Small Finds and Pottery

Archaeological Context

In Trench 3, the focus of the work was on an analysis of historic architecture and consolidation of structures. In contrast to 'normal' excavations and to the work in Trenches 1a and 1b, in Trench 3 virtually almost no architecture was removed in the process. The clearance of the Timurid gateway, conducted upon the wish of the authorities in charge, was paired with structural improvements in order to support the load distribution of the perimeter wall.

This work provided an opportunity to collect a large number of finds from the accumulated fill and debris, to investigate the glacis on a larger scale and to excavate in deep soundings as well. The outcomes of this research are described above. Yet, as in Trench 2, the nature of the deposits at the foot of the slope, below comparatively loose layers and where finds have rolled down the hill, is predestined to cut through already thoroughly mixed material. For this reason most of the excavated finds are of less stratigraphic significance: all of them originate from the fill in the ruins of the building or the adjacent debris. Only the soundings, located for example in the bridge area (2007) and two lateral trenches excavated in 2008, provide better stratigraphic evidence, even though the excavation was done in arbitrary horizontal removals.

Accordingly, phasing and dating are closely linked to the structural evidence from the buildings. The documented phases of its use, change and abandonment are therefore important aspects in the assessment of finds. Hence, here, the term 'phase' refers exclusively to building phases and phases of use of the architectural structure in question. In order to group the finds stratigraphically and in relation to chronology, they were assigned to 'horizons' that reflect the depositional processes. If finds can be dated stylistically, this information supports a dating of these deposition processes which started only after the abandonment of the gateway. Unfortunately, this is not usually the case within any narrower margins.

The counting in 'units' records architectural elements as a means of identification of find complexes as well as coherent find contexts, artificial removals of deposits or particular sections of more massive accumulations of debris. Thus, e.g. is the western outer wall of Room 5 designated with Unit 3041, but the finds from this room with Units 3037 and 3038, whereas the find material from Unit 3037 is located above that from Unit 3038 and was consequently deposited at a later point in time.

While the relative sequence of building and occupation phases of the complex can be determined quite well with methods of building archaeology, for their absolute chronological placement only the time of the construction of the complex is definite, evidenced through ^{14}C-dating of the installed wooden elements, a coin and historical information on building activities, starting with Shah Rokh. In relative chronological terms, the structural analysis has proven that the glacis was constructed at a later date than the gate complex: it blocks the lateral entrances, thus making this part of the building inaccessible. The structural analysis, however, has shown that the gate complex itself stayed in use, because the subsequent reinforcement of the gateway towers with a massive stone structure cover the glacis on the eastern and the western side. Yet, when exactly these building measures were conducted, cannot be determined on the basis of the architectural remains; for this purpose datable material from adjacent find layers and historical sources would be required.

In an undisturbed archaeological record the upper layers usually contain younger material than the subjacent niveaus. However, this is not true for slope sediments, as in the present case in the gate complex itself and its vicinity. Here, the slope layers contain already redeposited cultural debris from, for example, the citadel located itself high above the gateway. This debris can be individual vessels, a heap of sherds or waste, or also larger landfills or cleared rubble due to episodes of demolition and rebuilding of structures in the upper citadel.

On the basis of excavations in Trench 1 it can be stated that the upper part of the citadel had been in use at least since the beginning of the second half of the first century BCE and that architectural structures had existed there. Cultural debris also amounted to a certain extent. Consequently, in the course of every later building measure in the citadel, find material from the oldest periods may have been shifted and thrown down on the citadel slope – resulting in an irregular stratigraphical and hence chronological sequence within the slope debris. It is therefore probable that during a building measure in the 16th century, for example, not only broken vessels from that time, but also Timurid or even pre-Islamic materials were shifted into secondary position and buried in the slope debris.

For the structures located in Trench 3, it can generally be assumed that these layers of debris could only evolve after the glacis and the gateway fell out of use: A paved glacis as a means of defence will usually be kept clear and not be covered with soil and debris, as it is meant to obstruct access via the slanted surface of the slope. Also the gateway itself would have been kept clean. The debris layers inside the rooms of the gate complex could therefore have developed only at a time when it had already lost its function.

As the debris that was removed from the rooms during the excavations hardly contained larger fragments of bricks or other architectural elements, it must be assumed that these building components gradually deteriorated or were removed and reused for other structures after the gate complex had been abandoned.[1] After the collapse and decay of the roofs as well as the upper parts of the walls of the rooms and the towers, the area was gradually filled with cultural debris from the upper citadel. This process could have taken place slowly over centuries, but it is also possible that meter-high sediments have accumulated as a result of a single measure. It is also unclear if the structure stayed uncovered for a certain period of time. In the northwestern parts of the gateway that were excavated in the late 1970s, the deposits accumulated only afterwards and mostly comprised material from collapsed sections.

The finds from these slope layers can therefore not be analysed using the same archaeological methods as for the excavation of a mound that has evolved over a longer period of time, either in horizontal or vertical direction. Therefore, statistical analyses and observations are not very useful; more appropriate for studying chronologically mixed material is the analysis of particular find contexts. Accordingly, an interesting aspect is, for instance, which dating is prevalent among the finds that are located directly on the deserted floors of the gateway, that is, in the lowest layers of the filled rooms. If finds from this niveau date predominantly into the 18th century, the gate complex was probably in use for longer than if the majority of objects belongs to the 16th century. Exceptions are find layers in those areas that were sealed through a building measure, for instance, by newly erected or added walls, or the construction of a floor or glacis. Here, the youngest finds of the cultural layer enclosed thereunder serve as a *terminus post quem*.

Another aspect is the filling of the moat north of the citadel. It can be assumed that the moat had existed over a longer period of time, since two clearly distinguishable building phases of the above-located bridge providing access to the gate complex can be discerned: an older brick construction and a younger wooden building. Two trial trenches were dug into the moat on both sides of the gateway, none of them reaching the maximum depth of the glacis. Consequently, the finds retrieved from these soundings were deposited only after the building of the glacis. In 2007 a third sounding was dug outside the gate complex, in its central axis, an area, where no glacis had existed at any time. This part must have been unearthed for the last time when the stone reinforcement of the towers was laid, partly covering the glacis. The material found there is therefore associated with the gradual filling of the moat when it was no longer maintained. This lack of attention suggests that the military significance of the initially so laboriously reinforced northern face of the citadel was decreasing.

Extensive earthworks with considerable deposits of debris in the slope areas may have been performed on the following occasions:

- during repairs of the citadel in the early 15th century under Shah Rokh;
- through destruction and repair measures following various conquests of Herat;
- during the citadel's conversion into a residence under Abdur Rahman Khan at the end of the 19th century;
- through the demolition of large parts of the upper citadel for obtaining fired bricks as building material by the Herat military in 1953. As a result, large amounts of debris must have been thrown over the citadel wall, recognisable as mighty heaps on old photographs and in the Unesco-documentation from 1980, partly reaching up to the upper edge of the citadel wall, which was still preserved at that time;
- through collapse and neglect between 1900 and 1975;
- during extensive restoration measures conducted by the Unesco between 1976 and 1979 the debris accumulations north of the citadel were largely levelled and a plane horizontal surface area was created around the newly reconstructed citadel wall (total mass of debris removed in the citadel area: 7,046 m^3).[2]

Terminology and Contexts with Special Chronological Significance

In analogy to the documentation in Trench 2, performed in a similar situation at the northwestern citadel slope, the find layers are assigned to different 'horizons', while various (building) phases define the construction and transformations of the architecture. Yet, since the amount of finds is much higher in Trench 3, the ceramic evidence is discussed here seperately, subsequent to the small finds.

Horizon 1 comprises the horizontal sediments running towards and below the citadel mound. These oldest layers were not reached in Trench 3. The paving of the surface of the glacis with stone slabs and, shortly afterwards, with a brick coverage divides the older subjacent Horizon 2 from younger cultural layers in Horizon 3; the latter are situated above this coverage. The majority of finds from Trench 3 come from this horizon.

1 As the inner core of the structure was largely built with clay mortar, the bricks can be comparatively easily loosened and cleaned.

2 Bruno 1981, 15.

These horizons are divided on the basis of 'removals' into 'niveaus'. This system allows for a better assessment of the associated finds from mixed contexts, due to the deposition history explained above. The finds were documented separately according to their find spot, for instance in rooms or excavation units. Some areas are especially interesting for assessing the chronological development, particularly the following ones, the lowest units in each room:
- Room 1: Units 3114, 3113
- Room 2: Unit 3096
- Room 3: Units 3100, 3101, 3102
- Room 5: Unit 3078
- Room 6: Units 3087, 3094

Units of special interest:
- Units 3082 and 3092 in Room 6 mostly contain material retrieved from below the floor level of the room; it is therefore older than the building of Horizon 3. These units thus belong to Horizon 2.
- The lowest layers of the trial trenches in the moat areas: Units 3112 and 3115 in the east and Unit 3077 in the western trial trench.
- The lowermost layers of the trial trench along the central axis of the gate complex: Units 3024 and 3025.
- The backfill of the upper access to the gate complex (from bottom to top): Units 3074, 3070 and 3050.
- Find material from the foundations resp. foundation trenches for the construction of Tower XVIII at the citadel wall, which was erected upon the backfilled Room 4 of the gate complex: Units 3043 and 3044.

All units outside the gate complex comprise debris layers that have developed only after the glacis was no longer in use. The only exceptions are Units 3093, 3095 and 3122, which stretch below the glacis and therefore belong to Horizon 2.

Small Finds

The number of small finds from Trench 3 is higher and more groups are represented than in Trench 2. In the following, the objects are briefly described according to category and group. Due to the different nature of contexts, as explained above, contextual remarks are only provided when conclusive. Many objects remain undated, since they are too small or unspecific.

A note on object identification: The catalogue numbers are determined by group abbreviations and a sequential number, followed by an object number, e.g. T1 3047.501 or 08/045 for architectural decoration – tile, Cat. no. T1, Object No. 3047.501. Yet, tiles and tile mosaic also include unregistered objects. If illustrated, these are identified by a sequential number plus group abbreviation, e.g. T20.

Coins (Co1, Co2)

Two coins were found in the excavations, both broken and badly preserved.
G. Helmecke proposed a date of around 930 H / 1523/24 for Obj. no. Co1 (08/18, Unit 3047) and of c. 870 to 930 H/1465 to 1523/24 for Obj. no. Co2 (08/50, Unit 3086).
While the former comes from a surface layer, the latter was found in the lowest level of Room 6. This fact is important since it provides a *terminus post quem* for the subsequent accumulation of debris.
Falling into the later Timurid or early post-Timurid era, these data are congruent with the ^{14}C-dates for the construction of the towers.[3]

Obj. no. Co1 08/018
Trench 3, Unit 3047; Horizon 4, surface; cleaning of glacis, west of gateway
coin, cu-alloy
diam. 2.1 cm, height 0.11 cm
c. 930 H / 1523–24
The coin is minted on both sides, the mint is not identifiable. The obverse shows in the centre an unidentified animal inside a dotted frame. The reverse has an illegible inscription
Description: G. Helmecke

Obj. no. Co2 08/050
Trench 3, Unit 3086
Horizon3, Room 3, fill, upper level
coin, cu-alloy
diam. 1.97 cm, height 0.19 cm
c. 870–930 H / 1465–1523/24
Very corroded, hardly readable.
Mint: possibly Herat
Description: G. Helmecke

3 For the exact data see p. 401.

Sherds with Inscriptions (C1–C5)

Inscribed sherds are not many and they were already described in the pottery catalogue.[1] Yet, noteworthy is the occurrence of four sherds, belonging to similar types: two from black-under-turquoise painted bowls (C1; C2) and two from thin-walled plain jars, possibly of the same vessel, with painted inscriptions (C3; C4). With an 8th/9th century date attributed to similar vessels from Susa and Samarra, the latter two sherds, coming from two vessels, are exceptional.[2] While the find spot of C4 predates the construction of the glacis[3], C3 comes from a surface layer.

C3

C5

Obj. no. C1 3047.04, see also Pl. 264,4
Obj. no. C2 3047.05
Trench 3, Unit 3047; Horizon 4, surface; outside, west, cleaning of glacis
15th/16th CE
vessel, black-under-turquoise earthenware

Fine buff body fragments, possibly from one bowl; white slips, cursive inscription, Ta'liq. Above: ...hamchun gul... – 'like a rose', below: illegible.
Reading: C.-P. Haase.

Obj. no. C3 08/059, see also Pl. 245,1
Trench 3, Unit 3081, Horizon 4; surface water jug, earthenware, fine buff (egg-shell); 4.8 x 2.6 x 0.48 cm
9th/10th CE
Small, closed water jar with incised geometric decoration and an inscription painted in black; colour of sherd: beige; slip o/s: buff-yellowish to buff; decoration o/s: faint black painted inscription in two rows, bold cursive letters, applied with brush; possibly related to content. Above: '... ...t - a' -ı l; below: ..q -a .. -a .. ak...'
Reading: C.-P. Haase.
Similar vessels were found at Susa[4], Samarra and Nishapur.

Obj. no. C4 08/060, see also Pl. 246,3
Trench 3, Unit 3095; Horizon 2, below glacis, east
water jug, earthenware, fine buff (egg-shell); 9th/10th CE
Small, closed water jar with incised geometric decoration and an inscription painted in black; colour of sherd: beige; slip o/s: buff-yellowish to buff
decoration o/s: faint black painted inscription in two rows with c. six letters, bold cursive, applied with brush. Above possibly '... ratl...', measure of capacity (?), c. ½ kg
Reading: C.-P. Haase.

C4

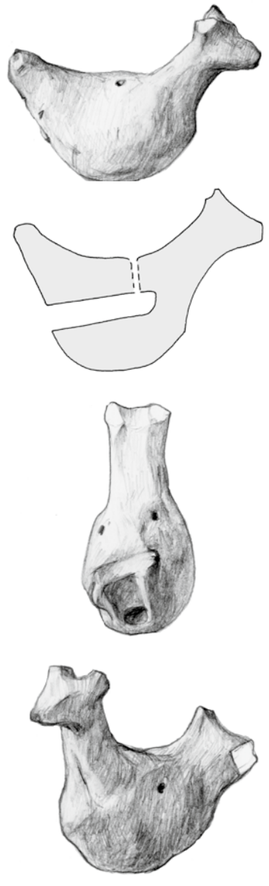
Obj. no. C5 08/008, see also Pl. 212,3
Trench 3, Unit 3042; Horizon 3, above Tower XVIII, near perimeter wall
vessel, earthenware
max. body diam. c. 40 cm
Body sherd, rather fine orange fabric, assembled; stamped or moulded squares with Kufi inscriptions, shallow, back: 4 x 'Muhammad', in relief: 4 x 'Ali'.
Reading: C.-P. Haase.

1 Pls. 212,3; 245,1; 246,2.3; 260,2; 264,5; 274,22.
2 Joel/Peli 2005, Cat. nos. 116; 125–135. – Koechlin 1928, Pl. V, Cat. no. 41A.
3 Obj. no. C4 08/060.
4 Joel/Peli 2005, 101. - Makariou 2012, 76.

Clay Objects (C6–C7)

A rather coarsely hand-made bird figurine with three holes and many finger impressions on the sides is the only noteworthy small find. It must have been a flute or pipe.
The broken leg of a potter´s tripod, used as distance holder for bowls in the kiln, shows cloth impressions and has remains of green glaze on the foot. It implies the production of green-glazed vessels in the vicinity.

Obj. no. C6 07/036
Trench 3, Unit 3007; Horizon 3, north
figurine, terracotta; 7 x 5.5 cm



Bird-shaped figurine with three openings, used as a flute or pipe (?)

Obj. no. C7 08/039
Trench 3, Unit 3048, Horiz. 3, glacis east
tripod, earthenware, fine buff
8 x 4.2 x 1.5 cm
One leg of a potter´s tripod (spacer),

with traces of green glaze at the edge.

Bone Objects (B1)

A small lathed bone object found in the lower levels of Room 6 is drilled and decorated. It most probably served as furniture fitting.

Obj. no. B1 08/017
Trench 3, Unit 3073; Room 6, lower level
furniture attachment (?), bone
diam. 3.2 cm, height 6.6 cm
Oval-shaped furniture application.

Faience (F1)

A small ring-shaped bead with a quartz body and turquoise glaze was found in the moat fill.

Obj. no. F1 3020.106
Trench 3, Unit 3020; Horizon 3, north, moat fill
faience bead; diam. 1 x 0.6 cm

Irregularly ring-shaped, turquoise faience bead, eroded.

Glass (G1–G14)

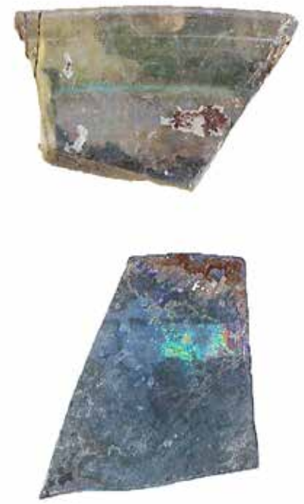
The glass fragments are all small and in bad condition. The sherds come from very thin-walled small bowls, beakers and bottles, some with fluted necks. Two fragmentary glass bangles and a small ring-shaped faience bead are the only adornments.

Obj. no. G1 3015.03
Trench 3, Unit 3015; Horizon 3, north, moat fill

glass vessel, beaker (?); diam. 14 cm
Folded rim of beaker or small bowl.

Obj. no. G2 3015.51
Trench 3, Unit 3015
Horizon 3, north, moat fill
glass vessel, bottle
Greenish base fragment.

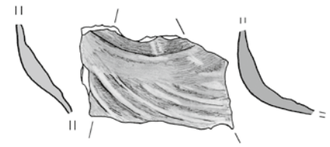
Obj. no. G3 07/026a
Obj. no. G4 07/026b
Trench 3, Unit 3011, surface, north
glass vessel
3.5 x 2 cm, 3 x 4 cm



Two glass fragments, one greenish rim, one bluish-green body sherd.

Obj. no. G5 08/74a, b
Trench 3, Unit 3023; Horizon 3, north, moat fill
glass vessel; 3.6 x 2.9 cm
Two fragments of translucent green glass vessels, no particular shape or features visible, iridescent.

Obj. no. G6 08/75
Trench 3, Unit 3017
Horizon 3, north, moat fill
glass vessel, bottle
6 x 5 cm, 5 x 4 cm



Two rather thick, fluted sherds from the upper neck of a green bottle. Originally translucent clear, now with a thick brown iris.

Obj. no. G7 08/73a, b
Trench 3, Unit 3025
Horizon 3, north
glass vessel, bottle; 5.3 x 4.4 cm

Fluted upper body/neck from a bottle, light green, translucent glass, iridescent, porous.

Obj. no. G8 3015.601
Trench 3, Unit 3015
Horizon 3, north, moat fill