

Ceramic Analysis Lab

1. The Wales museum itself has many different collection areas, but as for the collection area selected for us, "Archaeology and Numismatics," there is a little more focus. Numismatics is apparently the study or collection of coins, tokens, medals, and like objects. Archaeology is on the other hand a very broad category, but seems to have a focus on human remains, animal remains that humans may have been involved with, tools, and pottery. Time period and region do not seem to be patterned.
2. The database filters searches within the collection area by material, subject, technique. Furthermore, each object may have additional attributes such as location of the object in the museum, the date and method of acquisition of the object by the museum, measurements, collection method, site name, as well as notes on the find.
3. Since the time period and region of the objects is so varied, it is possible to ask diachronic and synchronic questions. For example, "how did the rise of private property in Wales affect the distribution of different types of numismatics?" My guess is that new types were created, but only because of the new ubiquity of coined money.
4. I chose "Late Iron Age/Roman copper alloy ring," "Prehistoric flint knife," and "Early Bronze Age bronze tanged spearhead." The classifications for the ring help show the time of excavation of the artifact, that it was excavated by a company, and its measurements. It is difficult to tell, however, what the purpose of the ring was, or whether it was a decoration or a wearable, or both. The knife's classifications includes, besides a few less evocative details, measurements, the material, and the mention that the site where the knife was found was in Egypt. The context that is given alongside these classification is

actually very helpful, and paints the picture of a knife that was in regular use by a particular person or group of people, given the time it must've taken to create a rounded, holdable back to the knife along with serrated edges. It is not given a date range however outside of "prehistoric," so I think that would help contextualize the knife's place in the evolution of stone tools. The spearhead's classifications are quite comprehensive, and from them and the context it seems that the bronze spearhead was becoming the projectile of choice in Wales, and that this specific spearhead was very much like others of the time and slightly after it. I would like to know the method of collection at the site where the spearhead was found.

5. I think the material culture we leave behind, as an industrial society, will be of a vastly different kind and magnitude compared to that of the past. Ruins of stone, brick, and wood compared to our sprawling jungles of steel and concrete might seem very quaint by comparison. Digitally, there will probably be completely preserved artifacts from the 21st century in the form of videos, websites, etc., which might be all that is even needed to understand life today. I think the classifications might be similar for material objects, but for digital "objects," we might need a plethora of new ones. Surely, an estimate of age, and a date "discovered" will always be necessary, but the others would probably be very different. Perhaps some categories will be related to big events in the future like "Pre-climate-disaster," "Post-climate-disaster," or "Carbon-neutral era." Maybe they'll date using the kinds of processors used in tech at the time. So for example, they could look at a phone and a backpack from between 2008-2070, and conclude they're both from 2022 because the phone's tech seems to point to roughly that point of advancement in consumer electronics under global capitalism.

