

Make your Own Index

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My title is unlikely to put any genuine Indexers out of work, although I am not without hope that a few members of our Group may try to compile an index. What does one need? A small box, and a hundred or so small cards or pieces of paper to put inside the box, and some quiet hours in which to read through the work, noting each topic and person and place-name, and putting the cards in alphabetical order. Later, if the cards are sufficiently numerous, they can be sorted into three indexes. It is more complicated than that, and there is a Guide which I have found most helpful (Carey 1963).

But will many of you have a go? Since I suggested at our Southampton meeting (Simpson 1990) that every archaeological report ought to have an index, I have received approving responses from Indexers, but none at all from archaeologists in general or pottery specialists in particular. The following comments may encourage some of you to make an index, but please do not use a word processor or computer even though their manuals include instructions for indexing. At present an automatic index is only of the very simplest kind.

"The developers of these modules are clearly unaware that indexing requires intellectual effort to identify the concepts in a document, to express these concepts in a useful way, and to link related entries through a network of cross-references that guide the reader to headings of interest" (Wittman 1991, 235).

We need to make 'stand-alone indexing programmes', and such a task is pleasurable. Mrs Joyce Cherry has compiled a Comprehensive Index for sixteen volumes of a county journal and she wrote:

"The esoteric satisfactions of indexing are sufficient recompense for the labours involved..." (Cherry 1981, preface).

Reviewers rarely mention an index, but I have recently read two reviews which did: one stating that the book contained a glossary, a bibliography and an index, but the other, a more expensive volume, had a simple glossary, no bibliography and only a place-names index which was evidently not adequate for the reviewer's

needs. The Society of Indexers, and their journal *The Indexer*, are not yet widely known and appreciated. There is an article in that journal which is especially for archaeologists (Lavell 1981). One index discussed by Mrs Lavell is from Exeter (Bidwell 1979). This is large and useful with two and a half columns of sub-entries on the various kinds of pottery. Samian is cited as dating evidence which is a very unusual entry. In contrast with that, a monograph from Wales stated in its preface that an index would have added nothing but expense: a shocking attitude, because even a poor index is better than none at all. Users of indexes include the specialist who needs to know what other specialists in the same line of research are publishing, the tyro who is looking for some topic which has taken his or her fancy (and we can all play that part sometimes), the teacher who needs to know many things, and the synthesist who is adding to a store of information. Indexers are trying to help researchers: this is their aim, but it is often not understood.

Researchers may find that an editor has never referred to their specialist report and thus, if there is an index, there is no mention of pottery dating. Often it has seemed to me that the editor or excavator has never even read my report: otherwise its main points would have been discussed with the stratigraphical evidence. Equally tiresome is to find words have been misquoted. Misquotations do not support any argument because they have no foundation. We must be careful to quote correctly.

Pottery studies have greatly advanced in the past thirty years and all pottery specialists try to look at some at least of the qualities of reports which appear each year. Our journal helps us, and other specialist archaeologists, to do this. Chronology is still the biggest problem and in my opinion that is more important than weighing huge quantities of potsherds. Little Roman pottery of any sort has been found in contexts which are closely dated by historical events or destructions, or by coins or inscriptions. There used to be a date of AD 197 which was associated at Corbridge and in Roman Scotland with large deposits of pottery. February 197 is still the date of an important battle at Lyon between Septimus Severus and Clodius Albinus, but those pottery groups belong to a different and earlier military phase. This was

noted by B.R.Hartley just twenty years ago (Hartley 1972). About 161 to 163 was the final occupation on the Antonine Wall in Scotland. During that time at Corbridge a legionary base was being built and the work was abandoned so suddenly that the mason's tools were thrown down and left lying, where they were found by the pre-1914 excavators. They also found a hoard of gold coins in which the latest was dated 159/160. Evidently a senior officer had buried the coins beside a newly-made path.; he could not carry such a heavy weight of gold to war (Simpson 1974, 329-35; Brassington 1975, 69-75).

Most of the production of Cinnamus of Lezoux and his associates was before 161/3. His latest styles are at Newstead in the Scottish lowlands which were occupied up to about 180. It was the late Dr. Hans-Gunter Simon who, in 1967, alerted me to the too-late dating (from 160-90) of Aventinus 2, because his style has been found in a small fort in the Odenwald on the Inner Limes, abandoned around 150 and with no finds of Rheinzabern pottery there. The suggested end of production by Cinnamus and his associates of about 170 is nowadays supported by discoveries in Germany, Austria and Hungary concerning the Marcomannic Wars from 166-78. Much burnt pottery in the style of Cinnamus and his associates has been found in the debris of sites destroyed in those wars. Later Central Gaulish samian was exported down the river Danube after the wars had ended. The styles of the later 2nd century Lezoux potters Casurius, Doeccus and Paternus 2 came to Britain, with a little to Pannonia. I have summarised this continental dating in the revised edition of Stanfield and Simpson (1990, 15-19). While samian specialists in Britain and abroad have been contracting their dating for the working life of such middle 2nd century potters as Cinnamus, Anthony King has been extending it (King 1985), without any reasons for doing so, although I discussed our differences with him at length in 1986.

Why is there no index in the recent Report by Fulford and Huddleston? It would have been a useful addition. There is a strange entry:

"Clearly material relevant to the dating of the site is important but, unless the specialist feels that it is important to see all the material from a particular site, residual and unstratified sherds should not be submitted.. " (Fulford and Huddleston 1991, 49).

None of my samian colleagues have suggested such an extraordinary practice. Personally I have often discovered that a most important decorated sherd or potter's stamp on a plain form has been found when back-filling dumped soil. Much samian pottery is residual or re-deposited when a building is pulled down and replaced by another. Be assured, all of you, that every samian specialist wishes to see every scrap, or the quantification which most of us do provide, but is not always published, would be impossible to assess.

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