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**RAETICUS, GERMANUS, IANUARIUS AND OTHER ITINERANT POTTERS****A contribution to commercial questions****The *Vicus Vitudurum***

The *vicus* of *Vitudurum*, today Oberwinterthur, canton Zurich, is situated in NE-Switzerland<sup>1</sup>. The settlement lay on an important main road, which ran from the legionary fortress of *Vindonissa* in the west eastwards towards Raetia. According to the results of dendrochronological analysis the establishment of the settlement took place in 4 BC. A large-scale construction of the western quarter “Unteres Bühl” started around 7 AD. At least 16 plots had wooden rectangular houses with a common frontline and a common *porticus*. The wooden houses were constantly altered and rebuilt until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The centre of the *vicus* lay at the “Kirchhügel”, which had been settled since the Augustan period. After a fire around 70 AD the first stone buildings - a temple and a bathhouse - were erected there. In 294 AD, the Kirchhügel was fortified with a wall with towers. An inscription names the instigator and the date as well as the name of the *vicus* “*Vitudurum*”. Finds, graves and pithouses indicate that the settlement continued until the early medieval period.

**Local Pottery Production**

In the *vicus* 15 pottery kilns of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD are known producing coarse ware and Terra Sigillata imitations<sup>2</sup>. During the last years, chemical analyses on various potsherds were carried out by scientists at the University of Fribourg<sup>3</sup>. As a result at least two local reference groups

(OW1–2) could be defined. Of special interest are the locally made *mortaria* as some potters marked these vessels with their names (**fig. 1**). As of now, 139 stamped *mortaria*, both local and imported, are known from the *vicus* Oberwinterthur. An investigation of these stamps revealed that the fabrics of certain potters named Raeticus, Germanus, Ianua(rus) and Ian(-), who was probably another Ianuarius, are distributed in a very restricted area. The distribution extends between Oberwinterthur in the West to the *vicus* Eschenz/*Tasgaetium*, Canton Thurgau, across the river Rhine to the *vicus* Orsingen (Germany) and further east to the *vicus* Bregenz/*Brigantium* (Austria) (**fig. 2**)<sup>4</sup>. This paper proposes that these potters moved from one *vicus* to the other to work on-site with the local resources and infrastructure. The easiest way to prove this thesis would be a comparison of vessel forms and stamps. A proof without doubt would be a chemical analysis of the potsherds to decide whether they were made of local clay or bought from a merchant on a marketplace nearby. The problem is that analyses of local clay are lacking in other places than Oberwinterthur. To examine how local craftsmen moved and worked, we decided to follow an unusual way of investigation in collaboration with the Forensic Science Institute of Zurich<sup>5</sup>.

**Now open: IANVARIVS – new potter in residence**

The marking of pottery is a very standardized procedure. In detail the stamping of a *mortarium* is divided into different stages: when the potter is right-handed he has to mark the vessel by holding the fingers or only the index finger of his left hand under the rim of the *mortarium* when rolling the stamp from the interior to the exterior of the rim (**fig. 3**). Some

<sup>1</sup> The results of various studies have been published in the VITUDVRVM series, monographs of the Kantonsarchäologie Zürich (vol. 1–9). For the *vicus* generally see: V. JAUCH/B. ZOLLINGER, Holz aus Vitudurum – Neue Entdeckungen in Oberwinterthur. Arch. Schweiz 33, 2010, 2–13; B. HEDINGER/V. JAUCH, Die römische Zeit. In: M. Graf et al., Hintergrund-Untergrund. Archäologische Entdeckungsreise durch Winterthur. Neujahrsbl. Stadtbibl. Winterthur 331 (Zürich 2000) 47–75; V. JAUCH, Winterthur ZH, Oberwinterthur. In: L. Flutsch/U. Niffeler/F. Rossi (Hrsg.), Die römische Epoche. Die Schweiz vom Paläolithikum bis zum frühen Mittelalter (SPM) 5 (Basel 2002) 403–404.

<sup>2</sup> The local pottery kilns and their production are subject of a thesis at the University of Bern, Archaeology of the Roman Provinces, completed by V. Jauch in 2012 and due to be published in V. JAUCH, Vicustöpfer. Töpfereien im römischen Oberwinterthur. Vitudurum 10. Monogr. Kantonsarch. Zürich 45 (Zürich/Egg 2014).

<sup>3</sup> The analyses were made mainly by G. Thierrin-Michael, Department of Geosciences – Mineralogy and Petrography, University of Fribourg, Pérolles. Partly published: G. THIERRIN-MICHAEL/A. ZANCO/G. GALETTI, Gallo-roman Pottery from Kilns in Oberwinterthur (NE Switzerland): Two Reference Groups. In: V. Kilikoglou/A. Hein/Y. Maniatis (Eds.),

Modern Trends in Scientific Studies on Ancient Ceramics. BAR Internat. Ser. 1011 (Oxford 2002) 299–304; G. THIERRIN-MICHAEL/A. ZANCO/G. GALETTI, Chemische Analysen von 90 Keramikscherben aus römischen Töpfereifunden in Oberwinterthur. Internal report of the Institute of Mineralogy and Petrography (Fribourg 1999); G. THIERRIN-MICHAEL, Reibschüssel- und Gebrauchskeramikproduktion in Oberwinterthur und Umgebung zu römischer Zeit: Ein Überblick der naturwissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen 1999–2011. In: V. Jauch, Vicustöpfer. Töpfereien im römischen Oberwinterthur. Vitudurum 10. Monogr. Kantonsarch. Zürich 45 (Zürich/Egg 2014).

<sup>4</sup> V. JAUCH, Raeticus, Germanus, Mercator und andere Töpfer auf der Walz. Jahrb. Arch. Schweiz 94, 2011, 149–160.

<sup>5</sup> The research of the fingerprints and its comprehensive discussion can be read in the doctoral dissertation mentioned above (footnote 2).



Fig. 1. *Mortarium* from Oberwinterthur stamped by the potter Germanus (photography: Martin Bachmann, KAZH).

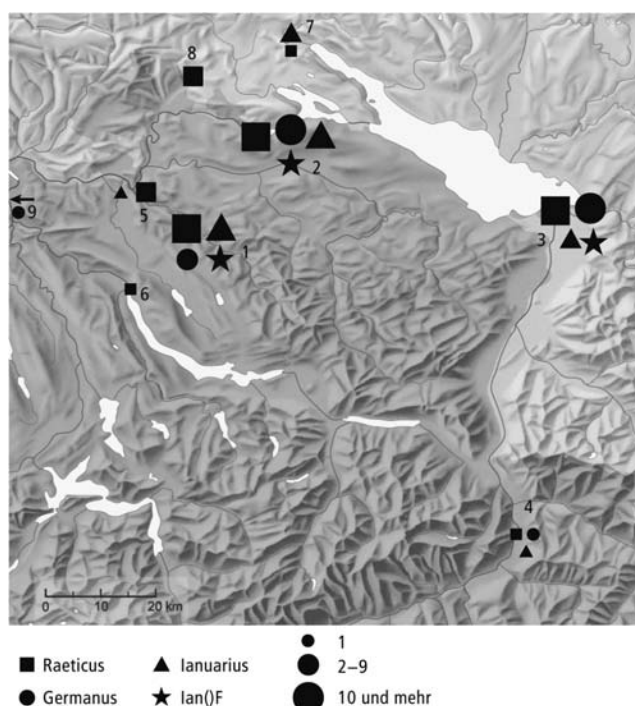


Fig. 2. Distribution map of the local potters Raeticus, Germanus, Ianuarius and Ian(-). 1 Oberwinterthur; 2 Eschenz; 3 Bregenz; 4 Chur; 5 Vindonissa; 6 Zürich; 7 Orsingen; 8 Büßlingen; 9 Augst (illustration: Marcus Moser, KAZH).

potters did this so powerfully, that they left the imprints of their fingertips in the soft clay under the rim. One of these potters marked his vessels with IAN(-) F(ecit): his name can most likely be completed as the common name Ianuarius (fig. 4)<sup>6</sup>. The dactyloscope and fingerprint expert Beat Keller from the Forensic Science Institute Zurich analyzed a sample of these imprints. A good example has to show many characteristics ("minutiae"), which are individual and different for every person and do not change in the course of a life. A good example of an imprint is shown on a sherd from Oberwinterthur, which belongs to the local reference group<sup>7</sup>. The aim was to find another potsherd from a local pottery workshop in the nearby *vicus* in Eschenz, where the potter Ian(-) as well as the other potters of the group mentioned above are supposed to have worked. In the course of the investigation we were at last successful in identifying the same finger imprint on local pottery from the *vici* Oberwinterthur and Eschenz (fig. 5)<sup>8</sup>. This means that the potter Ian(-) moved about 30 km from one place to the other to work on-site using the local infrastructure and resources. A further explanation would be the opening of a branch workshop in the neighbouring village under the management of Ian(-) or another potter who signed the vessels in the name of the owner. The fact that the mortaria show identical finger imprints opens two possibilities of interpretation: first, the potter could have moved from one place to the other leaving his old workshop behind and

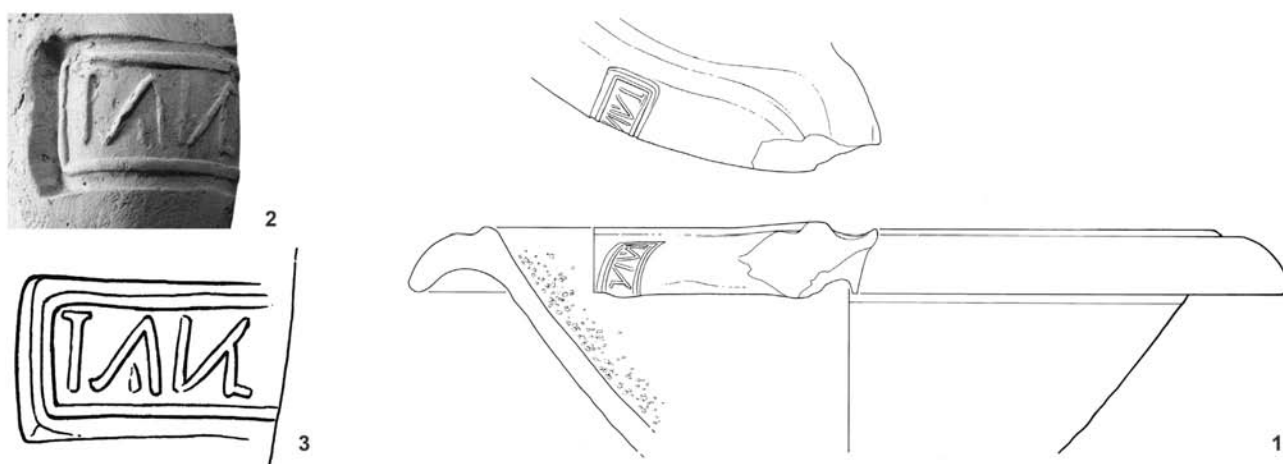
<sup>6</sup> A. KAKOSCHKE, Die Personennamen in der römischen Provinz Rätien (Hildesheim/Zürich/New York 2009) 191–192; id., Die Personennamen in den zwei germanischen Provinzen. Ein Katalog. Bd. 2,1: Cognomina ABAIUS–LYSIAS (Rahden 2007) 416–418.

<sup>7</sup> ST63 Oberwinterthur, Römerstrasse 187, FK 1992.016.67.

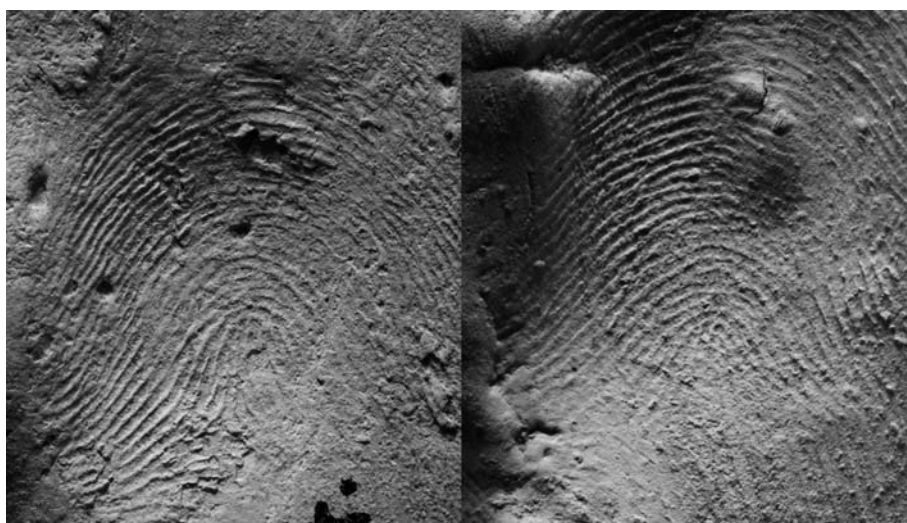
<sup>8</sup> Eschenz, FK 2009.009.124.1. Sincere thanks are owed to H. Brem and I. Ebnetter, Department of Archaeology, canton Thurgau, for giving me permission to examine the stamped mortaria from Eschenz.



**Fig. 3.** The potter Johannes Weiss stamping the rim of a *mortarium* (photography: Erika Elsener).



**Fig. 4.** Production of the potter Ian(-). **1** Drawing of the vessel (scale 1:3); **2** Photo of the stamp (scale 1:1); **3** Drawing of the stamp (scale 1:1) (drawings: Sibylle Heusser, KAZH; photography: Martin Bachmann, KAZH).



**Fig. 5.** Finger imprints from the potter Ian(-) found in Oberwinterthur (left: FK 1992.016.67) and Eschenz (right: FK 2009.009.124.1) (photography: Fw MBA Peter Rauch, Forensic Science Institute Zurich).

opening a new workshop at a new place for new clients. Second, the potter could have opened a second workshop and could have worked in the new locality either simultaneously or successively. Probably during his absence he had other potters to work under his management. As one can hardly

prove either one of these hypotheses we can only summarize by stating that we succeeded in providing evidence for the phenomenon of itinerant potters – mobile craftspeople – by criminological fingerprint comparison.

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