**Sample database of Roman potters**

This is a catalogue of makers’ marks on pottery. Therefore …

* Each vessel has properties, such as shape, type of clay (possibly signifying where it was made), where it was found, where it is now
* The findspots merit a table of their own, with geographical coordinates, so that one may generate distribution maps
* Each stamp refers to an individual potter, about whom we may know various things
* Most potters used a range of different stamp-types (dies)
* All of the information is derived from or related to published sources, which need to be quoted.

The data entry process for recording new data therefore typically involves a range of tables; new entries may refer to potters, findspots, publications etc. which are already in the database. But if they are not, it is desirable to enter them immediately without having to abandon the current process and open another form. The project was successfully implemented in the 1990s using Paradox, a beautifully designed database system which has now passed into history. There is therefore a precedent that worked, and which I am now trying to replicate in LibreOffice Base.

The table structure may be seen by going to Tools|Relationships.

My current problem (19 May 2020) is that I have been able to replicate the previous data entry form (here “F-EntryForm”), which successfully displays most of the data related to each recorded instance of a particular stamp. When I scroll through the records (cursor in ‘Vessel no.’ – only a sample is included here of the 37,569 entries currently in the database), you can see that the potter and stamp details change in accordance with the value in the master table (“T-Stamps”) on which the form is based.

However, if I change, say, the potter no., the slave record (details of potter) do not change as I move to another field. (This used to be automatic, but I guess it could be forced by a ‘Refresh’ attached to the ‘Lose focus’ event on the master field.)

If I wish to enter entirely new records, the problem is more acute. A new record is initiated currently by means of the pushbutton at upper left. This generates a new number, places it in the ‘Vessel no.’ field and then moves the cursor to ‘Form’ in order to enter details of the vessel – but I cannot enter anything into that field. I can enter data into the other fields of the master table (Potter No., Stamp type etc.) but – as already stated above, they do not immediately generate entries in the related parts of the form. In the previous incarnation of this database, entering an unrecognized number into, say the ‘Potter No.’ field could be made to force the cursor immediately to go to the ‘Potter’ part of the form in order to enter details of the new potter. This does not seem currently to be possible with Base.

I have a vague recollection that this was prevented by the internal integrity constraints between the tables, and that if I deleted the defined relationships (enforcing referential integrity by other means), I could do what I wanted. But this does not seem to help here.

This worked really well before and it would be good to implement it again. Another work-around could probably be devised, but it would not be so neat (and intuitive).

*Philip K*