

## Unesco Excavations 1976–79 – Pottery Rediscovered

In 2006, two large sacks with pottery from the 1976–79 Unesco excavations were discovered in the storerooms of the citadel. Some of the sherds are numbered, but the hope of being able to reassign them to their archaeological context could not be fulfilled due to the lack of a related documentation. In his report, D. van Eenhooge describes the pottery summarily, without mentioning only numbers and contexts, and no images are included. He differentiates, however, between the trenches along the northern foot of the citadel and the finds from the upper eastern citadel.<sup>1</sup>

12 trenches were opened along the foot of the citadel at that time<sup>2</sup>: Trenches A and B, closest to the Timurid Tower, the latter corresponding to our Trench 2<sup>3</sup>, Trenches E, F and G, Trench H, also labelled Area XXXVI, next to Tower XVIII and corresponding to our Trench 3<sup>4</sup>, and Trench K, close to Tower XIX. The pottery drawings and sherd counts provided by van Eenhooge refer to finds from Trench B, Stratum 1, above the glacis.<sup>5</sup> He mentions pottery clusters dating to the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> and the early 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>6</sup>, and – the majority – to the Timurid and Safavid periods in certain strata. A few lustre tiles and sherds were present as well. However, van Eenhooge also points out the mixed nature of the deposits above the glacis and in the light of our results it appears very unlikely that these types were in fact found in closed contexts. It is nevertheless interesting to see the proportions of identifiable types in his counts of Stratum 1<sup>7</sup>, such as slip-painted (8), 'silhouette' (10)<sup>8</sup>, celadon (6) or porcelain (15); other types, such as e.g. black-and-blue under-glaze painted, which might date to the 14<sup>th</sup> or the 16<sup>th</sup> century, remain unidentifiable in the report. The potsherds found in the eastern upper citadel<sup>9</sup> were not counted and drawn, are hence not illustrated and described only summarily, with a focus on Gardner porcelain.<sup>10</sup>

The material retrieved in the citadel cannot be matched with this information in a reliable way. The list, the descriptions<sup>11</sup> and the drawings, which depict only shapes, and the lack of images do not facilitate to link the drawings with the re-discovered sherds, except in one case.<sup>12</sup> The assemblage apparently

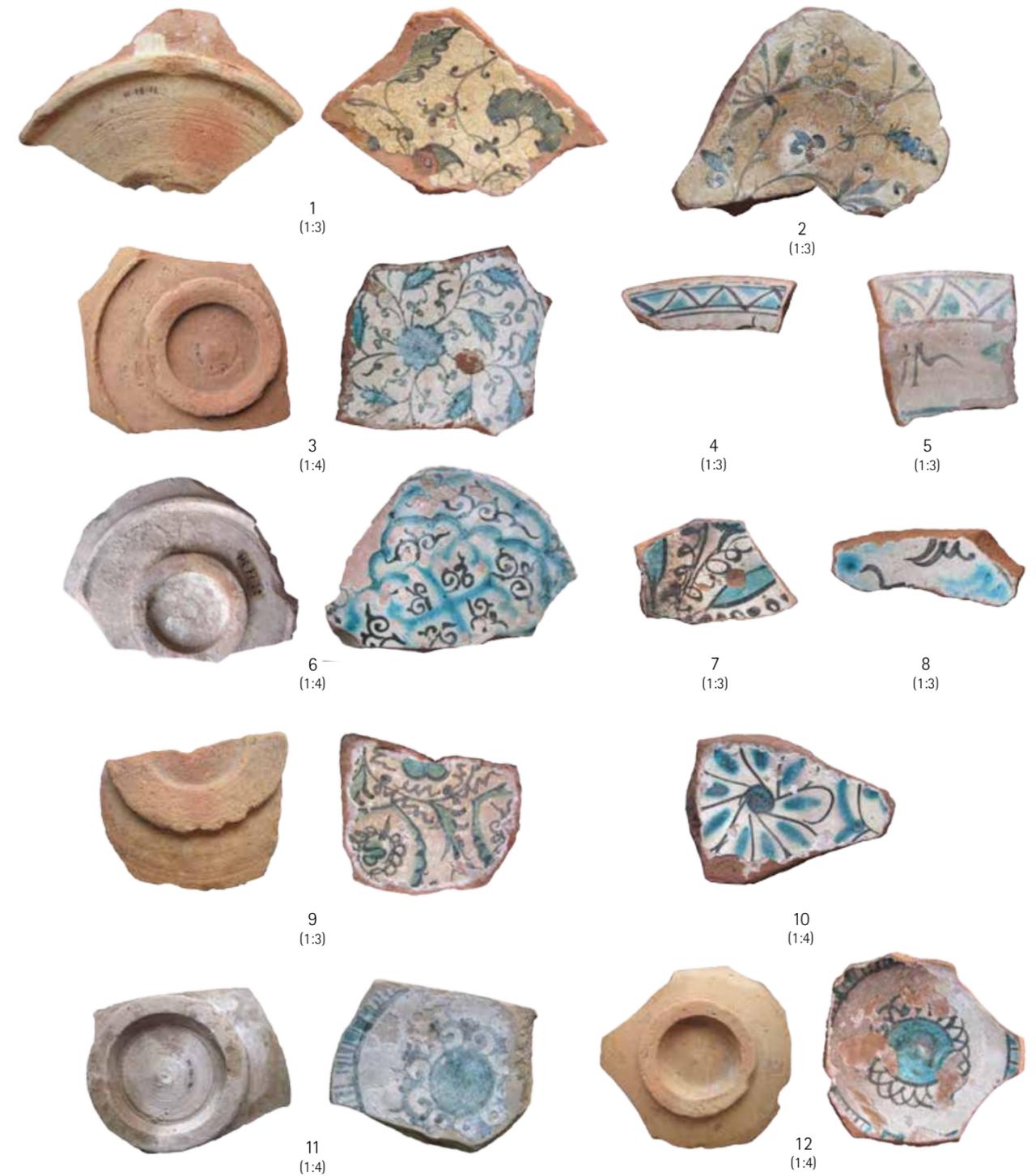
also represents only a small part of the collection since neither – for example – slip-painted and unglazed painted wares nor the complete shapes drawn by van Eenhooge are present. Yet, since his notes are basically in line with our findings, namely that the inventories from the northern foot of the citadel and from the eastern upper part are rather different in composition, it is possible to tentatively propose which area the sherds may have come from. The types are summarily presented here (Pls. 297–303), following the typology applied to the material from our excavations.

Two sherds retrieved during the work of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture at the Timurid Tower are included here as well (Pl. 301, 17, 18).

### Inscribed sherds (text: C.-P. Haase)

Pl. 299,7: blue-and-white underglaze painted fragment of a plate showing remnants of a bordure with an intersected blue band forming a quatrefoil medallion alternating with a cartouche with lobed end(s). The latter contains five letters irregularly written in a round script, perhaps Nasta'liq, with additional decorative dots. These could be read as three words in Persian: [â]n gul ki – 'that flower which ...', but also other versions are possible, like an abbreviated 'gâh', spot/place for 'ki'. Usually one would expect a poem written in such cartouches, with a rhyme at the end, but this does not seem to be the case here.

Pl. 302,2: fragment of an unglazed moulded jar; Arabic inscription in two lines in round Thulth script with fat vertical lines of a later type. Upper line with beginning of the inscription in the centre under a vegetal motif: 'izz al-...'; and end on the right side: '...[wa a]l-salâma...', which could be added to the well-known formula 'Glory [of ? and success and blessing... and] happiness'. But the article 'al-' appears usually also at the beginning: 'al-' izz a[l-da'im...]: '[The everlasting] glory...'. The remnants of the lower line show upper parts of vertical letter lines combined with vegetal motifs (floriated script), but they are difficult to assign to some saying.



Pl. 297 Earthenware, black-and-blue or turquoise under a clear glaze; from the northern foot of the citadel (?)

Thick-walled ridged bowls with geometric or floral designs, with close parallels from Trenches 2 and 3.

Zigzag-pattern (no. 4) with turquoise accents, two inscriptions ('behtar' [?], nos. 5; 8, cp. Fig. 50b) and curly and vivid floral patterns, with freely painted fine-line drawing (nos. 1, 2); rotating forms (no. 3, cp. Pls. 170,3; 213,4) or structured by lobed medallions (nos. 6; 7; 9, cp. Fig. 52e. f). Bases with central, stylised floral patterns (no. 10: cp. Fig. 50; no. 12: cp. Pl. 298,12; Fig. 51j)

1 Regrettably, the information from these investigations was also not published later-on in more detail.

2 van Eenhooge 1981, 19–24 Plan 1, Figs. 63–66.

3 See Trench 2, p. 323 Fig. 280; 281.

4 See Trench 3, p. 368 Fig. 308.

5 van Eenhooge 1981, 23 Figs. 63–67.

6 Which he compares to Sultanabad and related wares in Syria and Egypt and correlates with Mongol pottery of the Golden Horde (van Eenhooge 1981, 24).

7 With a total of 2,110 sherds.

8 Sherds with decorations incised into a black slip, such as e.g. Pl. 298,6–9.

9 See Trench 1, pp. 147–149.

10 van Eenhooge 1981, 24; 25.

11 E.g. black-painted under blue glaze, silhouette ware, slip-painted ware or unglazed decorated.

12 A neck with a filter: van Eenhooge 1981 Fig. 64.5, here: Pl. 302,4.



Pl. 298 Earthen- and fritware, black-and-blue/turquoise under clear (nos. 1-3; 6) and black under turquoise glaze (nos. 4; 5; 7-18); from the northern foot of the citadel (?)

Thick-walled bases with incised patterns and colour accents (nos. 1; 2: cp. Pls. 158,7; 165,4), no. 3: 14<sup>th</sup> CE (?).  
Nos. 4; 5; 7; 8: thin light-bluish glaze, no. 4 'geometric' style, peacock eyepattern, no. 6 honey-comb;  
nos. 5; 7; 8; 12: curly floral, panels, 'relief' painting (cp. Figs. 48c; 52h. j; Pls. 168,3, 182,5; 198,3); painted and incised under turquoise-glaze, earthenware (nos. 9-11; 12-15) and fritware (nos. 16-18); no. 17 monochrome plain, fluted



Pl. 299 Porcelain (nos. 1; 2) and fritware, blue-and-white (nos. 3-16), blue-and-black under clear glaze (nos. 17-22); the latter type possibly from the eastern upper citadel

Nos. 3-16: blue-and-white fritware, 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century; no. 4: with bird; no. 7: centipede-rim with inscription, facing to rim, 16<sup>th</sup> century (?), see text p. 680; nos. 17-22: with additional black contours, occasional turquoise highlights (no. 17), 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century (?)