

The Pottery Collection of Sūq Ḥarāj (Lana Shehadeh)

The rescue excavation of Sūq Ḥarāj yielded a diversity of pottery remains, the earliest of which date to the 13th century. This article aims at providing an overview and analysis of the findings, which were divided into 10 main collections, three of which are surface finds, that constitute the most extensive collection. The overall pottery analysis yielded four main forms of ware, all of local origin; three of which were well worked pottery and comprise both wheel made and hand made vessels. The fourth ware, although very course includes a variety of vessels, mainly drainage pipes that were not as worked as those of the previous three¹.

The Wares

Ware I: a refined ware that is composed of a clean clay with very minimal amounts of inclusions. The inclusions which make up only 5% of the ware are mainly that of chalice.

Ware II: a partially porous ware. This ware differentiates from the above in that it contains more inconsistencies composed of both chalice and lime. The lime remnants within the clay leave a void which is usually circular in shape. The inconsistencies in this ware make up ca. 50% of the clay.

Ware III: in comparison to the above wares, one may consider this to be a rather course form of ware. The clay is filled with inclusions that vary in size and in form. Within this ware remains of coal, chalice, lime and stone were found. This ware however is different

from the last form (ware IV, see below) of very course ware in that it was used for the making of more refined pieces, that is to say glazed plates and bowls were made using this form of clay.

Ware IV: the final form of ware is composed of a very course clay that includes remnants of stone and other inclusions of lime, chalice, calcined bone, grog, and metallic remains identified by the forms of voids they create. This form of clay was mainly used in the construction of the clay pipes that were retrieved around the fountain and also in the sherds of the very few cooking pots that were found.

The Collection

Rescue excavation works began during the renovation of the sūq where during the removal of the 20th century floor tiling, certain structures were found (see contribution of Meister / Karam). Ten areas were examined and the corresponding pottery collected. Starting from the fountain which appeared within the courtyard, three main collections were made related to this structure. In the courtyard another two collections were gathered, one related to the finds from the eastern entrance of the yard, and the other from the channel structure, north of the fountain. Two more compilations, coming from within shops 1 and 2 were made, ending the stratified collections. The remaining three collections are those labeled surface finds that make up unstratified material which appeared during the earth-moving works on the construction site (yard, street, shop). These collections made up most of the total amount of the sherds collected.

Techniques of Glaze and Decoration

Dating back to the Mamluk period (see contribution Weber), Sūq Ḥarāj revealed numerous amounts of glazed ware. Therefore, prior to beginning our description of the material remains, it is essential

| Location | Pottery | Glass | Metal | Special finds |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------------|--|
| Fountain north | 10 sherds | 13 fragments | 10 recent pieces | 2 stones; 1 brush 4 porcelain sherds |
| Fountain south | | | 10 recent pieces | |
| Fountain west | | 23 fragments | 22 recent pieces | 9 water pipes; 1 stone 5 porcelain; 1 recent coin; 1 prosthesis dental |
| Yard entrance | 13 sherds | | | |
| Channel yard | 53 sherds | 6 fragments | 7 recent pieces | 2 bones; 1 worked bone |
| Shop 1 | 22 sherds | 3 fragments | | |
| Shop 2 | 17 sherds | | | |
| Surface finds street | 26 sherds | 3 fragments | 2 recent pieces | |
| Surface finds yard | 50 pottery sherds (lamp and pipe) | 5 fragments | 1 piece | 9 water pipes; 1 new coin; 1 stone |
| Surface finds shop | 7 pottery sherds | | | 1 cement tile; 1 recent tile |

to make a small note on the types of glazes that are used in the making of pottery.

There are two main types of glazes that are used in the decoration of pottery: Over-glazes and Under-glazes.

I. Over-glaze: the glaze itself is used as a color. This type of glaze is not durable however, the glazes make the colors more vibrant.

II. Under-glazes: one uses regular colors to paint the pottery and then covers that with a clear glaze. This technique has a limited color and design option, where the colors are not very strong and designs are not well defined. The advantage of under-glazes, is that the pottery becomes more durable.

Within the techniques of over and under-glazing, various decorative techniques have been witnessed in the Sūq Harāj collection. Those include:

- Polychrome decoration: where at least two line forms are found painted on the ware with no incisions made. This technique is found in both over and under-glazing practice.

- Single color glaze: an over-glaze where no designs are employed. The glaze is placed onto the vessel and then fired.

- Multi-color glazes: similar to the above technique; however in this category at least two colors are used.

- Splashed glazes: where two colors were used to glaze the ware, one color serves as a base for the vessel, and the other is splashed on with a brush forming line designs with a splashed effect².

The Forms

The distinctive aspect of the Sūq Harāj collection is that the pottery sherds retrieved were mainly related to daily used wares that were rather well worked. 92% of the sherds belonged to wheel made pottery, where glazes were used on all four divisions of the wares found.

Forms that have been collected from the area mainly included small and large bowls (76%) with both flat bases and high ring bases, *ibrīqs* (3%) with long necks and short spouts, and finally cooking pots

(16%) that have been fired haphazardly. The remaining 5% include coarse ware handles, a lamp and remains of chibouk pipes³.

Ware I (Pl. 1 and Fig. 1)

This refined clay was mainly found in the usage of small bowls, and for the lamp sherd. Although these bowls were not decorated extensively, they were very well fired and all composed of wheel made vessels.

Three main types of rims were found (labeled according to ware type, rim or base, then number form; example: I.r.1 Ware I Rim r Type 1):

Type I.r.1.: outward articulated triangular rim: where the rim was pinched outwards to form a triangle on the wall of the vessel.

Type I.r.2.: double outwards articulated rims forming a "V" shape on to the wall of the vessel.

Type I.r.3.: inwards articulated circular rims that are pinched inwards forming a circular form to the tip of the vessel and a "V" shape to the wall.

The largest of these vessels measures 20cm at its opening and all the bases found related to this ware type were ring bases of which two main types were found:

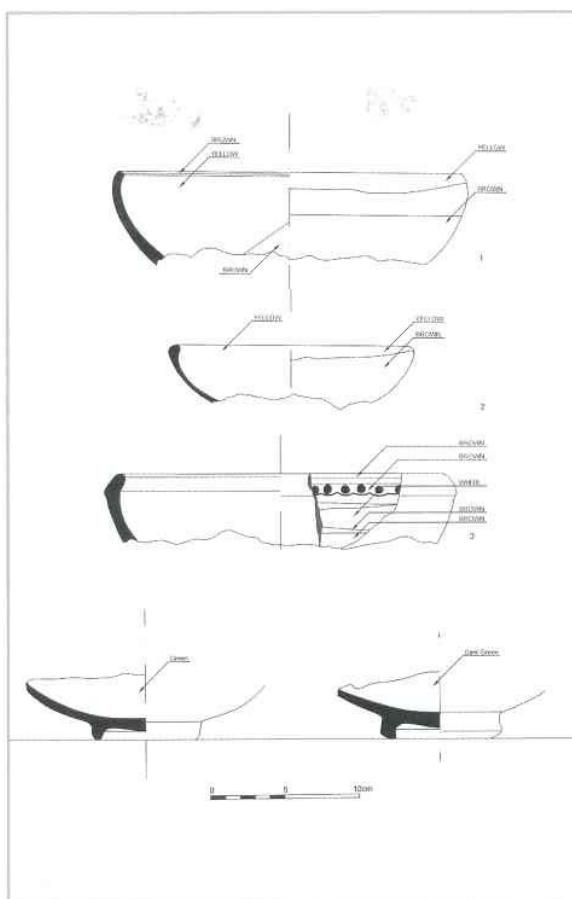
Type I.b.1.: thin vertical circular bases: where not much work was done for the base, the walls of the base, that was thin, ran down vertically on both the inner and outer sides, with a circular base to the vessel.

Type I.b.2.: inward articulated bases: where the base was pinched inwards, forming a very slight protrusion in the outer wall, and a concave curvature to the inner wall.

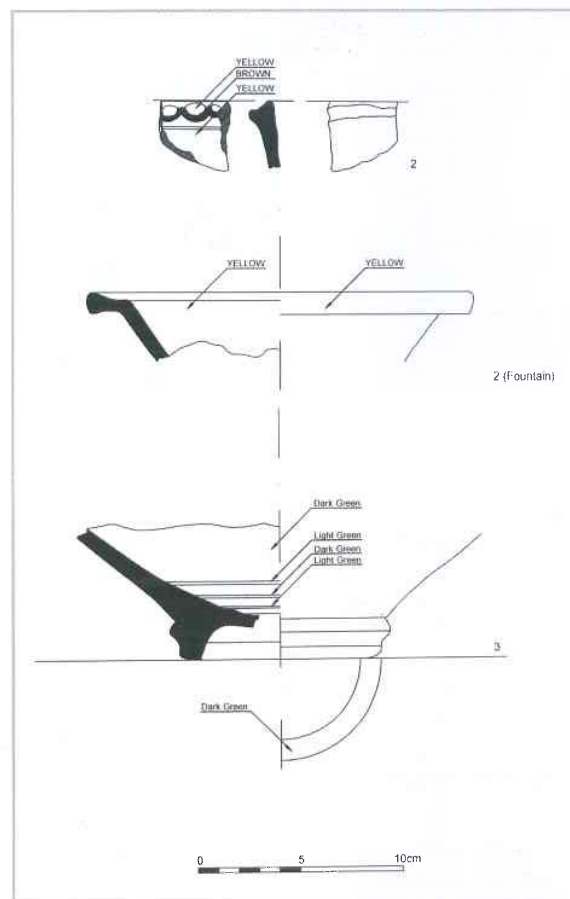
Ware II (Pl. 2 and Fig. 2)

Like ware I these forms are all wheel made forms in which the clay is not too impure. The bowls, where both large and small are found, are more likely to be decorated using glazes. Four main forms of rims are attested in this ware:

Type II.r.1.: inwards articulated circular rims: where the rim is barely pinched inwards with a circular shape to it.



Pl. 1- Ware type 1 composed of a rather refined clay. All made of wheel made pottery, collection mainly composed of up small bowls.



Pl. 2- Ware type 2 composed of wheel made pottery varying in sizes both large and small.

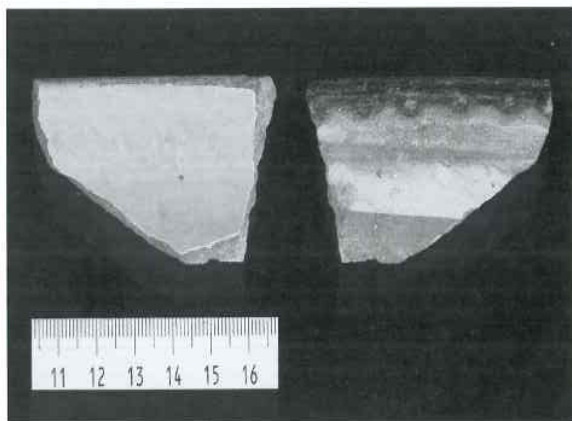


Fig. 1- Examples of ware type 1 composed of a rather refined clay. All made up of wheel made pottery, collection mainly composed of up small bowls (Meister 2005).

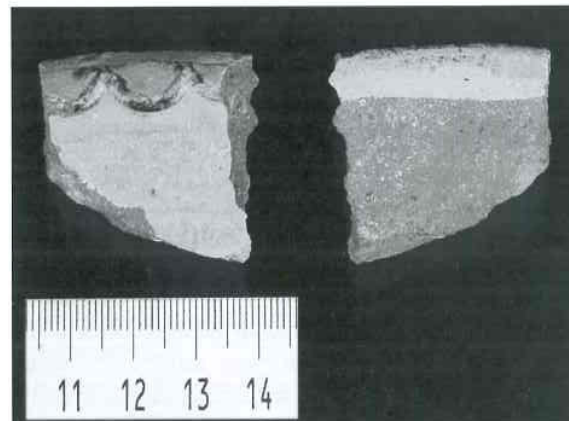


Fig. 2- Examples of ware type 2 composed of wheel made pottery varying in sizes both large and small (Meister 2005).

Type II.r.2.: outwards articulated rims: where the rims are pinched outwards forming a perpendicular rim to the body of the vessel (an up-side-down 'L' shape) that is circular at its end.

Type II.r.3.: slightly outwards articulated rims: where the rim is slightly pinched outward to form a pointed triangle shape to the body of the vessel also referred to at times as forms of 'homos bowls'.

Type II.r.4.: double outwards articulated rims: where the rims have been slightly pinched twice, forming a 'V' shape to the walls of the vessels.

Two types of bases are accounted for in this ware group:

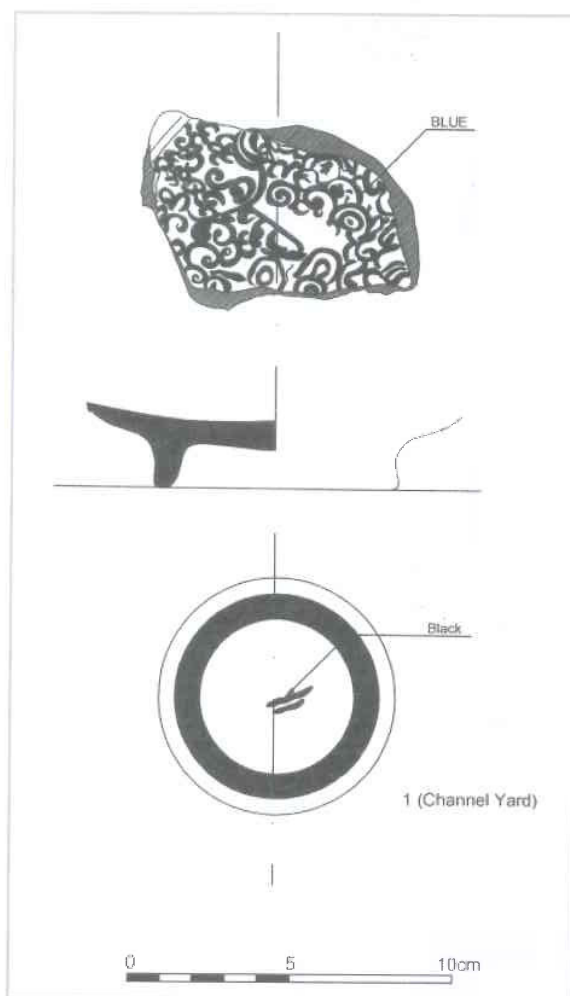
Type II.b.1.: slightly outward articulated circular base: forming a very slight concave inner and outer wall where the inner wall is more concave than the outer. The vessels stand on the circular part of the base.

Type II.b.2.: double outward articulated circular base: the first pinch is perpendicular to the wall of the base forming a ring around the base of the vessel, and the second is slightly pinched outwards and flattened to hold the vessel. This form was found on the large bowls.

Glazes within this ware group included a large variety of single and splashed color glazes. Colors included dark olive green, yellow, brown and turquoise.

A variety of polychrome under-glazes were also used in this ware. A very interesting piece was found that was composed of blue and white glazes that were used to make circular motifs onto the inside of the vessel (small bowl) (**Pl. 3 and Fig. 3**). The interesting feature of this particular piece was the thickness of the glaze that was just over 0.5cm giving the effects of a merged painting that was only clearly seen when water was placed onto the glaze.

The base of this particular vessel is also of interest. Belongs to group type II.b.1, the base of the vessel is incised with two small parallel lines. This is a common feature used on what is known as Zeuxippus ware which uses incisions on the bases usually of circular or linear markings that date to the later part of the 13th century. However, this particular piece was found along with that of recent China ware that has Latin numbers inscribed on the bottom.



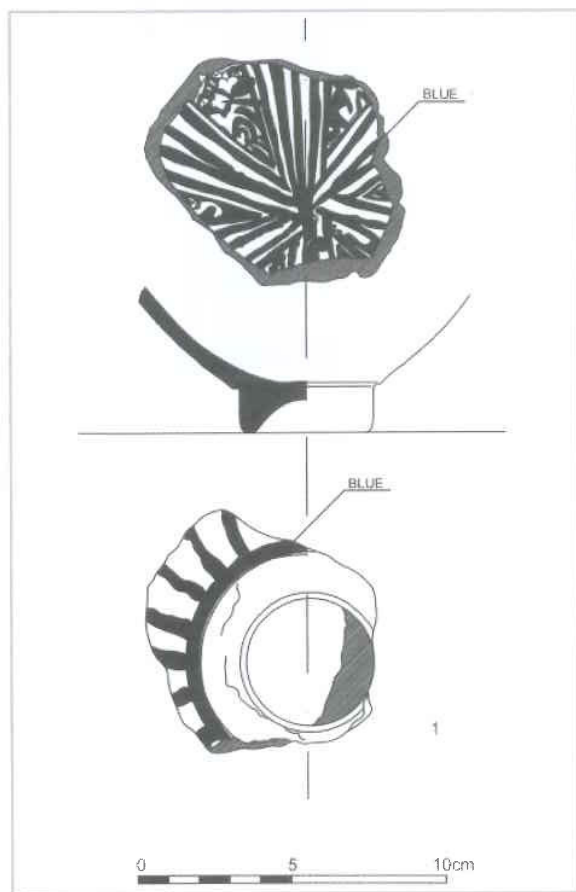
Pl. 3- Blue and white glazed bowl with incision on the base.



Fig. 3- Blue and white glazed bowl with incision on the base (Meister 2005).

Other interesting pieces within this ware collection were those of what is known as “Homos bowls” that use polychrome over- and under-glazes. One particular example of a polychrome under-glaze is of a bowl (Pl. 4 and Fig. 4) that had intricate line designs that extended to the outside of the bowl until the base. In the inside of the bowl, between the lines, were some circular patterns that resembled, but are not, calligraphic forms (such forms have been attested to the late 13th and 14th century found in Kafr Batna, Syria)⁴.

This ware also was used to make the two chibouk pipe shank remains that were found. Both are very simplistic in form and similar examples of varying dates have been found around the Levantine region. The simplicity of its work where lozenge and vertical line decorations were placed beneath the pipes’



Pl. 4- Blue and white glazed bowl similar to those found in Kafr Batna Syria dating to the 13th-14th century.



Fig. 4- Blue and white glazed bowl dating to the 13th-14th century (Meister 2005).

wreath indicates it to be a local made form that has a nice dark brown buff to it. The pipes may have had a rounded bowl form.

Ware III (Pl. 5 and Fig. 5)

Although this ware is composed of a very dirty clay, the sherds from this collection were also at times glazed. As a result of the black core of some of these sherds, one can tell that there were some cases where an open fire was used to fire the pottery, indicating rather bad workmanship. Not all vessels in this ware group are wheel made, and some may belong to groups of small cooking pots. Four main forms of rims are associated with this form of ware:

Type III.r.1.: inwards articulated flattened rim: the rim is slightly bent inwards and then flattened at the rim.

Type III.r.2.: inwards articulated ‘T’ shaped circular rim: the rim is pinched inwards with to form two edges, both of which are rounded.

Type III.r.3.: inwards articulated angular rim: by being pinched inwards this rim forms a triangle on the wall of the vessel where the rim is flattened at its head.

Type III.r.4.: vertical flattened rims. Where the rim was flattened and the wall of the vessel was a straight construction.

Bases of this ware type are both ring and flat bases where the ring bases are very simple coils that are added to the vessel, and the flat bases are simply flattened after its completion.

This ware group also was used in the making of the *ibrīqs* that were found. All of the *ibrīqs* were wheel made where two main forms are attested:

Type III.r.5.: outward articulated circular rim: where there was a very slight pinch outwards to the *ibrīq*'s rim that sat on a very long neck that yielded evidence of the wheel's marks.

Type III.r.6.: outwards articulated square rim: the rim of the *ibrīq* is slightly pinched outwards where the tip is flattened giving it a square shape. The rim also sat on a long neck with the wheel's marks on the clay⁵.

Ware IV

Not much can be said of this ware group besides the fact that the ware in itself was very coarse. Remains of cooking pots' body sherds were found belonging into this category where only 1 rim (vertical flattened rim) was attested.

The clay water pipes attested to this group type are all molded and the largest piece measures ca. 40cm. Understanding the collection:

As stated above, the bulk of the collection from Sūq Ḥarāj was not a clean one; that is various surface finds that are unstratified were collected. Therefore no precise dates can be provided to the structure of the fountain. However, the evidence yielded from the above described sherds, and their comparative counterparts found from around the region gives us a rough datation that extends from as early as the late 13th century to the 19th century. On looking at the pieces from the stratified layers that come from within

the shops, a precise date to the 14th century can be attested. The large bowl that was found around the foundation wall can be attested to this period because of the usage of the green color splashed glaze that was common for the period and in the region (Masri 2000) and more importantly, in Syria (Gibbs 1998).

Due to prevailing conditions on the Sūq Ḥarāj construction site giving the archaeological works the character of a rescue mission this pottery collection is not extensive, but provides some information for the *sūq* itself. It could contribute to a further understanding of Islamic common wares by adding to the available typologies of the region. Furthermore this very minor descriptive study can be used as a foundation step that may aid in later understandings of old Tripoli, and not only of the Sūq Ḥarāj neighbourhood.

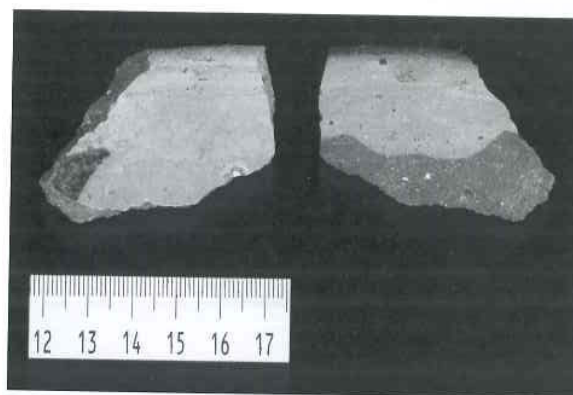
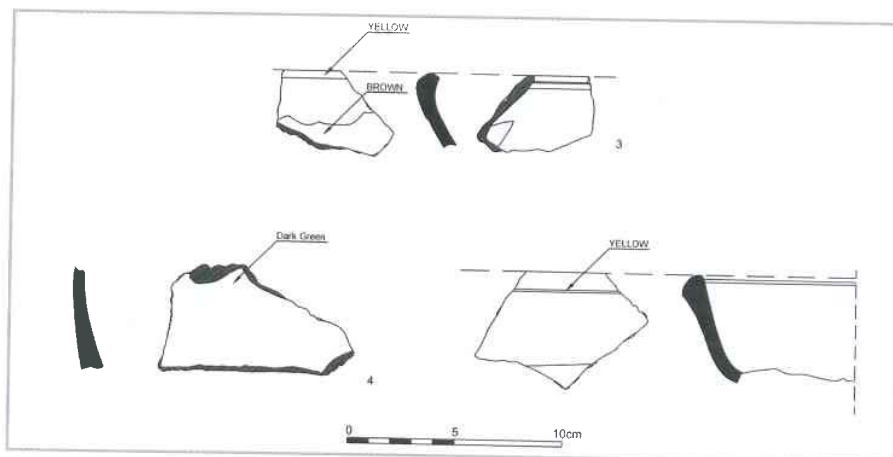


Fig. 5- Examples of ware type 3, the more coarse of the collection composed of all sizes of wares which were also glazed.



Pl. 5- Ware type 3, the more coarse of the collection composed of all sizes of wares which were also glazed.

Notes

1- Drawings have been provided for the shape analysis, The Cambridge Manual for Pottery in Archaeology was used in the study and recording of the pottery. Color was described using the Munsell Color Chart, rim and base forms according to Joukowsky (1980) and Kareem (2000).

2- Taken from my thesis "The Mamluk and Ottoman Remains of Tell el Burak" AUB 2005,

3- All the above mentioned forms are found scattered in the region of the Middle East. For the typologies see: Pringle (1986), Tholbecq (1998), Masri (1998), and E. Gibbs (1998).

4- Mamluk Ceramics 648–923A.H. / A.D.1250–1517, The Seventh George de Menasce Memorial Trust Lecture Given by Edward Gibbs on 1st December 1998.

5- Special thanks to Norma Sfeir Khoury and Salwa Yaacoub for the pottery drawings.

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