

Ancient dates

The dates used in the Ure Museum are based on a system in which years are counted from the year 1, both backwards and forwards. This system was originally developed by Christians, who took the year 1 as the traditional year in which Jesus Christ was born. It has, however, been adopted by many cultures throughout the world.

According to this system, the years before 1 are followed by 'bc', which stands for 'before Christ'. Dates after 1 follow the letters 'ad', which stand for the Latin words, Anno Domini (meaning 'In the year of our Lord'). Since the bc dates are counted backwards, 100 bc came before 50 bc. But ad dates (including the times in which we live) are counted forwards, so the year ad 100 came after ad 50.

Sometimes we do not know exactly when an event happened, for example, when a pot was made, so we refer to the **century** (hundred year period) in which it was made. Centuries of ad years start with the same numbers as the years themselves: ad 2005, for example, is in the beginning of the 20th century. Because we have to count backwards for bc dates, bc centuries sound older than they are: 450 bc was in the 5th century bc. In some cases we give a shorter range of dates, such as '525–500 bc', or we use 'ca.' (which is short for the Latin word *circa*), as in 'ca. 3100 bc', to show that an event happened around the date given.

The timeline displayed in the Ure Museum and printed on the back of this page provides a few historical events that give us a broad sense of the cultures of Greece, Egypt and Rome, and when their culture and politics came together.

Timeline

| date | greece | egypt | rome |
|---------|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| | Beginning of Bronze Age (ca. 3200 bc) | Late Predynastic Period (ca. 3200–3050 bc) | |
| 3000 bc | | | |
| | Mycenaean domination of the Aegean (ca. 1450 bc) | | |
| | | Reign of Tutankhamun (1332–1322 bc) | |
| 1000 bc | | | |
| | First Olympic Games (776 bc) | | |
| | | | Foundation of Rome (753 bc) |
| | | Babylonians conquer Egypt (664 bc) | |
| | Persians conquer Ionian Greece (545 bc) | | |
| | | Persians conquer Egypt and North Africa (525 bc) | |
| 500 bc | | | |
| | | | Foundation of Roman Republic (509 bc) |
| | Battle of Marathon: Greeks defend against Persians (490 bc) | | |
| | | Egyptians revolt against Persians (462–454 bc) | |
| | Building of the Parthenon (447–428 bc) | | |
| | | | Gauls sack Rome (390 bc) |
| | Alexander the Great gains Egypt (332–31 bc) | | |
| 300 bc | | | |

| | | |
|--------|--|---------------------------------|
| | | Hannibal invades Italy (218 bc) |
| | Romans conquer mainland Greece (146 bc) | |
| 100 bc | | |
| | Caesar invades Britain (55–54 bc) | |
| | Battle of Actium: Octavian (later Augustus) conquers Cleopatra and Mark Antony and gains for Rome control of all of Greece and Egypt (31 bc) | |
| | Beginning of the Roman Empire (27 bc) | |
| | Constantine establishes Christianity throughout the Roman Empire (ad 330) | |
| ad 400 | | |