

Verena Jauch

MORTARIA – WITH OR WITHOUT STRIPES

For the tri-national research project ‘Limites inter provincias – Rome’s internal frontiers’ the author focused on specific types of mortaria, which are referred to generally as “Raetian” ware. The research showed that the red slipped mortaria were developed in Northern Raetia and are spread widely in the provinces of Germania Superior, Noricum, Pannonia and Britannia. The fact that vessels with early-dating features like handles, horizontal flanges and cut spouts were produced locally in Northern British workshops – probably simultaneous with the Raetian examples – is striking and can only be explained by the military expansion. A group of mortaria with radial striped rims occurs only in the Eastern provinces of Raetia, Noricum and Pannonia. In the more western and northern parts of Germania Superior and Inferior, and northwards to Britain, a different form was developed: the wall-sided mortarium – sometimes decorated with painted stripes on the rim. The distribution of this specific pottery is restricted to Germania Superior and northwards up to Britain. In parts of Southern Germania Superior it seems to follow the course of the Limes towards Raetia.

For the research project ‘*Limites inter provincias – Rome’s internal frontiers*’ funded by Zurich’s cantonal archaeology department, the author examined specific pottery groups according to their typology, chronology, provenance and distribution in the Roman provinces¹. The starting point for this study was pottery production at the *villa rustica* near Seeb-Winkel (canton Zurich, CH) an area considered as part of *Germania Superior*. Within the scope of this article are given only a few extracts of the research findings.

The Raetian Type?

The so-called Raetian *mortaria* are better described as partially red slipped *mortaria* (fig. 1). The defining features are a thick red-brown slip covering only the upper side of the flange and the internal concave moulding below the bead. Trituration grit is restricted to the area below the moulding. Occasionally the bowls may have a distinctive spout and/or lug handles. The vessels were produced in various workshops and show regional and typological differences in form and decoration. The starting point for the red slipped type came from Northern *Raetia* and spread widely in different

directions: eastbound to *Noricum* and *Pannonia*, south and northwards to *Germania Superior* and up to *Britannia* from around 120 AD until the late 3rd century. Only a few imports reached *Germania Inferior*. The province of *Britannia* represents a special case with a relatively high amount of local workshops in the North (fig. 2). Obviously these *mortaria* could have been produced since Hadrianic times in the area of Wilderspool near Manchester, with early-dating features such as lug handles, horizontal flanges and cut spouts². This opens up a connection with the Northern *Raetia* from where the form spread rapidly from 120/130 AD onwards in different directions. The distribution map showing a large number of widespread production centres does not characterize the vessel as specifically Raetian (fig. 3).

The real Raetian or Eastern type

A very special feature is the *mortaria* with radially striped rims that appear in the late 2nd and the 3rd century (figs. 4–5). Unlike the red slipped bowls, the striped *mortaria* generally don’t have spouts, handles, decorations on the rim, flange or other decorative elements. The only exception are the vessels from Seeb-Winkel where the potters did not differentiate between *mortaria* with plain surface, red slip or stripes on the rim: all have modelled spouts, while the slipped examples may have an inner moulding and a groove on the flange. The striped type of vessel appears to be common for sites in the provinces of *Raetia* and *Pannonia*, particularly the military sites on the Danubian *Limes* (fig. 6). Two large workshops are known: One is Seeb-Winkel (Switzerland) situated at the

¹ Trinational research project: University Zurich, Switzerland (leadership Ph. Della Casa), University Freiburg, Germany and Innsbruck, Austria. My gratitude goes to the Swiss National Fond, who sponsored my research for three years (30%). – V. JAUCH, Die «rätische» Reibschüssel – Eine Erfindung aus Rätien? Rätische Elemente im obergermanischen Gutshof von Seeb-Winkel (Kt. Zürich, CH) und anderen Teilen der Nordprovinzen. Fundber. Baden-Württemberg 37, 2017, 89–194. – V. JAUCH, *Mortaria* and cooking pots – explaining boundaries: An approach. In: Ph. Della Casa/E. Deschler-Erb (eds.), *Rome’s Internal Frontiers. Proceedings of the 2016 RAC session in Rome*. Zurich Stud. Arch. 11 (Zurich 2016) 91–97.

² HARTLEY 2012, 81.

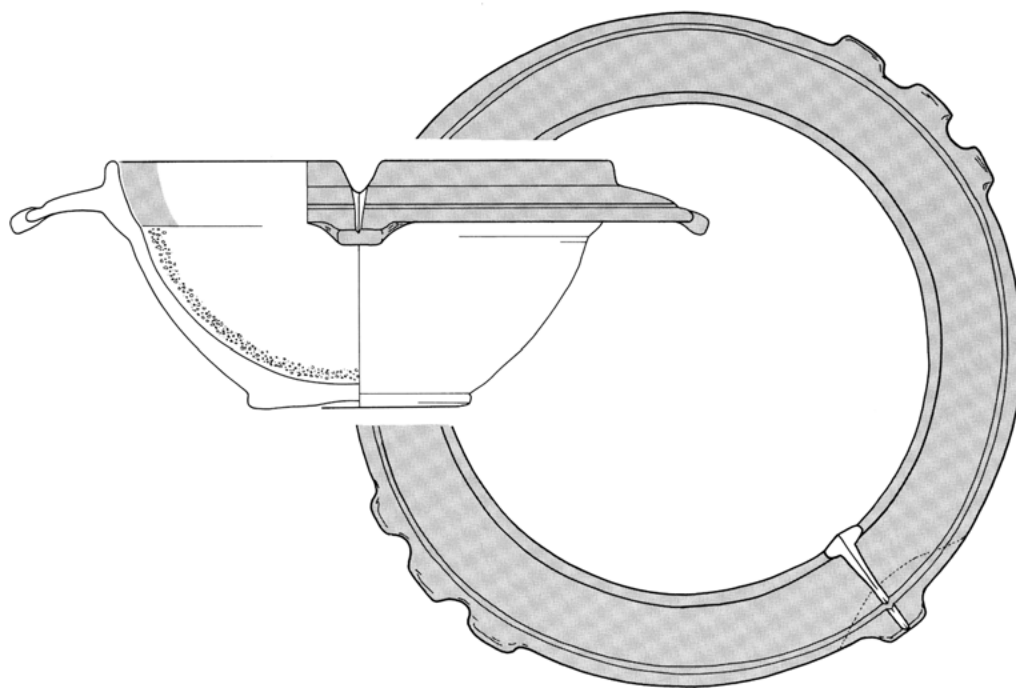


Fig. 1. Schwabmünchen. *Mortarium* from Schwabmünchen with cut spout and lug handles. – Scale 1:3 (SORGE 2001 Taf. 21,B139).

frontier between Raetia and Germania Superior, the other is a *vicus* at Schwabmünchen in *Raetia*, where different potters worked on-site³. Obviously only a small number of vessels have been found. Chemical analyses might reveal another production site in Vienna (A)⁴. Further workshops are assumed to have been at other sites in *Pannonia* such as *Brigetio* or *Salla*⁵. In *Germania Superior* where the red slipped *mortaria* were being produced, the radial striped vessels do not appear at all. The distribution map reflects something of a cultural border regarding the *mortaria* types between Raetia and Germania Superior (fig. 6). *Mortaria* with stripes represent an Eastern habit and if there even exists a real ‘Raetian’ type, it would be the striped *mortarium*.

Germania Superior and beyond

Of particular interest in this context is the fact that when the production of red-slipped ware comes to an end in *Germania Superior* another form appears in the late 2nd and 3rd century: the *mortaria* with a vertical rim or “hammerhead type” which could probably be interpreted as a substitute for the radial striped *mortaria*. This form is absent in the Eastern provinces (fig. 6). In workshops along the Wetterau

Limes the rims have been decorated with red-brown stripes and/or geometric design (fig. 7). Wall-sided *mortaria* are not confined to the mainland (*Germania Inferior*, *Belgica* and northern parts of *Germania Superior*) but show obvious similarities with Britannia where they were being produced until the 4th century often with painted decoration (fig. 8). In the southern parts of *Germania Superior* where the striped *mortaria* were not common, the ordinary red slipped vessels continued to be produced until the end of the 3rd century.

Hammerhead versus flange

The distribution of the vertical rim and the striped flange seems to correspond in particular with the assumed border between the provinces of *Raetia* in the East and *Germania Superior* in the West (fig. 6). The hammerhead type is not restricted to the mainland but shows obvious similarities with the local pottery production of the Northern regions including *Britannia*. The large-scale distribution could be explained by the army serving as a vehicle for introducing different pottery types into different provinces⁶.

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³ CH. MEYER-FREULER, Die Gebrauchskeramik. In: W. Drack et al., Der römische Gutshof bei Seeb, Gem. Winkel. Ausgrabungen 1958–1969. Ber. Zürcher Denkmalpf. Arch. Monogr. 8 (Zürich 1990) 143–177. – Schwabmünchen: SORGE 2001.

⁴ R. CHINELLI in: M. Mosser et al., Die römischen Kasernen im Legionslager Vindobona. Die Ausgrabungen am Judenplatz in Wien in den Jahren 1995–1998 (Wien 2010) Anm. 1487: KE2536 und KE643.

⁵ E. B. BÓNIS, Das Töpferviertel „Gerhart“ von Brigetio. Folia Arch. 30, 1979, 108 f. Abb. 6, 17 (Typ 2.1); G. VARGA, Roman Mortaria from Salla. Acta Arch. Acad. Scien. Hungaricae 61, 2010, 175 Abb. 25,227; 26,241.

⁶ V. G. SWAN, Vexillations and the Garrisons of Britannia in the second and early third centuries: a ceramic viewpoint. In: W. Groenman-van Waateringe/B. L. van Beek/W. J. H. Willems et al. (eds.), Roman Frontier Studies 1995. Proc. of the 16th Internat. Congress of Roman Frontier Studies. Oxbow Monogr. 91 (1991) 289–294. – On the distribution and the chronology of Raetian and wall-sided *mortaria* in Britain: K. F. HARTLEY, Mortaria. In: D. Breeze, Bearsden: A Roman Fort on the Antonine wall (Edinburgh 2016) 129–165.

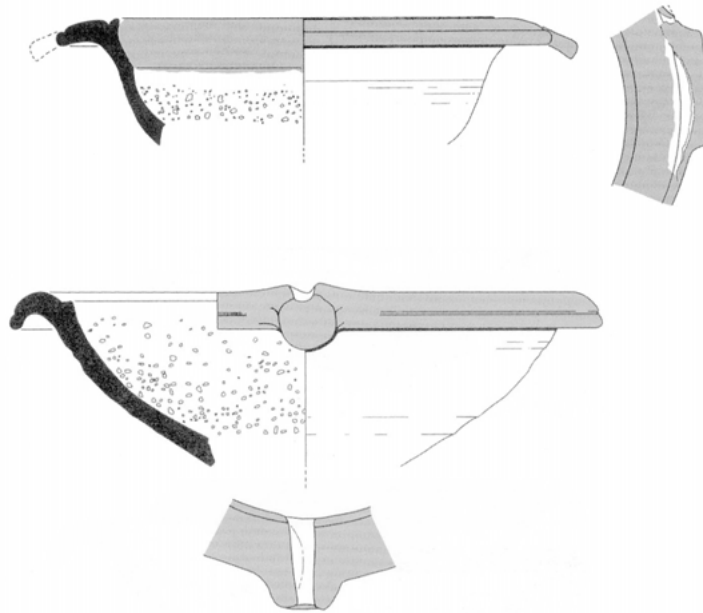


Fig. 2. Two *mortaria* from Wilderspool in Northwest-England. Above: with lug handles; below: with cut spout. – No scale (HARTLEY 2012 Abb. 7,8 Typ B).

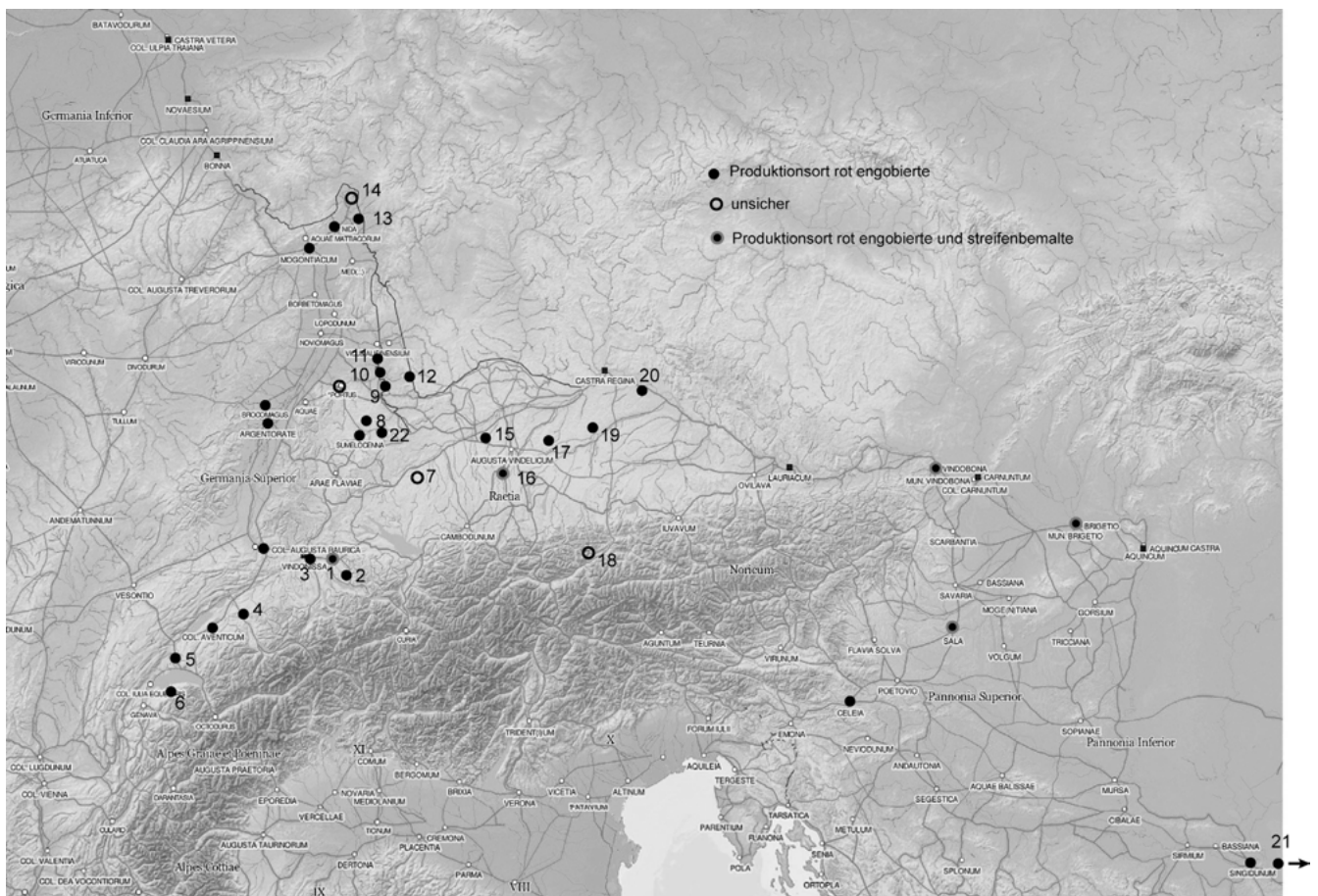


Fig. 3. Distribution of pottery workshops with red slipped *mortaria* (without *Britannia*): 1 Seeb-Winkel, 2 Kempraten, 3 Baden, 4 Bern-Enge, 5 Lausanne, 6 Thonon-Les-Bains, 7 Emerkingen, 8 Weil im Schönbuch, 9 Waiblingen, 10 Benningen, 11 Walheim, 12 Welzheim, 13 Heldenbergen, 14 Echzell, 15 Aschberg bei Günzburg, 16 Schwabmünchen, 17 Pfaffenhofen, 18 Angath, 19 Eugench, 20 Straubing, 21 Viminacium, 22 Reutlingen. – Mapping Jauch (as of September 2016). Map Basis: DARE 2016 <http://dare.ht.lu.de/>.



Fig. 4. *Mortaria* made in the workshop of Seeb-Winkel (Switzerland)
(photo: Martin Bachmann, Kantonsarchäologie Zürich).

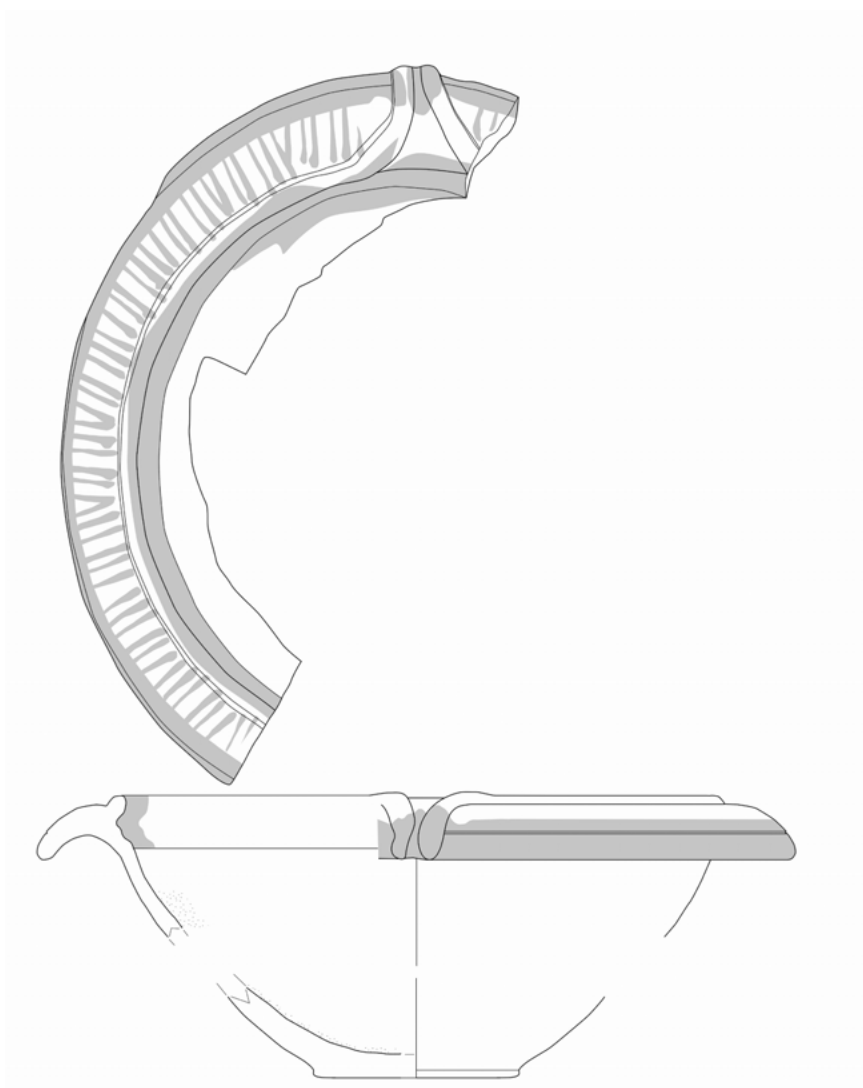


Fig. 5. Vessel from Seeb-Winkel (Switzerland) with radially striped rim and modelled spout. – Scale 1:3
(drawing: Judith Bucher, University of Zurich).

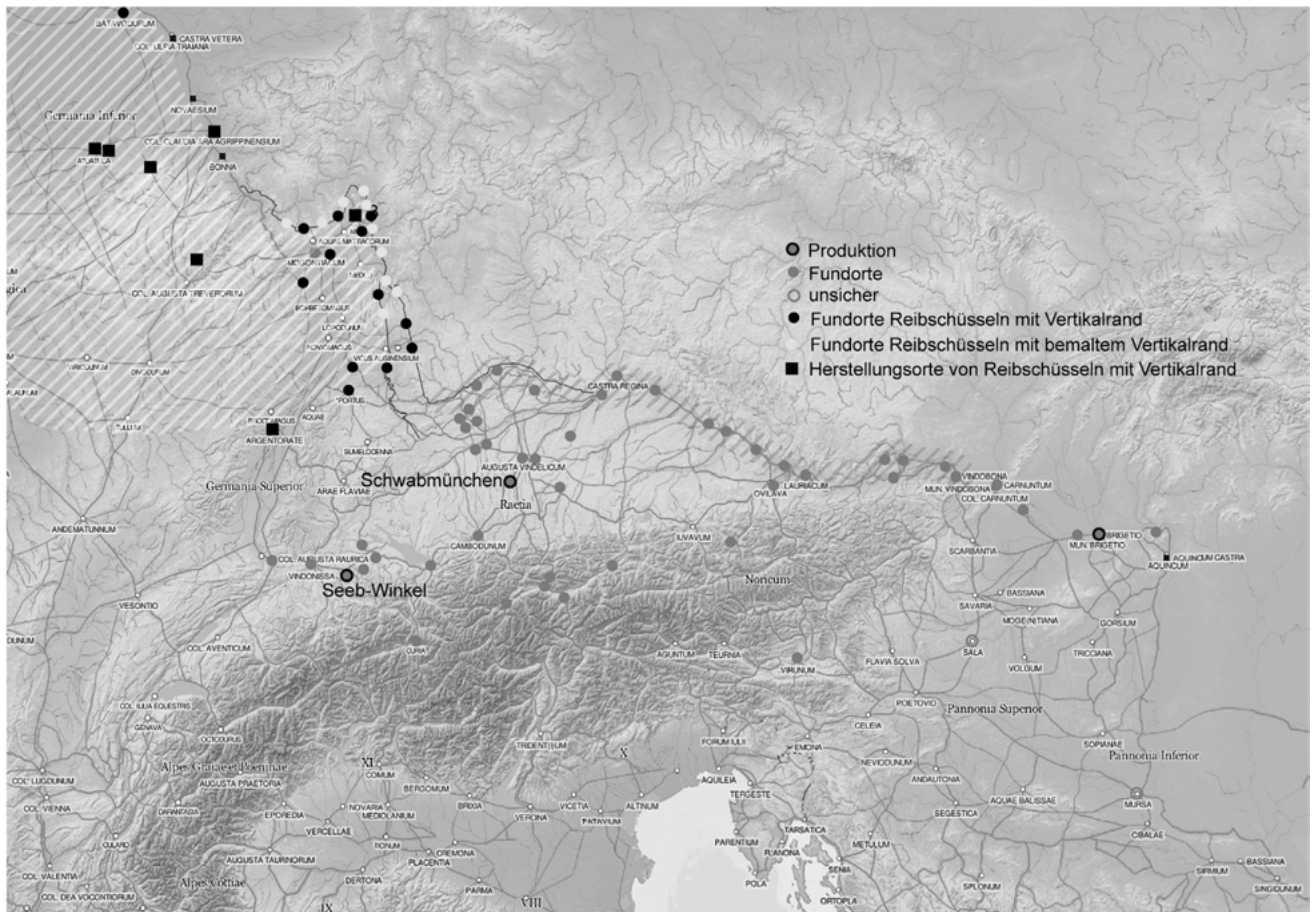


Fig. 6. Distribution map showing the radially striped *mortaria* (red dots), production (black encircled). Main distribution area along the Limes (red crosshatched). Distribution of wall-sided *mortaria* (without *Britannia* and *Belgica*) finding spots (black dots) and production centres (black squares). Distribution area (white crosshatches). – Map based on: DARE 2016 <http://dare.ht.lu.de/>.



Fig. 7. Wall-sided *mortaria* from the fort at Altenstadt, Wetterau (Hessen). – Scale: 1:3
(H. SCHÖNBERGER/H.-G. SIMON, *Die Kastelle in Altenstadt. Limesforschungen* 22 [Berlin 1983] 151 Taf. 59, CIX 109–110).

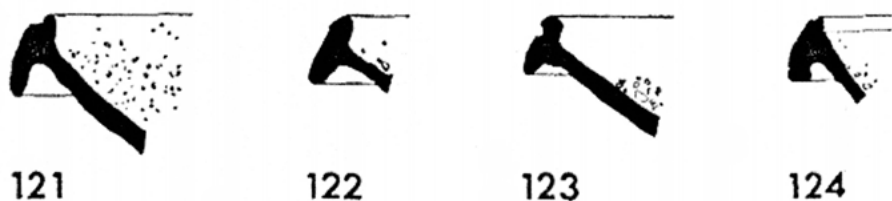


Fig. 8. Wall-sided vessels from the workshop in Wilderspool, North England. – No scale.
(K. F. HARTLEY/P. V. WEBSTER, *The Romano-British pottery kilns near Wilderspool. Arch. Journal* 130, 1973 Fig. 12, 121–124).
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