

What are the advantages and disadvantages for reconstructing the history of the r...

[History](#), [Empires](#)



When looking at any sort of archaeology you have to take into account the validity of the find, for instance your on a dig in Plymouth the Excavation involves the Victorian era however you discover a coin of Roman origins picturing Nero as emperor.

Do you take this evidence as a example that the Romans occupied Plymouth or that sometime after the Victorians somebody simply dropped a roman coin which was then buried? The Roman Empire had a long history which would mean a lot of archaeological evidence would be left throughout the provinces of the Empire. For example Germany has many features that date from the Roman era such as the boundary walls and ditches that are located along the Rhine these were mainly used for transporting supplies and troops and to patrol the provinces and there natives. Many of these places give us a clue of their use and date of construction and also who had them built for example the two lower provinces in Germany were called Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium which judging from the name was founded by or at least governed by Agrippa the general of the roman military who was involved in the second triumbrate in Rome along with Augustus so this name is a good example of this characters historical ignificance . The sheer existence of the provinces shows the growth of the Roman Empire itself an important factor in the history of Rome is how it gained the great empire. This can only be researched by examining the remains of the provinces and even if the opportunity arises the remains of the inhabitants themselves as this can often reveal the wealth, social structure and general health of the people that were living at that time. The disadvantage of this comes when the

graves of only one large family can be found, these family graves are usually of wealthy aristocracy who had pro-consuls as members.

This isn't a great example of that entire society and it isn't always clear which are the remains of the important family head member. However the puzzle becomes clearer when a memorial has survived usually these are Greek styled grave stelie with a memorial epitaphs or epigram which describes the actions of that person during there life time this comes as another good source of history building as it often shows even the smallest attributes of leaders who didn't make much of a mark otherwise such as the one made by Lucius Metellus to his father Quintus Metellus as described by pliny. 7. -44 this is a good reflection of the historical social status that the Romans held so high and shows in context the public displays important role in their lives .

Another public display that was important was the forms of entertainment in the city itself and the provinces in a why the provinces had to have the right buildings other wise it wasn't considered a city at all. So the standard provincial towns usually are found to have bathes and at least an amphitheatre such as the newly excavated ruins in lower Germany of a town called Colonia Ulpia Traina at Xanten; it has an amphitheatre a forum sewers and street griding . The standard layout of a Roman town is useful for two reasons firstly it's a clear indication that the town was that of Roman in origins also the lay out can let us date the settlement usually because the buildings will have on then some sort of dedication inscription that tells us who had it commissioned this is because the governors were interested in

proving that they were meant to be in charge by giving the people what they wanted this was the best form of proper gender in roman times other than giving shows of gladiators and chariots, it was good to give the plebeians the buildings to have these shows in. So the buildings often have some sort of sign that they were commissioned by an emperor or pro-consul and this combined with literal sources can give us a time in which the building was constructed.

Literal sources often tell us when somebody did something that is memorable and then links it to the actions of another person so then even if we don't have a clue when the initial event took place we can find out. The most obvious source to date an archaeological find is often over looked, as it seem as mythology in our modern ways of thinking however it is what we base our own calendar on still today I am of course talking bout the Bible . The place were the dead sea scrolls were found and were many scrolls which are either copies or original scripts of the Hebrew Bible were found is a place in Israel called Qumran for years after its Discovery in 1947 it was believed that the building had been a monastery however recently the theory has been revised and the site is thought to be a fortress or a winter villa for some rich equite no dought . This is were we meet the conundrum of interpretation this has long been the test of an Archaeologist's mettle, the ability to investigate, make a well rounded evaluation of a site, artefact or source of evidence. is is the main point were the disadvantages can be at there most potent for instance you find an inscription that indicates that an emperor for instance Tiberius has built a temple in carthage but then you find evidence in

a book that says that the temple had been there since 69BC how do you find the truth the answer is scientifically analysis such as radiocarbon dating or electron microscopy . These methods are just some that are used to discover the truth about artefacts and building remains others that are used are metallurgy and flint napping, simple typological sequences often put things into perspective as you would start to see the patterns of necessity breeding invention.

This means tools would get more refined buildings would grow to gain more features, and boundaries would change and expand to accommodate new provinces these are the various ways in which we can build a scientific analysis of the history of the empire and then we would use the information that it gives us and compare it to the other sources physical and literal and build a more objective picture to try and gain a common ground . The disadvantages of reconstructing the history of the roman empire remain that of interpretation from the archaeology and literal sources the fact is many of the literal sources are very pro-romanist, which means the advantage of archaeology is that it is actually there were as the written word could easily be false the only disadvantage comes when the remains aren't sufficient as they could be damaged or trapped in a terminus post /anti quum position which mean that the roman occupational layer is between two other historical significant layers that would mean it cant be disturbed. This is rare and usually the archaeology is the best way to discover the history of the roman empire.