

IMTO – Italian Mission to Oman

University of Pisa

SUMHURAM

Preliminary Report

April – June 2015 (SUM15B)



PRELIMINARY REPORT (SUM15B)

April - June 2015

The second IMTO's campaign of 2015 (SUM15B), under the direction of prof. A. Avanzini, started on 18th April and finished on 28th June 2015.

Excavation was performed in Area F with different goals.

Two different operations took place to clarify stratigraphic relations, relative chronology and street network in this area. Excavation to the South of the building named Monumental Building 2/BF5 exposed some structures connected with BF5 and some structure reused and modified during the long life of the city.

To the West of MB2, excavation on the south of street A43 was carried on in order to follow the water-channel made by limestone blocks and plaster which runs along the street that served this area. This is an important finding for understanding the road network in this part of the city. Excavations were conducted on the field by Silvia Lischi, Said al Mashani and Said al Amri.

The work of IMTO has been possible thanks to the collaboration of the Office of the Adviser of His Majesty the Sultan for Cultural Affairs in Salalah and in Muscat, in particular Ghanem al Shanfari, Said al Mashani, Ali al Kathiri, Said al Amri, Said al Salmi, Hassan al Jabri. We thank them all, together with all the Museum's team, for their kind helpfulness.

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Archaeological Report

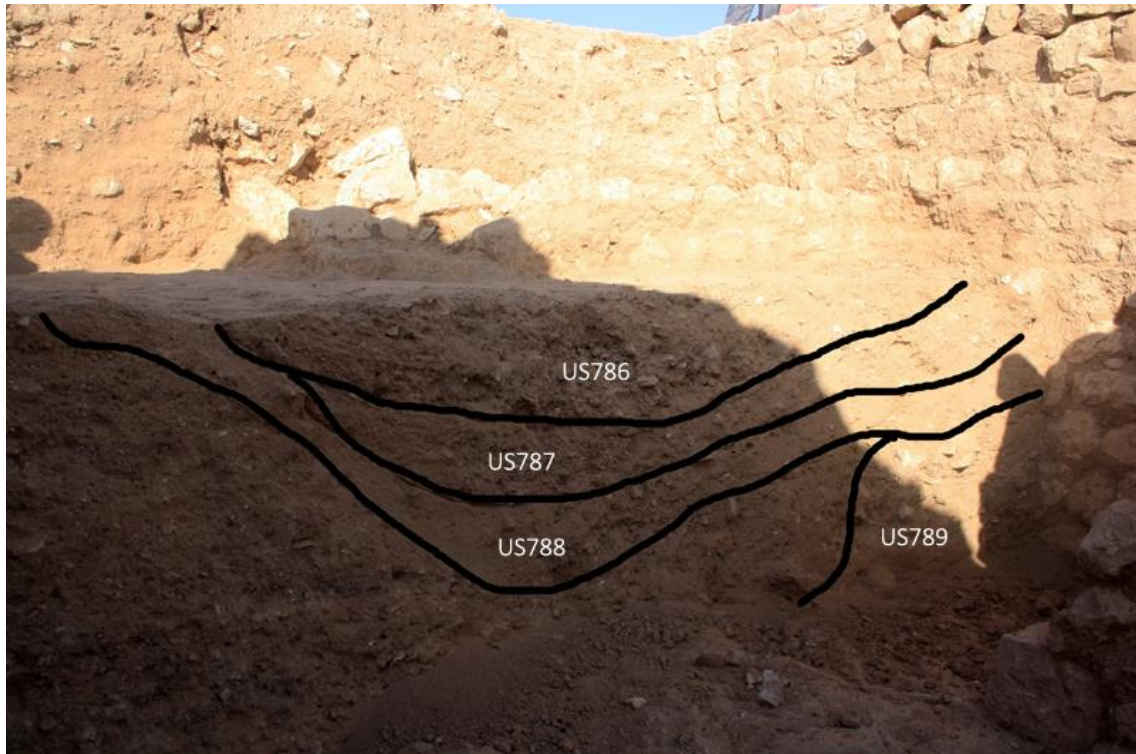
Excavation in Area F: south of A43 (trench supervisor: Silvia Lischi)

The goal of the campaign, in this area, was to understand whether the water channel partially discovered during the last campaign continues under the section or not. Furthermore we were interested in understanding the direction.



South of A43 before excavation.

This area, already excavated during the previous campaigns, showed a stratigraphy slightly different from the one found along street A43. After removing US782 (digging started in SUM15A) it was clear the presence of a pit. This pit cut all the original stratigraphy of the accumulation in A43, and leaning on the last part of the accumulation of US793. That implies that the stratigraphy found near M726 and M708 is the stratigraphy of the street and which probably continued in A43. The layers found near the city wall M118 and near the perimetral walls of A250 (M718 and M721) are later.



South of A43: stratigraphy of the pit.

After the excavation of **US782** (27.35 m) on the whole area we excavated the pit (see the picture of the section). The upper layer of the pit was **US786** (27.03). This layer is characterized by a sandy matrix soil, light brown in colour with some charcoals and traces of fireplaces. Inside we found some bones, few pottery shards and only one object (S2760). Under this layer there was **US787** (q. min. 26,81 - q. max. 27,17) very crumbly and reddish brown in colour. Inside there were small and medium size stones, bones and pottery shards. One object and one coin were found in this layer: Co940 and MB916.



South of A43: stratigraphy of the pit.

Below this layer we find the latest layer of the pit, **US788** (q. 26,64 m). This layer is composed by a very soft soil, light brown in colour. Inside there were some bones, shells, pottery shards and two objects (S2759, Sh761). This layer cuts the stratigraphy of the street, and stopped at an elevation of 26,64 m inside the accumulation layer of US793. Near the city wall M118, there is **US789**. The layer US788 leans direct on this new layer (q. 26,71 m). This layer is always part of the pit and it is located only near the wall M118. It is characterized by limestone chips and medium size stone, some bones and pottery shards and only one object (MI268).



South of A43: stratigraphy of the pit, the last layer.

The most ancient layers of the street A43, to the East of the pit described above, start with **US790**. This layer is located directly beneath US782. This layer is an accumulation layer composed by a loam mixed with gypsum. The colour was grey. Inside there are bones, shells and few pottery shards. One object and one coin were found in this layer: Co952 and G233. In the corner between M726 and M722 there were traces of fireplace. Under the accumulation there was **US790floor** (q. 27,44 m), composed by compact grey loam.



South of A43: stratigraphy of the street.

Below there was a new accumulation layer, named **US791**. This layer is characterized by a crumbly loam, brown in colour. Inside there were found few materials. The floor associated with this layer is **US791floor** (q. 27,19 m). This floor was compact and reddish grey in colour. Inside there were fragments of plaster and small stones.



South of A43: during excavations.

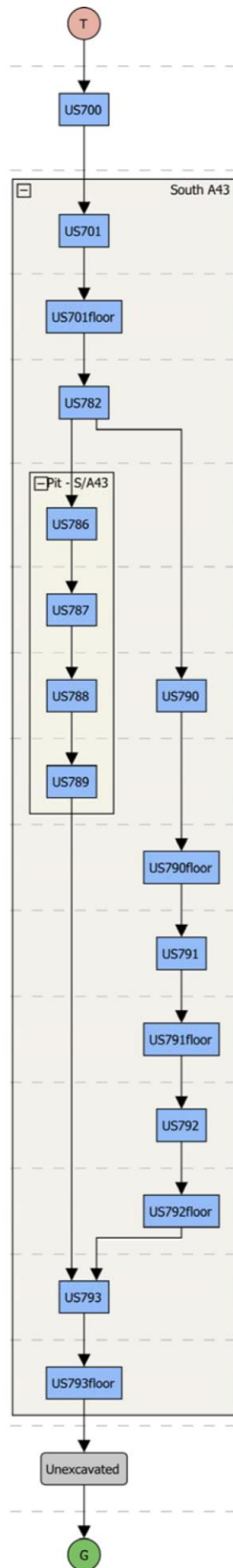
The accumulation layer **US792** was reddish brown and compact. Inside there were found few materials including two objects (Sh768 and MI267). Under the accumulation there is **US792floor**, grey and very compact (q. 26,91 m). The last excavated layer, **US793**, is characterized by a uniform grey colour in the accumulation and in the floor. The elevation of **US793floor** is to the south-east 26,54 m and to the north-west 26,19 m. The slope is followed by the structure made by stone slabs and plaster and interpreted as a water channel. Inside the layer we found few materials.



South of A43: water channel and detail with two bases of column and stone slabs with ASA letters (see Report SUM15A: 44).



South of A43: after excavation.



Stratigraphy of the layers found during this campaign to the south of A43.

Excavation in Area F: south of A50 (trench supervisor: Silvia Lischi)

To the south of A50, room adjacent to MB2, investigated during the previous campaign, we have expanded the area of investigation, including to the south the wall M717. To the east we reached the edge of the section near M704. To the west, we connected the areas already excavated around MB2.



South of A50: before excavation.

In the whole area **US700** was excavated (to the east q. 28,65 m – to the south-west q. 28,20 m), a surface layer of sandy matrix and light brown loam with pottery fragments, bones, shells. Many iron slags were found inside. This layer had already been excavated during the campaigns (SUM14B, SUM14C, SUM15A). To the west it was connected with the stratigraphy of A43 and seems to be possible the connection with US623 (q. 28,00 m). Below the **US700floor** we excavated extensively **US701**, characterized by a very compact and brown earth. Inside were found pottery fragments, bones, shells and some iron slags. Some objects have been recovered in this layer (Sh759, MI265, MI266, MB915, S2757, MB917, Sh763, S2767, S2768, S2769, S2770, S2771, Sh766) and 11 bronze coins (Co941, Co943, Co944, Co945, Co946, Co947, Co948, Co949, Co950, Co951, Co953). Under the accumulation layer **US701floor** was found (q. 27,87 – 27,91 – 27,98 – 28,04), very compact and light brown loam.

Below this floor we found to the south of M111 the US785 and in the rest of the excavated area, inside the walls M722, M725 and M714, the layer named US795.

US785 was an accumulation layer composed by very compact loam with many fragments of mudbricks and plaster (probably from the floor that we found below). Inside this layer have been recovered only two objects G231 and S2758, and three coins (Co939, Co942, Co958). This layer covered the plaster floor, very sloping, called **US785floor** (q. 28,12 – 27,90).



South of A50: during excavation (US700floor, US701floor).

The thickness of this plaster was 4 cm (sample). The area covered by US785floor was named A249. This because the floor was finished along the margins and showed the beginning of the plastered walls. Under this floor we found another plastered floor, but thinner and very bad preserved. The name of this layer is **US796floor** (q. 27,88 m). This floor was connected with the staircase M723, composed by 5 steps. Probably this floor covered most of the excavated area but there was only in this part of the excavation. Inside this layer we found only one object (S2773).



A249 with US785floor, US796floor and staircase M723.

In order to investigate the previous phases, the described layers and the staircase M723 have been removed. In the whole area delimited by walls M722, M725, M714, M675 and M111 we found **US795**. This was an accumulation layer composed by compact brown loam. Inside the layer we found

many fragments of red and grey mud-bricks and some medium and small stones. Inside there are some objects (S2761, S2762, S2763, S2764, S2765, S2766, Sh764, Sh765, Sh772) and very few materials like bones, shells and pottery shards. The elevation of **US795floor** was at 27,78 m. This floor was composed by a very compact loam mixed with fragments of mud-bricks to the east and big size stones to the west; the colour to the east was grey and to the west was reddish

Under this layer there was **US794**, reddish in colour and crumble with few fragments of mud-bricks and plaster. Inside there are many bones, few pottery shards and only one object (S2773). The excavation of this layer has allowed us to bring to light the first part of the sandstone staircase, that to the north leaning on M675. The elevation of **US794floor** was at 27,24/27,37 m. This floor was plain, compact and reddish in colour with inside some fragments of mud-bricks. In the corner between M714 and M675 there is a fireplace.

After the excavation of US794, we can see the upper part of walls (M731, M729 and the internal face of M725 and M714).



South of A50: during excavation (US798, US797).

Below of US794floor there was **US797**, layer composed by medium compact loam and reddish-brown in colour. There are inside some fragments of charcoal, gypsum/plaster and many pottery shards and bones/shells. Inside we found some objects and one coin: Co959, MB919, MB920, Sh769, Sh770, G234, S2774, S2775. The excavation of this layer has enabled us to highlight the corner between M714 and M725 and therefore has identified the area as a room, called **A251**. It is also became clear that there is a small room, surrounded by M731, M729, M732 and M111 to the north (called **A252**), and a corridor that runs around A252, called **A253**.

A251

Within this room the accumulation layer US797 directly covered US797floor. This floor is composed by stone slabs and plaster at an elevation of 26,50 m. Between the walls M729 and M725, at the corner between M729 and M732, there is a threshold of sandstone that divides the room A251 from the elongated room A253, perhaps a corridor that runs around A252.



South of A50: A251 after excavation and A252, A253 during excavation.

A252

Inside the room there is a new accumulation layer, **US798**, this was crumble and reddish in colour, in some parts it was very compact. There were few materials inside, some objects (S2777, G235, S2778) and one coin (Co960). Under this accumulation layer there was a plaster floor very bad preserved, called **US798floor**(q. 26,69 m). Seems that the perimetral walls of the room stopped at this elevation. It is probably due to the floor destroying by collapse of the perimetral walls because inside the US798 accumulation layer we found many big masonry stones.



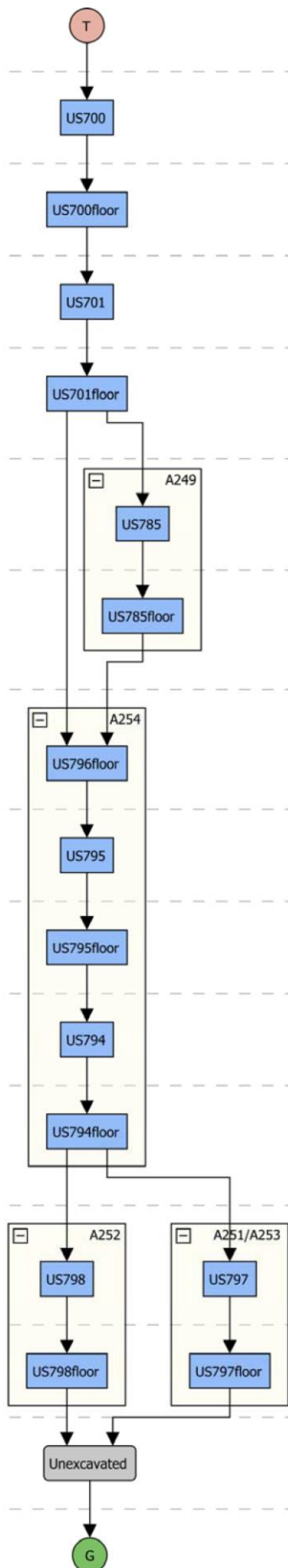
South of A50: after excavation from east.

A253

Inside this elongated room, that seems a corridor we found a stone floor like in A252, but very bad preserved. Here there isn't traces of plaster. This level called US797flor, we found at an elevation of 26,67 m.




South of A50: after excavation from south-west.




Stratigraphy of the layers found during this campaign to the south of MB2/BF5


Object Index Card

Registration Nr. SUM15B; US785, 3 S2758				
Provenance Area F, A249, US785				
Drawing code Nr.				
Definition Loom weight	State of preservation good	Measures l. w. h. th. diam.		Shape Conical
Material Soft stone	Preserved part complete			Section circular
Description SUM15B; US785, 3 Group of 4 loom weights, made of soft stone. Surfaces are not well preserved; chisel marks are visible. The shape is conical and the edge is rounded. The circular hole is placed on the top. 1- h 12 cm; l. min 3,3 cm; l. max 5 cm; w. 3,2 cm; d. hole 0,7 cm 2- h. 12,3 cm; l. min 3,9 cm; l. max 6,3 cm; w. min 3,2 cm; w. max 5,5 cm; d. hole 0,7 cm 3- h. 12,4 cm; l. min 3,8 cm; l. max 6,4 cm; w. min 2,7 cm; w. max 7,3 cm; d. hole 0,7 cm 4- h. 9,2 cm; l. min 5,1 cm; l. max 6, 7 cm; w. min 4 cm; w. max 5,7 cm; d. hole 0,7 cm				
Responsible Silvia Lischi		Date 20/05/2015		


Object Index Card

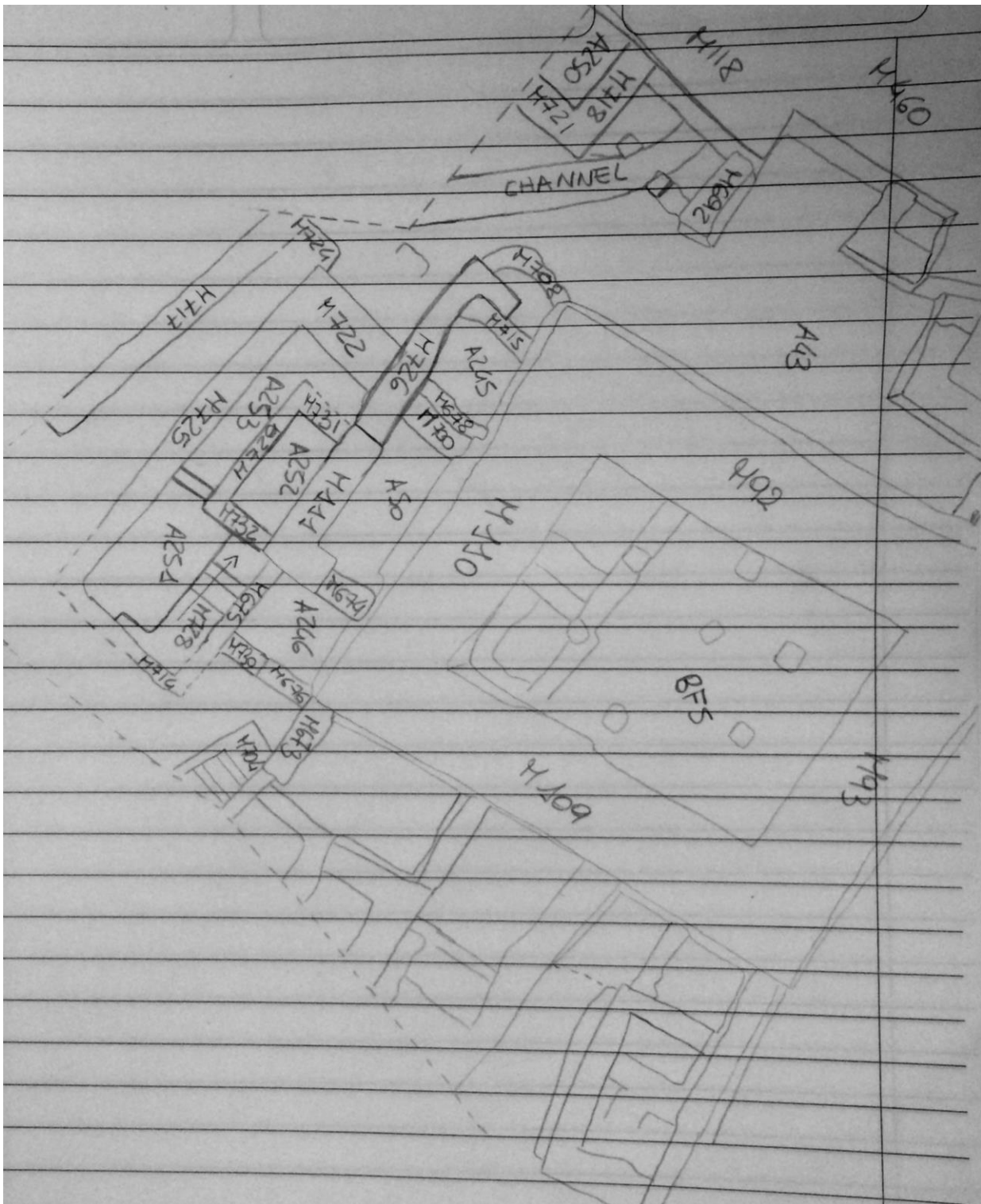
Registration Nr. SUM15B; US798, 2 S2777			
Provenance Area F, US798, A252			
Drawing code Nr.			
Definition Inlay	State of preservation good	Measures l. w. h. 1,8 cm th. diam. 5 cm	Shape circular
Material Agate	Preserved part complete		Section flat
Description SUM15B; US798, 2 Complete circular inlay made of agate stone. The base is slightly convex, the upper surface is flat. A groove is visible in the middle of the lateral side The upper edge is rounded and the lower is sharp. The light natural lines are visible on the surface of the stone .			
Responsible Silvia Lischi		Date 30/05/2015	

Object Index Card

Registration Nr. SUM15B; US785, 4 G231			
Provenance Area F, US785, A249			
Drawing code Nr.			
Definition Fr. of ribbed bowl	State of preservation good	Measures l. w. h. th. 0,3 cm diam.	Shape
Material glass	Preserved part fragmentary		Section flat
Description SUM15B; US785, 4 Two small fragments of glass ribbed bowl. Part of the rim and wall are preserved. The fragment is decorated with fairly prominent ribs, which begin shortly below rim and extend to bottom of wall (not preserved). Four ribs are preserved. The interior is plain. The colour is very dark with iridescences.			
Responsible Silvia Lischi		Date 15/05/2015	

Object Index Card

Registration Nr. SUM15B; US701, 35 MB915			
Provenance Area F, US701 South-west of MB2			
Drawing code Nr.			
Definition vessel	State of preservation good	Measures l. w. h. th. 0,3 cm diam.	Shape
Material bronze	Preserved part fragmentary		Section flat
Description SUM15B; US701, 35 Two fragments of a bronze vessel, with out-turned, rounded rim (d. 0.5 cm). The fragments belong to part of wall and rim. The diameter is uncertain, because of the deformation of the metal.			
Responsible Silvia Lischi		Date 15/05/2015	



Sketch of the investigated areas (by Silvia Lischi).