A late medieval pottery assemblage from a cesspit on the site of the Emile Braun Square in Ghent, Belgium

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In 2009 a rescue excavation was carried out by the Dienst Stadsarcheologie Gent *(City of Ghent archaeology department) ahead of redevelopment at Emile Braun Square, Ghent. A cesspit belonging to a patrician property was discovered, containing four ceramic-bearing layers, dating from the second half of the 14th century to the first half of the 16th century. A discussion of the chronological and taphonomic issues is presented, based on the data from the quantitative and morphological analyses. The context contains some (relatively) rare finds, including a piglet-shaped flute/whistle in local redware, double-handled jars* (grapen) *in Tournai-type Whiteware and Valencian Lustreware which can provide insights into the socio-economic status of its consumers. Furthermore, as a part of the archaeological side of the overarching KOBRA research project, this paper is a small contribution to the study of urban development in Ghent's historical centre.*

Introduction

With the foundation of the first *Portus* (trading settlement) on the west bank of the River Scheldt at the end of the 9th century and the construction of the first phase of the Gravensteen Castle on the west bank of the Leie River in the first half of the 10th century, a process of urbanisation had been set in motion that ensured Ghent's rise to power during the Middle Ages (Laleman 1990, 7; Laleman 2008, 11; Raveschot 1990, 14). A gradual westward expansion from the *Portus* led to the development of the area between these rivers, including the construction of iconic ecclesiastical buildings such as St. Nicolas Church (*c.* 10th century) and St. James Church (now St. Bavo Cathedral, *c.* late 11th century). As a result, a first defensive circuit was constructed around the city at the beginning of the 12th century, which made clever use of the existing waterways (Laleman and Stoops 1996b, 125). As Ghent grew during the 13th century it experienced an economic boom, having vital roles in both the European grain and the cloth trades. These developments made the construction of a second defensive circuit necessary, constructed at the beginning of the 14th century using a combination of waterways, fortified walls and gates (Laleman and Raveschot 1986, 67). By the end of the 14th century the city had extended beyond the confines of both river banks and became one of the largest cities of north-western Europe (Fig. 1) (Boone 2010, 53).

Historically, the 14th century can also be considered an important moment in the formation of a specific political culture within the city of Ghent. In thanks for support during the 'Battle of the Golden Spurs' in 1302, the Flemish Count Gwijde Van Dampierre ordered the reform of the board of aldermen, which in turn led to the participation of the craft guilds in the council, breaking the monopoly held by the urban patrician elite (Boone 2010, 53). As a result a period of urban growth followed, including the construction of two new town halls and the Belfry (Laleman and Vermeiren 2010, 36–7). It was only at the turn of the 15th century, with the 'Peace of Cadzand' (1492), that a central power in the form of Maximilian of Austria succeeded in breaking the financial and political independence of the craft guilds and the burghers of Ghent. The rule of Philip I of Castile (Philip the Handsome/Fair, r. 1482–1506) brought a period of economic recovery, but the economic focus nonetheless shifted towards Antwerp and the Duchess of Brabant during the 16th century, forcing Ghent into a more regional economic role (Boone 2010, 92).

The site

The subject of this paper is a site in Emile Braun Square, which is located at the heart of medieval Ghent and is surrounded by some of the city's most iconic historical buildings (Steurbaut and Vermeiren 2008; Beldé *et al.* 2010; Bru *et al.* 2010; Bru *et al.* 2011). To

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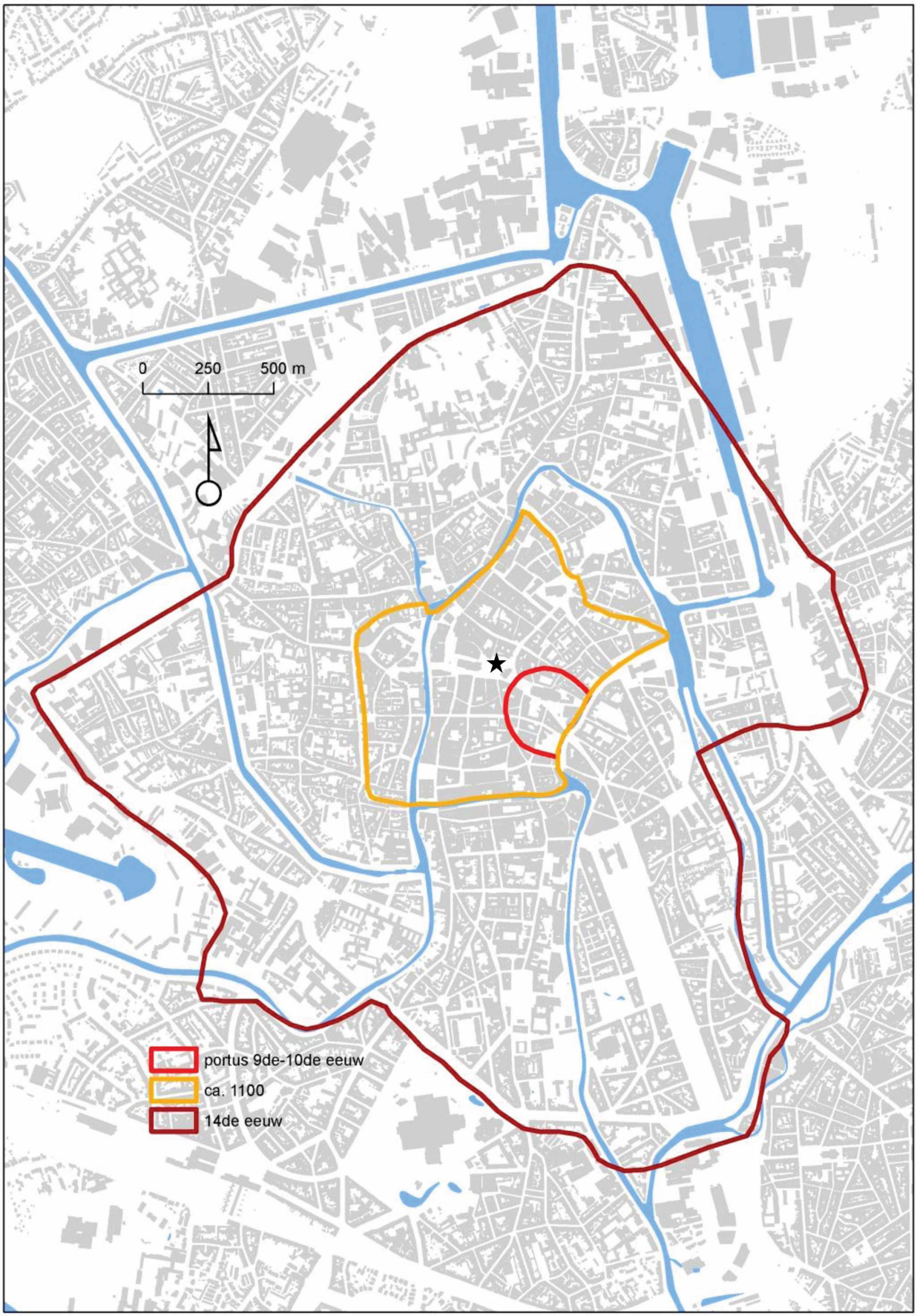

Figure 1. The expansion of the medieval city, and its fortifications in the 9th-10th century (red), beginning of the 12th century (yellow), and the 14th century (dark red). Location of Emile Braun Square (black star). (Image: *Dienst Stadsarcheologie Gent*).

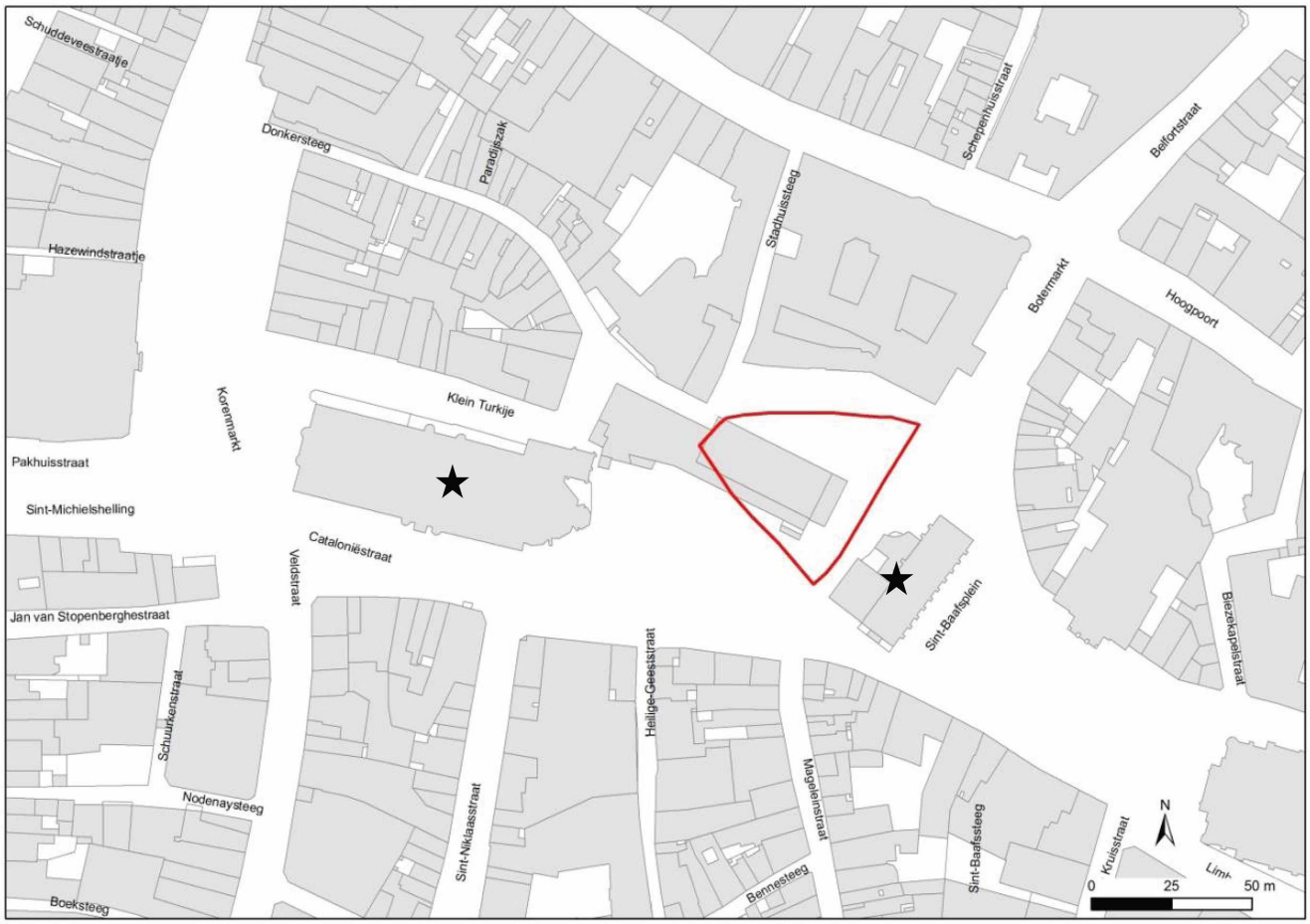

Figure 2. The location of the northern building block of Emile Braun Square in red, the St. Nicolas church in the west and the Belfry in the east (black stars). (Image: *Dienst Stadsarcheologie Gent* and author).

the east it is flanked by the Belfry and to the west by St Nicholas Church (Fig. 2). The area has only been an open square since the 19th century. Prior to this the area was occupied by a northern and southern block of buildings, separated from each other by the *'Korte Ridderstraat'* (Fig. 3). Due to the installation of a new sewer system and the construction of an underground bicycle storage facility, an excavation was carried out in 2009 by *Dienst Stadsarcheologie Gent* (City of Ghent archaeology department) to ensure the conservation of the underlying archaeological heritage. In a broader perspective these interventions are part of the KOBRA project, a project to re-furbish several historic areas of central Ghent.

Archaeological evidence for activity on the site prior to its urbanisation is scarce, but some late Neolithic flint artefacts were found in the immediate vicinity of the square at the *'Goudenleeuwplein'* (Crombé *et al.* 1998, 5–8), while a Roman cremation burial was excavated at the adjacent *'Botermarkt'*, dating to 100 AD (Laleman *et al.* 1997, 96). Research suggests that in the early medieval period the site was part of an open landscape with little vegetation. This being said, some fragmented individual finds dating to the Merovingian period have been made in the surrounding area, perhaps suggesting some form of discontinuous habitation (Laleman and Vermeiren 2010, 10–12), while the foundation of the Abbeys of St. Bavo and St. Peter in the 7th century demonstrates that there was early medieval activity here, which has, so far, eluded archaeologists (Declercq and Laleman 2010, 30).

As the area between the *Portus* and the Gravensteen Castle began to be developed a number of roads evolved, including the *'Korte Ridderstraat'* and *'Hoogpoort'*, which served as important east-west connections between both river banks and were the crucial main axes which framed the medieval urban landscape (Laleman and Vermeiren 2010, 12–31). The excavation of two phases of wooden road at Emile Braun Square, dating to the late 10th and late 12th centuries, attests to the importance of this route as a vital communication axis in the ever-expanding city (Laleman and Stoops 1996a, 58–60; Laleman and Vermeiren 2010, 14). This axis, known as the *'Korte Ridderstraat'*, is particularly relevant to this discussion as it triggered the formation of two building blocks to the north and south of the route (Laleman and Vermeiren 2010, 23–5). At the core of the northern block, four brick-built patrician

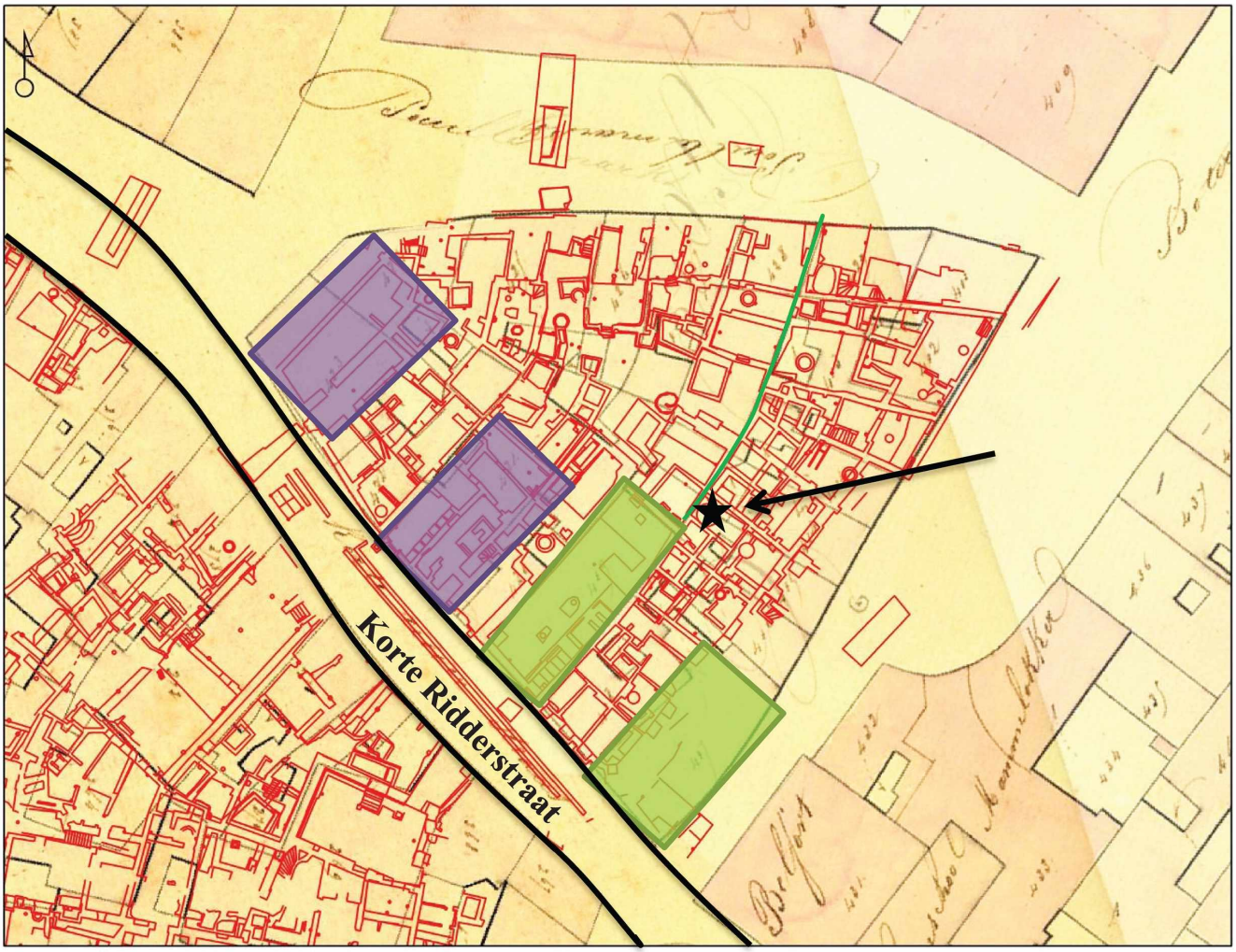

Figure 3. The four early patrician houses of the northern building block with the easternmost houses in green, and the location of Korte Ridderstraat and the cesspit (black star). (Image: *Dienst Stadsarcheologie Gent* and author).

houses were identified, dating to the beginning of the 14th century. These four separate properties formed the basis from which the rest of the block developed in the following centuries, whether as the result of consecutive inheritances or the selling of the land on to a third party (Laleman and Vermeiren 2010, 23–5). Between the easternmost two original patrician houses, a circular brick stone cesspit was discovered containing a considerable amount of late medieval pottery (Fig. 4) which forms the subject of this paper, and aims to provide information on the chronology of site development and the socio-economic lives of the householders.

The cesspit

The cesspit [EB-09-A-K3-R2-S27] was situated beneath a series of later floor layers. It was circular in form (diameter of 1.9 m) and was constructed of large red bricks, measuring 260 x 130 x 60 mm. The brick wall at the north-east side of the pit was preserved up to a height of 0.4 m. Due to the positioning of wall W4, right above the south-east part of the cesspit, the wall there was only preserved up to a height of 0.22 m (Fig. 4). It is difficult to determine when this cesspit came into existence. The first interpretative excavation results suggest that the urbanisation of this area occurred around the start of the 14th century (Laleman and Vermeiren 2010, 23–5), but architectural historical research in Ghent places the earliest use of brick as building material in the middle of the 13th century (Laleman and Stoops 2008, 1646), meaning that the feature could date to this period. The ongoing discussion concerning the use of brick and its dating might provide us with some new insights. It is also important to note that the cesspit does not necessarily have to be a part of one of the two easternmost houses: it could equally belong to one of the houses of a subsequent allotment phase.

The cross-sectioning of the cesspit fill [EB-09-A-K3-R2-S30] revealed a stratigraphic sequence of six layers, UL and L1–L5. The composition of the uppermost layer (UL) and layer 1 (L1) is the same;

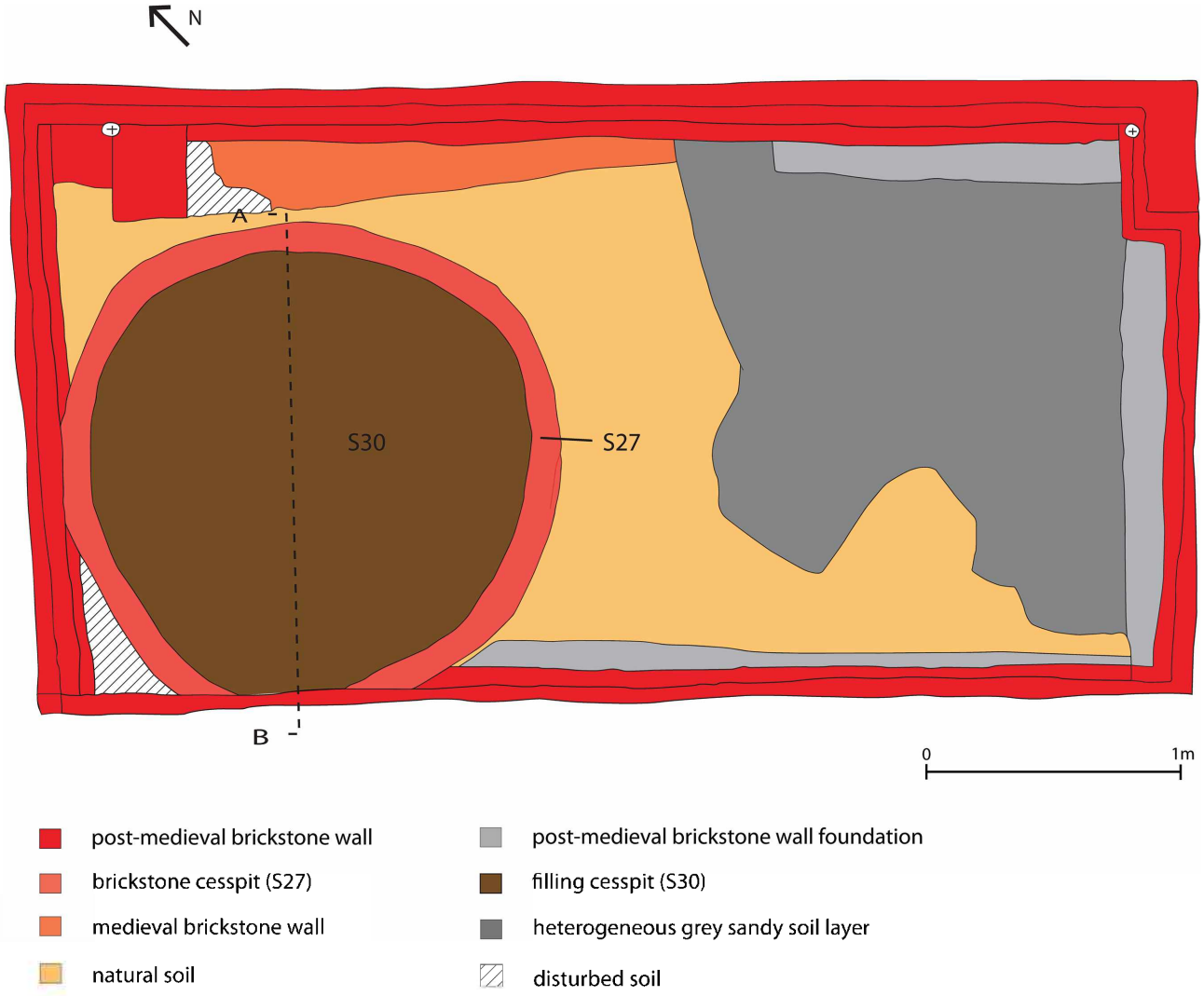

Figure 4. The location of the cesspit S27 and the surrounding archaeological deposits and structures within the earlier rectangular space, A-B cross section. (Image: *Dienst Stadsarcheologie Gent* and author).

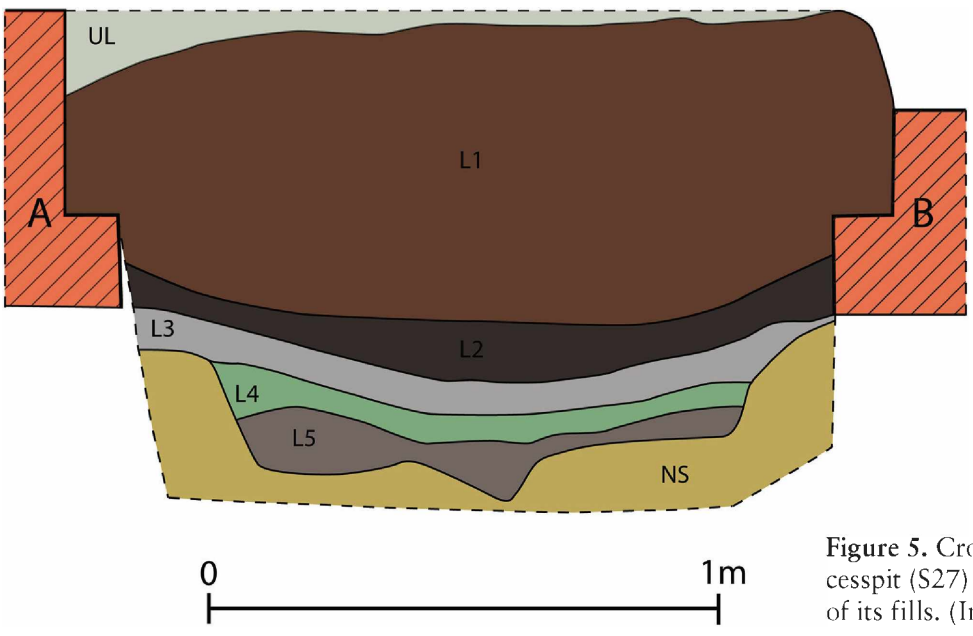

Figure 5. Cross-section (A-B) of cesspit (S27) with the stratigraphy of its fills. (Image: Author).

in both cases a dark brown to brown sandy debris layer with a heterogeneous character, containing brick, a high quantity of charcoal, traces of lime mortar, bone, mussel and oyster shells, and, most importantly to this paper, a concentration of ceramic fragments. With a depth of 0.6 m, L1 was the thickest of the six layers. Layer L2 was a homogeneous, dark brown, viscus layer 0.12 m thick, containing small amounts of charcoal particles. Below this, L3 was 0.08 m thick and consisted of small light grey pebble stones, supplemented with small brick fragments and animal bones. Both L2 and L3 contained fragments of pottery, but in much smaller quantities than layers UL and L1 (see Tables 1-5). No pottery was found in the two subsequent layers, of which L4 was a homogeneous sandy grey-beige-green layer, while L5 was a heterogeneous light-grey to light-brown layer containing traces of brick debris overlying the natural subsoil (NS) (Fig. 5).

Taphonomy of the cesspit

As the refitting or cross-fitting of ceramics can provide useful information regarding depositional mechanisms and stratigraphic relationships (Brown 1985, 35), the pottery from UL and L1, L2 and L3 was checked for joins or sherds from the same vessels in order to better understand the taphonomy of the cesspit. This showed that inter-layer refits almost exclusively occur between UL (108 sherds) and L1 (110 sherds; Fig. 6), but two links were found with sherds from the transition zone between L1 and L2, as a result of which all fragments from this transitional zone will be considered together with those from UL and L1. No refits were registered between the six sherds from L2 and the 12 from L3, and both layers will be analysed together. In any case, the refitting of the sherds and the chronology of the two groups seem to indicate that a separation should be made between layers L2 and L3 on the one hand, and UL and L1 on the other. Whether L2 and L3 should be interpreted as a single or separate phase is difficult to determine based on the available evidence. The lack of pottery fragments and the limited thickness of these and the underlying layers could be explained by the regular cleaning of the pit which would have prevented the build-up of thicker layers. It could also be due to a single clean-up event immediately prior to the closing of the cesspit, which was probably common practice as the work of Van Oosten (2015, 148-51) shows. From the surviving pottery, this phase has been tentatively dated to the second half of the 14th century or the first half of the 15th century. The similarity of layers UL and L1 suggests that they can be interpreted as a singular dumping phase, intended to fill up the cesspit and are consequently linked to its closure, which, from the pottery, can be dated to the second half of the 15th century or the first half of the 16th century.

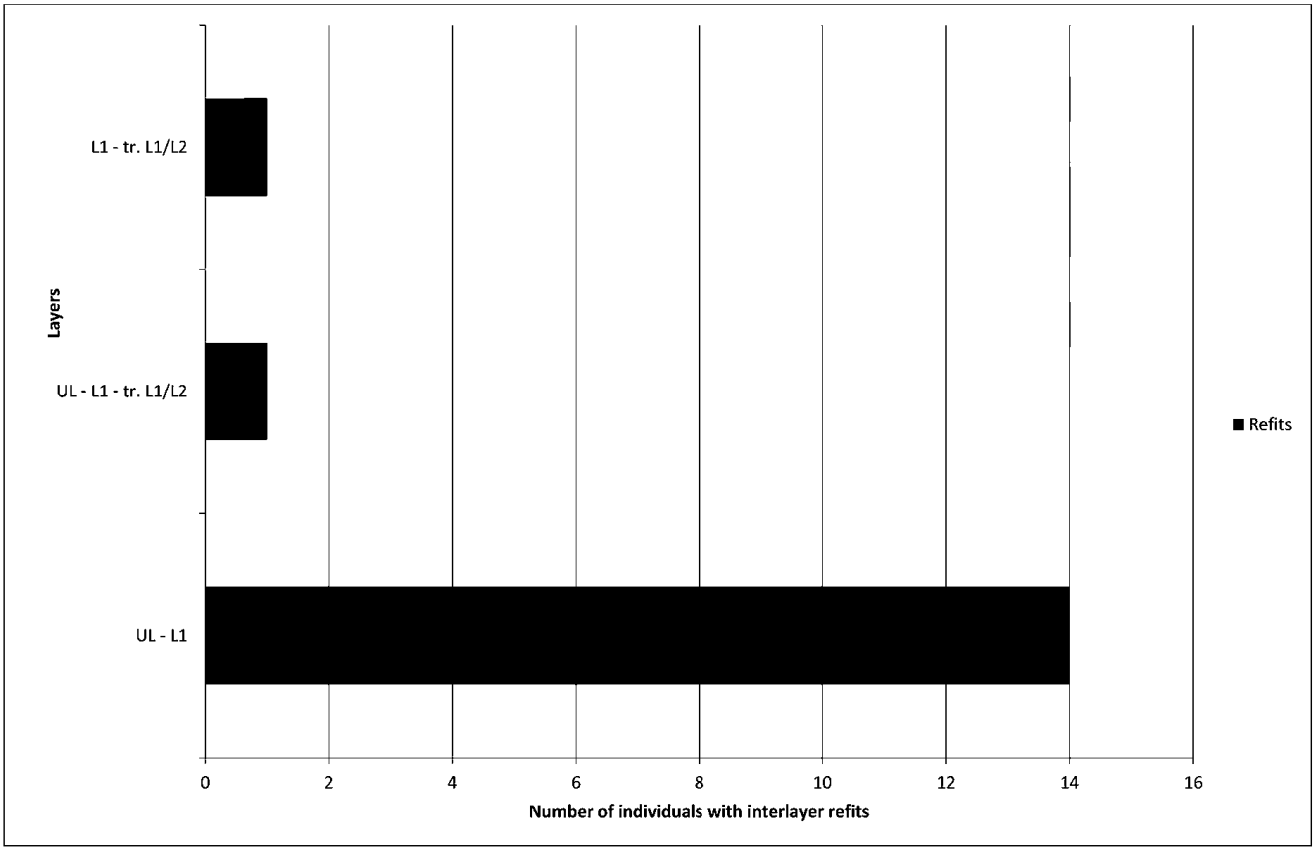

Figure 6. Number of vessels with interlayer refits (tr.=transition). (Image: Author).

The Pottery

Medieval and post-medieval ceramic studies in Flanders and Ghent

The state of medieval and post-medieval ceramic studies in Flanders has been extensively discussed by a number of scholars (Verhaeghe 1993; De Groote 2008; Poulain 2013; 2016). Excavations in the larger cities such as Bruges, Brussels, Antwerp, Mechelen and Ghent have produced large ceramic assemblages with great potential. In recent years individual researchers have made some substantial advances (Poulain 2016, 32); relevant to this paper and the late medieval period are the publications of assemblages from Aalst (De Groote *et al.* 2004), Petegem (De Groote 1993), Middelburg (De Clercq *et al.* 2007), and Ename (Lemay 1994). Specifically for Ghent, studies of this magnitude have yet to be carried out. We therefore had to rely on a series of smaller publications on the sites of Dobbelslot (Raveschot 1984), Kammerstraat (Raveschot 1989), Sint-Michielsplein (Berkers *et al.* 2011) and Sint-Baafsplein (Van Iseghem 2007).

It is vital that such studies continue to be undertaken. The privatisation of the archaeological sector in Flanders has led to an increase in the quantity of archaeological work undertaken within the context of development, making more material available for study. However, ceramic studies are rarely a priority and the funding for and quality of the resultant studies varies significantly (Verhaeghe 1993, 15–16; De Groote 2008, 24). The resources for consistent and significant advances in more regionally-oriented studies are lacking. As a way of resolving the backlog of unexamined ceramic contexts, a significant amount of ceramic studies are being undertaken as part of postgraduate dissertations, as was the case with this study. Needless to say, the quality of these studies also varies and very few are published.

The studies cited above show that by the end of the 13th century ceramic production in Flanders had shifted from a domestic to a commercial level. This shift brought about new technical innovation and enabled the broadening of the spectrum of forms during the 13th and 14th centuries (De Groote 2008, 399–402). The jug remained a common form but had to compete with the new German stoneware imports that rapidly gained popularity. The late medieval period saw the expansion and diversification of ceramic forms. New forms like the double-handled jar, plate, and large carinated bowl emerged during the 14th century (De Groote 2008, 392). In the 15th century we largely see a continuation of the developments from the previous centuries, but in the 16th century forms like the apothecary jar and chamber pot appeared which can be linked to sanitation and health practices and the improvement of personal hygiene (De Groote 2008, 406–8).

Pottery assemblages of the late 15th to early 16th centuries are generally dominated by local redwares, which account for 65–80% of assemblages by Minimum Number of Individuals/Vessels (MNI), with smaller quantities of local greywares (6–25% by MNI); until the later 16th century by which time the greywares have effectively disappeared (De Groote 2008, 299). The principal imports are German stonewares, typically in the form of tankards. Other imports are less common. Tournai-type Whiteware occurs exclusively in this period, whilst maiolica is rare in the Flemish hinterland, appearing from the 14th century onwards, mainly at seigniorial or religious sites (De Groote 2012, 8–9). The pottery assemblage from the cesspit at Emile Braun Square aligns well with these characteristics.

Quantification of the cesspit assemblage

The pottery from UL-L1 and L2-L3 was quantified by sherd count and a calculation of the Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI). After refitting, and due to the relatively limited number of sherds recovered, the risk of double-counting specific vessels was minimal. Certain vessels, including a Siegburg stoneware jug, were very clearly represented by base fragments only, all other sherds being definitely absent from the assemblage. Other vessels lacking both rim and base fragments could be identified by their fabric or distinctive technological characteristics, such as a Valencian Lustreware albarello. In these circumstances a variant of the MNI calculation was used whereby rim, base, and other diagnostic characteristics (*e.g.* firing techniques, decoration, *etc.*) were taken into account (C.A.T.H.M.A. 1990, 157; Raux 1998, 13; Poulain 2013, 109). As a result, certain technical groups within the ceramic categories, which were only represented by body sherds and not by rim or base fragments, were also counted as an individual vessel.

Layers UL – L1

A total of 218 sherds were examined, representing 53 individual vessels (Table 1; Table 2) which fall into six different fabric types: local greyware, local redware, Tournai-type Whiteware, stoneware, and tin-glazed lustreware/maiolica. Redwares are the best represented by both sherd count (83.0%) and MNI (77.4%), but greywares are much less common (sherd count: 2.8%, MNI: 7.6%). The source of Tournai-type Whiteware (sherd count: 8.7%; MNI: 3.8%) is still under discussion and it could be of local or regional origin (De Groote 2008, 109). The remaining wares are imported, comprising Rhenish proto-stoneware (sherd count: 0.5%, MNI: 1.9%) and stoneware (sherd count: 4.5%, MNI: 7.6%) and tin-glazed lustreware, or maiolica (sherd count: 0.5%, MNI: 1.9%) from Spain, more specifically Valencia.

Table 1. Cesspit layers UL – L1 pottery quantification by ware type.

	Sherds	MNI	% sherds	% MNI
Local redware	181	41	83%	77.4%
Lcoal greyware	6	4	2.8%	7.6%
Tournai-type Whiteware	19	2	8.7%	3.8%
Maiolica (Valencian Lustreware)	1	1	0.5%	1.9%
Proto-stoneware	1	1	0.5%	1.9%
Stoneware (Siegburg, Raeren)	10	4	4.5%	7.6%
Total	218	53	100	100

Table 2. Cesspit layers UL – L1 pottery quantification by vessel form.

MNI UL – L1	Local redware	Local greyware	Tournai-type Whiteware	Proto-Stone-ware	Stoneware (Siegburg, Raeren)	Maiolica (Valencian lustreware)
Plate	2					
Small bowl	2					
Porringer	3					
Jug	5				3	
Double-handled jar	6		2			
Cooking pot (chamber pot)	1					
Large carinated bowl	3					
Chamber pot	3					
Albarello						1
Miniature handled pot	1					
Oil lamp	1					
Money box	1					
Unknown (rim/base)	11				1	
Unknown (undiagnostic)	2	4		1		
Total	41	4	2	1	4	1

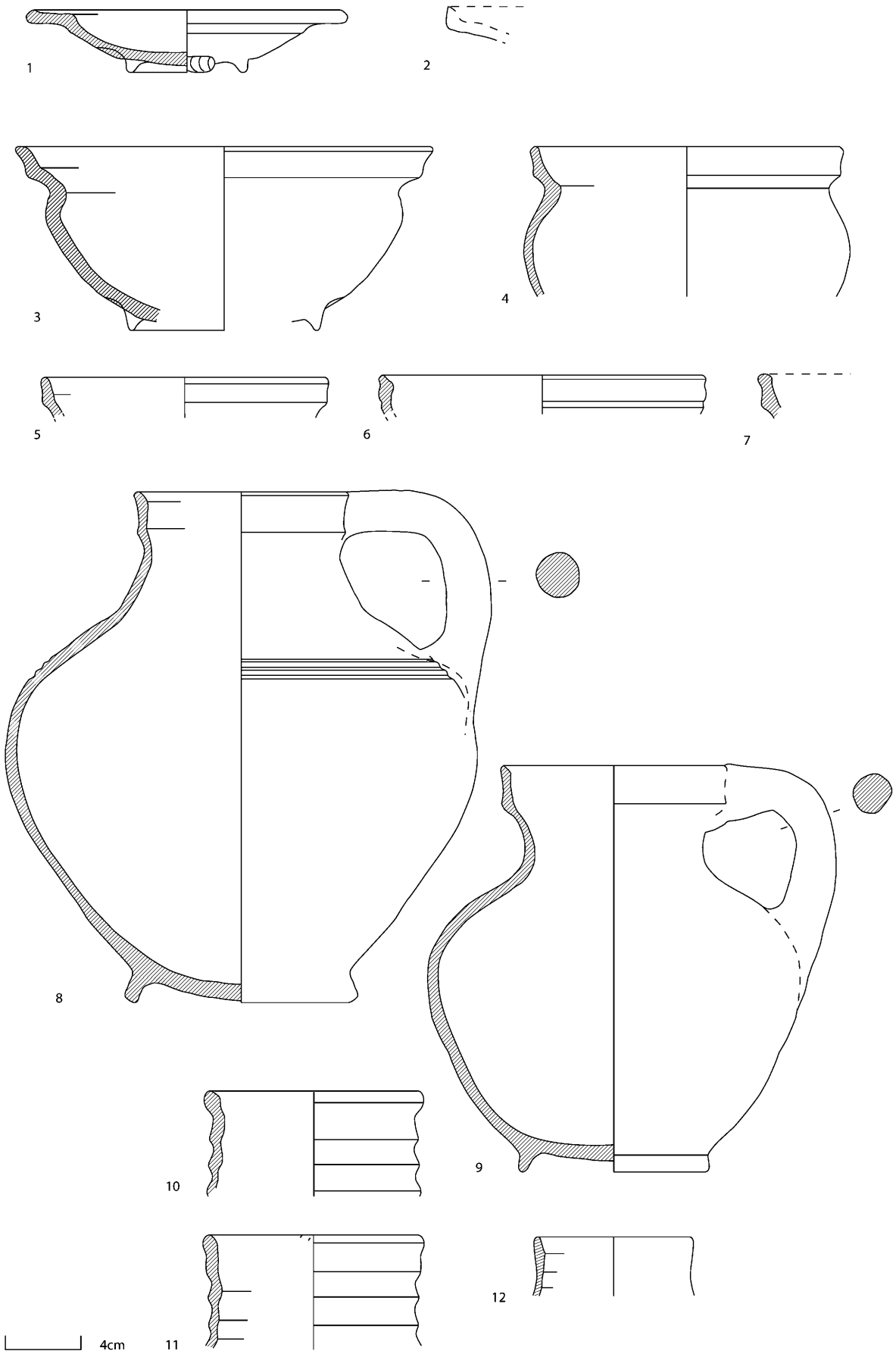

Figure 7. Local redware pottery from UL – L1: 1-2: plates, 3-4: bowls, 5-7: possible porringers, 8-9: jugs, 10-12: jugs. (Image: Author).

Figure 8. Pottery from the site. 1: Plate in local redware with a green-coloured lead glaze, white slipped interior. 2: Jug in local redware. 3: Chamber pot in local redware with soot traces. 4: Money box in local redware with perforations. 5-6: Double-handled jars in Tournai Whiteware 7: Burnt fragment of a Valencian lustreware *albarello*. (Image: Author).

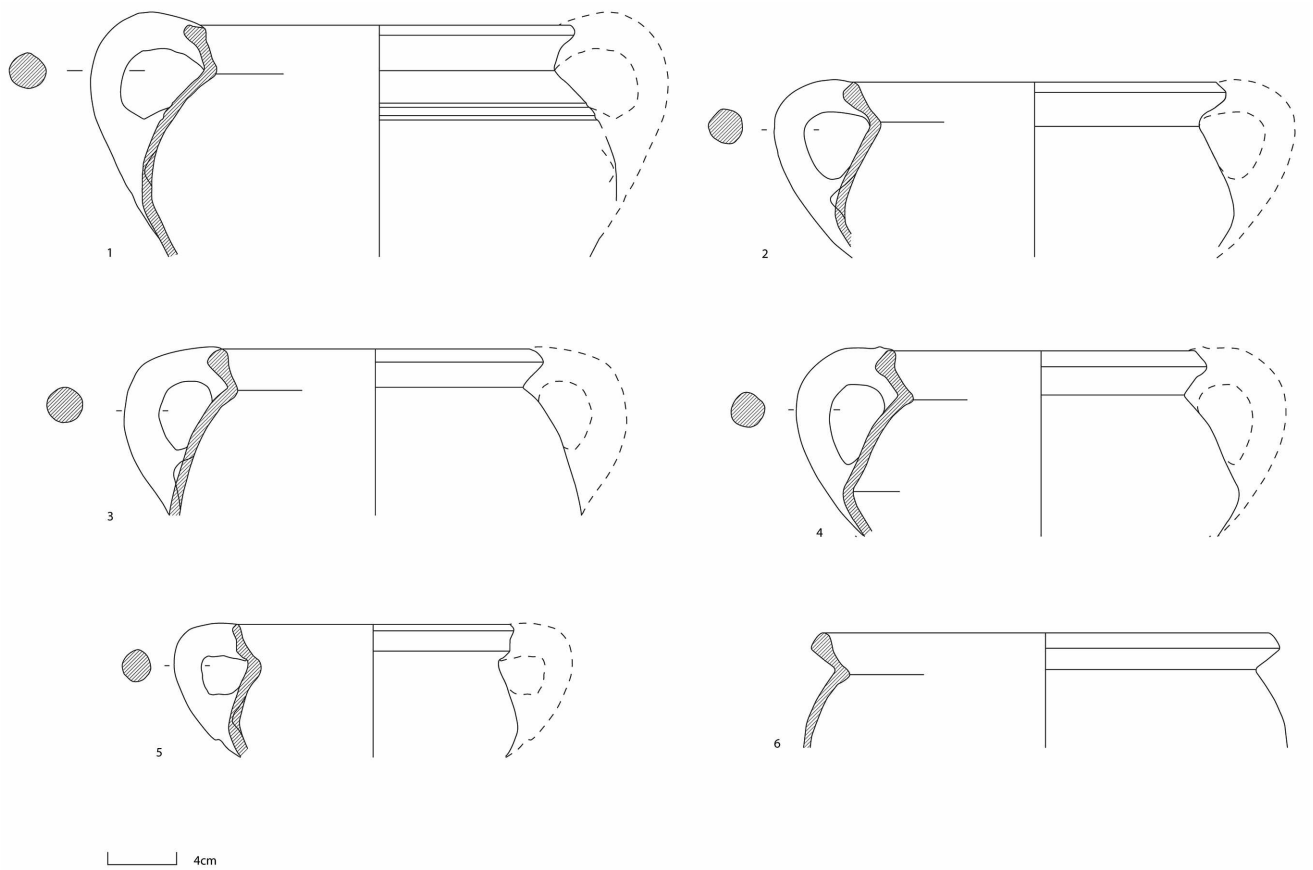

Figure 9. Local redware pottery from UL – L1: 1-6: double-handed jars. (Image: Author).

Fabrics and typology (Table 2)

Local redware

The redware found in the cesspit has a hard and dense sandy fabric comprised of fine rounded grains of quartz (0.1–0.2 mm) with occasional other inclusions such as mica; colour varies from red-brown to orange-red with occasionally a darker grey core. The 41 vessels comprise 12 different forms: plates, small bowls, porringers, jugs, double-handled jars, cooking pots, large carinated bowls, chamber pots, an albarello, a miniature handled pot, an oil lamp, and a money box.

Plates

The assemblage from UL – L1 contained two plates (Fig. 7.1-2), one of which was sufficiently well preserved to permit a thorough typological analysis. This plate (Fig. 7.1 and 8.1) has an upright lip with a slightly thickened rim and thumbed feet around the base, abrasion marks on which show that it was regularly used. The interior was covered by a green lead glaze over a white slip but no further decoration was present. Based on the rather small rim diameter of 170 mm, together with its stylistic features, this vessel can be dated to the 15th century (De Groote 2008, 150–1). Similar plates can be found at the abbey site of Petegem-Beaulieu and are dated to the last quarter of the 15th century or the first half of the 16th century (De Groote 1993, 348).

Bowls and porringers

Two small bowls are characterized by an upright collared rim with a constricted neck and a hemispherical body with an internal lead glaze (Fig. 7.3-4). Three fragments from possible porringers also have a clear lead glaze on the inside (Fig. 7.5-7). The bowl with a collared rim and constricted neck is a very common type in Ghent, from the 13th century up until the first half of the 16th century (Berkers *et al.* 2011, 52). Although bowls were certainly used in the kitchen for the preparation of food, those with smaller diameters (ranging from 110–230 mm) are more likely to have been used serving single portions at the dining table (De Groote 2008, 235, 407).

Jugs

Five jugs in local redware were identified, two of which could be reconstructed to almost their full original form (Fig. 7.8-9 and 8.2). Both are globular with a sagging footring base and a smooth neck with an upright, slightly collared rim. Some small differences can be found, as the second example seems to have a slightly more funnel-shaped neck (Fig. 7.9) and is also

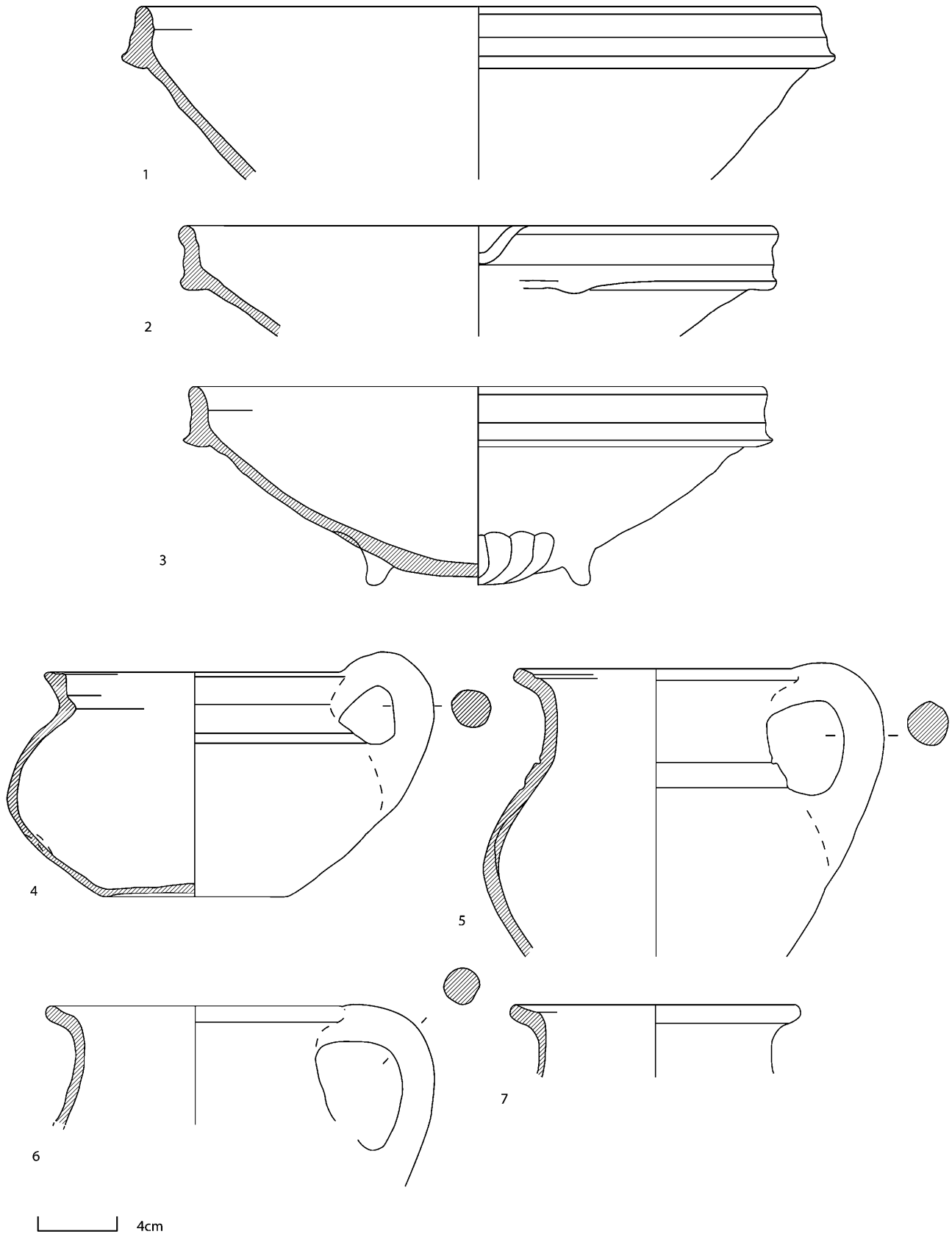

Figure 10. Local redware pottery from UL – L1: 1-3: large carinated bowls, 4: chamber pot used as cooking pot, 5-7: chamber pots. (Image: Author).

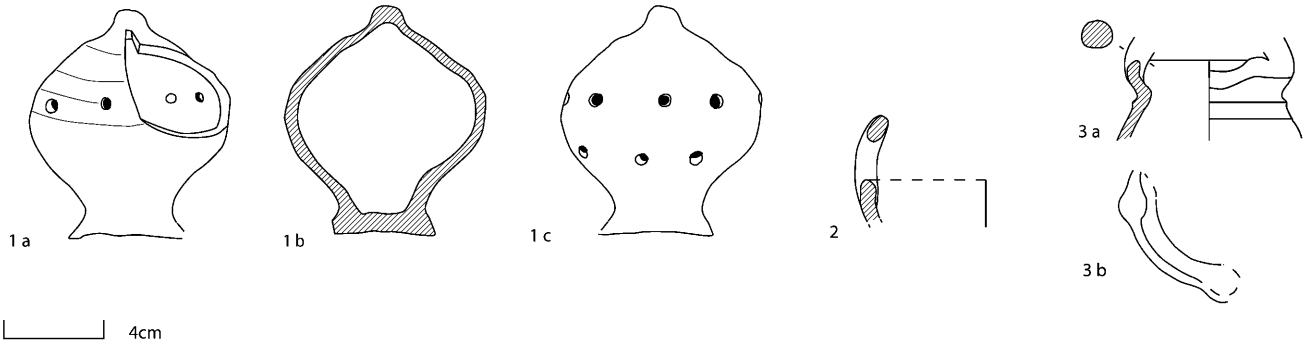

Figure 11. Local redware pottery from UL – L1: 1 a-c: money box, 2: oil lamp, 3 a-b: miniature handle pot. (Image: Author).

the only jug that has been treated with lead glazing on both the interior and exterior. The calcareous deposit observed inside both jugs suggests that they were used for the storage of water or contained urine. The remaining vessels were identified by rim fragments only (Fig. 7.10-12). Two (Fig. 7.10-11) have a ribbed shape with a rounded top, while the third has a smooth upright shape with a slightly flattened top. All three have external lead glazing.

Double-handled jars

With six examples, the double-handled jar, or *grape* (Fig. 9.1-6) is the most common form in local redware. All have similar features such as a short protruding collar, with lid-seated rim, a pair of looped rod handles, partial lead glazing, and traces of sooting on the lower body, due to their use as cooking pots. Study of the rim diameters shows that an array of different sizes was available, with dimensions ranging between 160 mm and 280 mm. This variation could reflect an evolution towards more refinement in food and culinary practices, whereby the preparation of new dishes required the use of specific, and more specialised, cooking vessels (De Groote 2008, 293).

Large carinated bowls

Three large carinated bowls were identified, all with collared rims and one with a pouring lip (Fig. 10.1-3). Due to their fragmentary preservation only one bowl still has the remains of the convex base with thumbed decoration (Fig. 10.3). The insides of all three bowls were covered in a lead glaze. Such bowls are traditionally interpreted as being used for the storage and processing of milk. A more recent theory, however, suggests an alternative use in the preparation of cold and hot foods (De Clercq *et al.* 2007, 8; De Groote 2008, 266; Poulain *et al.* 2016).

Chamber pots

Two different types of chamber pot can be distinguished. The first is quite squat, with a relatively wide mouth, spehерical/globular body and a slightly concave base. The rim has short protruding collar and seems to be internally lid-seated (Fig. 10.4). The second type can be identified by its pear-shaped body (Fig. 10.5-7). All three chamber pots have traces of lead glazing, ranging from just a glaze spatter to covering more than half of the exterior. Where enough of the base still remains, traces of glaze have also been found on the interior (Fig. 10.4-5), but urine residue was only present on the best preserved of the type 2 chamber pots (Fig. 10.5). Although the chamber pot is generally considered to be a sanitary vessel, traces of soot found on the base and lower wall areas of one of the pots (Fig. 8.3 and 10.4), together with the absence of urine deposits seem to suggest an alternative use as a cooking pot or industrial vessel.

Money box

The unglazed money box (Fig. 8.4 and 11.1a-c) is mammiform with a rounded top, slightly concave foot and a vertical slit in the wall for the insertion of coins. The vessel is unglazed and undecorated, but perforations in the wall seem to indicate a secondary use for which no clear explanation has yet been found. Larger perforated pots have been used as containers for the cultivation of herbs (Trimpe-Burger 1964, 523), but ascribing a similar secondary use to the money box seems rather unlikely.

Oil lamp

One oil lamp (Fig. 11.2) is represented by a rim sherd with a standing ear. Very little information can be deduced about this vessel but it probably belonged to an upright/standing type of lamp composed of two dishes connected by a solid vertical shaft (De Groote 2008, 244).

Miniature handled pot

The last local redware form is a miniature handled pot (Fig. 11.3a-b), which is interpreted as a toy. What remains of the rim seems to indicate a near circular form, with a small pouring lip and a basket handle arching from one to the other; no base fragments were recovered. Both the inside and outside of the pot have been treated with lead glaze, with a band of white slip around the rim giving a slightly yellow hue.

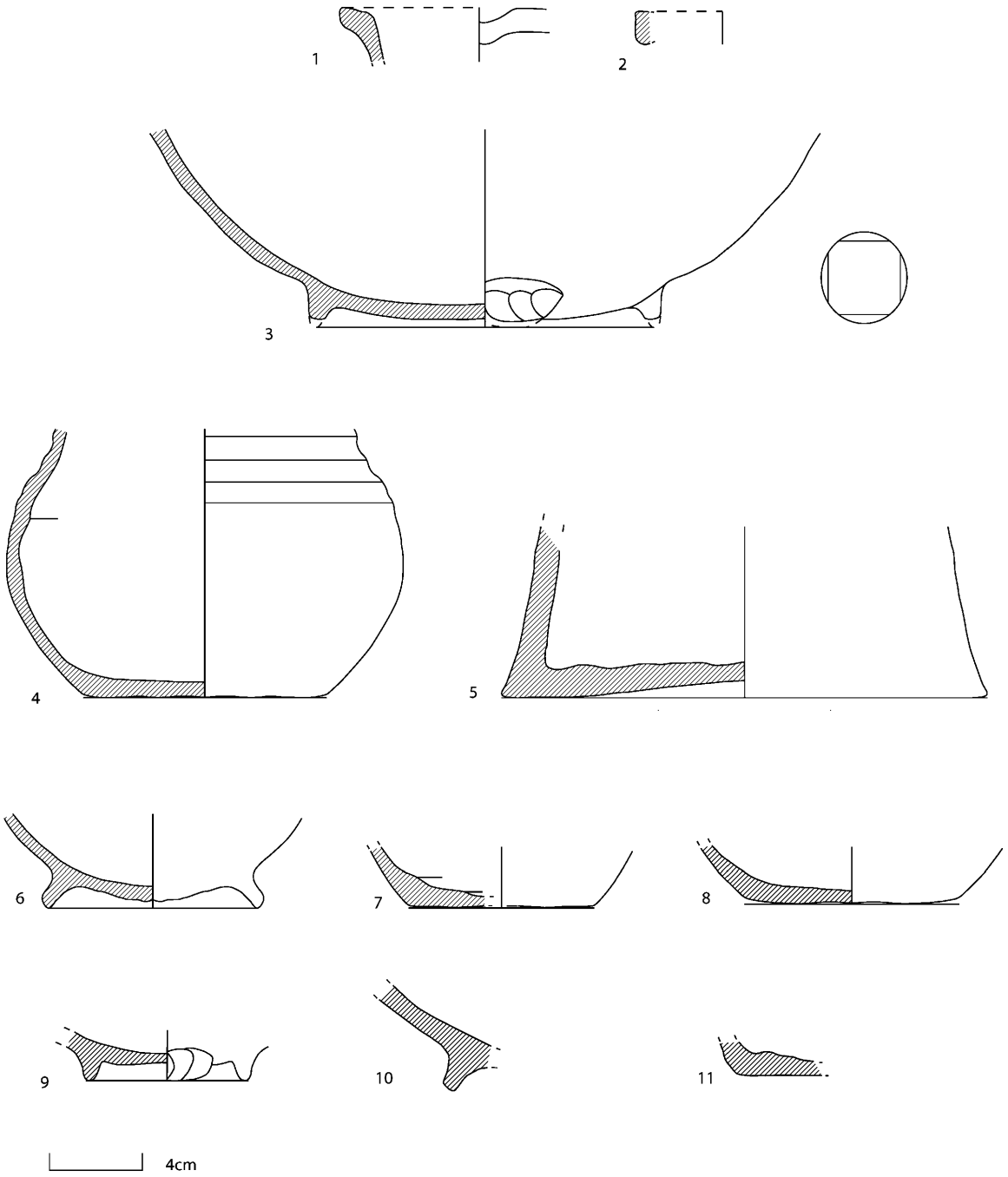

Figure 12. Local redware pottery of undetermined form from UL – L1. (Image: Author).

Unidentified
Following the chosen method of MNI calculation, two rims (Fig. 12.1-2), nine bases and two body sherds (Fig. 12.3-11) of local redware have been interpreted as representing individual vessels, the forms of which cannot be determined.

Local greyware
Technologically, the local greyware can be seen as the reduced counterpart of the local redware, having a hard, dense sandy fabric comprised of fine quartz grains with no other definite inclusions. The colour varies from light grey to beige to dark grey. In two out of the four fabric groups, the core is distinctive, having either a darker or lighter colour than the margins and surfaces. The six body sherds from layers UL and L1 represent four individual vessels, but no forms could be identified.

Tournai-type Whiteware
The whiteware in this assemblage has a fine-grained, soft, chalk-like, sandy fabric with an orange to pink colour, in some cases with white or red lenses as inclusions caused by combining the normal redware clay and alluvial white clays with a low iron content (De Groote 2008, 99). This fabric type owes its name

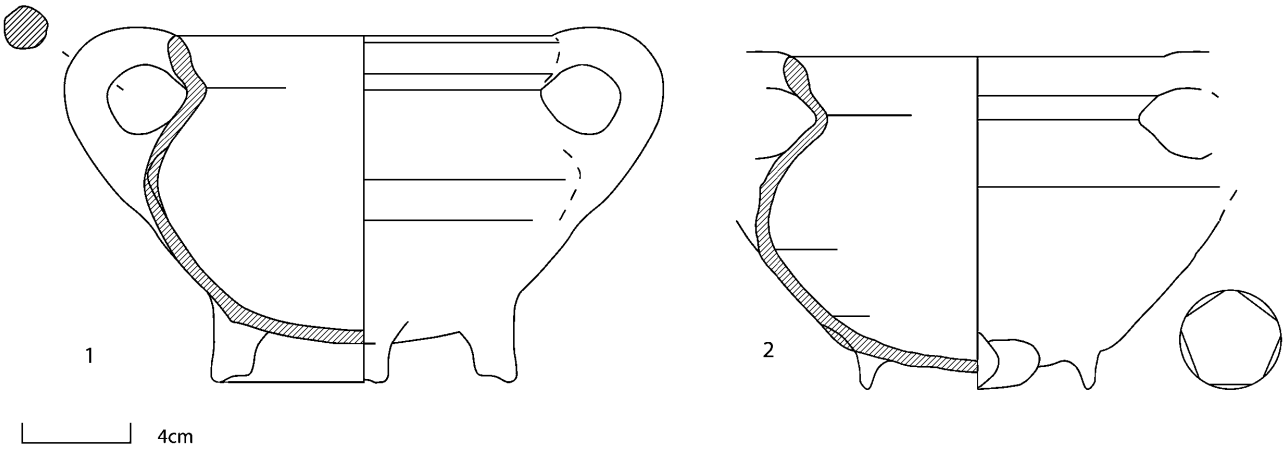

Figure 13. Tournai-type Whiteware pottery from UL – L1: 1-2: double-handled jars. (Image: Author).

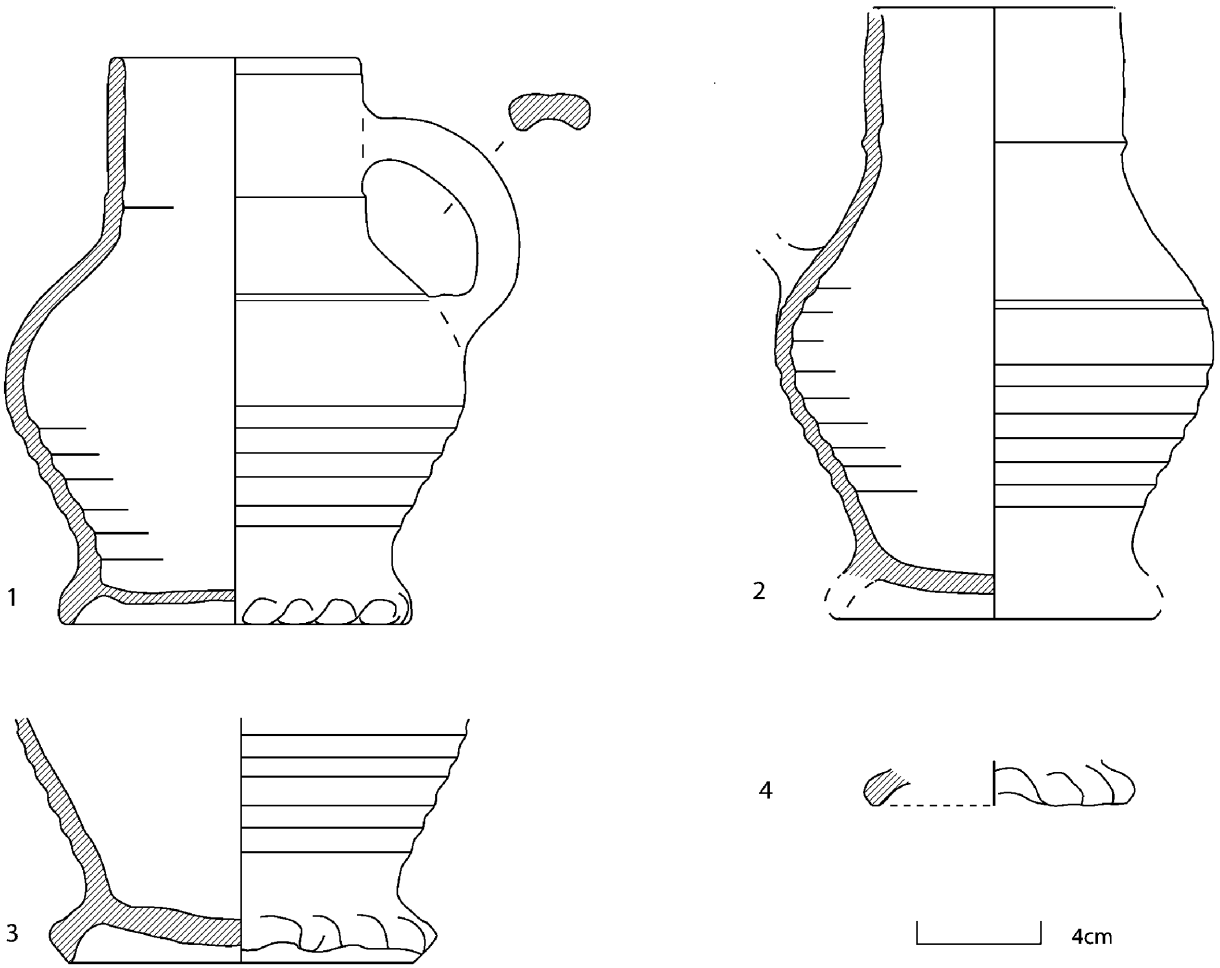

Figure 14. Stoneware pottery from UL – L1: 1-3: mugs/drinking jugs, 4: unknown. (Image: Author).

to the fact that the closest source of white alluvial clay to the Scheldt valley is Tournai and its surroundings. Whether or not entire pots, or just the white clay, were imported is still open for debate, and Tournai is not the only possible point of origin, but where finds in the Scheldt valley are concerned, it is admittedly the most plausible one (De Groote 2008, 109).

Two vessels were present, both double-handled jars or *grapen* (Fig. 8.5-6 and 13), which, like their local redware equivalents have a lid-seated rim and two loop handles. One example has a tripod base while the other has thumbed feet. Both vessels are fully glazed, with a yellow glaze on the interior and an external green glaze. No other decoration was found, nor any

traces of soot. With rim diameters between 140 and 159 mm, these jars seem to belong to a smaller type than their local redware counterparts, and, like them, can potentially be linked to increasingly sophisticated cooking practices which were evolving in the 13th to 14th centuries (De Groote 2008, 293). As the white clay used in the manufacture of these jars seems to be a better heat conductor than the iron-rich clay used for the local redwares, these whiteware jars may have been better suited to the preparation of specific dishes and meals (De Groote 2008, 293).

Stoneware

Only one (probably residual) sherd of proto-stoneware and 10 sherds of German stoneware were recovered, the latter deriving from four different vessels. Three of these can be clearly identified as salt-glazed mugs/drinking jugs, probably from Raeren (Fig. 14.1-3). Two are nearly complete, while the third is represented by a base fragment. Both the well-preserved examples are of typical Raeren forms, having an upright, rounded, cylindrical rim with a slight rib on the neck and a vertical handle and a slightly concave base with a lobed foot. Typologically, these vessels are typical of the second half of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century (Gaimster 1997, 58; De Groote *et al.* 2004, 340). The fourth vessel, possibly also a Raeren product, is represented by a single small lobed base fragment (Fig. 14.4) which cannot be assigned to a specific form type.

Valencian Lustreware

Only one sherd of tin-glazed pottery was recovered (Fig. 8.7). Although the sherd has been burnt, it has a soft, fine sandy fabric with a light pink to brown pink colour, and is tin-glazed both internally and externally, with some traces of lustre still visible on the exterior. This find can be identified as part of an imported Valencian lustreware *albarello* dating to the second and third quarter of the 15th century (J. Conesa pers. comm; Hurst and Neal 1982, 83; De Groote 2002, 443). However, due to the prolonged use of this type of pottery, potentially over several generations, this dating should be used with caution and as a *terminus post quem* (De Groote 2012, 6). The importance of this find, the first of its date from a domestic assemblage, is considered below (discussion).

Layers L2 – L3

A total of 28 sherds were examined, representing twelve vessels (Tables 3 and 4). Only three different ceramic categories were identified: greyware, redware, and stoneware. Depending on the method of quantification, either local redware (sherd count: 35.7%, MNI: 58.3%) or local greyware (sherd count: 57.1%, MNI: 25%) is the best represented. For both types, the technological characteristics of the fabrics are the same as those noted above. The only import category is Siegberg stoneware (sherd count: 7.1%, MNI: 16.7%)

Table 3. Cesspit layers L2 – L3 pottery quantification by ware type.

L2 – L3	Sherds	MNI	% sherds	% MNI
Redware	10	7	35.7%	58,3%
Greyware	16	3	57.1%	25%
Stoneware	2	2	7.1%	16,7%
Total	28	12	100	100

Five different forms were identified: a small bowl, a bowl/porringer, jugs, a gaming counter and a pig-shaped flute/whistle (Table 4). Five vessels, either rim fragments which could not be assigned to a specific form type, or identified by their fabric, were classified as unknown.

Table 4. Cesspit layers L2 – L3 pottery quantification by form.

MNI L2 – L3	Red	Grey	Stoneware
Small bowl	1		
Porringer	1		
Jug	1	1	1
Gaming piece/counter	1		
Flute/whistle	1		
Unknown (rim/base)			1
Unknown (diagnostic)	2	2	
Total	7	3	2

The best preserved of the two small bowls in local redware (Fig. 15.1) has a rim diameter of 190–210mm, hemispherical shape with a constricted neck and a collared rim with a pronounced upper lip. No base was recovered but the interior is completely covered by a colourless lead glaze. The second example (Fig. 15.2) could equally be a porringer, as only a small collared rim fragment survives, the diameter of which could no longer be calculated.

Sherds from three jugs were recovered, of which that in the local redware has a straight, slightly everted rim, with a rounded top (Fig. 15.3). The local greyware jug has a rim with a ribbed and band-shaped appearance and a rounded top (Fig. 16); no glazing or other decorative features were present. The third example,

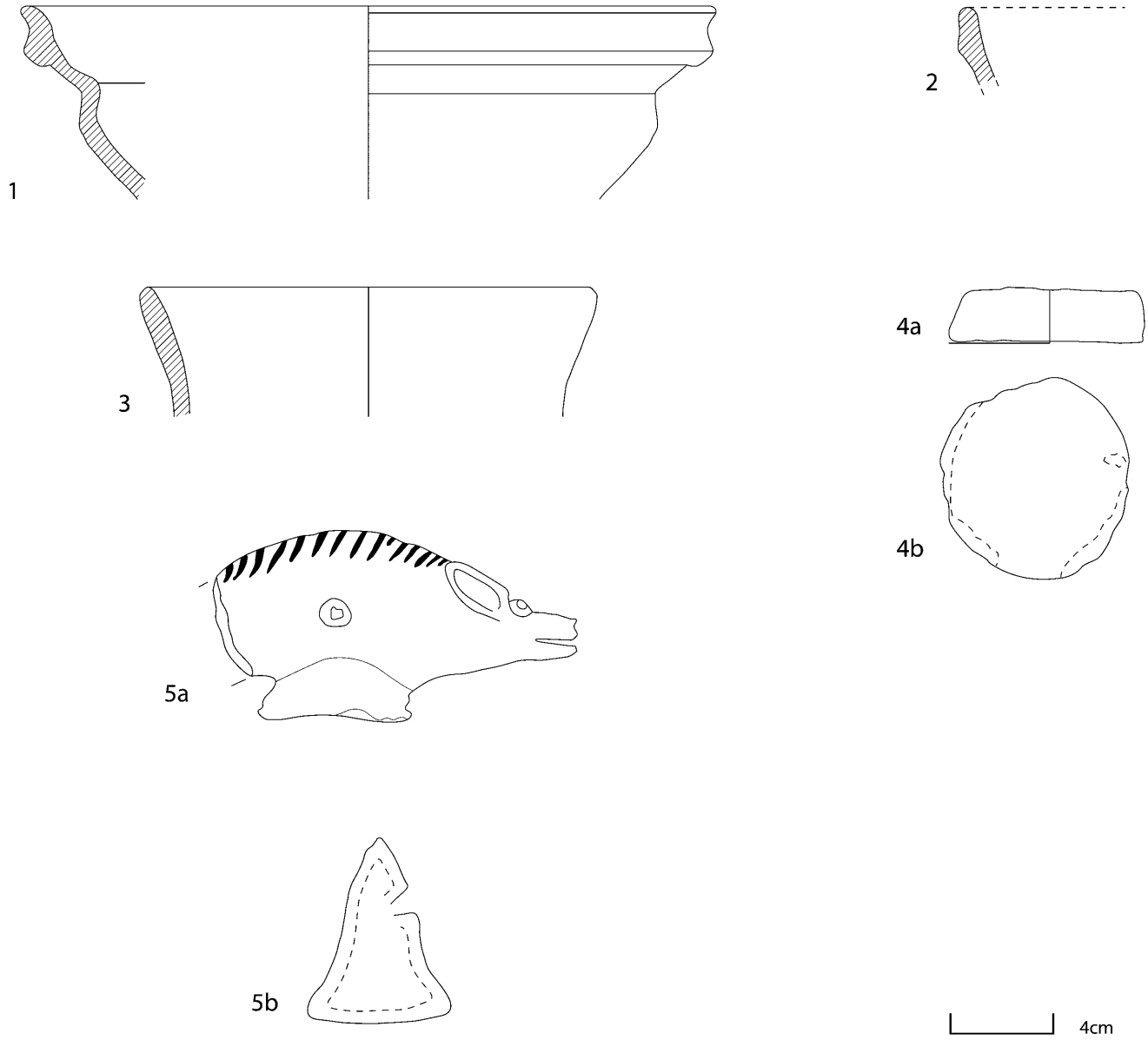

Figure 15. Local redware pottery from L2 – L3: 1: small bowl, 2: small bowl/porringer, 3: jug, 4a-b: gaming counter, 5a-b: pig-shaped flute/whistle. (Image: Author).

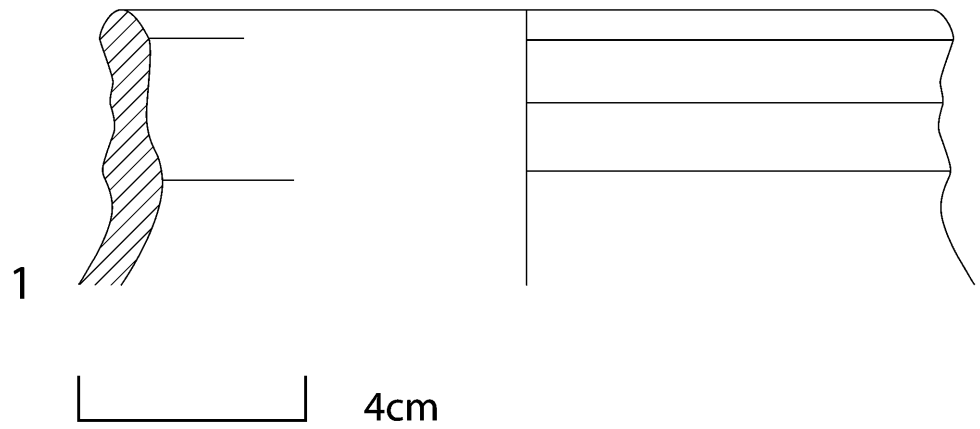

Figure 16. Local greyware pottery from L2 – L3: 1: jug. (Image: Author).

of Siegburg stoneware (Fig. 18), is represented by the thumbed base and part of the ribbed body with the typical orange-red flamed exterior which is a direct consequence of the firing process.

Two other vessels in local redware were identified. The first is a disc with a diameter of 55 mm and a height of 15 mm (Fig. 15.4a-b). It has no glazing or other decorative features and was probably fabricated by shaping a piece of coarse ceramic building material for use as a gaming counter. A similar disc was found in in the 15th-century sector at the site of Walraversijde (Pieters *et al.* 2013, 133).

The second find is one of the most remarkable in the whole assemblage. Of pig-shaped form, it has a length of 110 mm, a height of 58 mm and a width of 23 mm (Fig. 15.5a-b, 17) and is fully covered with a colourless lead glaze. For the back hair of the pig, slight parallel incisions have been made, which, like the eyes of the pig, were painted with a fine white slip, giving them a yellow colour after glazing. The perforation in the right wall of the figurine might suggest a functional use as a water flute or whistle. This type of flute is usually found in the shape of a bird (Hurst *et al.* 1986, 142–3; Pieters *et al.* 2013, 428) whereas the only parallels for ceramic pigs are money boxes (Bartels 1999, 126) an interpretation which in this case seems dubious at best.

One last remaining find, for which no parallels have been found thus far, is an oddly-bent, very fine rim sherd without any glazing or decorative features. The rim is straight and slightly rounded (Fig. 18.2).

Figure 17. Pig-shaped whistle in local redware. (Image: *Dienst Stadsarcheologie Gent*).

Interpretation and discussion

To summarise, the earliest possible date for the construction of the cesspit is at the beginning of the 14th century although the pottery from it is clearly later. Two concentrations of pottery can be distinguished: the first one was cautiously dated to the second half of the 14th to the first half of the 15th century, and the second concentration was dated to the second half of the 15th to the first half of the 16th century. This would mean the pit had been in use as a cesspit for several decades before its final phase, in which it was filled up by a ceramic-rich layer of debris.

At least two depositional phases can be identified within the cesspit based on the analysis of the inter-layer refits. The limited number of sherds from L2-L3 impedes a clear dating and interpretation of the lower layers, but the relatively high percentage of local greyware, a Siegburg Stoneware jug base and a small bowl in local redware allow us to suggest (very tentatively) a deposition date in the second half of the 14th or the first half of the 15th century. The paucity of pottery in both L2 and L3, and its complete absence

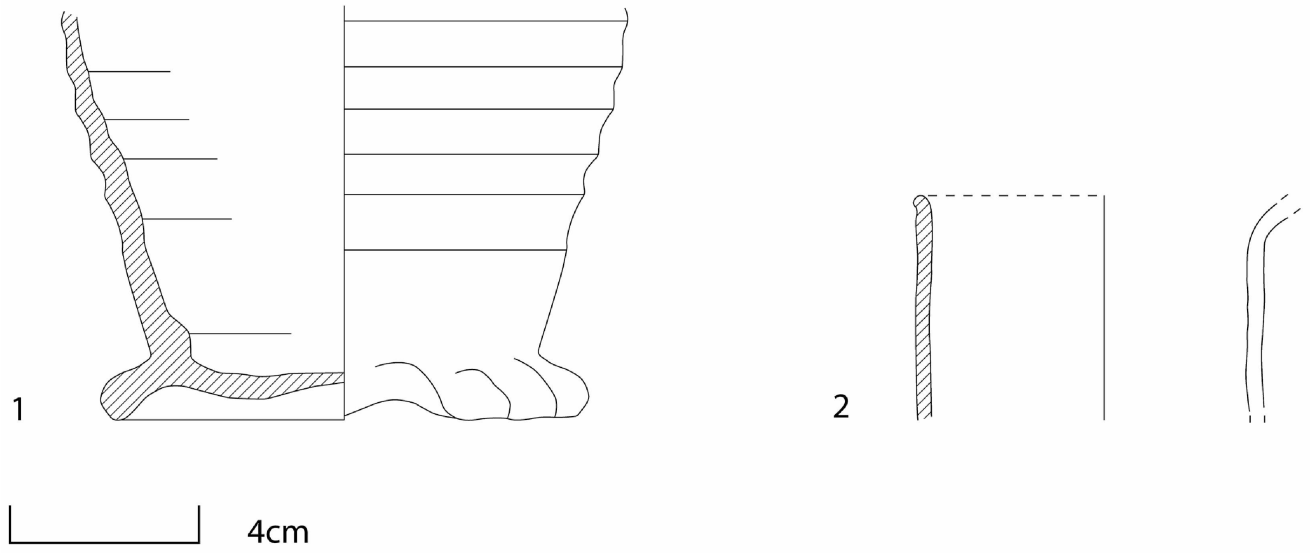

Figure 18. Stoneware pottery from L2 – L3: 1: Siegburg jug base, 2: unknown. (Image: Author).

from layers L4 and L5, are most likely due to the regular cleaning of the cesspit. The date of the cesspit itself, therefore, depends on the bricks used in its construction which, as noted above, give us a *terminus post quem* at the end of the 13th or the beginning of the 14th century. Unfortunately, based on the current available evidence, no further refinement of this date is possible. We do, however, have a better understanding of when the cesspit went out of use, as it was backfilled with a thick layer (UL-L1) containing more pottery. The locally-produced redware forms give a rather broad date range of the 15th to first half of the 16th centuries, and the Raeren stoneware jugs and the double-handled jars in Tournai-type Whiteware show that this deposit dates to after 1450. The high percentage of functionally-unidentified vessels is partially due to the choice to incorporate not only rim, but also base and other diagnostic fragments, when calculating the MNI.

Although no single form category is overwhelmingly dominant, the composition of the assemblage suggests that a broad variety of household tasks are likely to be represented (Table 5). Thus while we do see a more prominent presence of forms used in the cold and warm preparation, serving and storage of food and drinks, forms that can be linked to hygiene and personal care are also represented. Especially interesting finds like the money box and miniature handled pot can perhaps be linked to leisure time and the presence of children, and the same could be argued for the pig-shaped flute/whistle from L2-L3. A similar money box can be seen, held by a child, in Pieter Bruegel the Elder's painting *The wedding of Mopsus and Nisa,* dated to 1570 (Bartels 1999, 126).

Table 5. Pottery quantification by function.

	MNI Ul-L1		MNI L2-L3	
Food preparation	9	17.0%	0	0.0%
Kitchen/Storage	9	17.0%	0	0.0%
Tableware	9	17.0%	5	41.7%
Hygiene	4	7.5%	0	0.0%
Other	3	5.7%	2	16.6%
Unknown	19	35.8%	5	41.7%
Total	53	100%	12	100%

As for the status of those using the pottery, an additional multidisciplinary study with a more detailed historical and microbotanical aspect, as well as a study of the recovered animal remains could provide us with a more precise and nuanced image. That being said, while most of the pottery is typical of the period and widely found, three ceramic forms might indeed be indicative of a more prosperous consumer. These include the pig-shaped flute/whistle and the double-handled jars in Tournai-type Whiteware which, as noted above, was more suited to cooking with high temperatures than the local redwares and could be seen as a more specialised product, available at a higher price (De Groote *et al.* 2004, 343). The second, and more significant, the fragment of Valencian Lustreware *albarello.* The presence of this vessel in a civic patrician context of this date is remarkable, as most imported maiolica fragments of this date in Flanders have been found on religious sites and to a lesser extent on seigniorial sites within cities such as Ghent, Antwerp, Aalst, and Oudenaarde (De Groote 2012, 9; Raveschot 1985, 27-29; Charles 2009, 170–178), with them being exceptionally rare on sites belonging to the civic class (De Groote 2012, 7–9),

To summarise, the assemblage discussed here has provided a small insight into the material culture of a patrician household in Ghent. Based on the available data, no far-reaching conclusions can be drawn, but possible indications of an above average financial standing of the residents of the property have been noted. As very few pottery assemblages from Ghent have been published in detail, this paper offers a contribution towards the better understanding of Ghent's late medieval ceramics and the regional variations present in Flanders. Furthermore, with regards to the overarching KOBRA research project, I have provided a chronological anchor point and some elements for a future socio-economic interpretation. In what will hopefully become a multidisciplinary approach, these can be useful additional elements towards the better understanding of the evolution of the building block on the northern side of the Emile Braun Square and aspects of life within it, and in medieval Ghent as a whole.

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Résumé

En raison de l'emplacement d'un nouveau système d'égouts et de la construction d'une installation d'un dépôt souterrain de bicyclettes, une fouille a été réalisée en 2009 sur le site de la place Emile Braun, Gand, pour assurer la conservation du patrimoine archéologique sous-jacent. Dans le bloc de construction au Nord de la place, un cloaque circulaire de la fin du Moyen Age a été découvert. Cet article présente une analyse taphonomique et morphologique, et une analyse de la pâte de ce matériel pour déterminer la chronologie et la taphonomie de cet installation afin de mieux comprendre le statut socio-économique de ses consommateurs.

Zusammenfassung

Aufgrund des Baus eines neuen Kanalisationssystems sowie eines unterirdischen Fahrradlagers wurde 2009 am Emile-Braun-Platz in Ghent eine Ausgrabung durchgeführt. So sollte die Erhaltung des darunterliegenden archäologischen Erbes sichergestellt werden. Innerhalb der nördlichen Baueinheit des Platzes wurde dabei eine kreisförmige Jauchegrube aus dem Spätmittelalter entdeckt. Dieser Beitrag präsentiert eine taphonimische, morphologische und Textilanalyse des Materials. Dadurch können sowohl Chronologie und Taphonomie seiner Eigenschaften bestimmt werden als auch Einblicke in den sozio-ökonomischen Status seiner VerbraucherInnen gewonnen werden.