

TEMPLE FIELD EXCAVATION

ADDITIONAL POINTS TO BEAR IN MIND WHEN EXCAVATING

- As we are working within a temple precinct be aware of the possibility that there may be structured deposits (the deliberate placement of multiple objects in the same location) of both artefacts and animal bone. Care should therefore be taken when exposing finds to ensure that individual items are not lifted prematurely before the exact nature of the context had been established.
- It is also possible within temple precincts to find artefactual evidence to have been deposited in discrete zones which can be significant in determining how the temple enclosure was being used. It may also be possible to glean other useful information from carefully recording the exact location of specific deposits.
- When a Small Find is discovered please do not remove it from the ground until you have been given the go ahead by the Trench Supervisor. This will enable the exact location of each Small Find to be plotted on the trench plan. There may also be a need to photograph the find in situ. The first step in revealing a Small Find will be to obtain a SF number from the Register and to mark the find spot with a plant label bearing the Context Number followed by the SF Number. This can then be pinned to the find spot using a nail from the tool box. The find spot label will remain in place until the necessary recording has been completed.
- No attempt must be made to "clean" any small find. This includes wiping off dirt with the fingers, spitting on the object etc... etc... It can be very tempting when small amounts of detail are just visible through the centuries of accumulated muck but we want to give ourselves every chance of identifying that artefact and in some instances leaving the dirt attached may be the best option initially in terms of preservation.
- The sieves are not an alternative to the careful removal of soil using a trowel. Diligent trowelling affords the best opportunity of finding artefacts precisely where they have lain in the ground, possibly since original deposition. Whilst the Context will be known, if an artefact turns up in the sieve, it's exact location in the ground will have been lost. The objective is therefore to maximise artefact recovery via trowelling which demands both concentration and an understanding of why you are doing it. Apart from actual finds, changes in context can sometimes be extremely subtle and easy to miss and once soil has been removed the evidence is lost.

