



The Sounding in the Lower Citadel – Trench 4

After reaching horizontally deposited accumulations of clayey soil with sand lenses indicating virgin soil in Trenches 1 and 2 at levels of 923 m and 918 m amsl respectively, it was decided to open a small sounding in the lower citadel to test whether these deposits are also present in the southwestern courtyard. Today, this area is one of the major communication zones, but the consolidation and refurbishment measures started by the AKTC in 2008 provided the opportunity to carry out a small excavation.¹

Trench 4 is located in the westernmost part of the lower courtyard, in front of the present offices, near the conservation laboratory and museum depots (Figs. 677 and title image). The trench measured 2.00 x 3.00 metres and reached a depth of 3.30 m. The surface and top level of the sounding was at approx. 917.80–90, the base at 914.60 m amsl.

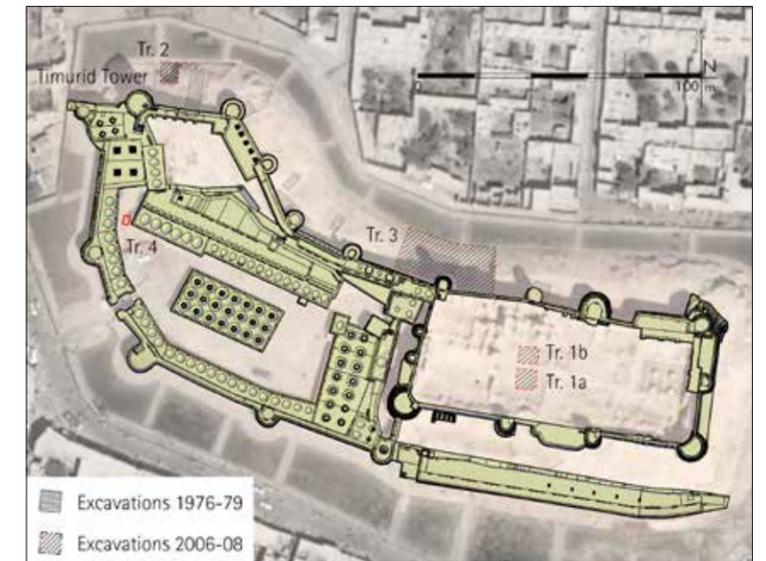


Fig. 677 Schematic plan of the citadel wall, location of Trench 4

Context and Stratigraphy

As in the other trenches the excavation proceeded in removals oriented, if possible, along the natural deposits and, otherwise, in artificial units. Altogether, 13 units were excavated over a depth of 3.30 metres. The evidence is summarised below from top to bottom.

The uppermost Unit 4000 (917.80 m amsl) comprised loose clayey deposits with larger amounts of building debris, stones, pottery and modern finds, serving as consolidation level for the previous courtyard paving. The following Unit 4001 was marked by the additional presence of ash lenses. Unit 4002 below was more clayey and compact, with less debris and finds (Fig. 679).

¹ Carried out from September 9th to 20th, 2008, supervised by St. Langer (+).

After the removal of Unit 4002, two burnt-brick structures, which probably mark the corner of a room, were exposed in the northwestern and western part (Units 4005, 4009; Figs. 678; 680). The top of the structure became visible in Unit 4003, at a height of 916.80 m amsl. Preserved were six layers of mostly fragmented fired bricks (h. 4.5–5 cm), placed irregularly in mud mortar, with 1–2 cm wide and up to 2.5 cm high gaps. Two large stones mark the foundation of the brick settings at a height of 916.20 m amsl. The western section reveals an inclination of the structure towards the east (Fig. 685). Associated with the setting were Units 4003 and 4004, disturbed and irregularly deposited layers of use and rubble from the collapse of the burnt-brick walls. They contained brick fragments, stones, broken grinding stones, door sills, pottery and bones as well as slags, ashes and charcoal.

These deposits and wall Unit 4005 rest on a 0.45 cm thick gravel-clay mixture with larger amounts of ash, slags, pottery and bones in the south (Units 4006, 4007). In the northwestern corner, a clearly demarcated deposit of compact brown to reddish-brown clay and mudbricks, largely devoid of finds, came to light, extending towards the south and east (Unit 4008; Fig. 682).

These debris and clay layers rest on a deposit of stones and brick fragments (Figs. 680–682). Unit 4010 was the lowest unit of these remains. This clayey rubble layer sloped down towards the south, where it formed the lower part of a pit, which is visible in the southeastern corner from Unit 4006



Fig. 678 Base of Unit 4004, ashes and rubble, inclined brick wall Unit 4005 (in section and planum), lower layers, boulder of stone foundation wall Unit 4009; from east

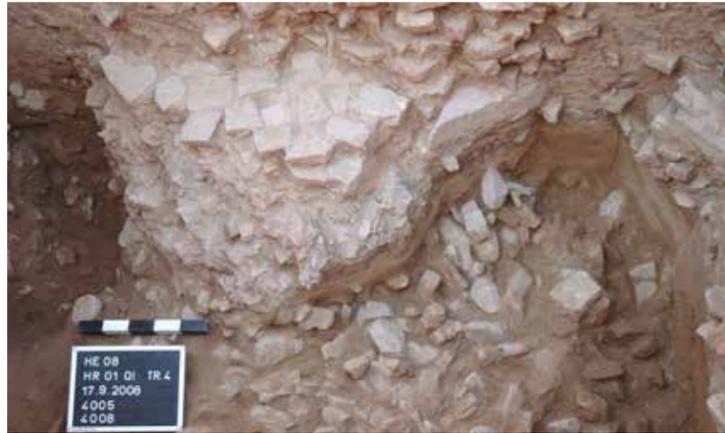


Fig. 680 Brick wall and substructure (4005-4007), intermediary clay and mudbricks in northwest corner (centre right), below: consolidation layer 4008; from east



Fig. 681 West section, top to base, inclined wall 4005, foundation ditch and consolidation layer (4008), below: clay layers (centre right)



Fig. 679 Units 4000-4002, rubble and clayey deposits; north section (above)



Fig. 682 Stone and rubble layer (Unit 4008); from south



Fig. 683 South section, step at base of Unit 4010, top of 4011, kiln residues in centre (assembled photo)



Fig. 684 Compact clay deposits (Unit 4011, base); from south

onwards and which comprises Units 4007 and 4008 as well (Figs. 685; 686; 688). Due to the disturbed preservation of these layers and the small size of the excavation area, a clear demarcation of the pit deposits was not always possible.

Below Units 4008 and 4010, the substrate changed completely to a clay matrix of brown to light-brown colour, with some sand lenses and only few inclusions of brick fragments (max. size 4.5 cm), small stones and sherds. These sediments were excavated in three removals (Units 4011-4013) and stopped at 914.60 m amsl (Figs. 684; 685).

Based on the archaeological findings and features, the units were assigned to five niveaux, numbered from base to top (Tab. 13: Fig. 685 [right]):

- Niveau 1a, b:** Units 4013 (1a), 1b: 4012, 4011, compact clayey deposits (base 914.60, top 915.30 m amsl)
- Niveau 2a-d:** Units 4010, 4008-4006
 - 2a: Unit 4010, pit (base: 915.30-40, top: 915.60 m amsl)
 - 2b: Unit 4008 (base: 915.30, top: 915.60 m amsl)
 - 2c: Unit 4007 (base: 915.60, top: 915.90-916.00 m amsl)
 - 2d: Unit 4006 (base: 915.90, top: 916.20 m amsl)
- Niveau 3a, b:** Units 4003, 4004, walls 4005 and 4009 (base: 916.30/20, top: 916.80 m amsl)
 - 3a: Units 4005, 4009, brick architecture, levelling layers
 - 3b: Units 4003, 4004, rubble layers with architecture
- Niveau 4:** Unit 4002 (base: 916.80, top: 917.00 m amsl)
- Niveau 5b, 5a:** Units 4000, 4001 (base: 917.00, top: 917.80 m amsl)



Fig. 685 West section, brick wall Unit 4005, Units 4006-4011, pit (left) and clayish deposits (assembled photo)

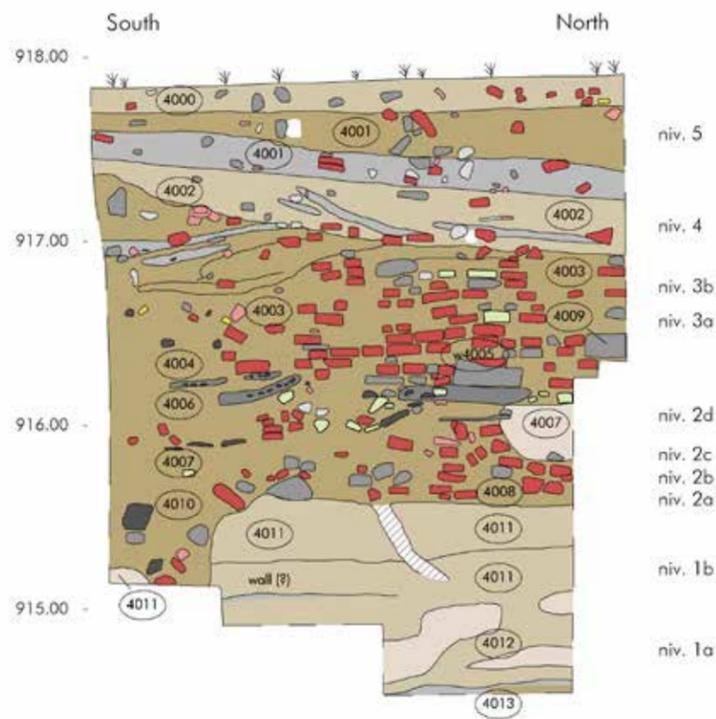


Fig. 686 Section West

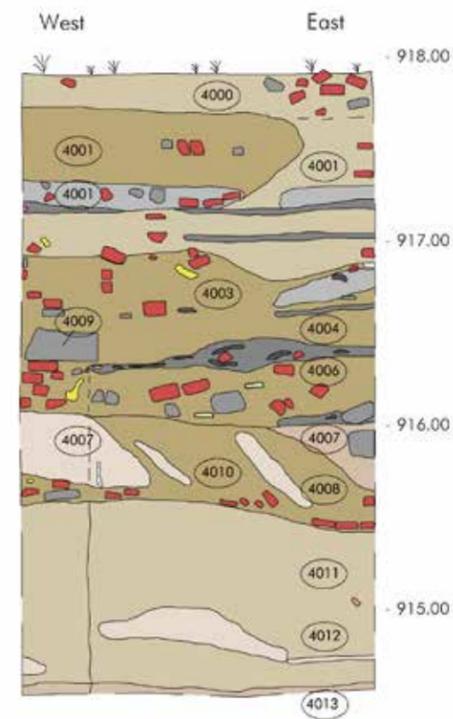


Fig. 687 Section North

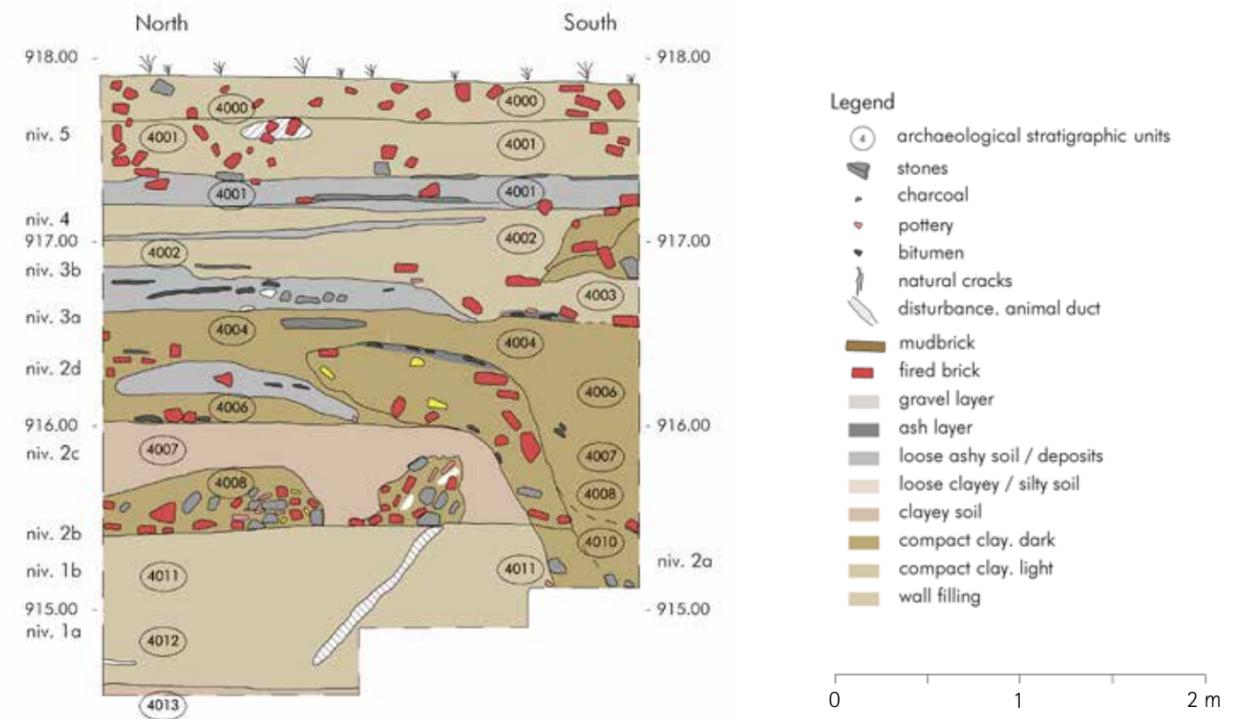


Fig. 688 Section East

Niveau	m asml	type	West	North	East	sherds	finds	stylistic date
1a	base 913.75	clay, MB	4012, 4013	4012, 4013	4012, 4013	49	carinated bowl, coarse cooking pot	pre-Islamic, 13 th /14 th CE ?
1b	top 915.30	clay, MB, dist.	4011, pit	4011	4011	89	green/brown glazed, blue underglaze, black-and-turquoise underglaze, black-under-turquoise, fine grey ware	12 th -14 th CE ?
2a/1b	top: 915.60	dist., pit	4010/11 pit	4010	4010/12, pit	53	moulded (mostly Unit 4011), sphero-conical vessel, green/brown glazed	13 th /14 th CE ?
2b	base 915.30-40 top 915.60	dist., stone, rubble	4008	4008	4008	904 (join with 4007)	slip-painted, green glazed, blue underglaze, blue-and-black underglaze, moulded fine ('face' pattern), storage jars, carinated ridged bowl, carinated beaker, one with basket marks	pre-Islamic, 11 th / 12 th -15 th CE ?
2c	base 915.60 top: 915.60	clay, MB	4007	4007, pit	4007, pit	120	blue underglaze, black-under-turquoise, celadon, carinated ridged bowl; tile frag., slag	pre-Islamic, 14 th -16 th CE ?
2d	top 916.20	rubble	4006	4006	4006	80	blue underglaze; blue-glazed tile frag., frit	16 th /17 th CE ?

Niveau	m asml	type	West	North	East	sherds	finds	stylistic date
3a	base 916.20-30	w4005, fdt. 4009	4005	4005, 4009		9	one green-glazed; one blue tile-mosaic fragment	
			4004	4004	4004	99	blue underglaze frit, monochrome glazed; slag	16 th /17 th CE ?
3b	top 916.80-917.00	w4005	4003	4003	4003	111	blue underglaze earthen- and fritware, monochr. glazed; 1 pipe fragment, slag	
4	top 917.00	clay, rubble	4002	4002	4002	130	green glazed, black-under-turquoise, blue-and-black underglaze, sphero-conical vessel	13 th CE ?, 15 th -17 th CE ?
5a	base 917.00	horizon	4001	4001	4001	126	green marbled, black-under-turquoise; 1 turquoise-glazed brick	15 th -17 th CE ?
5b	top 917.80	consolidation	4000	4000	4000			

Tab. 13 Stratigraphic sequence in Trench 4: Niveaus, type of deposits, Units (Abbreviations: consol. - consolidation layer, BB - fired brick, dist. - disturbed layer, fdt. - foundation, MB - mudbrick/clay setting)

□ □ = walls

Small Finds and Pottery

Apart from pottery, the finds from the sounding comprise only a glazed brick and tile mosaic fragment (Units 4001, 4005), broken iron nails and a larger amount of slags, all of the latter from Units 4001–4004, plus two pieces from Unit 4007.

The slags include glassy black slags, a whitish-green piece and vitrified clay slags, including drops from the kiln walls and overfired parts of the kiln itself (Fig. 690a–q). Vitrified wasters of unidentifiable shape are visible in Fig. 690r. Their presence indicates that a kiln was operated in this area. Since all finds come from the upper levels and debris layers that accumulated south of wall Unit 4005 (Fig. 686), these activities can be dated to a period when the brick architecture was no longer in use, i.e. after Phase 7a of Trench 1, and hence to the late 17th century or thereafter, based on the ceramic evidence from Trench 1. This dating is also supported by the pottery from Trench 4.

The ceramic assemblage, comprising only approx. 1,770 sherds, is illustrated on Plates 278–296, in the sequence of the niveaux described above. The collection is mixed, as in the other trenches; the distribution and types of diagnostic pieces are indicated in Table 13 and illustrated on the plates. The majority of potsherds is unglazed and hence the number of datable sherds is small.

From the oldest Niveau 1a come only unglazed sherds, including nine fragments of the diagnostic carinated ridged bowls that belong to the pre-Islamic periods. Unit 4011 (Niveau 1b) still shows a similar composition, but includes four moulded and nine glazed sherds; and apart from monochrome green- and brown-glazed also one illegible calligraphic blue-underglaze sherd (Pl. 278,6). The pit in the southern part of the trench produced a disturbed assemblage from i.a. Units 4010, 4011 and 4012.

The largest amount of sherds comes from Unit 4008. Since some fragments match with pieces from Unit 4007, Niveaus 2b and 2c are linked. The assemblage includes monochrome green- and mustard-glazed sherds, black-under-turquoise as well as blue-and-white earthenware and blue-and-back underglaze fritware. Among the moulded examples is a jug showing a frieze with the 'face in a window'-pattern, datable to the 12th/13th century (Pl. 282,6). Noteworthy are a mould (Pl. 282,7) and the continued presence of carinated bowls along with slip-painted and later frit- and earthenware. This association of different types reveals the mixed character of the deposits. From Unit 4007 (Niveau 2c) one carinated ridged bowl and two green-glazed sherds are recorded, along with a celadon, blue underglaze and black-under-turquoise example. This is the uppermost unit with carinated bowls. In the lowest unit of Niveau 2 (4006), one blue underglaze frit- and earthenware base and one painted sherd were found.

Niveau 3 is associated with the brick walls, and most sherds come from the rubble layers that piled up against the wall. In Unit 4004, six blue-and-white quartz-based sherds, among them two rims with a brown band (Pl. 294,6. 7), in Unit 4003 only eight glazed and otherwise plain fragments were found. Units 4002 and 4001 (Niveaus 4 and 5) yielded mostly plain types, including a sphero-conical vessel, and monochrome glazed sherds; almost all other examples, such as e.g. black-and-blue underglaze and a black-under-turquoise fritware sherd, are illustrated.

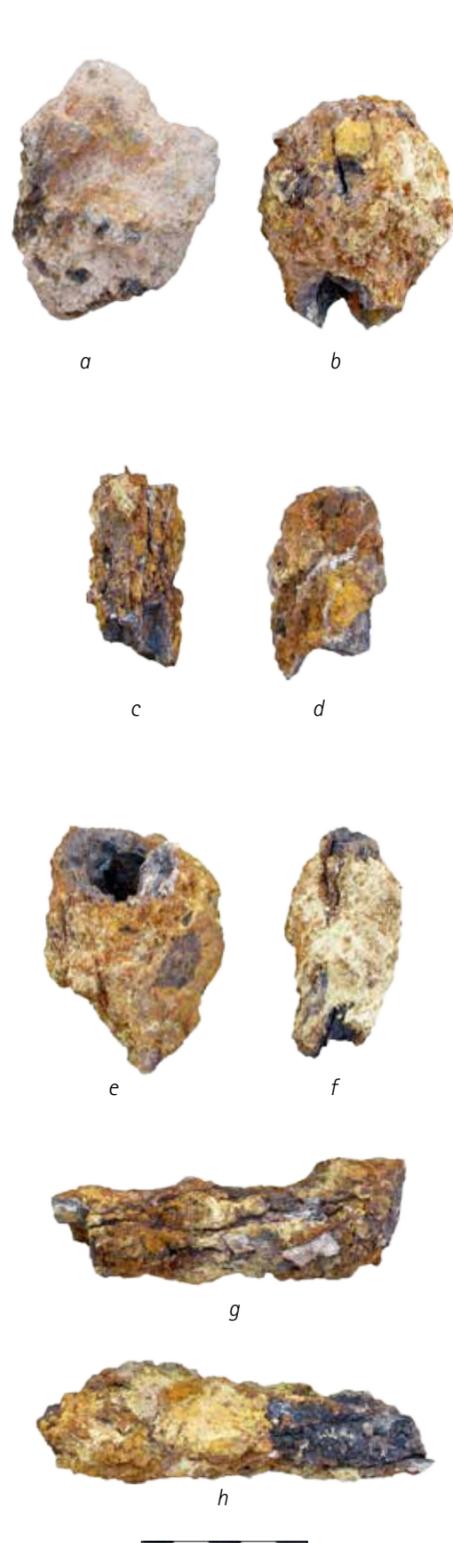


Fig. 689 Iron nails, fragments; scale 1:2 (Unit 4001)

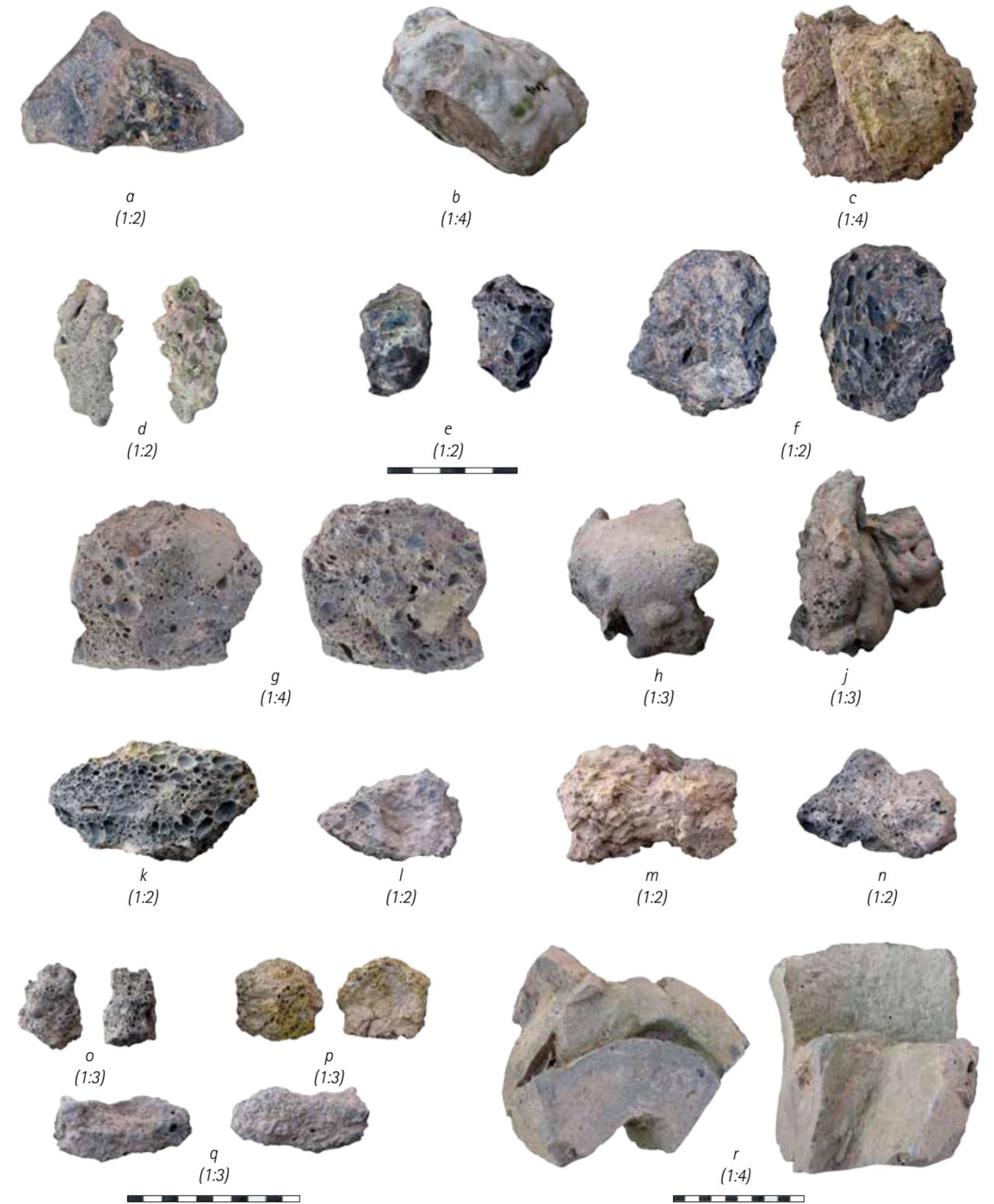


Fig. 690 Glassy and opaque slags (a; b); pottery wasters from a kiln and kiln slags (c; r); glassy and vitrified clay (d–q) Units 4001 (a; d–g; r), 4002 (b); 4003 (c; h–q); various scales