

# Environment

The exciting artefacts that Archaeologists find have been known to survive in some very extreme conditions. Ranging from very dry ground, to waterlogged environments, we have found that many conditions like these actually help to preserve the artefacts!

## Frozen in Time

Sometimes natural disasters can help to preserve sites. At Pompeii in Italy in 79 AD, the volcano Vesuvius erupted and buried the city in red hot ash. The shapes of people that you can see here are not bodies at all. Over time the ash hardened around the poor victims and as the bodies decomposed, they left an empty 'mould' of themselves, caught in the last desperate seconds before they died. These have been filled with plaster of paris to create the incredible imprints of human bodies from the past.

Ötzi was found in 1991 in the Ötztal Alps on the border between Austria and Italy at about 10,500 feet (3,200 m)! Initially, people thought he had laid buried there for only a short period of time, but upon thawing it became apparent that he was no modern European. In fact he dated to 3300 BC and is the oldest fully preserved human body!

Ötzi the Iceman



Archaeologists don't just use their eyes to view the evidence and reveal the secrets and story of the past. Microscopic evidence can reveal important information. For example a pottery sherd could contain pollen grains that would show what crops were grown at the time the pot was being used.