

# THE MAINZ INTERNET DATABASE OF NAMES ON TERRA SIGILLATA (SAMIAN WARE), PORTUGAL AND SPAIN AND THE COLLABORATIVE SAMIAN RESEARCH NETWORK

## Geoffrey B. Dannell

geoffrey.brian.dannell@gmail.com  
Visiting researcher, University of Nottingham

## Allard W. Mees

mees@rgzm.de  
Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz

### Abstract

The digital research resource 'Samian Research' offers access to a quarter of a million recorded Samian (*Terra Sigillata*) stamps found within the Roman Empire and its barbarian borderlands. It comprises the main corpora 'Names on *Terra Sigillata*', 'Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum' and 'Gestempelte Südgallische Reliefsigillata' and thousands of new finds from various sites added after the printed publication of these books. The resource also offers tools for data exploration, generating dating curves for find-sites, weighted distribution maps and statistical tools to analyse the internal structures of Samian potteries.

### Resumo

O recurso de pesquisa digital "Samian Research" oferece acesso a um quarto de milhão de marcas de *terra sigillata* ("Samian") registadas e encontradas no Império Romano e nas suas fronteiras "bárbaras". Compreende os principais corpora "Names on *Terra Sigillata*", "*Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum*" e "Gestempelte Südgallische Reliefsigillata" e milhares de novas descobertas de vários sítios, adicionadas após a publicação impressa desses livros. O recurso também oferece ferramentas para exploração de dados, gerando curvas de datação para locais de consumo, mapas de distribuição ponderada e ferramentas estatísticas para analisar as estruturas internas das olarias de *terra sigillata*.

### Keywords

*Terra Sigillata*, Samian, Distribution, Roman economy.

### Palavras-chave

*Terra Sigillata*, Distribuição, economia romana.

The internet database of Names on *Terra Sigillata* (NoTS) has been developed at the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM) and is available at <http://www.rgzm.de/samian>.

It is based on the data published in nine volumes by Brian Hartley and Brenda Dickinson (Hartley and Dickinson, 2008-2012), funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under the supervision of Professor Mike Fulford and Dr. Roger Brock of the Universities of Reading and Leeds respectively. The text of the books was parsed by scripts created by Dr. Paul Tyers and the results were then converted into a web database by Dr. Allard Mees. The NoTS database is part of a suite of databases running on the RGZM server, comprising information about samian ware.

However, the data available is far from complete, because during the life of the original project, it was not possible, for financial and political reasons to collect stamps from a number of areas. These principally lay north of the Danube, in 'Barbaricum', and also in Iberia.

The advantages of enhancing access to the dataset via the internet are clear. A major problem with paper publication of corpora is that once published, such works are rarely revised and quickly become outdated. With internet access it is possible to design data-entry forms for specialists to make new entries, and for both specialists and general users to interrogate the data from remote locations (Dannell and Mees, 2013). Apart from the classical search routines on potter stamps and forms (Fig. 1-4), there are also sophisticated explorative research tools available, which are deepening the understanding of the underlying structures of marketing and consumption patterns in the Roman period.