

From Celts to Romans in Noricum. Ugly and less ugly pottery

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ABSTRACT

This short picture book intends to set the focus on a few essential features marking the evolution of coarse-grained common wares in Noricum over more or less three centuries, roughly between 100 BC to 200 AD.

KEYWORDS

Noricum; Magdalensberg; coarse wares; cooking and storage vessels; table wares evolution; standardization; LT D2; Roman.

INTRODUCTION

Coarse-grained common wares, with surface colours between gray, brownish gray, and almost black, are a long-neglected category in the study of Roman pottery. As locally and regionally made pottery finds, they were long considered to be an ever-present nuisance filling the storerooms. Only recently, the interest in research and classification came into fashion and seems to reach a peak since scholars realized that they can provide as much information as long distance traded ceramics, albeit in another knowledge direction.

Obviously, a comprehensive study cannot be achieved in 20 pages, and therefore we prefer to offer a few important insights as an appetizer.

SOME DEFINITIONS

Already the names and the definitions, and following this, the ways and the approach depend on the homes and the scientific traditions of who deals with the subject.

‘Coarse wares’ seems the most common, but simple ‘common wares’ is popular too.

Some scholars refer more generically to ‘gray wares’ after one of the main properties, although a great many use-related discolorations occur. The vessels show a wide range of surface colouring from almost black to dark gray and shades of brown to pink. Some descriptions deal only with the purpose and call them ‘cooking’ and ‘storage wares’, without taking into consideration that the sizes varying from a small drinking cup to a *dolium* for the storage of winter supplies often indicate multi-purpose implements. Others prefer to create a sub-group of use as transport containers for meat and cheese conserves processed from alpine pasture management. In this picture book, we keep to the cover of generic and traditional names to minimize confusions and only add specifics where necessary or even possible.

The starting point for our considerations has to be the settlement on the Magdalensberg.¹

1 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA – DOLENZ – GOSTENCNIK 2019.

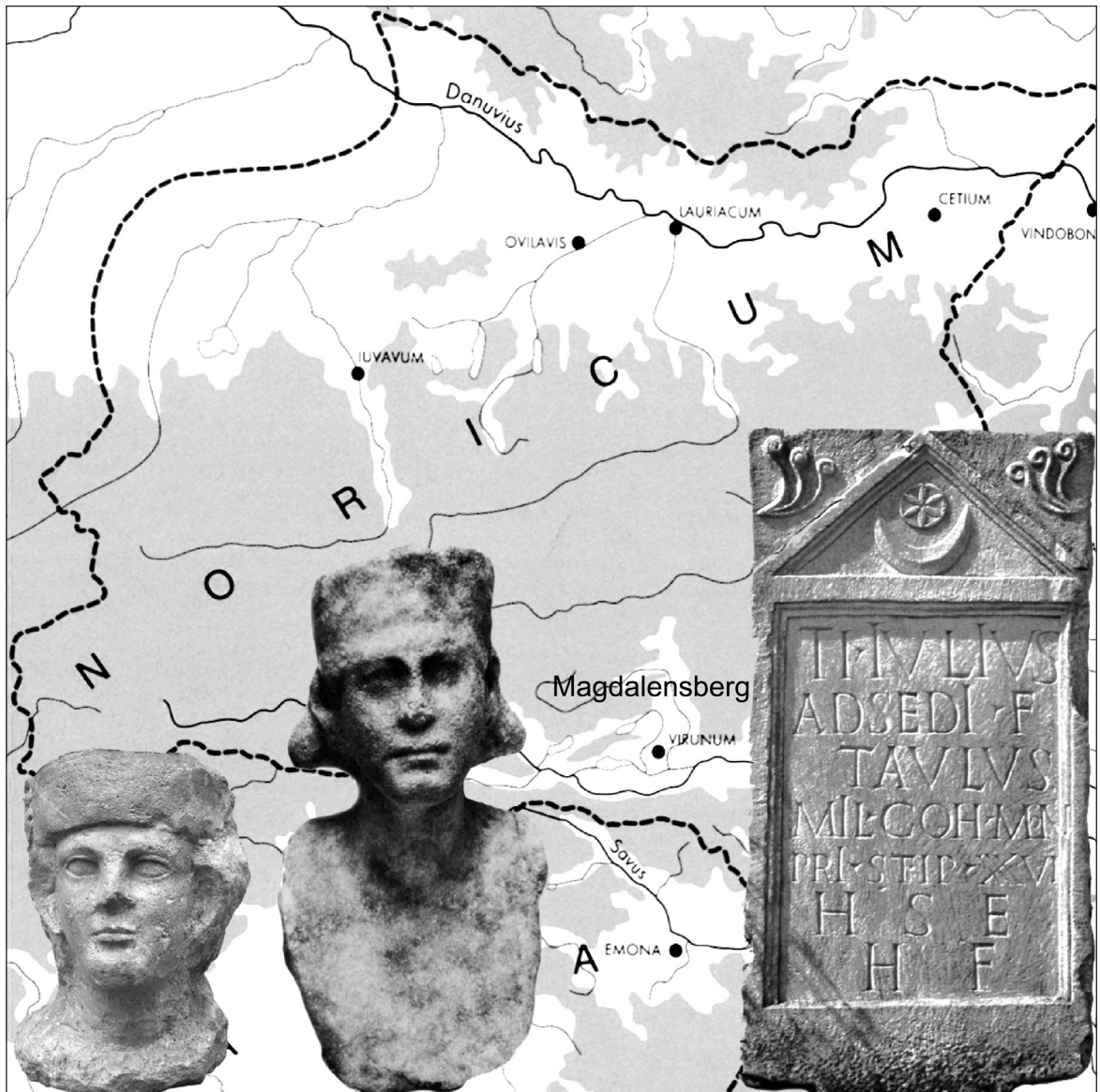


Fig. 1: We are Romans, we Noricans. From left to right. Unfinished portrait of a young Norican lady with traditional headdress in local marble, Portrait of a lady with headdress and veil in regional marble, Tombstone of *Tiberius Iulius Adsedi filius Taulus, Miles cohortis montanorum primae, stipendiorum XXXVI, Hic situs est, Heres fecit* CIL III, 4847, Lupa 1136.

THE MAGDALENSBERG

Founded in the middle of the first century BC in Norican territory as a trading post on a spot high up in the mountains assigned to merchants by local authorities, it swiftly transformed into a market town in which Roman merchants sent mainly from the big companies in Aquileia set up an offshore production centre. Their main interest consisted in the manufacturing of objects made of iron processed in the rich nearby ore deposits. *Ferrum Noricum* is a brand name for steel-like iron weapons, kitchen knives, and tools made from a primary material with a high manganese content, specially prized for its hard surface.

From the beginning, the town's population was composed of Romans and natives. Used to all Roman commodities, the merchants brought everything they needed for their well-being. They called for trained craftspeople, builders and decorators and imported the main food, spices, and drink as well as cooking implements and tableware. They also took care of everything else they thought necessary to survive, up to prefabricated tombstones in case of their unexpected demise in foreign territories.²

Soon Romans and native Celts, the latter present because of their special skills in metalwork, formed a mixed population. The local Celtic inhabitants swiftly adopted the Roman way of life, but always maintaining some of their traditions. These blends show in fashion and jewels, in tools and equipment, in kitchen devices and eating habits, as far as it appears through crockery and tableware. Grave statues and portraits represent traditionally clad peregrines as well as Roman citizens (**Fig. 1**). They also bear testimony to immigrated Roman craftspeople sculpting local and regional marble originating from nearby quarries. The names on the gravestones belong to natives and Romans. They show families uniting merchants and soldiers and their offspring, full citizens, freedmen, slaves, and free Noricans.³

In slight variation of René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo, the local Asterix would live and die according to the motto 'We are Romans, we Noricans!'

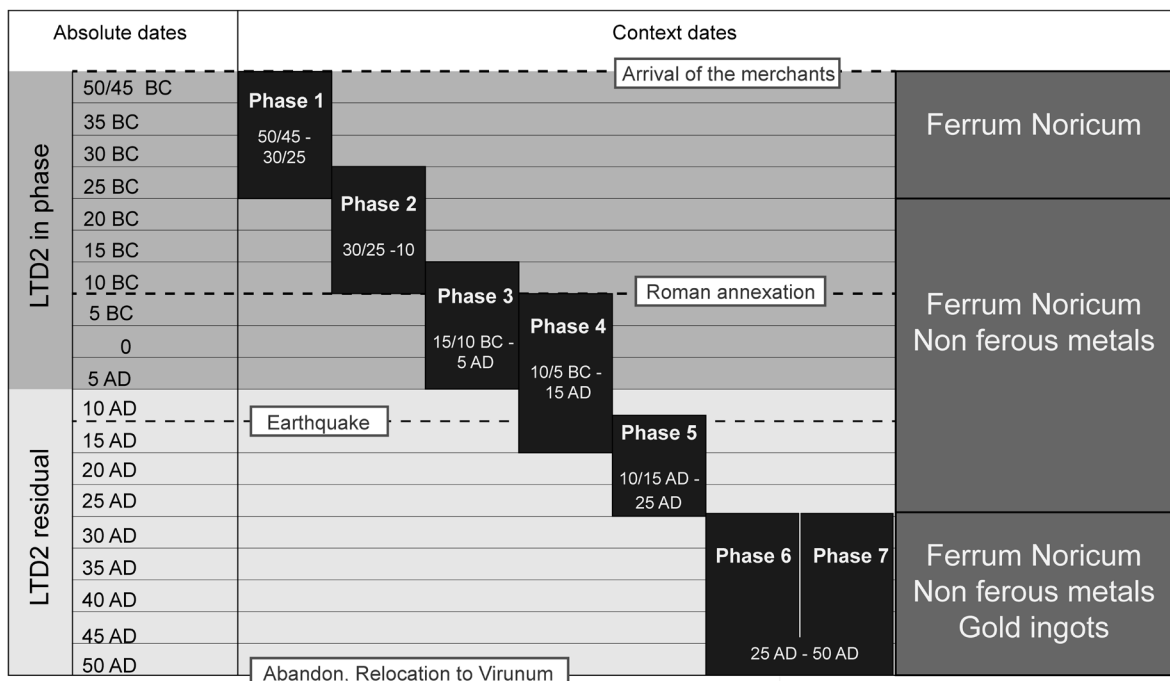


Fig. 2: The life of the market town on the Magdalensberg.

The life of the market town spanned between 50 BC and 50 AD. The chronological frame of 100 years of life emerges from 200 excavated units, temple, *thermae*, residences, offices, and workshops and extends to terrace and leveling surfaces. Over time building techniques changed, from the first log houses to framework buildings and in the last stage stone con-

² PICCOTTINI 2008a.

³ PICCOTTINI - VETTERS 1999, 133-149.

structions. Seventy-five chronologically safe key contexts form a sequence of seven phases or ten horizons.⁴

Trade and production cover all the phases while after the annexation, the political administration and the connected buildings gain importance.

Ferrum Noricum workshops manufacturing for exportation seem to function alone between 50/45 BC and 25 BC. Workshops treating non-iron metals, mostly bronze and brass, appear to open up a little bit later. Their ateliers operate from 20 BC to at least 25 AD, possibly even before and after this date. At the latest around 30 AD, there is evidence of the melting of gold ingots on behalf of the Emperor. Two marble moulds carrying the inscriptions C(ai) CAES(aris) AUG(usti) GERMANICI IMP(eratoris) EX NORICIS (metallis) document that the gold was sent to the treasury of Emperor Caligula⁵ (**Fig. 2**).

With regard to pottery study, in particular research on the topic of coarse or common wares, this is the panorama to dwell on.⁶ The last La Tène D1 shapes come along with the full version of LT D2 while all contexts, both early and late, contain at least 50% imported goods. This of course is of great value for the chronology. In late Augustan times, genuine LT D2 thins out to change into Roman style, both in grey fine wares and coarse wares. In the later layers, they just appear as residuals.

Among the more than 20,000 individual pieces made in coarse wares, it is quite easy to distinguish between the native ceramics manufactured in – as for now unknown – regional workshops and the extremely few strangers, the imported coarse wares made in northern Italy.⁷

Distinctive even to the untrained eye in shape, decoration, texture, technique, and colors, it is easy to detect these specimens during archaeological pottery processing without any form of further scientific analysis. These are mainly small pots and beakers originating from the workshops in the later *regio decima italica* that reached not only Noricum, mostly the Magdalensberg, but every now and then even the territories beyond situated along the major roads, albeit in small numbers (**Fig. 3**). The majority of them are restricted to horizon minus 1 dating between 60/50 BC – 50/45 AD. The term horizon minus 1 refers to features unconnected with clearly defined structures or buildings. Only some poorly legible construction remains, generally timber frame fragments that occur mixed up in the debris.

Among the late Augustan ceramics, some of them mainly showing slightly different shapes with dotted or other applied decorations make their appearance. Some of the later strangers and foreigners pertain to imports from *Celeia* (**Fig. 4**), while others remain of undisclosed proveniences.⁸ Nevertheless, all these finds give a clear sign of the fact that even coarse wares travelled for various reasons.

In contrast to the uniform, almost standardized foreigners, which could rather count as drinking mugs and cups, the regional early kitchen and pantry pottery in Celtic tradition consists of non-standardized shapes and sizes. Since the mainly coiled vessels are all freehand crafted, some even possibly homemade, it is impossible to classify them following the usual procedure. Pots, mugs, and beakers seem clustered in sequences of grouped individuals rather than being part of a clearly defined typological grid system.

The best examples of these multifunctional containers come from an *in situ* context destroyed by fire 30/25 BC. Sealed under a 15 cm terrazzo floor, the ensemble has been viewed

4 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA – MANTOVANI 2024 .

5 PICCOTTINI 1994.

6 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 2012.

7 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA – BIONDANI 2018.

8 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA – BIONDANI 2018, 249, fig. 2:22–23.

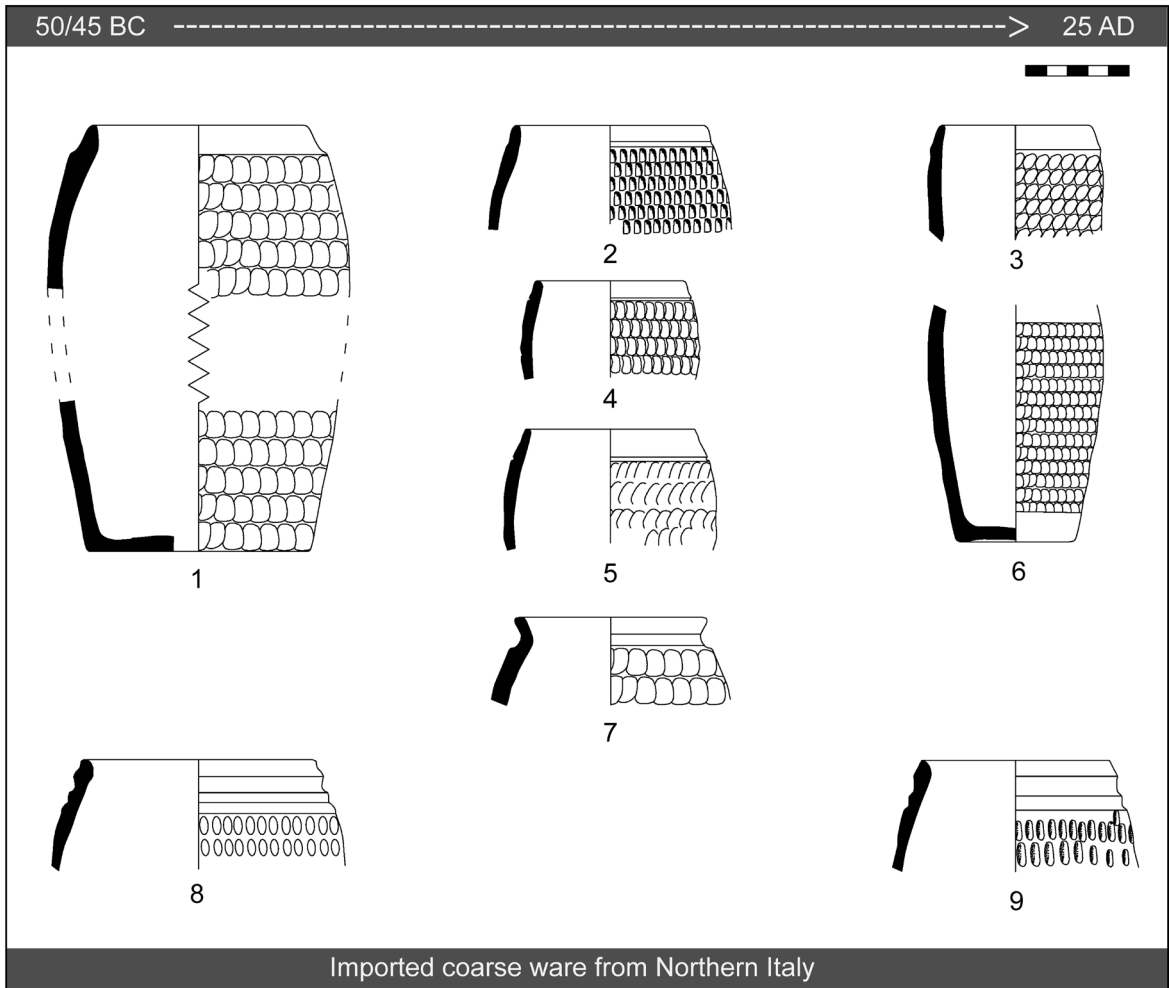


Fig. 3: Imports of coarse wares from northern Italy. Picture taken from SCHINDLER KAUDELKA - BIONDANI 2018.

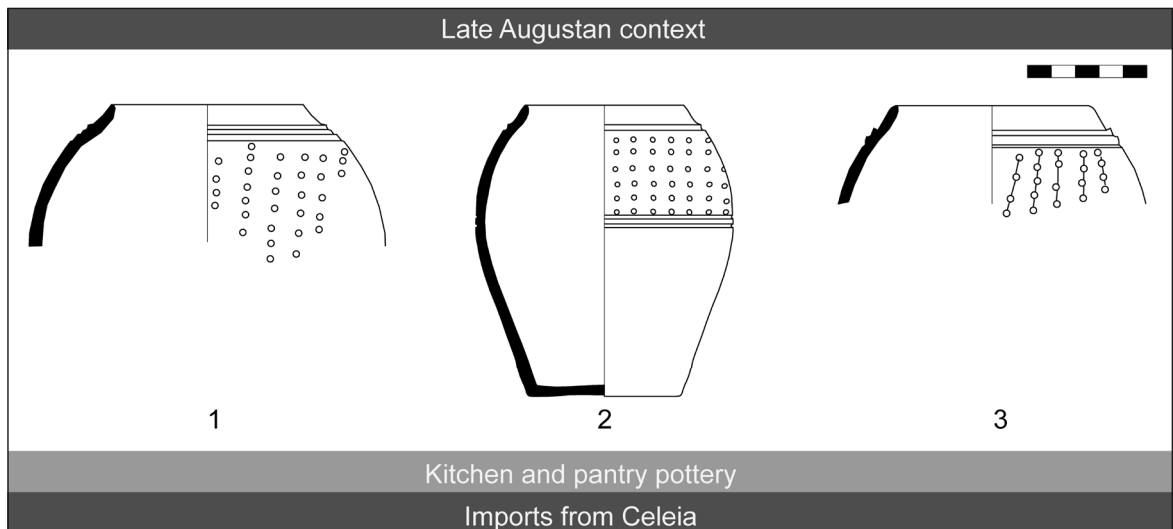


Fig. 4. Imports of coarse ware from Celeia.



Fig. 5: Storage pots from OR/zoc Schichte C.

as special since the excavations in 1960 and 1961.⁹ The most important content of the wooden storage cellar consisted of a box with *militaria* and souvenirs that point to the owner as being a former military man. Two esquiline lamps served for illumination while a number of imported *lagynoi* probably contained wine. No stoppers have been recorded. A couple of linen bags and clay storage pots containing lentils and beans as well as wheat and other staples kept the owner and his family from starving. The ceramic storage containers in the cellar are typical for late La Tène with their familiar shapes and decorations but with absolutely no recognizable standardization, neither in size, nor in content volume (**Fig. 5**). None of the vessels in this ensemble bore any discoloration from cooking, and therefore they were not multipurpose pots. This seems logical, because their capacity ranges between 2 and almost 5 liters. The only small beaker-like specimen (**Fig. 5:3**) could possibly have served as a scoop for grain, peas, and field beans rather than as a storage container.

Furthermore, a rich panorama of two groups of tableware awaited use for the time when guests came to dinner. One dozen each of Roman shapes in terra sigillata and their locally made counterparts of bowls, plates and platters, assorted with a drinking service of cups, beakers and pitchers, both local and imported, were stored in the cellar. As a boon for the archaeologist, the sets offer a perfect dating background.¹⁰

A short glimpse on the regional Celtic tradition – LT D2 tableware present in various contexts from 60/50 BC onwards with diminishing numbers in late Augustan around 15 AD shows the same tendency of non-standardized shapes and sizes. The fine gray bowls, pots, and serving dishes are always wheel-thrown and workshop-made. Wide ranges of stamped, rouletted, and incised decorations bear evidence of the potters' skill (**Fig. 6**). Here again, classification is easier to understand when the sets and potential services (?) are approached as generously conceived grouped individuals instead of rigid typological units. Around 30/25 BC, the same potters expand the supply with the introduction of plates, platters, and bowls adopting the Italian repertoire.¹¹

9 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 2002a.

10 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 2002a.

11 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA - BAUR - ZABEHLICKY-SCHEFFENEGGER 2018.

TRADITION – INFLUENCES – INNOVATION

The large number of the many individuals brought to light in 75 years of excavations form a secure background to conduct sensible research in this line.¹²

All the steps leading to the transformation of the traditional Celtic forms into the Roman shapes provide the necessary indication.

Celts and Romans used different dimensions. Moreover, the application of measurement units into the reasoning can provide insight that the change is more than a mere modification of the shapes. The transformation can be considered as a slow adoption of certain Roman elements along with the addition of complete Roman shapes into the traditional native pattern. This clearly does not figure as a one-way, since it is possible to watch the insertion of Celtic elements into the Roman typological canon as well.¹³

The large Celtic friendship *Gurtenbecher* probably reflecting banquet-like drinking habits with the cup circulating among the drinking companions, gradually lost the holding capacity of some half to two thirds of a litre, two volumes not assignable to the Roman *sextarius*, in favour of a smaller amount of liquid. However, it maintained the conical shape and the characteristic structure created by the *Gurten* (ribs). The end of this evolution is marked by the Roman-sized Neo Celtic cup for individual use with a capacity of a *hemina* (= 0.27 litre) (**Fig. 7**), in other cases even half of it.

When setting aside the quality and the provenance with a focus on the purpose only, the evolution suddenly becomes logical. The transformation encompasses not only the shapes and the sizes. People had access to a large number of imported goods and commodities while the potters seemed to enjoy experiments to favour their customers. The newly invented beakers for individual use come in coarse wares, both handmade and wheel-thrown, therefore in different techniques, but also in different raw materials. The handmade ones are made of clay tempered with marble chips acquired in the local stonemason's workshop, while the potters who preferred wheel technique used the ready clay with endemic quartz.¹⁴

The poor presence and the small numbers of **Figs. 8:7 to 8:12** suggest that the new shapes were not really a big hit, well received by customers. Whether this is due to market reasons and the easy availability of imported products and therefore just the growing popularity of the stylish Roman way of life or to more practical motives such as the difference in the taste of the drinks, a bit like drinking coffee in a mug or in a thin porcelain cup, remains to be discussed.

The same thread of tradition – influences – innovation is visible in coarse-grained robust heavy-duty ceramics. Pots and containers, too, undergo more than merely a formal transformation. The evolution from non-standardized LT D2 multifunctional individuals to standard-sized Roman pots, usually present in three, sometimes even four sizes, follows the same pattern and the capacity goes along with the division of the function into at least stockholding and cooking. Possibly decorations also adjusted to match sizes and contents, as is known up to now in traditional water jugs all over the Mediterranean.

Therefore, the different sizes develop into different purposes. The Magdalensberg finds brought to light enough complete or archaeologically complete vessels to serialize volume studies. First comparisons lead to the fact, that Auerberg pots in particular, but also their siblings with a triangular or rounded rim can be inserted into various geometric frames, from cube-shaped to box or case-shaped. The frames change over time and the pots tend to get a new

12 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA *et al.* 2021.

13 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 2002b.

14 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 2015.



Fig. 6: Magdalensberg LT D2 soup and porridge dishes, perhaps individual servings.



Fig. 7: Magdalensberg Celtic Gurtenbecher, partly with stamped decoration in three sizes.

appearance. Late La Tène pots in the tradition of *Graphittonware* are chubby, no matter their capacity, while pots of the Tiberian and Claudian times are slenderly built. Another change consists in the transformation from the almost unprofiled pot to the vessel with distinct body parts, a stepped neck, distinct shoulder, body, and base.

The next step consisted of volume calculations, done in today's metric system. The figures revealed three main considerations.

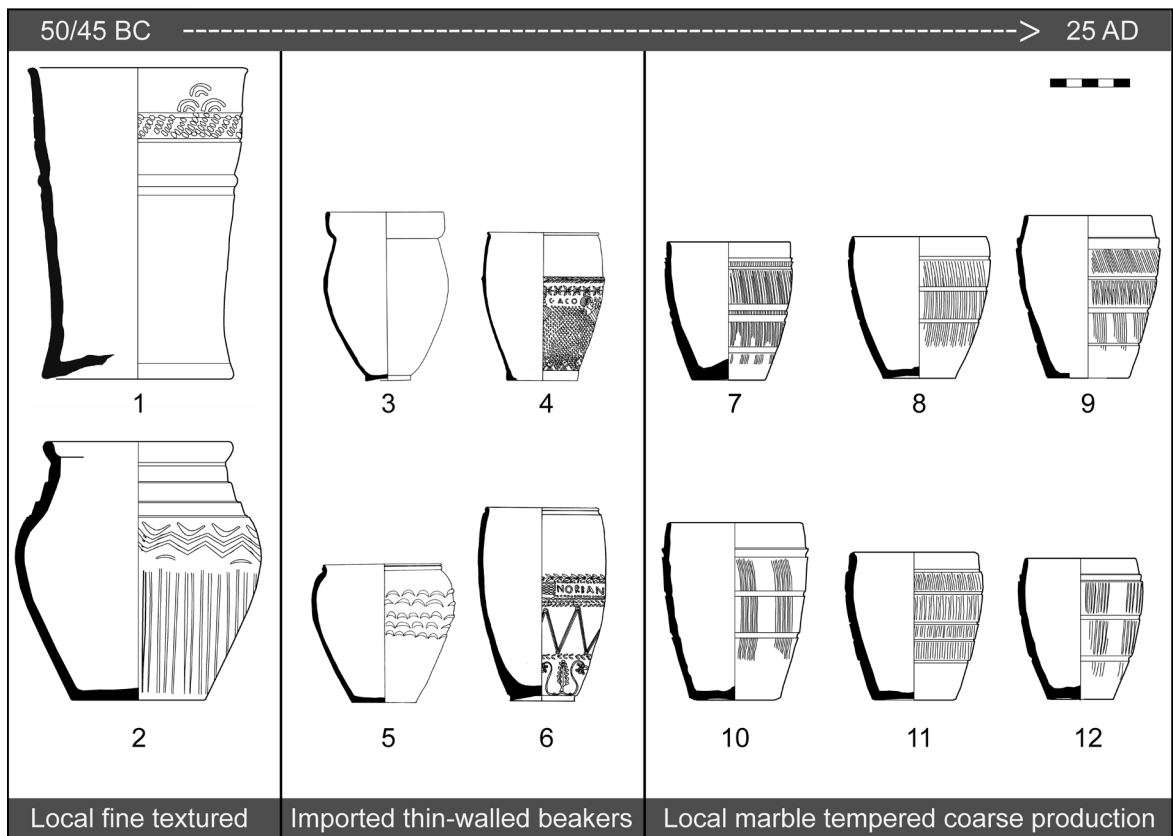


Fig. 8: Magdalensberg, from Celtic to Roman drinking vessels.

> Early pots, regardless of typology, present a wide variety of capacities, without many common points. No standardization whatsoever can be traced. From Augustan times onwards sizes generally tend to scale down.

> Most of the forms and their evolution from LT D2 shapes to Roman can roughly be grouped into three or four sizes, with a deviation of 1 millilitre (=less than 1 tablespoon). By the end of the Augustan times, gray coarse ware pots appear completely standardized with regard to the content capacity. Does the standardization depend on new modes of production, on specific consumers' demands, or a more rigid distinction between pots with different functions?

> Pots with discolorations due to cooking are generally smaller in Roman times, which could be a sign of smaller households. Furthermore, fuel had to be used as sparingly as possible, with respect to the storage capacity for wood in the kitchen.

Slowly, Roman cooking and storage pots take over (Fig. 10). It is obvious that the variety of shapes is not restricted to Auerberg pots and their cousins or to their ancestors and antecedents, the *Graphittontopf* and its non-graphite grandchildren.¹⁵ However, the extremely frequent pots with an almond-shaped lip best display the tendency towards standardization.

Regarding the number of clay lids in comparison to the pots and other containers, it has to be assumed that fitting lids were not really needed. Wooden lids as well as fabric/leather covers with ribbon closures were probably available, but they are mostly missing in the archaeological record.

15 SCHINDLER KAUELKA – ZABEHLICKY-SCHEFFENEGGER 2007.

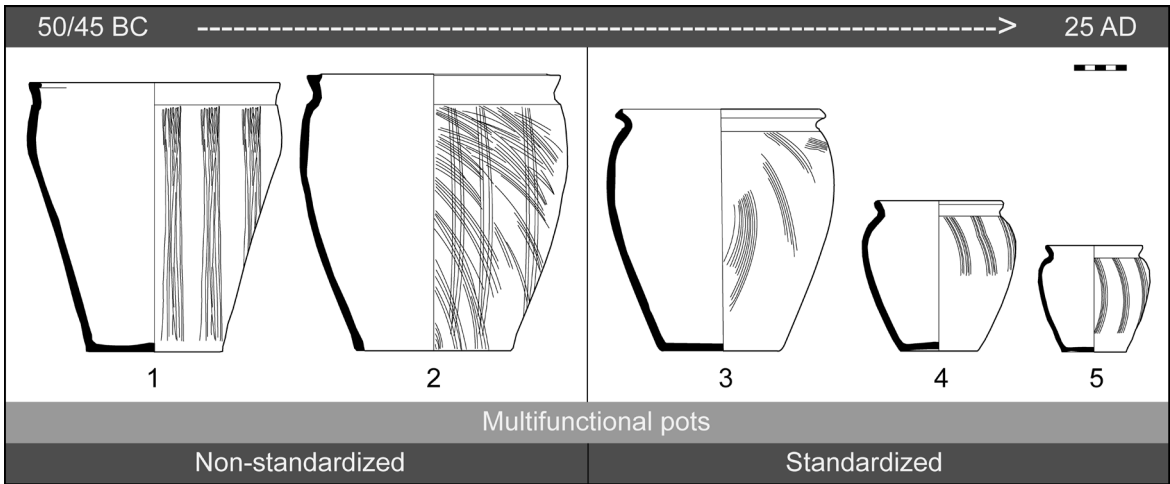


Fig. 9: From LT D2 grouped individuals to standardized Roman kitchenware.

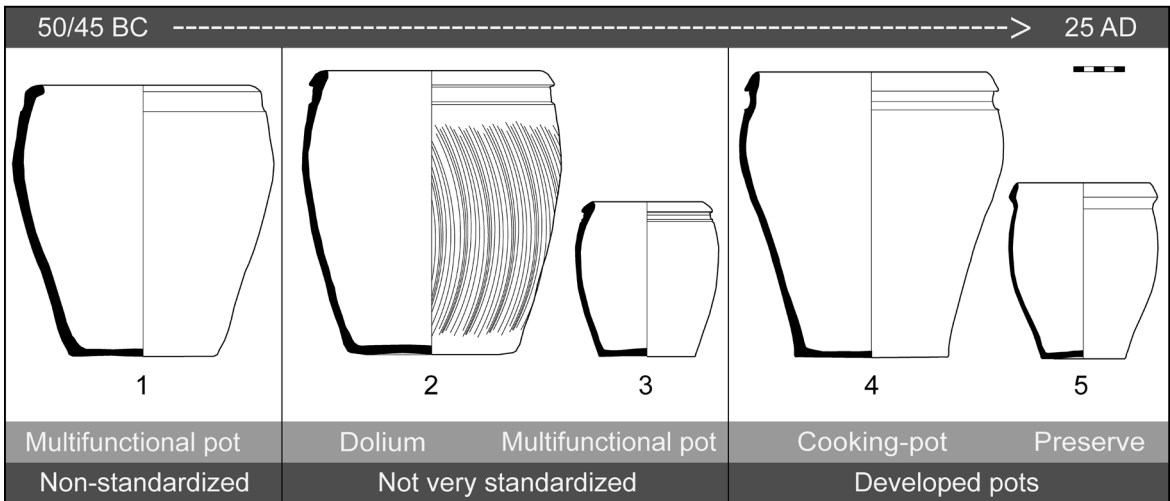


Fig. 10: Magdalensberg From multipurpose kitchenware to specific-use vessels.

On the Magdalensberg with its well-structured sequence of chronologically straight dating contexts, it is possible to follow the evolution and study how coarse wares changed over 100 years. The picture (Fig. 11) shows three blocks starting with Celtic shapes of late Republican date, in the second row their interactions with Roman styles through the Augustan phases and arrives in the third row at the completely renewed early Imperial repertoire in late Tiberian and Claudian times.

The latter is best studied in a building excavated in 1980 destroyed by fire around 35/40 AD.¹⁶ Somehow affectionately called a general store, a merchant’s depot, or a warehouse, depending on the tastes of the researchers, it contained an extremely large number of imported goods from the latest Tiberian period, ranging from more than 1000 terra sigillata vessels¹⁷ to

16 PICCOTTINI 1998.

17 ZABEHLICKY-SCHEFFENEGGER 1998.

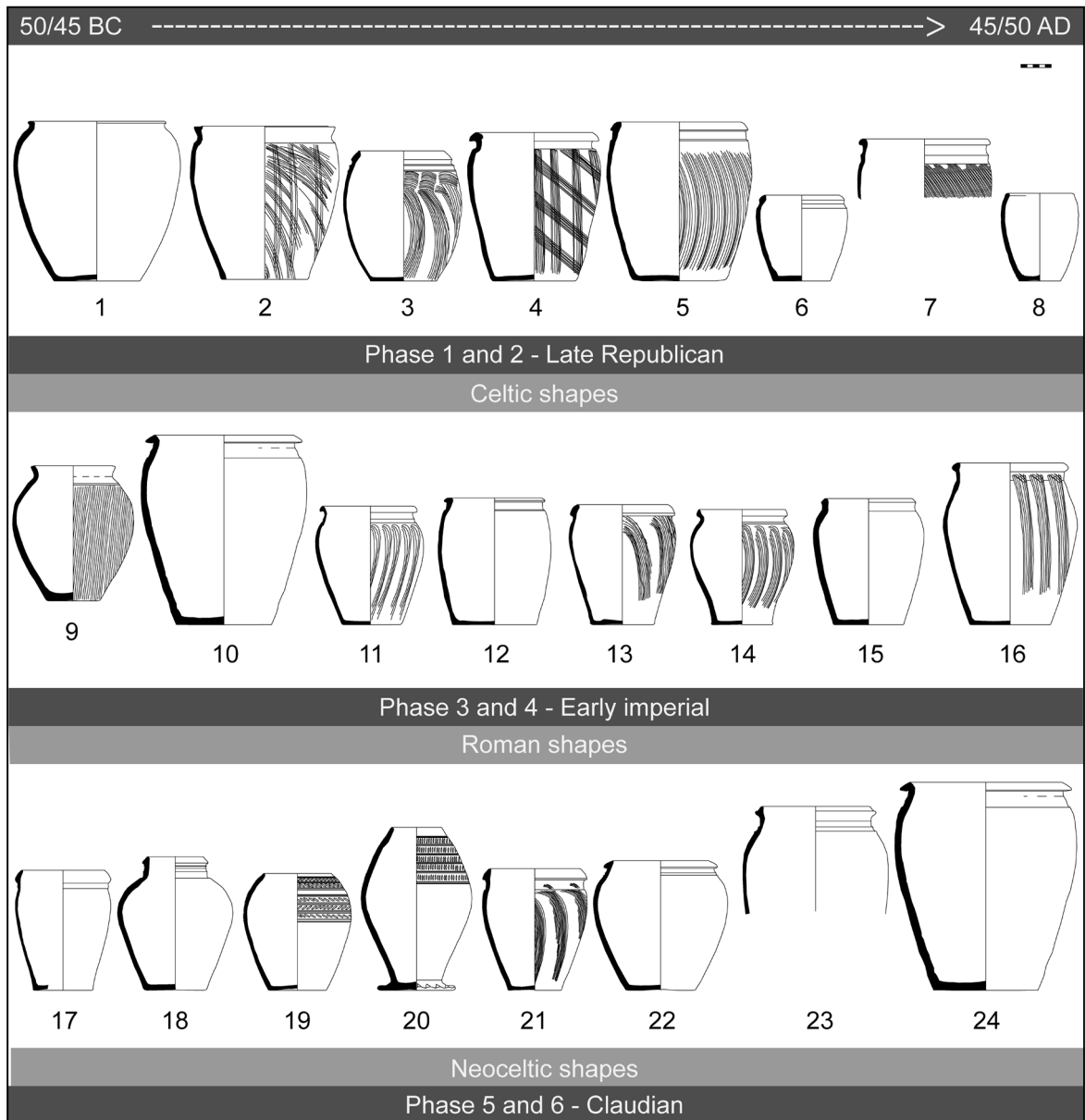


Fig. 11: Magdalensberg coarse wares between 50 BC to 45/50 AD. Typological changes over 100 years.

bronze tableware as well as a complete Norican style lady's jewel.¹⁸ Furthermore, the selection comprised thin-walled cups and beakers as well as finger-painted pitchers plus some 13 kilos of glassware and perfume bottles,¹⁹ as well as some 134 oil lamps. A merchant's cart was parked on the upper floor open to the street leading to the *forum*.²⁰ The regional coarse ware on sale displays a variety of Neo Celtic elements in a completely restyled new Roman repertoire.²¹

18 SEDLMAYER 2009.

19 CZURDA-RUTH 1998.

20 DOLENZ 1998.

21 SCHINDLER KAUELKA 2020.

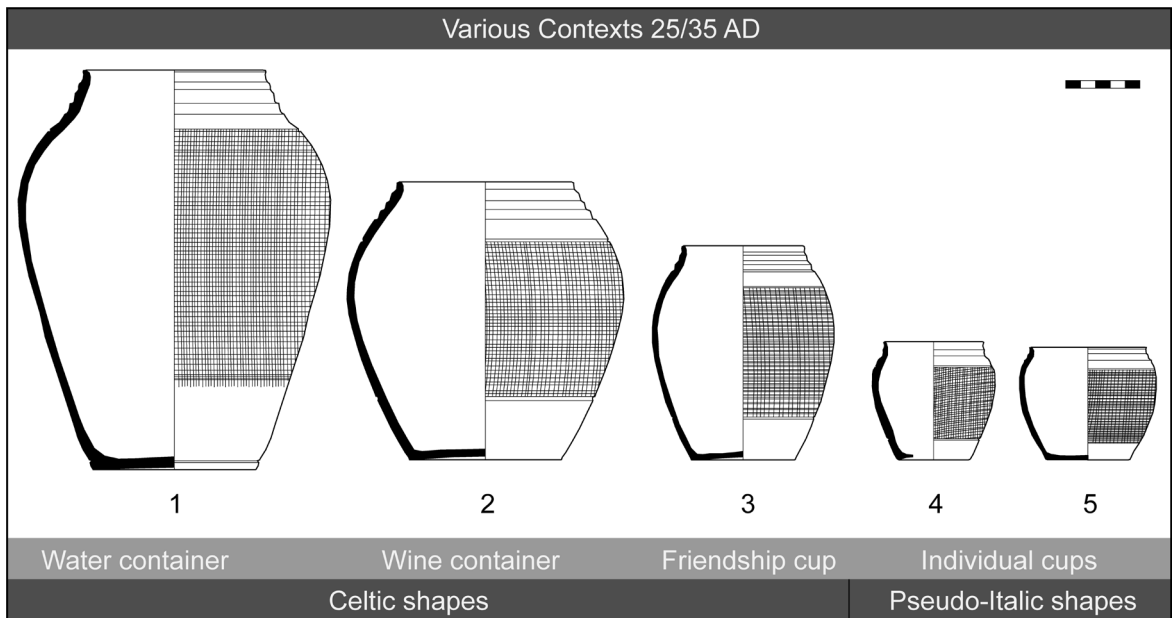


Fig. 12: Magdalensberg Semi fine table wares Regionally created wine service.

A few coins of the first minting series of Claudius testify that the debris were cleaned up and spread in the surrounding area in about 41–45 AD.²²

The condensed overview (**Fig. 11**) shows the change in fashion and spirit that occurred over roughly a century. Local potters familiar with both the La Tène as well as the Roman fashion were able to create something completely new. Most of the new Neo Celtic shapes are restricted to the southern part of Noricum. The sequence confirms the pattern of absorbing at least two, sometimes more streams of tradition. Based on the finds from *Aguntum* in the western part of the province up to *Iuvavum* north of the central alpine crest, it is correct to assume that the fusion and mix of ideas remains valid for the later centuries.²³

The transformation in pottery shapes always reflects a change in dietary habits. All over the Roman world, the takeover of formerly unknown forms in the regional repertoire occurs somewhat regularly, a fact that may take some 25 to 30 years after the first contacts between the newcomers and the natives. In Noricum, various contexts from around 25/35 AD show the fully established Italic element in the way of life in particular with the fusion of old and newly arrived food and drink habits. The new food available swiftly changes the diet and with this necessarily also the kitchen implements and the gadgets. Following the law of offer and acceptance the local potters adapt and supply new shapes in demand, and sometimes they create completely new shapes.²⁴

Suggestive evidence for the switch to Roman drinking habits comes from a wine service inspired by imported thin-walled beakers consisting of a water container, a wine container, and two sizes of cups, something previously unknown.²⁵ Regional potters created banquet services for the new drink. They adopted the shape and approximate decoration of two sorts of thin-walled drinking cups and offered something completely new to satisfy the local clientele

22 KRMNICEK 2010.

23 AUER 2019.

24 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 1997–1998.

25 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 2002b.

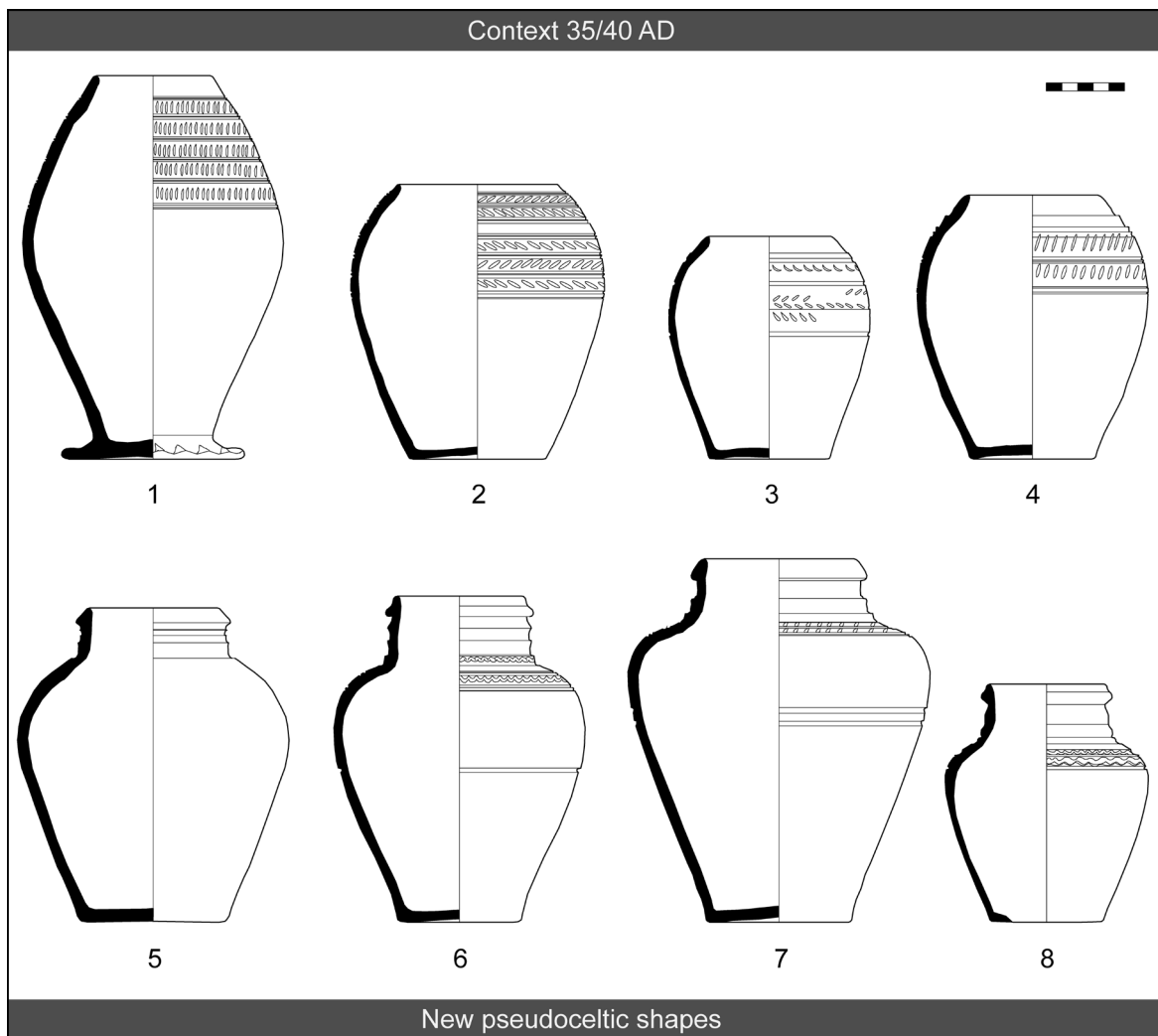


Fig. 13: Magdalensberg coarse wares. Neo Celtic elements in Roman cooking and mid-sized storage pots.

(**Fig. 12**). The occurrence of the larger vessels, rather than the less frequent cups, is reported primarily from the *Virunum* territory. It has to be emphasized that this is not a fancy silver service for the elite. It is everyday earthenware, made for and affordable by all. This means that already in late Tiberian times the everyday life of the average population was Roman rather than Celtic.

In the late Tiberian contexts dating around 35/40 AD, new Roman shapes with a completely renewed clearly Celtic background in fashion appear. Among the pots that form the inventory of a probable diner,²⁶ a number of barrel-shaped newcomers with accurately applied zonal decoration stand out (**Fig. 13**). They look Celtic, but the search for analogies in contexts earlier than Tiberian proves disappointing. Neither the characteristic form nor the precisely set rows of grooves are present, while the single elements alone may be associated with traditional features. Some of the pots stand on a flat foot like the so called ‘*Fußbecher*’ present in fine textured LT D2 tableware. For a long time now, the barrel-shapes are considered to be a blend,

²⁶ SCHINDLER KAUELKA 2008.

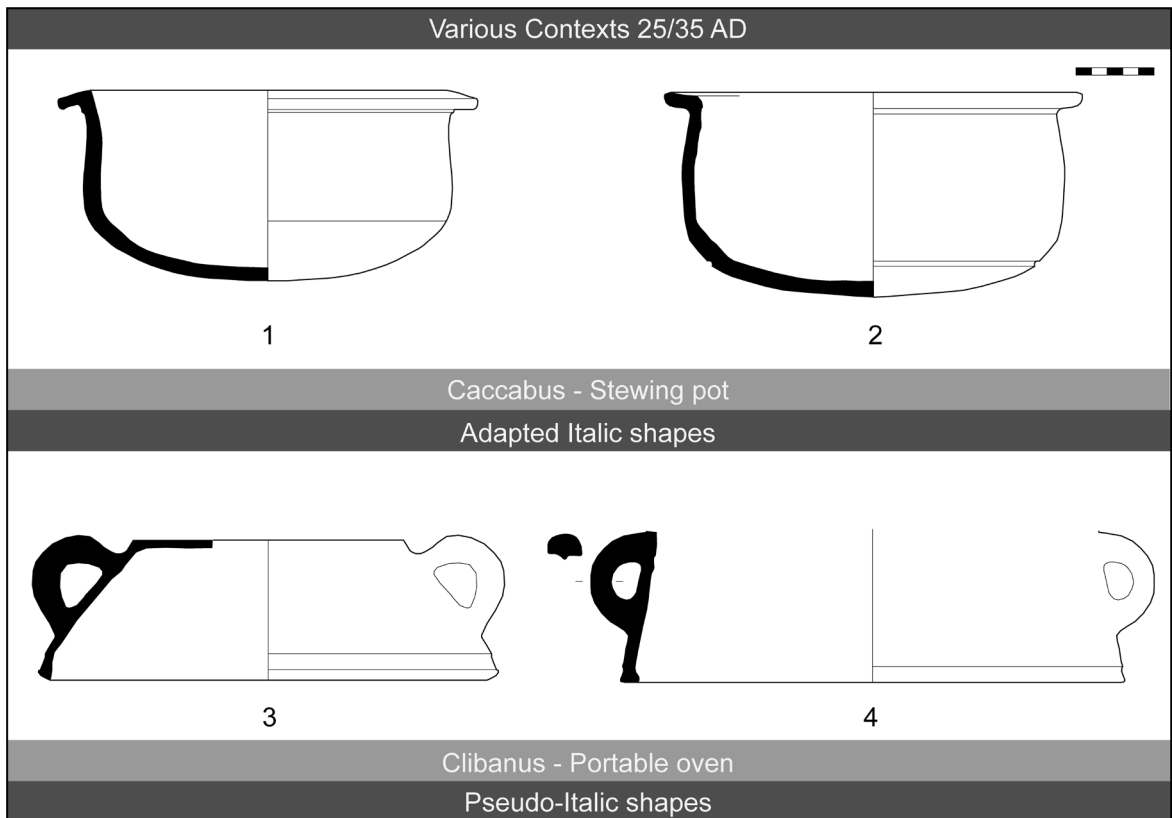


Fig. 14: Roman kitchen implements made in Noricum. Upper row locally made *caccabi*, lower row locally created *clibani*.

where potters familiar with Roman as well as Celtic fashions create something completely new braiding together different traditional elements.

Within the same *caupona* context, a further formerly unknown form is conspicuous. The pots and *dolia* show a characteristic high ribbed neck, generally a decorated shoulder and more often than not, a banded body again look Celtic in style.²⁷ Analogies in pre-Tiberian contexts are missing. In contrast to the small coarse ware drinking cups, these new experiments of Neo Celtic design enjoyed full success.

The feature is not restricted to ceramics but it rather gets broader over time. Some shapes, such as the *caccabus* – the typical Mediterranean stewing pot – are made not only from clay but also from bronze.²⁸ Therefore, both potters and bronze workers make faithful copies of imported cookware, previously considered imitations by the archaeologists (Fig. 14).

Patinae – baking pans originally used for egg-based dishes – are only rarely copied, probably because the local clays, while good at retaining temperature, are not as easy to use as the non-stick imported pans.²⁹ This property in the originals could be due to the use of clays with volcanic inclusions not only for the vessel body but also for the inner coating. Volcanic inclusions do not abound in local clays.

27 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 2008.

28 PICCOTTINI 1973; SEDLMAYER 1999.

29 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 1997–1998.

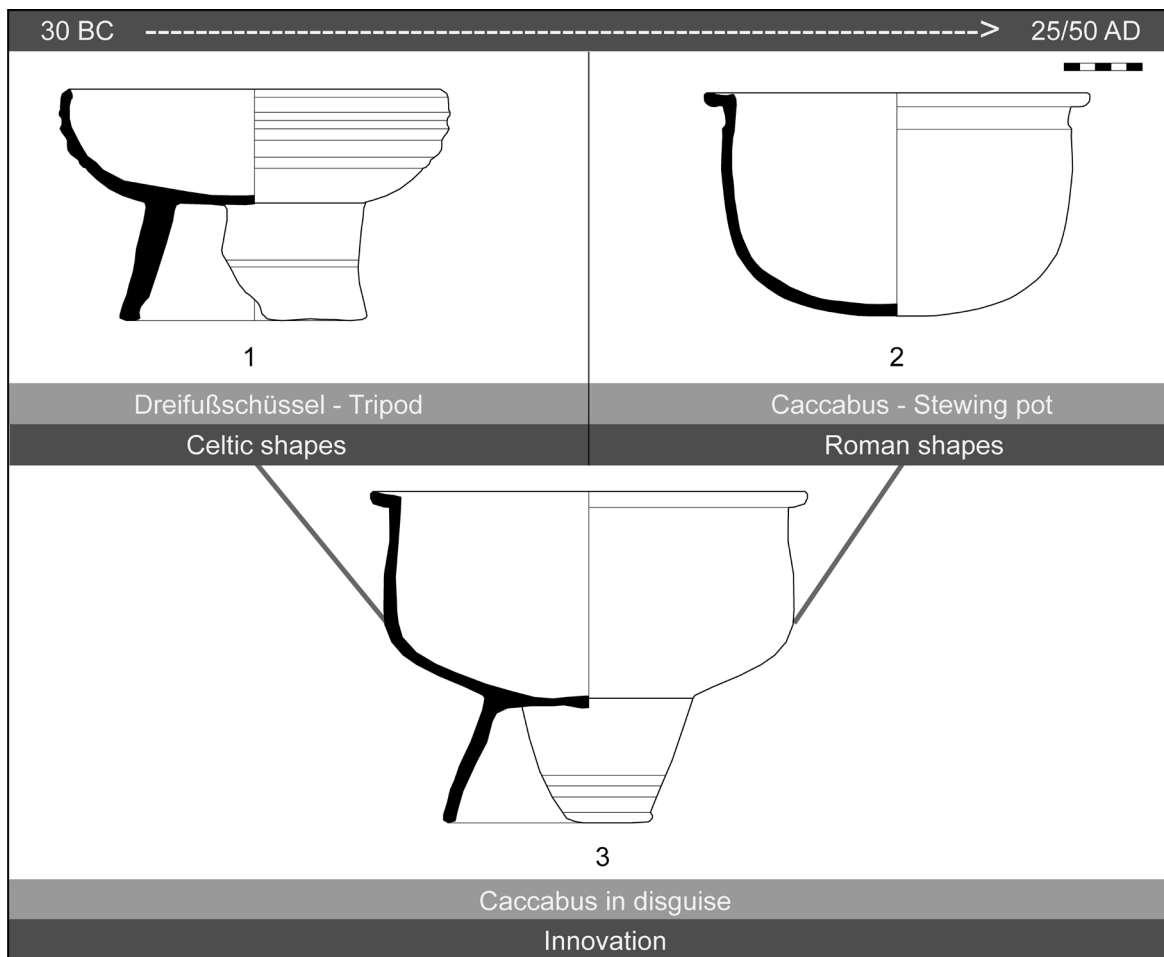


Fig. 15: Magdalensberg Fusion cooking kettles for Roman-time fusion food.

The situation is different with the introduction of the *clibanus*.³⁰ The portable oven that was used both for preparing braised food *sub testu* and for baking bread. Food slowly braised *sub testu* is not only a better way to prepare meat from old animals, but it also offers a different taste created without the need for constant attention by the cook. Moreover, it needs only one third of the fuel necessary for conventional cooking. Such devices were unknown before the arrival of the Romans, as were baking moulds. In this case, however, the potters did not simply copy the Italic model (Fig. 14). They introduced a newly created pseudo-Italic shape that, although easier to make, was probably less adapted to the process, since the embers that normally pile up on the top can simply fall down without being stopped by a limiting hitch.

More tradition – influences – innovation, from Celtic forms to Roman custom between 30 BC and 25/50 AD can be seen on stewing pots. Tripods with flat non-tubular base figure as a particular shape in alpine Noricum.³¹ Most likely, the numbers are often overstated in the contexts, as their characteristics make them easy to identify. The ever-present fire discolorations on the feet bring evidence of their use directly in the embers. They are tilt resistant but normally rather shallow.

30 SCHINDLER KAUDELKA 1997–1998.

31 ZABEHLICKY-SCHEFFENEGGER 1997.

The deeper Mediterranean kettle, the *caccabus*, will hold a larger amount of stew and therefore be even more efficient while using less fuel for the same result, but it needs a hook on the kettle chain. On the Magdalensberg throughout the evolution, a significant blend between Celtic slow-cooking and Roman braising traditions takes place.

With the addition of three feet on the base of a Roman style kettle, the two forms merge into a *caccabus in disguise* (**Fig. 15**). At the end of this development stands the tripod with a carinated body very common in Noricum from the end of the 1st to the early 3rd century.³²

NORICUM IS MORE THAN JUST THE MAGDALENSBERG

Evolution and regional differences of coarse wares can be traced through the distribution maps.

Beginning from the early 1st century AD, the further development of the pottery is observable in the whole Roman province. Among the earliest vessels to be found all around Noricum are the previously mentioned tripods. A small number of early handmade specimens, mainly known from the south-eastern part of the province³³ are followed by mostly wheel-made tripods with a rounded body. These braising kettles are manufactured in various workshops in a very similar manner³⁴ (**Fig. 16** – in this and following illustrations Type and Variant numbers refer to AUER 2019).

Some of the workshops experimented with these forms and used special decorations or a distinctive morphology (**Fig. 17**). The mostly narrow distribution of these experimental vessels points to limited distribution ranges for the single workshops, which may operate on a household- rather than a specialized workshop level.

During the 2nd century AD a predominance of tripods with a carinated body can be observed. These usually undecorated vessels are common all around the province.³⁵ However, some of the potters experimented with decorations. They developed a specific popular style mostly appreciated in a locally defined market only (**Fig. 18**). This leads to the possibility to identify travelling or export samples without the need for analysis.

The Celtic pottery tradition also lives on in storage and cooking pots. Two mostly handmade types of pots with a wheel-finishing touch can be traced in the southern part of the province (**Fig 19–20**).

In all cases a small number of samples underwent analyses to detect traces of the used manufacturing techniques. It is mostly easy to identify when the vessel is completely preserved, it may be a challenge to see the different techniques from coiling to wheel-throwing on poorly preserved fragments.

Many factors contribute to the success of the successor of the *Graphittontopf*. The *Auerbergtopf*, a slender pot with an almond-shaped rim, reaches a wide area, not only inside Noricum, although the main reason for the wide distribution might be its use as a transport container for processed food.³⁶ When used for cooking³⁷ or storage, the pots usually come larger, chubbier, and plumper. Once again, paying special attention to the volume and the dimensions is helpful to define the purpose.

32 AUER 2019.

33 ARTNER 1998.

34 AUER 2019, 27–32.

35 BORGERS *et al.* 2023.

36 FLÜGEL – DONAT – PETRUCCI 2006; DONAT – MAGGI 2007.

37 SCHINDLER-KAUDELKA – ZABEHLICKY-SCHEFFENEGGER 2007, 229–230.

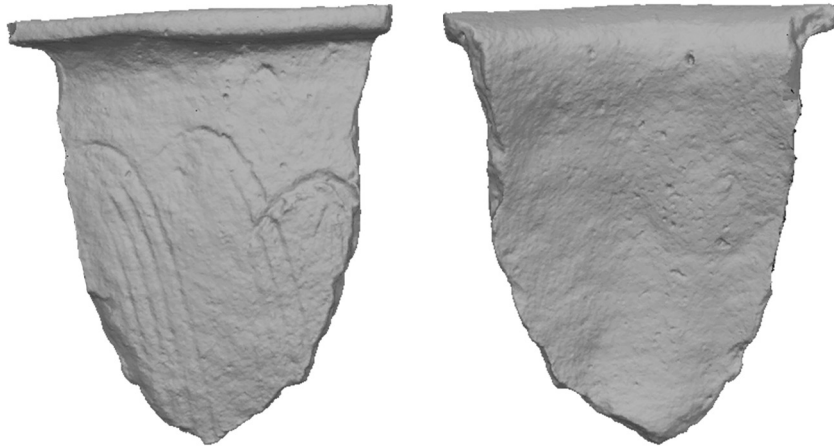


Fig. 20: Out- (left) and inside (right) of a Type XV pot rim fragment. Primary free hand forming is clearly visible on the inside of the sherd.

Pots with an almond-shaped rim produced in Noricum are customarily calcite-tempered, often with marble from the local stonecutters' workshop and show a glossy surface. However there are also specimens of the same morphology made out of clay with original quartz content as well as sand-tempered pieces.³⁸

Auerberg-pots, a commodity produced all over Noricum tend to be handmade and wheel-finished when including calcite temper and are wheel-turned or even wheel-thrown when made from quartz-containing clay. Auerberg-pots are part of the repertoire even outside Noricum, from the eponymous place, the Auerberg³⁹ to the mountainous part of the *regio decima italica*⁴⁰ to the western fringe of Pannonia along the Amber route. With regard to the differences and the wide distribution, mapping all Auerberg-pots would not yield a significant result.

Some specific features are noticeable, comb-decorations for example occur very often in combination with calcite or marble temper while remaining rare in quartz and sand tempered specimens. These pots show a concentration in the southwestern part of Noricum and northern Italy. Moreover, the preference for plain undecorated Auerberg pots increases with the time (**Fig. 21**).

The evolution of most of the other shapes for pots manufactured in the workshops in Noricum, both on a local and regional scale, demonstrates a similar developmental trajectory that can be traced back to the commonly distributed pots with an almond shaped rim.

During the 2nd century AD a significant increase in undecorated wheel-thrown vessels can be observed. This seems to correlate with the workshop structures. Pottery production changed and a kind of mass production, executed in much larger units than before, developed especially around the larger settlements. Towards the end of the 2nd century, this came to an end, at least in western Noricum.

The return of the ugly ware and the resizing of the workshops into smaller units takes place in the late 2nd and early 3rd century. Three typical shapes from this time might illustrate the statement. Bowls with a wide range of decorations and produced on the slow wheel⁴¹

38 AUER 2019, 49–59.

39 FLÜGEL 1999.

40 DONAT – MAGGI 2007.

41 BORGERS *et al.* 2022.

again point to an increase of downsized workshops and to potters experimenting with more personal styles with a local rather than a regional importance (**Fig. 22**).

This is a general phenomenon valid for pots also, where a wide variety of decorations reappears (**Fig. 23**). Here again, the production techniques point to handmade and wheel-finished products (**Fig. 24**). Together with the surge of the old coiling and forming techniques in use during the 1st century AD, the taste for decorations returns and is largely appreciated by the customers.



Fig. 24: Out- (left) and inside (right) of a Type XVII pot rim fragment. The marks on the inside point to the use of hand forming techniques and the slow wheel.

Obviously, the pottery tradition of the Celtic times survived the Roman influence, somehow undercover, and makes a comeback in the late 2nd century. Particularly true for the (south) western part of Noricum, these multiple developments are less visible in other regions of the province, like along the Danube Limes where the military consumers and their kin prevailed. The survival of forming techniques not requiring the fast wheel in all probability remains, seemingly always connected to small workshops operating over the 2nd century AD, when the large production units dominated the market.

With the incorporation of the Norican region into the Roman Empire, new influences brought and transmitted by migrating craftspeople take over in the ceramic production of Noricum, and become prevalent even in workshops run by natives. However, traditional craftsmanship survives in those small workshops, where its techniques are passed down. From the Norican point of view, ugly ware is not limited to late La Tène but persists through the Roman era, albeit with varying intensity and diffusion.

CONCLUSIONS – THE VIEW FROM NORICUM

In conclusion, it can be observed that research on coarse ware in Noricum has been ongoing for the past 25 years, with a particular focus on an array of coarse grained pottery. The majority of this pottery can be considered regionally and locally produced, with rare imports from neighbouring and more distant regions.

With regard to terminology and cultural definitions, we believe that the most generic and least ethnic label is the optimal choice for long-term use. From the perspective of Noricum,

the designation 'La Tène pottery' is proposed, with the addition of a chronological or topographical specification, if appropriate.

The emergence, evolution, and phase-out of domestic ceramics, both coarse grained kitchen and storage pottery and table wares in fine smooth clay are usually influenced by the contexts in which they are discovered and the regional differences that exist. From our perspective, we are dealing with several independent trajectories of manufacturing. Cultural areas typically adhere to regional traditions. It is possible for any skilled craftsman to achieve the same results with their traditional techniques.

In Noricum, local traditions, in conjunction with selected imports, appear to be the prevailing factors influencing the construction of local community identities. The archaeological evidence from the Romanisation process in Noricum offers sound indications that integration was a continuous process, with the emergence of hybridised forms. Furthermore, the translation of ideas and the material agency of individuals are also evident, with examples including the mobility of travelling craftsmen as well as merchantmen, brides migrating to new homes, and Roman soldiers moving to their new duties.

Instances where local traditions persist despite the influence of external factors can be observed all over the province. These factors, but also the introduction of new ideas and adaptations, can result in the modelling of a new identity created out of all traditions present, which may occur in a manner that is both simultaneous and sequential.

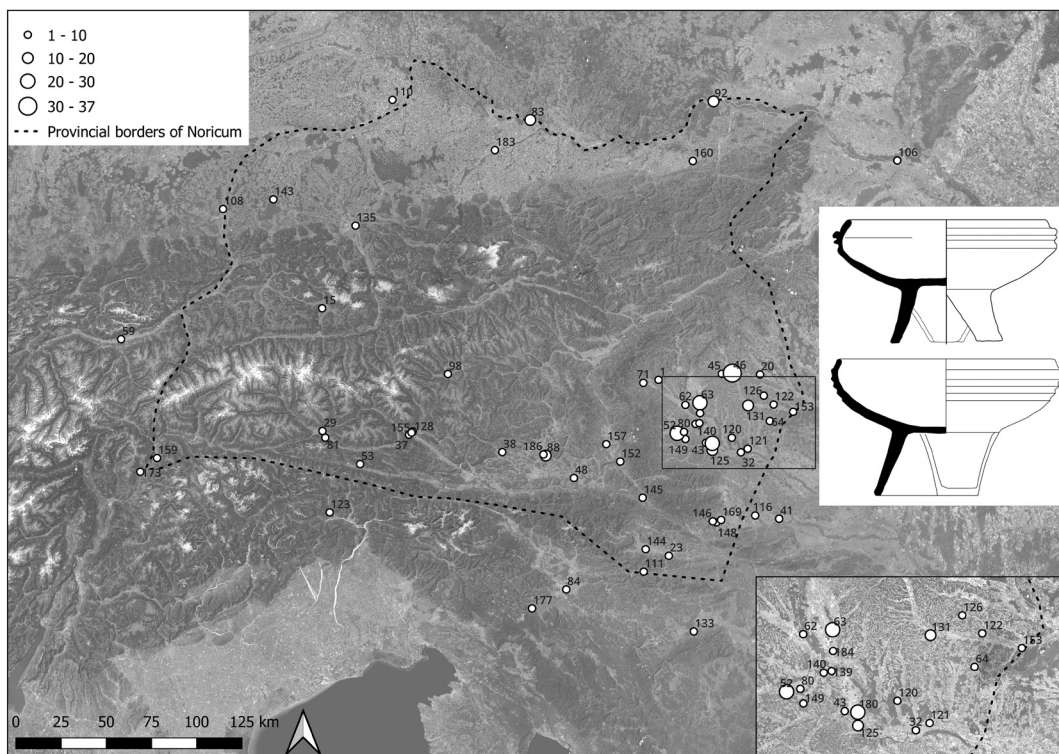


Fig. 16: Distribution of tripods with a rounded body and ribbed surface in Noricum and adjacent areas.

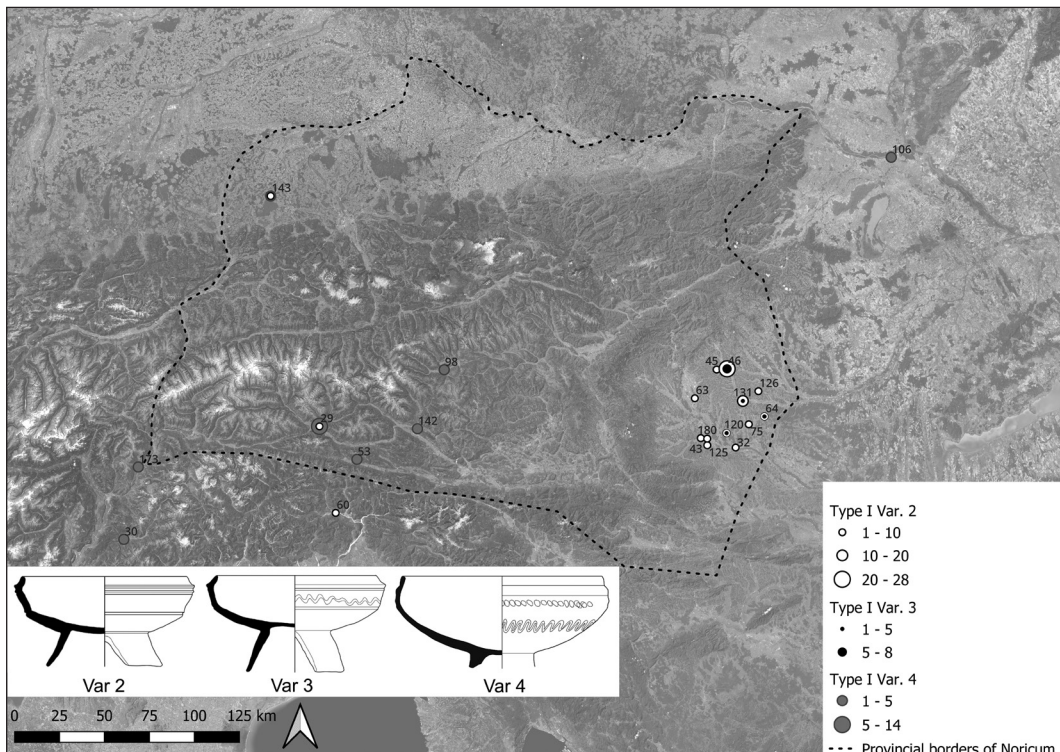


Fig. 17: Variants of tripods with a rounded body and their distribution in Noricum and adjacent areas.

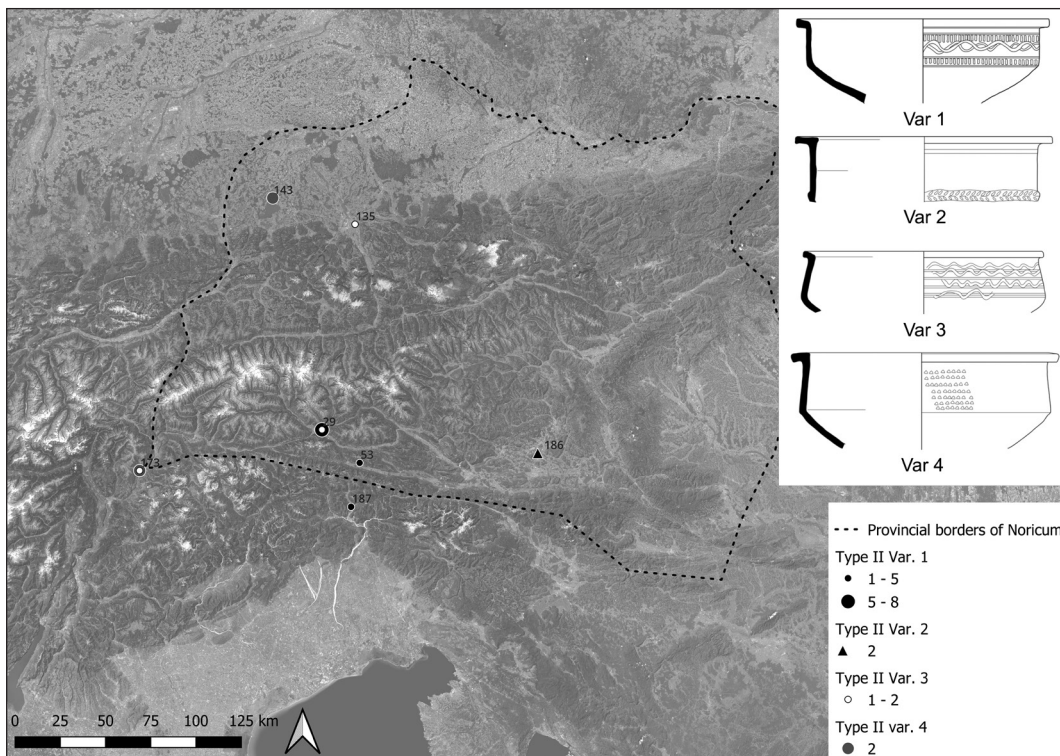


Fig. 18: Variants of tripod with a carinated body and their distribution in Noricum and adjacent areas.

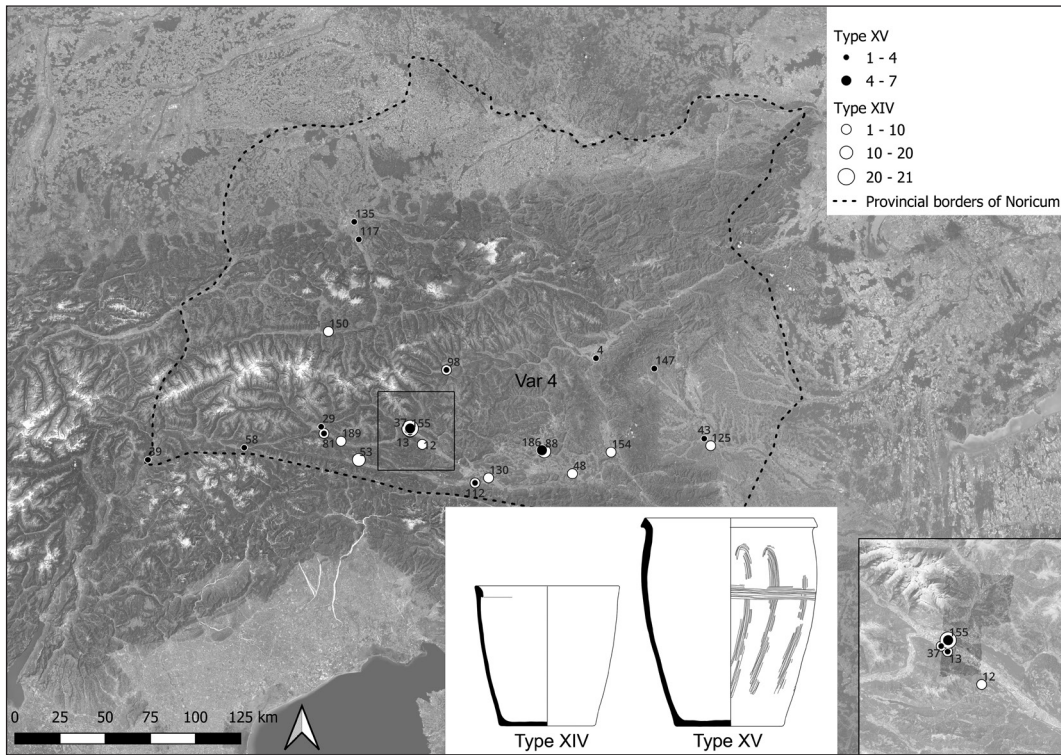


Fig. 19: Types of mostly handmade pots and their distribution in Noricum.

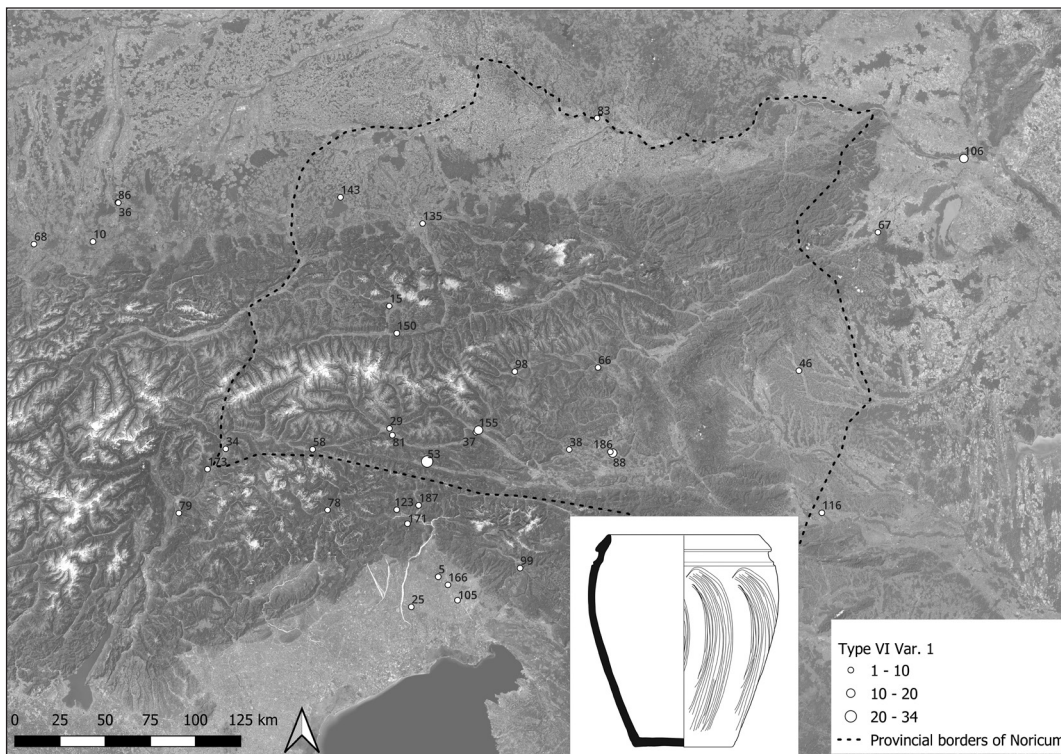


Fig. 21: Comb decorated Auerberg-pot and its distribution in Noricum and adjacent areas.

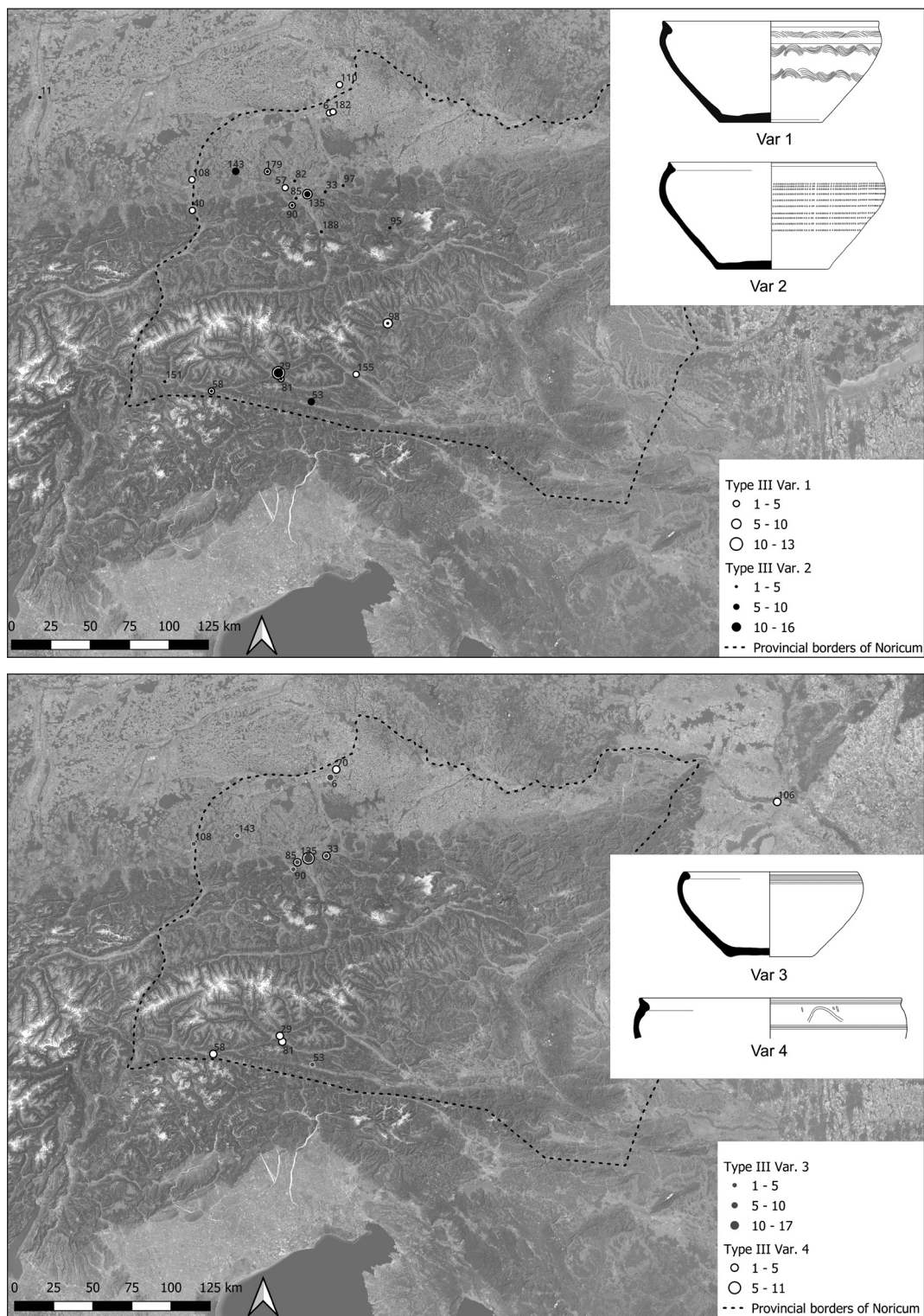


Fig. 22: Decoration variants of bowls and their distribution in Noricum and adjacent areas.

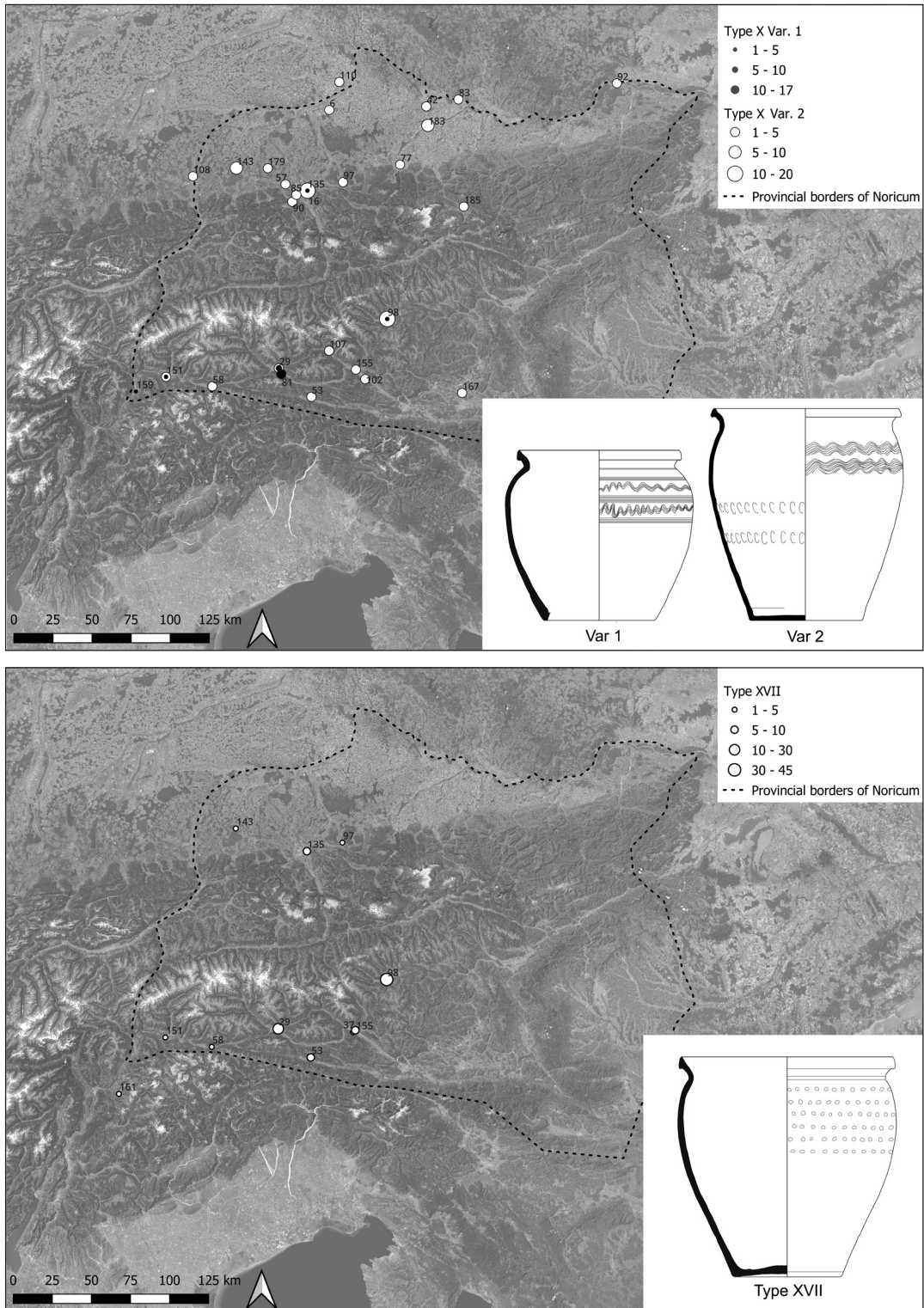


Fig. 23: Types and variants of pots and their distribution in Noricum and adjacent areas.

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