

Julia Kopf

EARLY SOUTH GAULISH SAMIAN WARE FROM THE SOUTHWESTERN SETTLEMENT AREA OF *BRIGANTIUM*/BREGENZ (AUSTRIA)

Since the middle of the 19th century a great amount of Terra Sigillata has been discovered in Bregenz¹, but only a fractional part of it has been scientifically processed and published so far. In fact only the so called “Bregenzer Kellerfund”, found in 1878², has been widely disseminated among Terra Sigillata experts, due to its scientific value as a closed find. The prominence of this deposit is the merit of Johann Jacobs, who published a preliminary report on the Kellerfund in 1912³. Apart from this publication and mentions of Samian ware in excavation reports, R. Knorr was one of the first archaeologists to deal with this kind of pottery from *Brigantium*. In his work “Töpfer und Fabriken verzierter Terra Sigillata des ersten Jahrhunderts“, published in 1919, he illustrated some Tiberian respectively early Claudian relief-decorated vessels of the forms Drag. 29 and Drag. 11 from Bregenz, which were found together in 1913⁴.

Since Knorr’s publication only few research on South Gaulish Samian ware from Bregenz has been carried out. S. Zabehllicky-Scheffenecker wrote a summarising article on “Terra Sigillata aus Brigantium” in 1985, estimating that half of the Samian material is of South Gaulish provenance⁵. Early Terra Sigillata vessels from the cemetery of *Brigantium* were processed by M. Konrad, but her master thesis from 1989 on the Augustan, Tiberian and early Claudian graves has not been released yet⁶. Finally, the South Gaulish Terra Sigillata sherds from a well back-filling were published by V. Hasenbach in 2011⁷. Altogether it can be resumed that there is quite little knowledge and thus still a lot of work to do regarding the South Gaulish Samian ware from *Brigantium*.

But although the processing of the vast amount of Terra Sigillata from former excavations in Bregenz would undoubtedly enrich the research on this pottery in general, it would only partly increase the knowledge about the development of the settlement *Brigantium*. For this purpose new excavations with stratigraphic methodology are necessary, because only they could provide the required connection between the archaeological features and the dating finds. The first excavations in Bregenz achieving this requirement took place from 2009 to 2012 in the southwestern settlement area of *Brigantium*⁸. They brought to light some very early South Gaulish Terra Sigillata fragments, originating from layers which can be attributed to Early Imperial military forts⁹. The discovery of these forts is one of the most important results of the recent excavations, resolving the long lasting discussion about the civilian or military origin of *Brigantium* in favour of the latter thesis¹⁰.

On **figure 1** a selection of South Gaulish Samian vessels with potters’ stamps from the first half of the 1st century AD deriving from the excavations 2009–2012 (and from excavations 1908 and 1967 on the same ground) is illustrated. The represented potters with production start in AD 10 respectively AD 15 prove that Bregenz appertained to the first places in the Northern provinces that were supplied

¹ Regarding the history of archaeological excavations in Bregenz see B. TRUSCHNEGG, Vorarlberg und die Römer. Geschichtsbewusstsein und Landesgeschichte im Wechselspiel (1800–1945) (Graz, Feldkirch 2001) 191–319.

² S. JENNY, Bauliche Überreste aus Brigantium. Jahrb. Vorarlberger Landesmusver. 1880, 16–18.

³ J. JACOBS, Sigillatafunde aus einem römischen Keller zu Bregenz. Jahrb. Altkde. 6, 1912, 172–184.

⁴ KNORR 1919, 22–26 Tafel 1–4; 50 E.

⁵ S. ZABEHLICKY-SCHEFFENECKER, Terra Sigillata aus Brigantium. In: E. Vonbank (ed.), Das römische Brigantium. Ausstellungskat. Vorarlberger Landesmus. 124 (Bregenz 1985) 21–45.

⁶ M. KONRAD, Frühe römische Gräber aus Bregenz-Brigantium (unpublished master thesis Univ. Munich 1989).

⁷ V. HASENBACH, Funde aus einem Brunnen der Villa. In: Ch. Ertel/V. Hasenbach/S. Deschler-Erb, Kaiserkultbezirk und Hafenkastell in Brigantium. Ein Gebäudekomplex der frühen und mittleren Kaiserzeit. Forsch. Gesch. Vorarlberg 10 (N.F.) (Konstanz 2011) 209–213; 241–243; 259; 263 f. Taf. 1–2.

⁸ M. BADER, Militärische und zivile Siedlungsreste aus der Römerzeit am Böckleareal in Bregenz. Ein Vorbericht. Jahrb. Vorarlberger Landesmusver. 2011, 8–67; J. KOPF/K. OBERHOFER, Archäologische Evidenzen der Grabung 2012 im Kastellareal von Brigantium (GN 1037/11, KG Rieden, LH Bregenz). Montfort. Zeitschr. Gesch. Vorarlberg 65/2, 2013, 17–29.

⁹ The finds of these excavations are currently processed in course of a research project of the University of Innsbruck, financed by the Austrian Science Fund FWF (Project-number P23777-G19). The processing of the finds of the former excavations on this area is financed by the states Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

¹⁰ The first one who postulated a Tiberian fort at *Brigantium* on the basis of excavation features was Adolf Hild (A. HILD, Brigantiums Frühkastell. Carinthia 143, 1953, 711–714.). Since then, several arguments in favour of as well as against this hypothesis were brought forward: see W. ZANIER, Das Alpenrheintal in den Jahrzehnten um Christi Geburt. Forschungsstand zu den historischen und archäologischen Quellen der spätlatène- und frühen römischen Kaiserzeit zwischen Bodensee und Bündner Pässen (Vorarlberg, Liechtenstein, Sankt Gallen, Graubünden). Münchner Beitr. Vor- u. Frühgesch. 59 (München 2006) 82–86. – Regarding the recently discovered military finds and features see J. KOPF, Rückblick und Ausblick: Spuren frühromischen Militärs in Brigantium. Jahrb. Vorarlberger Landesmusver. 2011, 68–75 and J. KOPF/K. OBERHOFER, Brigantium/Bregenz, Kastellareal: Neues zur Lage und Größe des Militärpostens. Jahrb. Vorarlberger Landesmusver. 2013, 60–73.

with products from La Graufesenque¹¹. The potters Vibius and Pilemus are known from only a few places outside their South Gaulish kiln site and regarding the potter Sume- the new basic work “Names on Terra Sigillata” actually records only evidence from La Graufesenque¹². The stamp from Bregenz documents that his products were in fact exported to a quite distant place. Quidvis also belongs to the category of scarce stamps on exported vessels, whereas the products of potters like Vapuso, Scottius and Cantus are widely spread in the Northern provinces. Besides the form range visible on **figure 1** – consisting of Drag. 15/17, Drag. 18, Drag. 24/25 and Ritterling 5 – the excavations of the years 2009–2012 uncovered fragments of all other Samian forms characteristic of the Tiberian and Claudian Period (Drag. 17, Haltern 1, Ritterling 1, Drag. 16, Drag. 27, Ritterling 8 and the decorated forms Drag. 11 and Drag. 29 with low rim and rouletted band between the two decorated zones). Because of their stratified context, the main scientific value of these sherds is that they enable us to establish a chronology for the Early Imperial military forts of *Brigantium*.

The former mentioned Samian find from 1913 – partly published by R. Knorr – comprises the same Tiberian respectively Claudian forms and therefore belongs to the same time horizon. In autumn 1913 C. von Schwerzenbach carried out an excavation in the southwestern part of the settlement plateau of *Brigantium*, next to the excavation area of 2009–2012. In the course of the excavations 1913 a mass find of early South Gaulish Samian ware was discovered. The fragments of several hundreds vessels were found at the same place, under the entrance hall of a later building with stone foundations¹³. This circumstance, together with the fact that virtually all vessels are burnt or show at least scorch marks and represent a quite homogenous form range relating to their dating, tempts to interpret the assemblage as a closed find, maybe a warehouse deposit. Another argument for this interpretation is the multiple occurrence of some potters’ stamps. But due to the early date of the excavation that brought to light this exceptional assemblage the information about the archaeological feature category from which it derives is not at our disposal. All we know is that the sherds lay in two successive layers, suggesting that we are dealing with vessels from two subsequent archaeological features. A. Hild, who published a preliminary report on the excavation of 1913 further remarks that the decorated vessels Drag. 11 came from the lower layer, whereas the upper layer contained a lot of plates¹⁴.

At the current state of research I can identify about 350 maximum individuals on the basis of the rim sherds¹⁵. The reason why I prefer to speak of a maximum number

of individuals is that the find comprises a large number of fragments with very similar rims, which could but not must belong together. Therefore it is often not possible to attribute two or more rather similar rim sherds to the same vessel, unless they fit directly together. Another element of uncertainty is the absolute number of the cup-forms and the bowl Ritterling 12, since a detailed analysis of these forms has not yet taken place.

Despite these methodological problems some statements can already be made: The best represented form of the plates is Drag. 17, which occurs in all three variants a, b and c (**fig. 2,2–4**). Taking into account its platter counterpart Drag. 17aR (**fig. 2,1**) and the plate Haltern 1 (**fig. 2,5**), almost half of the plates and platters of the Samian assemblage of 1913 can be chronologically classified as Tiberian. The production of the other occurring plate and platter forms (Drag. 15/17R, Drag. 15/17, Drag. 16, Drag. 18 and Ritterling 1; **fig. 3,1–5**) also began in the Tiberian Period, but lasted longer. The potters’ stamps on the plates date in the Tiberian and Claudian Age as well (on **figs. 2–3** you can see stamped plates of Acutus i, Anextlatus, Cantus, Firmo i(?) and Volus). Some plates of the forms Drag. 17b and 17c (**fig. 2,3–4**) and Ritterling 1 (**fig. 3,5**) bear spiral handles, which are distinctive of Tiberian production¹⁶.

Regarding the cups the low percentage of the form Ritterling 5 is astonishing. Only four of the approximately 350 so far identified individuals appertain to this typical Tiberian form (**fig. 4,1**) respectively to variants of this form. In contrast, the cup forms Ritterling 8 with at least 36 vessels¹⁷ (**fig. 4,2**) and especially Drag. 24/25 with more than 110 individuals (**fig. 4,3–4**) are well represented. On a considerable number of cups of the latter form spiral handles are preserved. The best testified potter is again Cantus; in addition stamps of Ave (i), Avetu (**fig. 4,3**), Masclus i and Salvetus i are available amongst others. The cups Drag. 27 include five vessels with rouletted upper wall (**fig. 4,5**), resembling the Italian form Consp. 31 and therefore of early South Gaulish production¹⁸. The stamp of Feliciter ii (**fig. 4,6**), who worked from 40–70 AD constitutes the chronologically latest stamp of the assemblage.

Besides plates and cups the find complex of 1913 also covers bowls. On the one hand plain bowls of the form Ritterling 12 (**fig. 4,7**; in big and small size) – mostly furnished with the characteristic early collar of triangular profile – and on the other hand decorated bowls Drag. 29 (**fig. 5,2**). Whereby we are again at the beginning of my paper since the Drag. 29-bowls constitute the vessels already published by Knorr in 1919, together with the Drag. 11 chalices of the Samian find of 1913. As Knorr already emphasized, the decoration of the latter ones resembles strongly the decoration of Italian Terra Sigillata chalices and the little animal heads on two of the

¹¹ All potters’ production dates derive from HARTLEY/DICKINSON 2008–2012. – For the starting date of the export from La Graufesenque to the northwestern provinces see POLAK 2000, 48–51.

¹² HARTLEY/DICKINSON vol. 8 (2011) 373.

¹³ HILD 1930, 148 f.

¹⁴ Ibid. 148.

¹⁵ The results concerning the Samian assemblage of 1913 are linked to a research project of the University of Innsbruck, financed by the states Tyrol and Vorarlberg. Due to the fact that this work task is still in progress, the following statements (especially the given numbers of individuals) are of preliminary character. For this reason I also abstain from presenting statistical analyses.

¹⁶ POLAK 2000, 83; 117.

¹⁷ The assignation of number of individuals of the form Ritterling 8 causes some problems because the represented vessels respectively the rims offer few distinguishing features concerning diameter as well as ornamental elements like grooves. On account of this the given number of 36 Ritterling 8 cups only considers vessels of which the whole profile (rim and foot) could be made out. The original number of individuals of this form is without doubt larger.

¹⁸ POLAK 2000, 119.

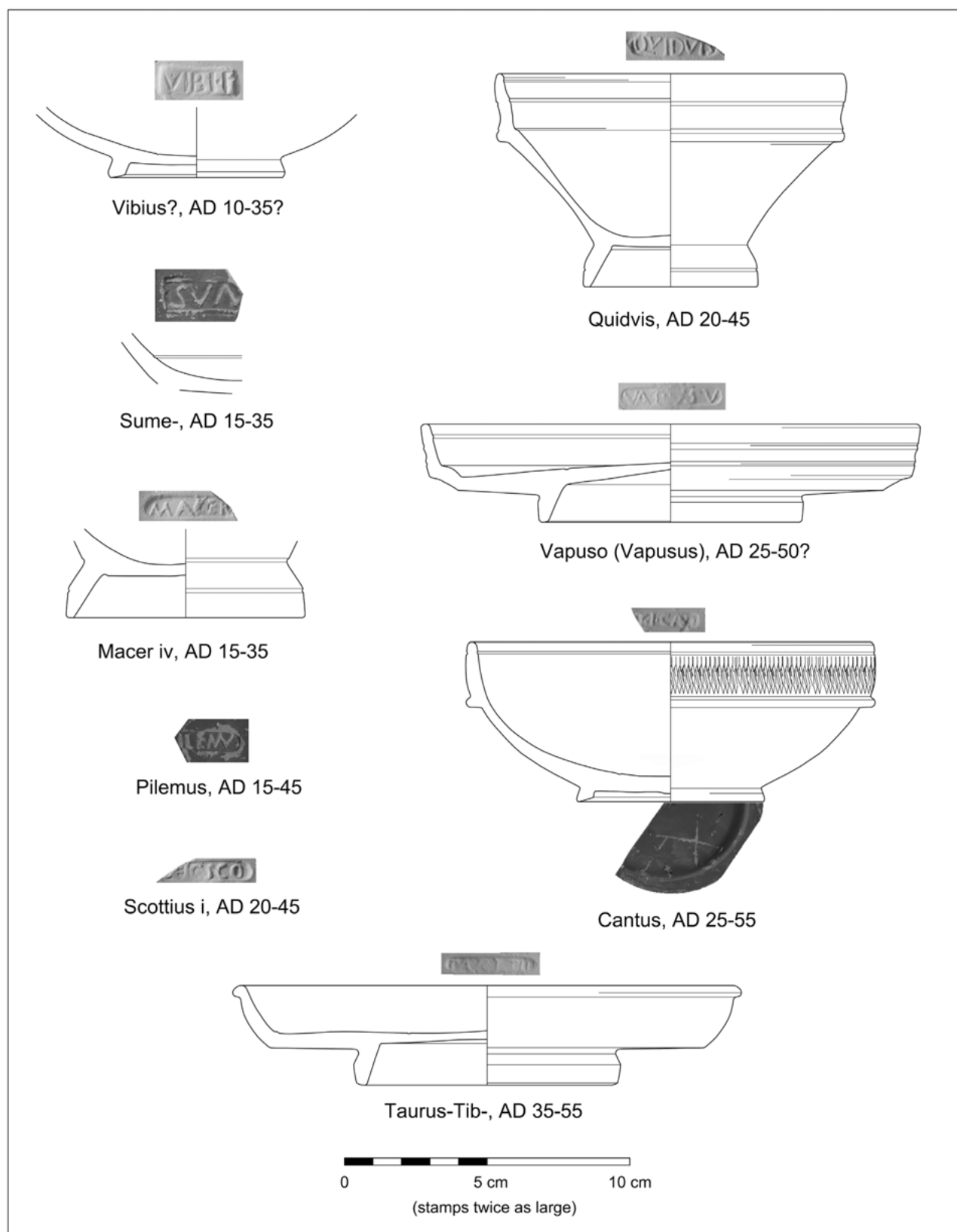


Fig. 1. Terra Sigillata fragments from the excavations 2009–2012 and from excavations 1908 and 1967 on the same ground. – Scale 1:2, stamps 1:1.

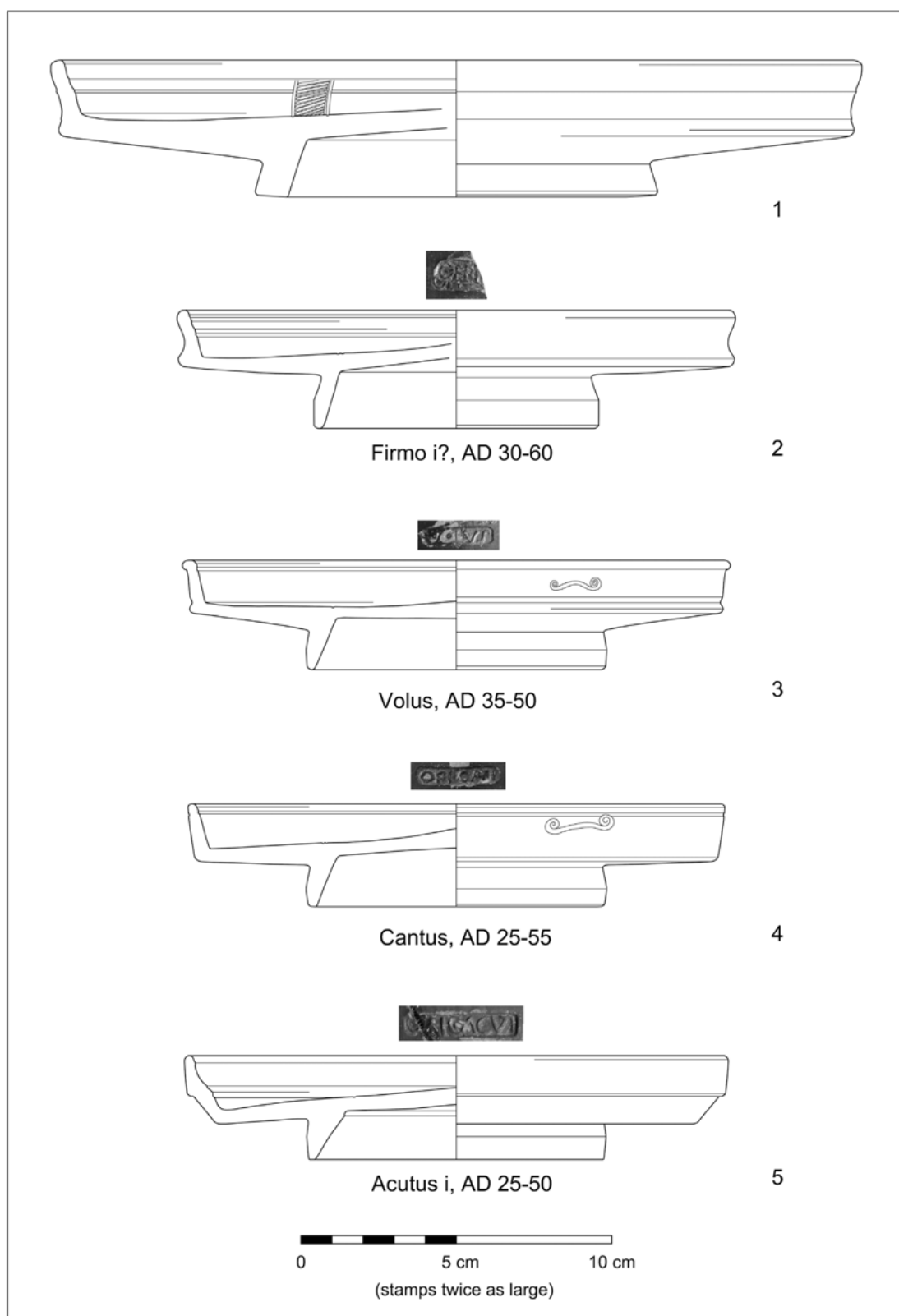


Fig. 2. Platter Drag. 17aR and plates Drag. 17a-c and Haltern 1 from the Samian assemblage of 1913. – Scale 1:2, stamps 1:1.

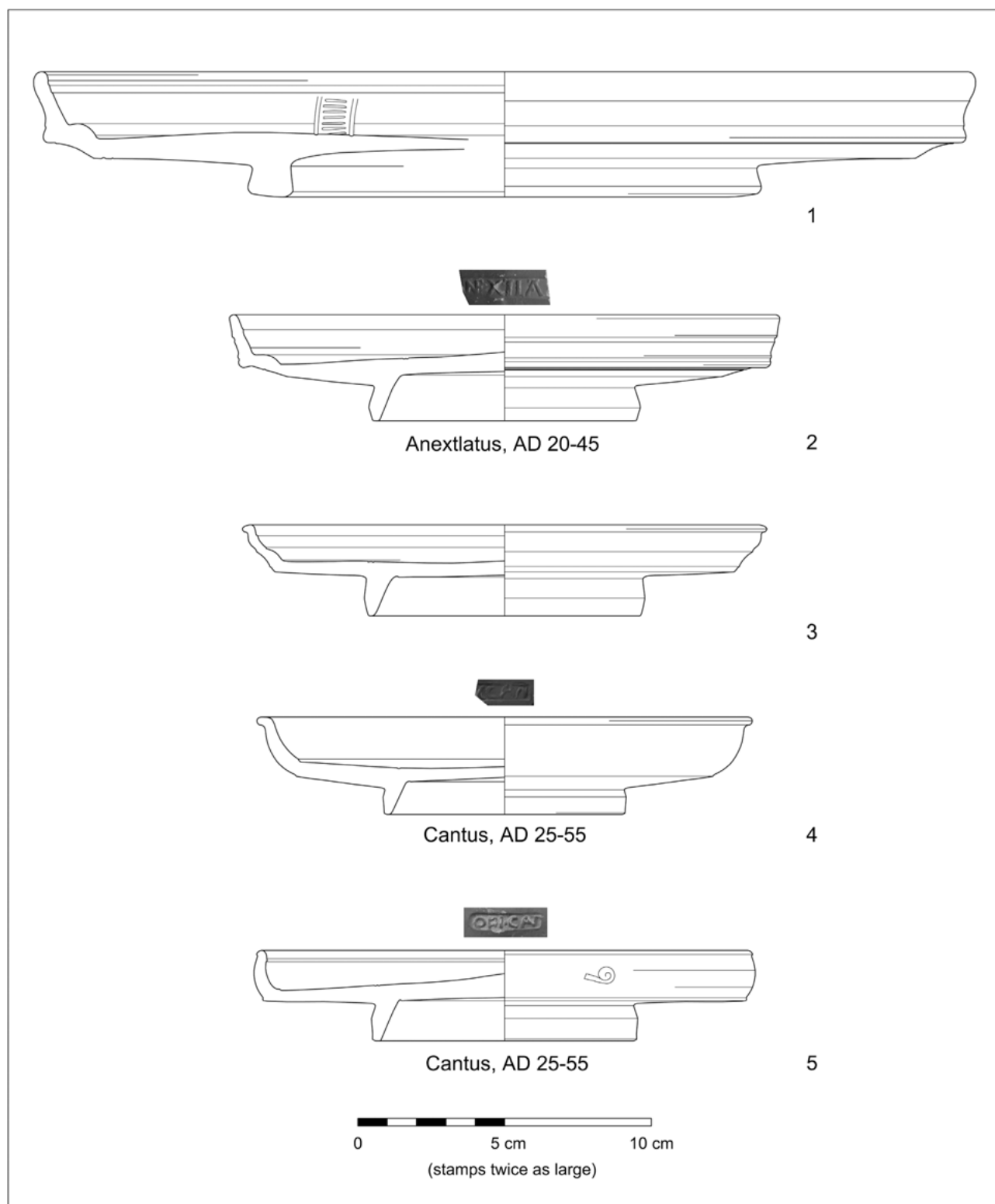


Fig. 3. Platter Drag. 15/17R and plates Drag. 15/17, Drag. 16, Drag. 18 and Ritterling 1 from the Samian assemblage of 1913. – Scale 1:2, stamps 1:1.

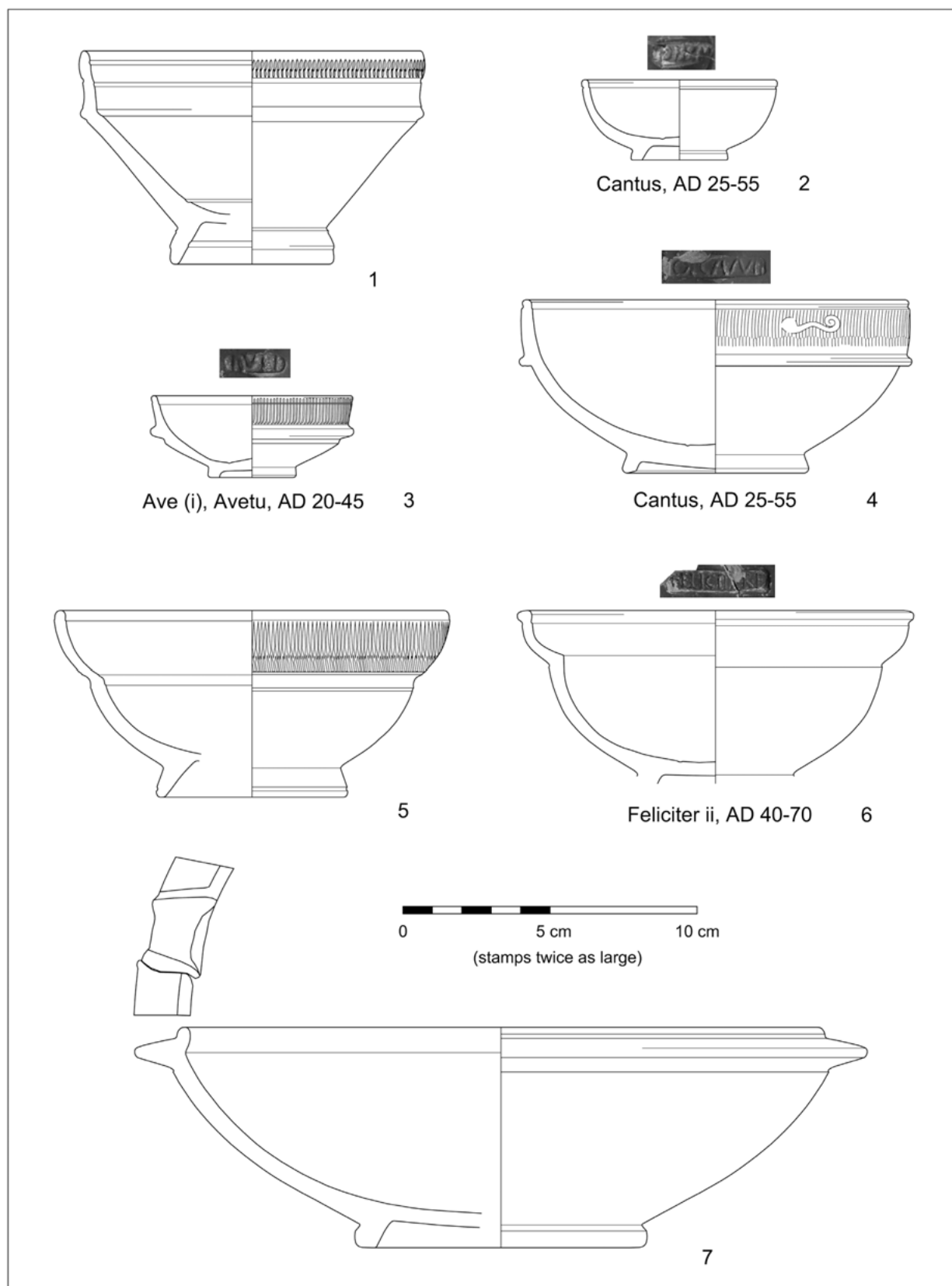


Fig. 4. Cups Ritterling 5, Ritterling 8, Drag. 24/25 and Drag. 27 and bowl Ritterling 12 from the Samian assemblage of 1913. – Scale 1:2, stamps 1:1.

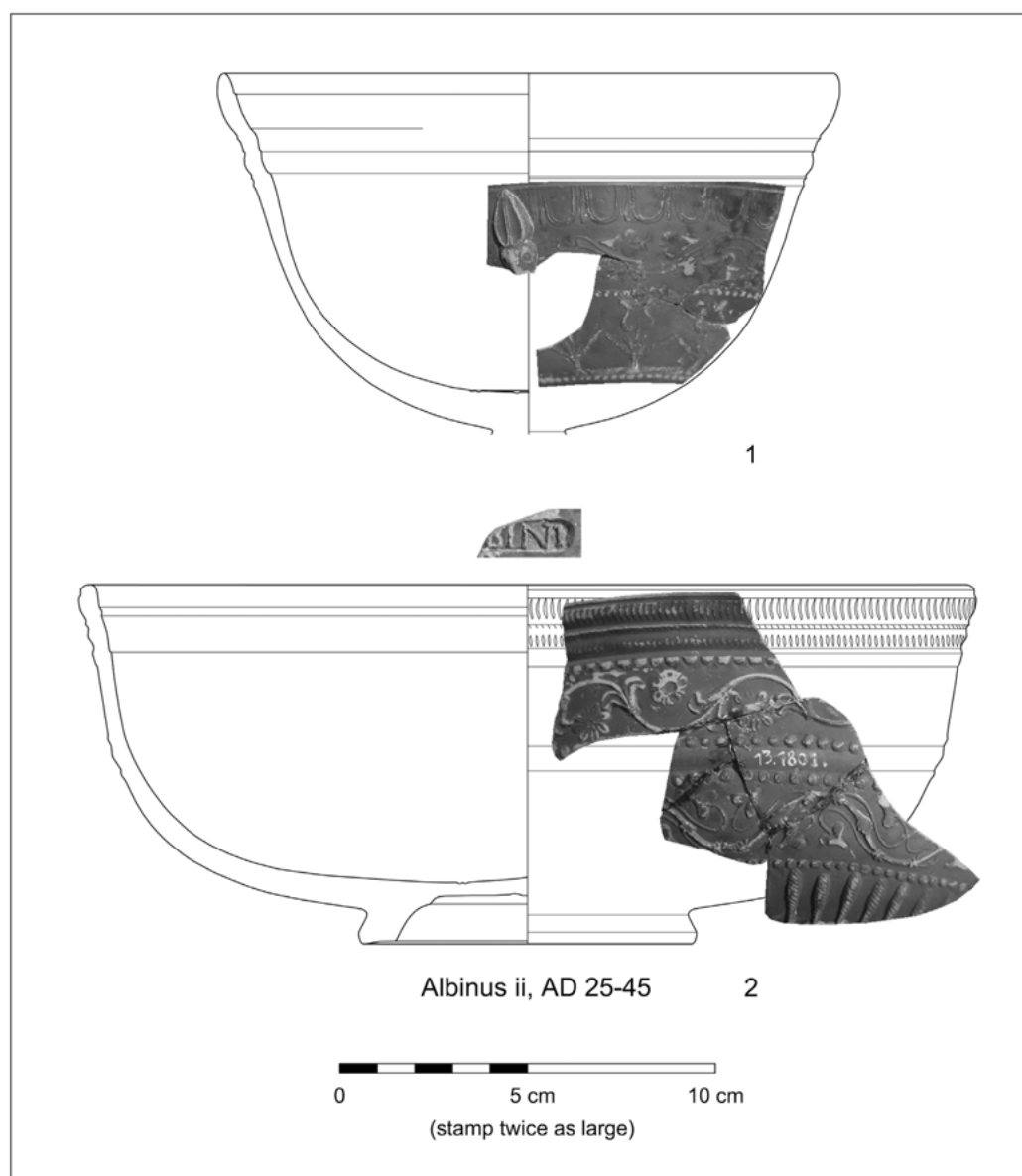


Fig. 5. Relief-decorated vessels Drag. 11 and Drag. 29 from the Samian assemblage of 1913. – Scale 1:2, stamps 1:1.

Drag. 11 vessels (**fig. 5,1**) are also an Italian remnant, attesting the Tiberian production of the chalices from Bregenz¹⁹.

In conclusion it can be stated that the form range as well as the potters' list argue for a Tiberian respectively early Claudian dating of the Samian assemblage found 1913. On the one hand, the potters' list is dominated by potters of the time 25–50 AD (especially by the potter Cantus) and on the other hand the absence of the rouletted platter Drag. 18R, which took over the position from the older platters Drag. 17aR and Drag. 15/17R around 50 AD²⁰, makes a strong case for an earlier dating. The question if we are dealing with a single deposit, two deposits or only settlement finds cannot be solved in the end. The observation of A. Hild that the fragments derive from two different layers is difficult to interpret

without knowing the feature context of these layers. Thanks to the recently discovered military features of the first half of the 1st century AD it is obvious that the Samian find of 1913 can be attributed to the phase of the Early Imperial military forts of *Brigantium*. According to dendrochronological data and the small finds from the back-fillings of the defensive ditches of the last fort²¹, the withdrawal of the garrison unit can be dated around 45 AD. Considering the potters' list respectively the chronological overlapping of the potters' production dates, it appears likely that the sherds of this assemblage came under the earth in the course of this occasion.

The fact that the fragments are secondary burnt could indicate that the fort was at least partly destroyed by fire.

¹⁹ KNORR 1919, 25.

²⁰ POLAK 2000, 99.

²¹ J. KOPF/K. OBERHOFER, Alte und neue Forschungsergebnisse zur Hauptstraße der römischen Siedlung Brigantium/Bregenz. In: I. Gaisbauer/M. Mosser (eds.), Straßen und Plätze. Ein archäologisch-historischer Streifzug. Monogr. Stadtarchäologie Wien 7 (Wien 2013) 77 f.

The different degree of burning of matching fragments and the curved breaks resemble burnt grave goods and therefore probably display that the vessels exploded during a fire in different directions²². Because of the lack of information concerning the archaeological context of this finding, its relevance primarily lies in its quantity, composition and early dating. Since we don't know many assemblages of South Gaulish Samian ware of Tiberian respectively early Claudian dating

outside of La Graufesenque²³, this assemblage from Bregenz constitutes an important find complex for the research on South Gaulish Terra Sigillata.

Julia.Kopf@uibk.ac.at

²² Kind remark of M. Polak.

²³ In La Graufesenque the ensembles "La fosse de Cirratus" and "L'ensemble du canal" are best comparable with the Bregenz assemblage from 1913. See M. GENIN, *La Graufesenque* (Millau, Aveyron) II. Sigillées lisses et autres productions (Bordeaux 2007) 55–82.

Bibliography

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>HARTLEY/DICKINSON 2008–2012</p> <p>HILD 1930</p> <p>KNORR 1919</p> <p>POLAK 2000</p> | <p>B. HARTLEY/B. DICKINSON, <i>Names on Terra Sigillata. An Index of Makers' Stamps and Signatures on Gallo-Roman Terra Sigillata (Samian Ware)</i> (London 2008–2012).</p> <p>A. HILD, <i>Archäologische Forschungen in Bregenz. Jahresh. Österr. Arch. Inst.</i> 26, 1930, 115–176.</p> <p>R. KNORR, <i>Töpfer und Fabriken verzierter Terra Sigillata des ersten Jahrhunderts</i> (Stuttgart 1919).</p> <p>M. POLAK, <i>South Gaulish Terra Sigillata with Potters' Stamps from Vechten</i> (Nijmegen 2000).</p> |
|---|---|