

IMTO – Italian Mission to Oman

University of Pisa

SUMHURAM

Preliminary Report

October - December 2018 (SUM18C)



PRELIMINARY REPORT (SUM18C)

October - December 2018

The third IMTO's campaign of 2018 (SUM18C), under the direction of prof. A. Avanzini, started on October 27th and ended on December 13th 2018.

Excavations were performed in two areas:

- Area G;
- Area F.

Excavations were conducted on the field by dr. Giulia Buono. Mr. Said al-Mashani was also present on the site. All the archaeological works were carried on under the supervision of the prof. Alexander V. Sedov and dr. Vittoria Buffa.

Dr. Giulia Buono was responsible for documentation of pottery finds and objects.

Architects Michele Lillo, Roberta Niada, Giovanni Randazzo, Arianna Rocca Chiavazza and Pietro Stefanelli, under the supervision of arch. Stefano Bizzarri, were responsible for the restoration activities carried on the site.

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 Ghanim al-Shanfari, Said al-Mashani, Ali al-Kathiri, Said al-Amri, dr. 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 G: rooms A315 and A316 (trench supervisor: Giulia Buono).

The area G, squares n-15, was investigated by the AFSM expedition in 1952-1953 during which six rooms, set close to the eastern part of the city-wall, were brought to light.¹

During this campaign, new numbers of wall were assigned; the rooms were renamed as follows (fig. 2):

SUM n.	AFSM n.
A312	VI - G21
A313	VI - H21
A314	VI - J21
A315	VI - K21
A316	VI - L20
A317	VI - L19

Room A315

The room A315 is a small rectangular space delimited by the walls M896 to the west, M900 to the north, M440 (segment of the city-wall) to the east and M901 and M902 to the south.

Below the surface, the layer US1050 was unearthed. US1050 was a *stratum* made of loam, brownish in colour and loose in consistency. Below it, a floor (US1050 floor) made of hard packed soil was identified.

Few stone objects were discovered, such as a fragment of *soft-stone* vessel (S3103), a pestle (S3104) and a mortar (S3105).

The pottery recovered from this layer was characterized by the 84% of storage vessels, the 8% of table vessels and the 8% of kitchen vessels. After a summary overview of the diagnostic shards, the types attested seem to cover a range that goes from the 1st to the 2nd constructional phase.²

¹ Albright, F. P. 1982. The American archaeological expedition in Dhofar, Oman, 1952-1953, Washington.

² For the pottery typology see Pavan, A. 2017. A Cosmopolitan City On the Arabian Coast. The Imported and Local Pottery From Khor Rori. Khor Rori Report 3, Roma.

For the typology of small finds see Avanzini, A. (ed.) 2008. A port in Arabia between Rome and the Indian Ocean (3rd c. BC – 5th c. AD). Khor Rori Report 2 (Arabia Antica 5), Roma.

US1050			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US1050, 1	Type III.1.2.3	S3103	Stone vessel, Type I.1.a
US1050, 2	Type II.6.2	S3104	Pestle, Type I
US1050, 3	Type I.2.4.7	S3105	Mortar, Type II

Tab. 1 – Findings from US1050 with indication of type.

Space A316

The space A316 is delimited by the walls M903 and M902 to the north, M454 (segment of the city-wall) to the east and M904 to the south.

Below the surface, the layer US1051 was unearthed. US1051 was a *stratum* made of loam, light brown in colour and loose in consistency. The layer wasn't completely removed from the space and the floor was not reached. A single object was discovered, that is a fragment of *soft-stone* vessel (S3106). In total, thirty-two pottery shards belonging to storage vessels were collected.

US1051			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US1051, 1	Type III.1.4.1	S3106	Stone vessel, Type I.1.c
US1051, 2	Type III.1.4		

Tab. 2 – Findings from US1051 with indication of type.



Fig. 1 – Area G, rooms A315 and A316 after excavation.



Fig. 2 – Plan of Area G with wall and room numbering.

Excavation in Area F: room A291; new building BF10, rooms A318, A319, A320, A321 (trench supervisor: Giulia Buono).

The main purpose of this campaign concerning the Area F was to continue clarifying the layout of this area delimited by the building BA13 to east, the building BF7 to the north and all the structures closed to the Monumental Building 2 to the west.

Room A291

The works started from room A291, already excavated in the past campaign SUM18A during which the excavation activities stopped at the level of US443 floor. Below it, the layer US425 was identified.³ It consisted of very compact loam, reddish brown in colour due to the presence of production activities unearthed in the later layer, that is US443 floor. The relative floor (US425 floor) was detected at an elevation of 28.50 m and it consisted of hard packed soil, brownish grey in colour. The following findings were collected from the layer US425: a fragment of *soft-stone* vessel (S3109), a nail (MI357), two bronze objects (MB1053, MB1054) and a coin (Co1197).

The pottery recovered from this layer was characterized by the 76% of storage vessels, the 23% of table vessels and the 1% of kitchen vessels.

US425			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US425, 14	New Type	S3109	Stone vessel, Type II.3.a
US425, 15	Type III.1.16.1	MI357	Nail
US425, 16	Type III.1.16.1	MB1053	Unidentified object
US425, 17	Type III.1.4.1	MB1054	Lamina
US425, 18	Type III.1.4.1	Co1197	Coin
US425, 19	Dressel 2-4 amphora		
US425, 20	Type III.1.4.1		
US425, 21	Type III.1.4.1		
US425, 22	Type III.1.4.1		
US425, 23	Dressel 2-4 amphora		

Tab. 3 – Findings from US425 with indication of type.

The removal of US425 permitted:

- to see that the staircase M871 was added to BF7 at the time of US425 floor;
- to reveal an earlier structure set in the eastern half of room A291.

³ The layer US425 was previously identified during SUM11A. See Street A80 section in SUM11A preliminary report (<http://arabiantica.humnet.unipi.it>).

The works in the western half of room A291 stopped at the level of US425 floor.



Fig. 3 – Room A291 after excavation with US425 floor (east view).

Street A156

The removal of US425 floor allowed finding the continuation of the street A156 toward west. Below US425, the layer US440, already identified during SUM11A, was dig:

- US440: layer made of loose and brown loam, with a large amount of small stones and animal bones. Fifty-one pottery shards were recovered from the layer (78% of storage vessels, the 20% of table vessels and the 2% of kitchen vessels). The relative floor (US440 floor) made of hard packed soil, was detected at an elevation of 28.10 m.

US440			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US440, 7	Type III.1.2.1		
US440, 8	New type		
US440, 9	Amphore égyptienne 3		
US440, 10	Type II.1.4		
US440, 11	Type I.1.1.9		
US440, 12	Type III.1.4		

Tab. 4 – Findings from US440 with indication of type.

Building BF10

The removal of US425 floor in the eastern half of room A291 revealed a new building, named BF10. The building is facing the street A156 to the north and the building BA13 to the east. Its outer walls are M906 and M913 to the north, M914 and M916 to the east, M920 to the south and walls M909 the west. All the outer walls of the building were built in dry masonry with two rows of limestone blocks. They were originally covered of plaster on the inner surfaces.

The building shows an irregular plan (pseudo-rectangular). The general dimension of the edifice is 22.50 m² *circa*. The entrance is from the corridor A322 and is set along the eastern side, between the walls M914 and M916. The structure is composed of four rooms: A318, A319, A320 and A321. Three steps placed in room A318 give access to the room A319.

Room A318

The room A318, that covers a surface of 2.1 x 1.85 m, is defined by the walls M906 to the north, M905 and M907 to the east, M910 to the south and M909 to the west. The walls are made of dressed limestone blocks and were plastered.

The room was intentionally filled with US1053, a layer made of very loose and brown loam mixed with a large amount of small stones and animal bones.

The floor (US1053 floor), made of well dressed sandstone slabs, was reached at an elevation of 28.10 m. A sandstone block was found placed on it, in front of the entrance to the room A319.

The findings are scarce: an alabaster lid (S3108). The pottery recovered from this layer was characterized by the 82% of storage vessels, the 15% of table vessels and the 3% of kitchen vessels.

US1053			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US1053, 1	Dressel 2-4 amphora	S3108	Alabaster lid
US1053, 2	Type III.1.4.1		
US1053, 3	Type III.1.4.1		
US1053, 4	Type III.1.4.1		
US1053, 5	Type III.1.2.3		
US1053, 6	Type II.6.1		
US1053, 7	Type III.1.4.1		
US1053, 8	Type I.2.4.2		
US1053, 9	Type I.1.1.3		

Tab. 5 – Findings from US1053 with indication of type.

Room A319

The room occupied the south-west corner of the building and covered a surface of 4.6 m² *circa*.

It is delimited by the walls M910 to the north, M908 to the east, M920 to the south and M909 to the west. The access to the room is from A318, by three sandstone steps.

The room was intentionally filled with US1052, a layer made of very loose and dark brown loam mixed with a large amount of small stones, animal bones and ash (fig. 6).

The removal of the filling allowed to underneath a rectangular structure (M911) built in ashlar masonry and placed closed to the wall M920. On the top, a rectangular and low recess is covered of plaster. The dimensions of the structure are: l. 1.7 m, w. 0.75 m, h. 0.2 m.⁴

The floor (US1052 floor) was detected at an elevation of 28.63 m. It consisted of two sandstone slabs placed close to the wall M908 and plaster in its central-western part. The area covered of plaster presents a smoothed rectangular stone in the centre and a small channel that runs towards the western wall M909.

In the layer a coin (Co1196) and a fragment of *soft-stone* vessel (S3107) were discovered, along with scarce pottery shards in the following proportions: 88% of storage vessels, 12% of table vessels. We underline the presence of a fragment of South Arabian Jar (US1052, 1) with a Qatabanian stamp [ḏr]’kr, equal to an other one (US890, 4) found in Area G during SUM16B campaign.

US1052			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US1052, 1	Type III.1.4	S3107	Stone vessel
US1052, 2	Dressel 2-4 amphora		

Tab. 6 – Findings from US1052 with indication of type.

Room A320

The room A320, that covers a surface of 1.6 x 3.4 m, is defined by the walls M913 to the north, M914 to the east, M915 to the south and M905 and M907 to the west.

The room was intentionally filled with US1054, a layer made of medium compact and brown loam mixed with stones fallen from the walls, animal bones and ash.

The floor (US1054 floor), made of well dressed sandstone slabs, was reached at an elevation of 28.26 m.

The findings are scarce: two whetstones (S3110, S3111), a rod (MI358) and a coin (Co1199). Also the pottery was scarce with six fragments belonging to storage vessels and two fragments belonging

⁴ Elevation of M911: 28.80 m.

to table vessels. Only one presents a diagnostic shape (US1054, 1), that is a fragment of rim of table goblet or jar (fig. 4).

US1054			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US1054, 1	New type	S3110	Whetstone, type I
		S3111	Whetstone, type I
		MI358	Rod
		Co1199	Coin

Tab. 7 – Findings from US1054 with indication of type.

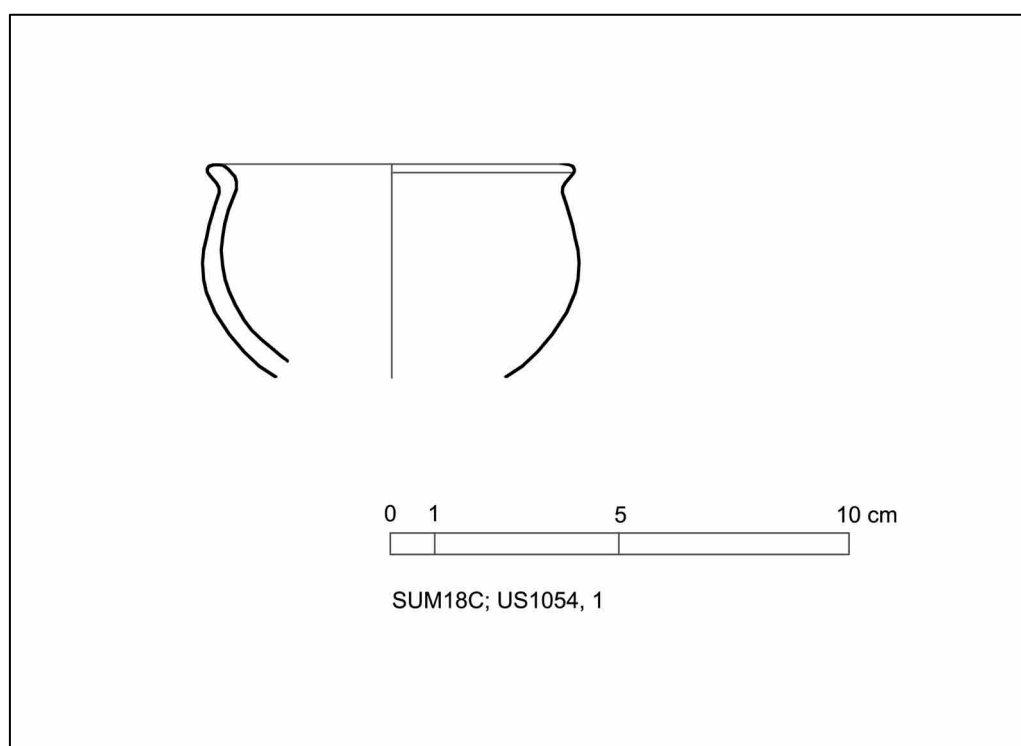


Fig. 4 – Pottery US1054, 1.

Room A321

The room occupied the south-east corner of the building and covered a surface of 4.3 m² circa.

It is delimited by the walls M915 to the north, M916 to the east, M920 to the south and M908 to the west.

The room was intentionally filled with US1055, a layer made of medium compact and brown loam mixed with a large amount of small stones, animal bones and ash.

The floor (US1055 floor) was detected at an elevation of 28.36 m and it consisted well dressed sandstone slabs. The pottery recovered from this layer was characterized by the 91% of storage vessels, 6% of table vessels and 3% of kitchen vessels.

US1055			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US1055, 1	Type III.1.4.1		
US1055, 2	Type III.1.4.1		
US1055, 3	Dressel 2-4 amphora		
US1055, 4	Type III.1.4.1		
US1055, 5	Type II.6.1		
US1055, 6	Type II.6.2		
US1055, 7	New type (glazed)		

Tab. 8 – Findings from US1055 with indication of type.



Fig. 5 – Room A319 after excavation (east view).



Fig. 6 – Room A319, removal of US1052.



Fig. 7 – Room A318 after excavation (east view).

Excavation in Area F: rooms A322 and A323 (trench supervisor: Giulia Buono).

The excavation in Area F proceeded east of building BF10 where two new rooms were discovered.

Room A322

During this phase the corridor A322 was delimited certainly by the walls M917 to the north, M918 and M919 to the east, M914 and M916 to the west. The room covered an area of 11.80 m² *circa*. The entrance could be imagined between the walls M657 and M920. At the moment a big collapse interested this area; further investigations will clarify the situation. It is possible that during an earlier phase the corridor was open because it is clear that the wall M917 was added in a second time.

The corridor gave access to the building BF10 and to an other room set close to building BA13 (room A323) by two doors, one set between the walls M918 and M919 and one set between the walls M919 and M657.

In room A322 the following stratigraphy was identified:

- as it happened for the rooms of building BF10, the room A322 was intentionally filled with US1056, a layer made of medium compact and brownish grey loam mixed with a large amount of small stones, animal bones and ash. Three stone vessel (S3112, S3120, S3121), an incense burner (S3113), a *Chlamys Townsendi* shell (Sh863), a clay object (CI90) and a coin (Co1200) were brought to light in the accumulation. The discovery of the *soft-stone* vessel S3112 is interesting: it is a production of the eastern Arabia, a bi-conical vessel with inward curving walls and slightly rounded/convex base.⁵ The incised decoration consists of six horizontal lines in the upper part of the vessel. The lower part is decorated with triangular compositions. The external surface is polished (fig. 8).

The pottery was abundant and it was characterized by the 58% of storage vessels, the 32% of table vessels and the 10% of kitchen vessels.

- Below US1056, a big collapse (US1057) originated from the surrounding walls was identified at an elevation of 28.35 m.
- The collapse covered an accumulation layer named US1058. It was made of compact brownish grey loam mixed with animal bones. The relative floor, US1058 floor, made of hard packed soil, was detected at an elevation that goes from 27.90 m to 28.03 m (from south to north). Findings were scarce: a bronze rivet (MB1055), an unidentified bronze object (MB1056) and thirty-eight pottery shards (76% of storage vessels, the 16% of table vessels and the 8% of kitchen vessels).

⁵ See **Zutterman, C. 2004**. The soft stone vessels from Qarn Bint Sa'ud, Abu Dhabi (U.A.E.), in *AAE* 15, pp 105-114.

The excavation stopped at level of US1058 floor.

US1056			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US1056, 1	Type III.1.2.2	S3112	Stone vessel
US1056, 2	Type III.1.4.2	S3113	Incense burner, type III.a
US1056, 4	Type III.1.26	S3120	Stone vessel, type II.5.b
US1056, 5	Type III.1.4	S3121	Stone vessel
US1056, 6	Type III.1.4.1	Sh863	Oil Lamp
US1056, 7	Eastern Sigillata B Form 31	C190	Clay object
US1056, 8	New type	Co1200	Coin
US1056, 9	No type (glazed)		
US1056, 10	Amphore égyptienne 3		
US1056, 11	New type		
US1056, 12	New type		
US1056, 13	New type		
US1056, 14	Type II.6.8		
US1056, 15	Type III.1.30		
US1056, 16	Type I.2.4.6		
US1056, 17	Type III.1.4		

Tab. 9 – Findings from US1056 with indication of type.

US1058			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US1058, 1	New type	MB1055	Rivet
US1058, 2	Type II.1.5	MB1056	Unidentified object
US1058, 3	Dressel 2-4 amphora		
US1058, 4	Dressel 2-4 amphora		
US1058, 5	Type III.1.4.1		
US1058, 6	Dressel 2-4 amphora		
US1058, 7	Dressel 2-4 amphora		
US1058, 8	New type		

Tab. 10 – Findings from US1058 with indication of type.



Fig. 8 – Stone vessel S3112.

Room A323

The room A323 is delimited by the walls M652 to the north, M494 to the east, M657 to the south and M919 to the west. It covers an area of 10.30 m² *circa*. The two entrances from the corridor A322 are set between the walls M918 and M919 and between the walls M919 and M657.

In room A323 the following stratigraphy was identified:

- The US689, partially excavated during SUM14A campaign,⁶ was a layer made of medium compact and brown loam. The relative floor, US689 floor, made of hard packed soil, was detected at an elevation of 28.56 m. It belonged to the same phase of US425 floor, identified in room A291.

Only a fragment of *soft-stone* strainer (S3114) with remains of bronze was found in the layer. The pottery was characterized by the 82% of storage vessels, the 13% of table vessels and the 5% of kitchen vessels.

- Below US689 floor, an accumulation layer named US1059 was identified. It was a layer made of loose and dark brown loam mixed with small stones. It covered a floor (US1059

⁶ See SUM14A preliminary report (<http://arabiantica.humnet.unipi.it>).

floor) made of very hard packed soil with white inclusions and small charcoals. The floor was detected at an elevation of 28.34 m.

The following findings were found in the accumulation layer: a whetstone (S3115), two *soft-stone* vessels (S3116, S3118), an alabaster vessel (S3117), an iron handle (MI359), *Chlamys Townsendi* and *Tutufa Bardeyi* shells (Sh864, Sh865) and eighty-eight pottery shards (89% of storage vessels, the 2% of table vessels and the 9% of kitchen vessels).

US689			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US689, 6	New type	S3114	Strainer
US689, 7	Type III.1.4.1		
US689, 8	Type III.1.4		
US689, 9	Type III.1.4.1		
US689, 10	Amphore égyptienne 3		
US689, 11	Dressel 2-4 amphora		
US689, 12	New type (glazed)		

Tab. 11 – Findings from US689 with indication of type.

US1059			
Diagnostic pottery shards		Objects	
Number	Type	Number	Definition/Type
US1059, 1	Type III.1.4.2	S3115	Whetstone, type I
US1059, 2	Type III.1.4	S3116	Stone vessel, type II.2
US1059, 3	Type III.1.4.1	S3117	Alabaster vessel
US1059, 4	Type III.1.4	S3118	Stone vessel, type III.1.a
US1059, 5	Type III.1.2.3	MI359	Handle
US1059, 6	New type	Sh864	Oil lamps
US1059, 7	Type II.6.6	Sh865	Tutufa Bardeyi shells
US1059, 8	New type		
US1059, 9	Amphore égyptienne 3		

Tab. 12 – Findings from US1059 with indication of type.

Preliminary remarks

After a summary overview of the diagnostic pottery shards, it seems that:

- The building BF10 was used during the 1st constructional phase. Also US1058 floor of room A322 and US1059 floor of room A323 belonged to the same phase;
- During the passage from the 1st constructional phase to the 2nd constructional phase, the building BF10, already abandoned as the collapse of the walls suggests, was intentionally filled, as well as the rooms A322 and A323;
- During the 3rd constructional phase the US425 floor covered all the area becoming an open space (room A291) and the staircase M871 was added to the building BF7.

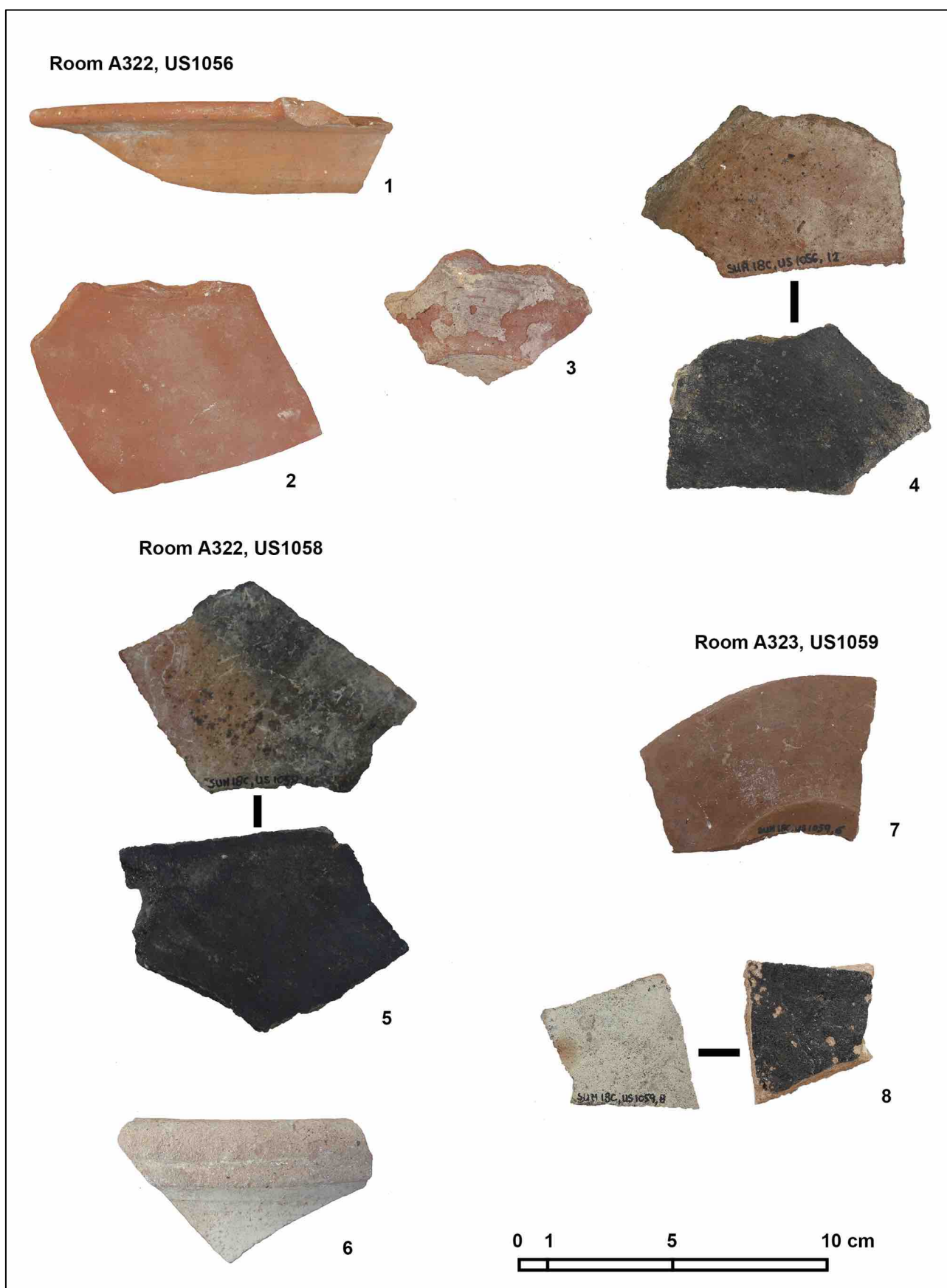


Fig. 9 – New types of pottery from rooms A322 and A323.

1: US1056, 8; 2: US1056, 11; 3: US1056, 13; 4: US1056, 12; 5: US1058, 1; 6: US1058, 8; 7: US1059, 6; 8: US1059, 8.




Fig. 10 – Area F before excavation (east view).




Fig. 11 – Area F after excavation.


Pottery Card

Index Nr. SUM18C US1052, 1			
Provenance Area F, A319			
Photo			
Drawing code Nr.			
Category Storage			
Shape Closed	Type Type III.1.4	Preserved part Wall	State of preservation
Measures cm Diam. Th. 1.9	Color inter. Surface Light reddish brown 2.5YR 7/4	Color ext. Surface Pale yellow 2.5Y 8/2	Color section Light reddish brown 2.5YR 7/4
Characteristic of paste Coarse and porous	Inclusions Straw temper		Method manufacture
Surface treatment (ext.)	Surface type (ext.) Wash		Decoration (ext.)
Surface treatment (int.) Smoothing	Surface type (int.) Plain		Decoration (int.)
Description/observations Fragment of wall of storage jar with <i>Qatabanian</i> stamp [dr]'kr (equal to US890, 4) impressed before firing. Measures of the seal impression: h. 2.5 cm, l. max 4.0 cm, lh. 2.0 cm			
Date 19/11/18		Responsible G.B.	

Object Index Card

Registration Nr. SUM18C, US1053, 1; S3108			
Provenance Area F, A318			
Drawing code Nr.			
Definition Lid	State of preservation	Measures cm l. w. h. th. 1.5 diam. 8.5	Shape Round
Material Alabaster	Preserved part Almost complete		Section
Description Alabaster round-shaped lid with rectangular horizontal handle.			
Responsible G.B.		Date 19/11/2018	

Object Index Card

Registration Nr. SUM18C, US1059, 3; S3117			
Provenance Area F, A323			
Drawing code Nr.			
Definition Vessel	State of preservation	Measures cm h. 4.1 th. 0.7 diam. rim 12.0 diam. base 5.5	Shape
Material Alabaster	Preserved part Archaeologically complete		Section
Description Alabaster vessel, archaeologically complete with round and flat base and flared pointed rim.			
Responsible G.B.		Date 05/12/2018	