

THE 1993 AND 1994 SEASONS AT UMM AL-JIMĀL BYZANTINE AND EARLY ISLAMIC OIL LAMP FRAGMENTS FROM HOUSE 119 AT UMM AL-JIMĀL

by
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Eight ceramic oil lamp fragments were recovered from deposits associated with Umayyad house 119 excavated in the 1993 field season at Umm al-Jimāl. While four sherds belong to the Jarash lamp type (Figs. 1-2), the remaining fragments (Figs. 3-6) are typical of those found in the Hauran. Three sherds (Figs. 3-5) are representative of the "Hauranian" type with pentagonal-shaped handles.

The Jarash Lamps (Figs. 1-2)

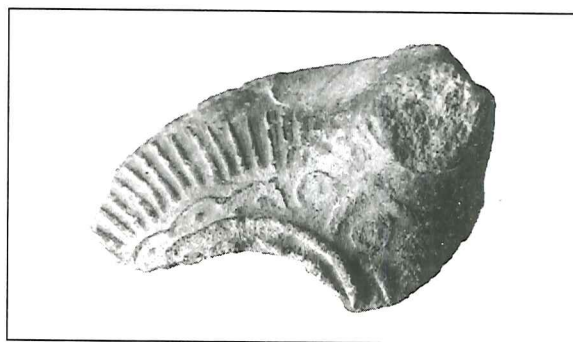
Typological and stylistic characteristics of fragments 1-4 suggest they belong to either the tongue- or zoomorphic handle variants of the Jarash lamps as discussed by Kehrberg (1989: 88-89). Because each fragment represents only a small portion of its complete lamp, it is not possible to determine with certainty to which variant it belongs.

The shoulders of all four examples are decorated with consecutive radial lines, a common feature of both the tongue- (Smith 1973: Pl. 67, no. 254; Kehrberg 1989: Fig. 5, no. 24) and zoomorphic handle types (Iliffe 1933: Fig. 2; Kennedy 1963: Pl. 28, no. 758; Rosenthal and Sivan 1978: 139, Fig. 574; 'Oweiss 1985: Pl. 7, nos. 7-12; Kehrberg 1989: Fig. 5, nos. 25-26). The scallop pattern found on no.1 occurs on both forms of the Jarash lamp (see Smith 1973: Pl. 44, no. 1329; Rosenthal and Sivan 1978: 139, Fig. 574; Kehrberg 1989: Fig. 5, no. 24).

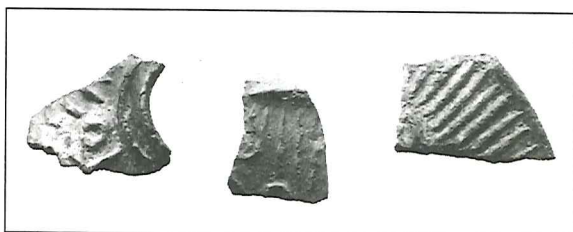
The remnants of Greek crosses whose quadrants contain circle devices rendered on nos. 1-3 are commonly depicted between the central filling hole and handle of the Jarash lamps of the zoomorphic handle variety

(Kennedy 1963: Pl. 28, no. 758; Rosenthal and Sivan 1978: 139, Fig. 574; 'Oweiss 1985: Pl. 7, nos. 7-12). The more or less circular outline produced by the missing handle of no. 1 in top view is akin to the rounded shaft of the zoomorphic handle, as opposed to the elliptical shaped outline one would expect in the tongue handle form in cross-section. The curved line on fragment no. 4 could represent the remnant of a volute or a cross.

As pointed out by Kehrberg, the tongue- and zoomorphic handle types of the Jarash lamp were contemporary and date to between the second half of the sixth and the second half of the eighth century AD (1989: 89). The unusually small body size and filling hole of no. 2 suggests it may have been a toy or votive lamp. None of fragments 1-4 bear inscriptions, particularly of the type referring to Jarash as the place



1. Jarash lamp fragment no. 1 (Photo by Sarkis Lapagian "Abu Hanna").



2. Jarash lamp fragments nos. 2, 3 and 4. (Photo by Sarkis Lapagian "Abu Hanna").

of manufacture (see Clermont -Ganneau 1898: 47-51; Rosenthal and Sivan 1978: 139, Fig. 574; 'Amr 1986: 163-164, Figs 1, 3, 4; Khouly 1994). Parallels of the Jarash lamp type are known from 'Ammān, al-Baṣṣa, Jarash, al-Lajjūn, Mount Nebo and Pella.

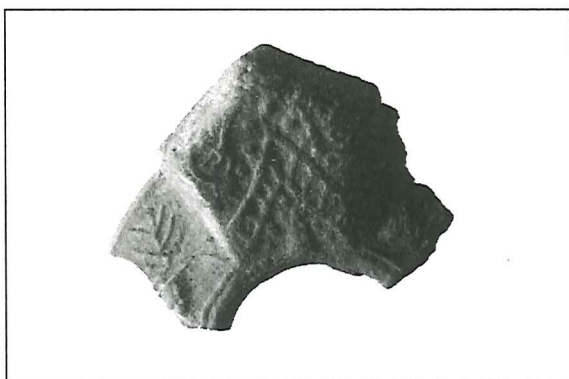
The "Hauranian" Lamps (Fig. 3-6)

Hauranian (the term was first ascribed to this lamp type by P.-M. Blanc in his paper presented at the 1994 Ceramics Colloquium in 'Ammān) lamp fragments were recovered from the ash and soil lenses of a dump created from the Umayyad cleanup of the Byzantine occupation debris of house 119. As noted by Blanc, the outstanding feature of this lamp type is the standing pentagonal shaped handle upon whose surface geometric patterns or human figures are often depicted (1994).

Because of their similar decorative theme and stylistic execution, fragment nos. 5 and 6 most likely belong to the same lamp. The

shoulders of both sherds are decorated with a continuous vine pattern with attached stylized grape clusters and leaves.

The flat surface of the pentagonal shaped handle of fragment no. 5 is ornamented with a simple geometric pattern not inconsistent with the decorative theme rendered on handles of the same type found in the Ḥaurān (Blanc 1994). Its face is decorated with an inverted V-shaped ladder pattern enclosed in a series of rounded nodules rendered in high relief, below the lowest series of which a plain, cone-like device is centered. Two stylized fowls with teacup-shaped bodies are depicted below (and contacting) the remnants of the wick hole on the upper surface of the lamp body. An overall symmetrical motif is achieved by presenting



3. Hauranian lamp fragment no. 5 (Photo by Sarkis Lapagian "Abu Hanna").



4. Hauranian lamp fragment no. 6 (Photo by Sarkis Lapagian "Abu Hanna").



5. Hauranian lamp fragment no. 7 (Photo by Sarkis Lapagian "Abu Hanna").



6. Possible Hauranian lamp fragment no. 8 (Photo by Sarkis Lapagian "Abu Hanna").

each bird pecking at a single grape cluster positioned between them (for a parallel from Bostra, see Blanc 1994). Ceramic lamps possessing pentagonal shaped handles with flat, decorated surfaces have been recovered at Bostra, Si'a, Sūwaydā' Qanawāt and Dar'ā. They date from the fifth and possibly the early sixth century AD (Blanc 1994).

The pentagonal shaped standing handle of fragment no. 7 is rendered in the form of a stylized human head with a face consisting of two large, circular eyes positioned below curved eyebrows, an elongated nose, an elliptical mouth and vertical lines for hair and beard. Semi-circular devices on each side of the head represent either stylized ears or earrings. The shoulder of the lamp is decorated with two consecutive and prominent vertebrae like bands, below which a series of evenly spaced circle devices with a single rounded nodule in each are placed. All these decorative features are executed in high relief. Because the slight outward protrusion of the face suggests a later evolved style than the flat-surfaced type (Blanc 1994), no. 7 can be dated to the mid-sixth century as is a parallel from Bostra cited by Blanc.

A stylized human-like form riding a horse with grossly elongated neck and body decorates the narrow, slightly sloping shoulder fragment no. 8. The body of the human figure is composed of two parts, a bulbous head and buttocks. Its long, disproportionately thin legs extend below the horse's belly. In addition to the peculiar body shape, two triangular tufts of hair (?) rising from the head may suggest that this is a representation of an anthropomorphic deity. Stick-like outstretched arms with attached hands extend from the mid-section, and the right hand grips reins depicted as lines inscribed around, and extending from, the animal's neck in a manner similar to a stylized human pictured riding a camel (Jobling 1985: Fig. 5, Pl. 47). Two sets of closely spaced

parallel lines faintly delineate a stylized saddle on which the rider sits. The stylistic features (elongated body parts of the horse and the stick-figure characteristics of the human-like form) and the theme of this motif (a possible hunting scene) parallel forms portrayed in rock art associated with Thamudic inscriptions (Harding and Littmann 1952: 251, Pl. 10; Jobling 1985:214, Fig. 2; 216; Fig. 3). It is difficult to date this fragment due to its small size, but because of stylistic affinities to the Hauranian lamps, a fifth/sixth century date seems plausible.

Catalogue of Oil Lamp Fragments

1. UJ.93.Y.6.003.1.2 (Figs. 1 and 7:1)

Lamp type : Jarash (zoomorphic-handle variant [?]).

Date: ca. 2nd half of 6th to 1st half of 8th c. AD.

Stratigraphic context: Surface soil. Probe in animal pen attached to S of house 119 against its E wall.

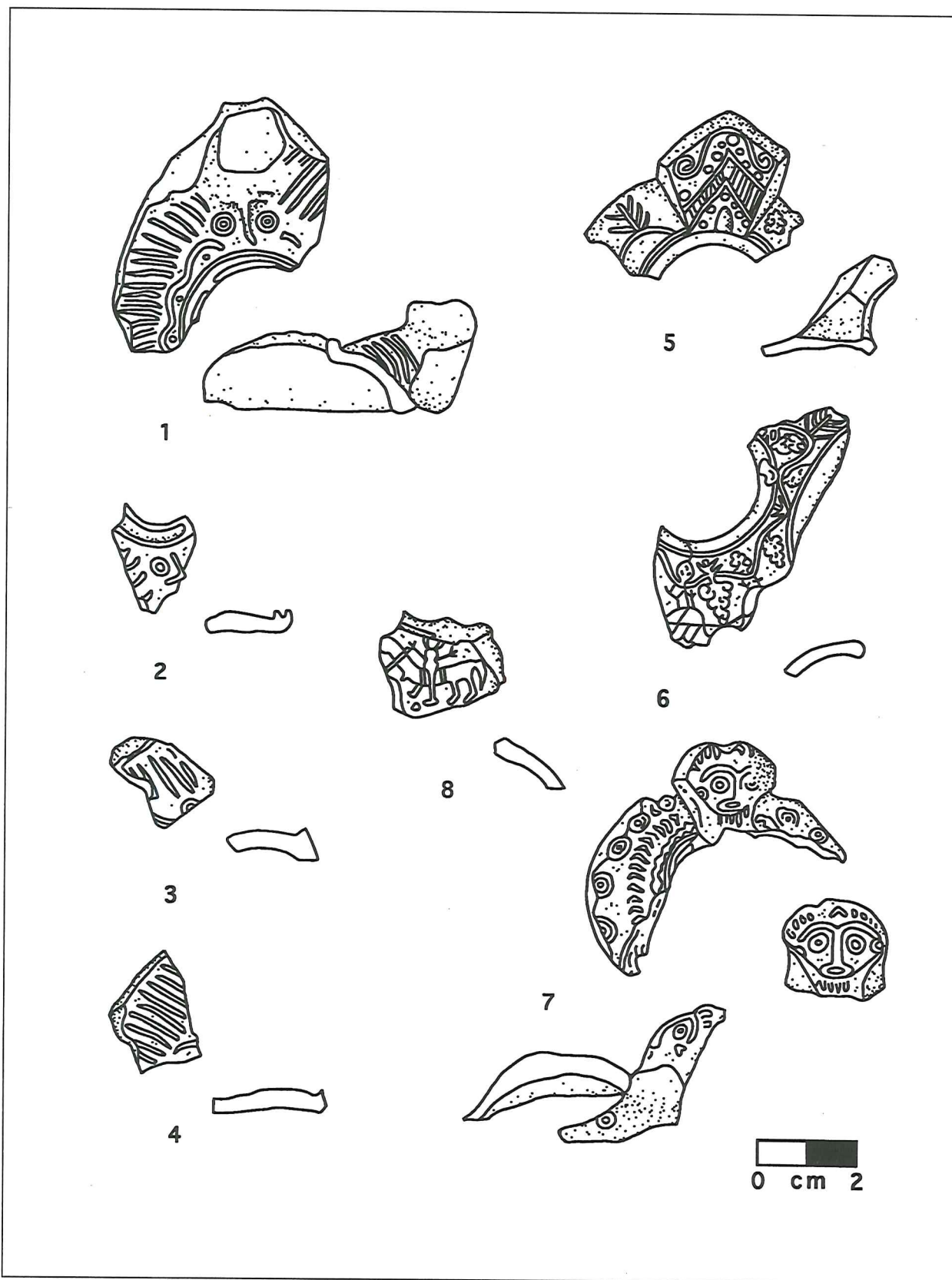
Description: Upper body fragment; missing zoomorphic handle(?); medium size filling hole (est. dia. 2.2 cm) encircled by outer, evenly spaced double ridges; on narrow, steeply sloping shoulder, consecutive radial lines in high relief; a scallop pattern between radial lines and filling hole ridges; a half cross (?), whose lower quadrants each contain a raised circle with internal, well centered round nodules, between handle and filling hole; well levigated clay fabric, mould-made.

Clay color: Munsell 10YR 5/1 gray (exposed outer surface and cross section).

Slip: No traces.

Buff: No traces.

Inclusions (grits): Gray (coarse sand; low frequency; poorly sorted); white (coarse sand; very low frequency; poorly sorted).



7. The oil lamp fragments nos. 1-8 from house 119 at Umm al-Jimāl (Drawing and computer scanning by the author).

Hardness: Moh's 5.5.

Carbon: Slight traces.

Condition: Fair.

Parallels: 'Ammān (Harding 1951: 12, Pl. 3, no. 36), al-Baṣṣa (Iliffe 1934: 85, Fig. 2), al-Lajjūn (pers. comm. S. T. Parker), Jarash (Day 1942: Pl. 13, nos. 1-2; Pl. 14, no. 2; Goodenough 1953: Fig. 374; Da'ana 1969: Pls. 22-24; 'Oweiss 1985: 89-90, Pl. 6, nos. 2-3, 5-6; Pl. 7, nos. 8-9, 11-12; Parapetti 1986: 202, Fig. 2; Schaeffer and Falkner 1986: Pl. 6.2, nos. 431, 435, 451, 457; Clark *et al.* 1986: Pl. 19, Fig. 1; Kehrberg 1989: 88-89, Fig. 5, nos. 24-26; Rasson and Seigne 1989: 147, Fig. 14, no. 2), Mt. Nebo (Saller 1941: Pl. 143, no. 6), Pella (Smith 1973: 220, Pls. 67, 84, no. 254; Pl. 44, no. 1329; McNicoll *et al.* 1982: 162-163, Pl. 141, no. 3; Smith and Day 1989: Pl. 55, no. 6; Pl. 60, no. 1) and unknown provenance (Rosenthal and Sivan 1978: 139: Fig. 574).

2. *UJ. 93.Y.1.008.13.4* (Figs. 2 and 7:2)

Type: Jarash (zoomorphic-handle variant [?]).

Date: ca. 2nd half of 6th to 1st half of 8th c. AD.

Stratigraphic context: Soil accumulation against exterior of dismantled Byzantine partition wall. Severely ruined rooms in SW corner of house 119, W of entry gate.

Description: Shoulder fragment with evenly spaced radial lines; remnant of single Greek cross whose upper left quadrant contains a circle; two prominent ridges encircle the small central filling hole (est. dia. 1.1 cm); finely levigated clay fabric; mould-made.

Clay color: Munsell 5YR 5/6 yellowish red

(exposed inner surface and cross section); 5YR 6/1 gray / light gray (exposed outer surface).

Slip: No traces.

Buff: No traces.

Inclusions (grits): No apparent evidence.

Hardness: Moh's 5.5.

Carbon: Slight traces on body.

Condition: Fair.

Parallels: See no. 1 above.

3. *UJ.93.Y.1.002.5.1* (Figs. 2 and 7:3)

Lamp type : Jarash (zoomorphic handle variant [?]).

Date: ca. 2nd half of 6th to 1st half of 8th c. AD.

Stratigraphic context: Surface soil, severely ruined rooms in SW corner of house 119, W of entry gate.

Description: Shoulder fragment with relatively evenly spaced radial lines; remnant of circle and volute or cross; finely levigated clay fabric; mould-made.

Clay color: Munsell 5YR 6/4 light reddish brown (exposed outer surface and cross-section).

Slip: Very slight traces (2.5YR 6/6 light red).

Buff: No traces.

Inclusions (grits): Gray (very fine sand; medium frequency; relatively well sorted).

Hardness: Moh's 3.0.

Carbon: No traces.

Condition: Good (-).

Parallels: See no. 1 above.

4. *UJ.93.Y.4.007.8* (Figs. 2 and 7:4)

Lamp type: Jarash (zoomorphic handle variant [?]).

Date: ca. 2nd half of 6th to 1st half of 8th c. AD.

Stratigraphic context: Ash-filled cooking area, probably Abbasid reuse of room after partial AD 747 earth-

quake collapse; probe in S half of room C in house 119.

Description: Shoulder fragment with evenly spaced radial lines; remnant of volute or cross, finely levigated, sandy clay fabric; mould-made.

Clay color: Munsell 7.5YR 6/4 light brown (exposed outer surface and cross-section).

Slip: No traces.

Buff: No traces.

Condition: Fair (+).

Parallels: See no. 1 above.

5. *UJ.93.Y.9.003.10*, *obj. no.18* (Figs.3 and 7:5)

Lamp type: Hauranian.

Date: ca. 5th to early 6th c. AD.

Stratigraphic context: Series of alternating ash and soil lenses which collectively comprise a dump created by the cleanup of Byzantine occupation debris in preparation for the construction of house 119. Probe in mound S of house 119, between S wall of animal pen and modern road.

Description: Pentagonal shaped standing handle and portions of shoulder fragment; narrow, slightly sloping shoulder; on face of handle geometric pattern of inverted V-shaped ladder pattern in high relief with irregular line of round nodules enclosing it; above ladder, volute; below ladder, plain "cone"-like device; stylized branches and vines with grape clusters; single, finely delineated ridge encircles medium to large filling hole (est. dia. 2.3 cm); relatively well sorted fabric; mould-made.

Clay color: Munsell 5YR 6/6 light reddish brown (exposed outer surface and cross-section).

Slip: Slight traces (10YR 6/6 light red).

Buff: Slight traces around filling hole and body.

Inclusions (grits): Gray (fine to coarse sand; low to medium frequency; poorly sorted; white (fine to coarse sand; low frequency; poorly sorted).

Hardness: Moh's 2.0.

Carbon: No traces.

Condition: Good.

Parallels: Bostra, Si'a, Sūwaydā', Qanawāt and Dar'ā (Blanc 1994); Pella (Smith 1973: Pl. 84, no. 292).

6. *UJ.93.Y.9.002.7*, *obj. no. 22* (Figs.4 and 7:6)

Lamp type: Hauranian.

Date: ca. 5th to early 6th c. AD.

Stratigraphic context: Dump (see no. 5, above).

Description: Upper body fragment; single, slightly raised ridge encircles medium-size filling hole (est. dia. 2.1 cm); edge of left shoulder tapered; on shoulder sharply delineated vine decoration with random grape clusters; on nozzle and below remnants of wick hole, two highly stylized fowls with "teacup"-shaped bodies in high relief (est. dia. 6 cm); single grape cluster between birds; well levigated clay fabric; mould-made.

Clay color: Munsell 5YR 7/6 reddish yellow (exposed outer surface and cross-section).

Slip: Considerable traces (10YR 5/6 red).

Buff: Slight traces around filling hole and on body.

Inclusions (grits): Gray (fine sand; low frequency; poorly sorted); white (fine sand; low frequency; poorly sorted).

Hardness: Moh's 2.5.

Carbon: No traces.

Condition: Good (-).

Parallels: See no. 5 above.

7. *UJ.93.Y.9.001.6, obj. no. 20; UJ. 93.*

Y.9.002.7, obj. no. 22 (Figs 5 and 7:7)

Lamp type: Hauranian.

Date: ca. mid-6th c. AD.

Stratigraphic context: Dump (see no. 5, above).

Description: Narrow, steeply sloping shoulder fragment; two consecutive, prominent "vertebrae"-like bands around filling hole; below bands series of evenly spaced circles containing a single round nodule; standing handle with stylized human face (large circular eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth, hair and beard) in high relief; single, finely executed ridge in high relief encircles small to medium-size filling hole (est. dia. 1.5 cm); finely levigated clay fabric; mould-made.

Clay color: Munsell 7.5YR 7/6 reddish yellow and 7.5YR 7/4 pink (exposed outer surface and cross-section).

Slip: Considerable traces on shoulder (10YR 6/6—6/8 light red).

Buff: Slight traces around filling hole. Inclusions (grits): Gray (fine sand; very low frequency; poorly sorted); white (fine to coarse sand; very low frequency; poorly sorted).

Hardness: Moh's 2.0

Carbon: No traces.

Condition: Poor.

Parallels: See no. 5 above.

8. *UJ.93.Y.9.001.6 obj. no. 19 (Figs. 6 and 7:8)*

Lamp type: Possibly Hauranian.

Date: 5th to 6th c. AD (?).

Stratigraphic context: Dump(see no. 5 above).

Description: Narrow, slightly sloping shoulder fragment; stylized depiction of horse with elongated neck and body with flagging tale; human stick figure or possible anthropomorphic deity on top of horse; faintly delineated saddle; reins around the animal's neck; below figure's legs and feet, a nodule; remnants of a medium-size filling hole (est. dia. 1.4 cm); around wick hole and above motif, a single ridge; finely levigated clay fabric; mould-made.

Clay color: Munsell 5YR 6/4 light reddish brown (exposed outer surface and cross-section).

Slip: Considerable traces (10YR 6/6 light red).

Buff: No traces.

Inclusions (grits): Gray (fine to coarse sand; very low frequency; poorly sorted).

Hardness: Moh's 2.25.

Carbon: No traces.

Condition: Fair.

Parallels: Unknown.

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