

Herefordshire ceramics type fabric series (Romano-British pottery found in Herefordshire)

Samian ware (terra sigillata)

Like the slightly earlier 'Arretine ware', Samian is terra sigillata - 'stamped clay' - plain and decorated tableware. Made mainly in Gaul, the pots are in a hard fine-textured fabric and are 'slipwares' having a glossy surface slip - a matrix of mainly silicon and aluminium oxides. The clay for these pots was pressed against the inside of a mould and the mould was then turned on a wheel. The stamp, usually the name of the potter (not the mould maker) appears on the base of these vessels.

From the Arezzo workshops and their offshoots, the terra sigillata industry spread to the major factories of southern (mid-late 1st century AD), central (2nd century AD) and eastern (2nd and early-mid 3rd) centuries AD) Gaul. During the 2nd century AD there were small workshops in Britain - at Pulborough (Sussex) and later at Colchester (Essex). Like Arretine, Samian is a hard, smooth fabric with fine inclusions varying slightly between the various regions of manufacture. The term 'Samian' is not used for this pottery in languages other than English, which only use the term 'terra sigillata'.

The industry was conducted on a large-scale and 25,000 - 30,000 pots were fired at a time at La Graufesenque in southern Gaul. The massive distribution infrastructure of this pottery is demonstrated by the fact that it has been found on sites from Scotland to India. Samian is found throughout Britannia and the original data from a survey of Samian ware in Britain by Dr Steve Willis can be downloaded from the [Archaeological Data Service](#) website.

Generally earlier records of finds of Samian pottery did not distinguish between the various industries. Pottery of the South, Central, East and North Gaulish wares were recovered from excavations outside Kenchester (Magnis) in 1977 - 1979 while South and Central Gaulish Samian was found at Blackwardine in 1981 and at the Romano-British settlement site at Stretton Grandison.

Central Gaulish ware was found at Whitchurch in 1949 - 1950.



fabric in section



external surface of fabric

forms

bowls; dishes; cups; platters; beakers



A Samian bowl, form 37



A Samian inkwell. An inturned rim prevented the ink spilling if the pot was knocked over

Photographs courtesy of Herefordshire Heritage Services: Hereford Museum & Art Gallery

Central Gaulish terra sigillata

POTSHERD : [Atlas of Roman Pottery - Central Gaulish terra sigillata](#)

Worcestershire fabric 43.2

Colchester fabric CG/LZ

JRPS bibliography fabric cts

Kent fine fabric 3d

Silchester fabric E4

East Gaulish terra sigillata

POTSHERD : [Atlas of Roman Pottery - East Gaulish terra sigillata](#)

Worcestershire fabric 43.3

Colchester fabric EG

JRPS bibliography fabric ets

Kent fine fabric 5c

South Gaulish (La Graufesenque) terra sigillata

POTSHERD : [Atlas of Roman Pottery - South Gaulish \(La Graufesenque\) terra sigillata](#)

Colchester fabric SG

JRPS bibliography fabric sts

Milton Keynes fabric

Kent fine fabric 20a

Silchester fabric E3

Colchester terra sigillata

POTSHERD : [Atlas of Roman Pottery - Colchester terra sigillata](#)

Colchester fabric CO

JRPS bibliography fabric cls

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