

**Weoley Castle:
A Reappraisal of and Report on the Pottery,
Appendix 10: Continental Imports**



by
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An Archaeological Overview of Weoley Castle, Birmingham

Summary

Weoley Castle is a fortified, medieval manor-house situated four miles to the southwest of Birmingham city centre in the historic county of Worcestershire (National Grid Reference SP 02158275). The site entered into the ownership of Birmingham City Council in *c.*1930 and thereafter two campaigns of archaeological excavation were undertaken; between 1932 and 1940 and 1955 and 1962. More recently the site has been subject to an ambitious initiative, “*The Weoley Castle Development Project*”, joint funded by Birmingham City Council, The National Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage. The aims of the project were to consolidate the surviving masonry, to increase community understanding of and involvement with the monument and to re-assess the finds collection and surviving archaeological archive. The following reports form the third strand of the initiative, “*An Archaeological Overview of Weoley Castle, Birmingham*”. The project was undertaken by Barbican Research Associates, managed by Stephanie Rátkai and monitored by Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery and was submitted in final form in August 2011, consisting of a series of reports on the archaeological archive, the ceramic finds and the small (portable) finds etc. The reports were presented in PDF format and will be available on-line, hosted by BRA (see www.barbicanra.co.uk for links). Hard and digital copies of the reports will be held by BMAG at selected museum properties. It is intended that the reports will form the basis for a synthesised monograph publication intended to bring knowledge of this important monument and the results of its past excavations to a wider audience.



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Weoley Castle: A Reappraisal of and Report on the Pottery by Stephanie Rátkai

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An appraisal of the portable finds from Weoley Castle, Birmingham by Quita Mould

Weoley Castle: small finds catalogue by Quita Mould

Structural Finds

Weoley Castle: The Ceramic Building Material by Stephanie Rátkai

Weoley Castle: The loose architectural stones, an assessment by Dr. Richard K. Morris

Weoley Castle: The decorated window glass by Stephen J. Linnane

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Continental Imports

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A small number of Continental imports were identified amongst the pottery from Oswald's excavations. The author is grateful to Duncan Brown, Phil Jones and George Haggerty for help in identifying this pottery.

Published code	Weoley Fabric	Bull Ring Fabric	Source	Location
Early Valencian Lustreware	Early Valencian Lustreware	not present	Spain	Appendix 10
Spanish Tin-glazed earthenware	Spanish Tin-glazed earthenware	not present	Spain	Appendix 10
Mercury jar	Mercury jar	not present	Spain/Levant	Appendix 10
S. Netherlands Tin-glazed earthenware	S. Netherlands Tin-glazed earthenware	not present	Netherlands	Appendix 10
Raeren Stoneware	Raeren Stoneware	not present	The Rhineland	Appendix 10
Siegburg Stoneware	Siegburg Stoneware	Siegburg	The Rhineland	Appendix 10
French Whiteware	WW03	not present	?N. France	Appendix 10
French Whiteware	WW04	not present	N France (Rouen)	Appendix 10
?Late Saintonge/? Spanish	?Saintonge	not present	SW France/Spain	Appendix 10



Figure A10.1: WC 994 a-b Early Valencian Lustreware bowl

Accession: 2000A2.16.7 (1956.33) Provenance: 1956 finds register states '1A clay ? second layer'.
1956 find, possibly from SE corner of the Moat.

The arcaded decoration on the flange rim is directly paralleled by a bowl found in Middelburg, Netherlands, where the vessel is dated to 1375-1425 (Hurst *et al* 1986 Fig. 17 and Colour Plate 4). The lustre decoration has perished due to burial but would have been within the zones delineated in (cobalt) blue and composed of Islamic geometric and botanical patterns.

Figures A10.1 and A10.2 (below) have been reported on by J. G. Hurst ('Spanish Pottery Imported into Medieval Britain' *Medieval Archaeology* 21 1977, 68-105). An illustration (in Hurst 1977, Fig 28, 22 reproduced above) of Figure A10.1 shows the now indiscernible lustre patterns. Hurst tentatively dated this to the early 15th century.

Early Valencian Lustreware is less common in Britain than the later Mature Valencian lustreware. It was probably traded via The Netherlands, although fewer examples have been found there than in Britain. Early Valencian Lustreware is not commonly found in Britain and even less so once away from ports and their immediate hinterlands. The Weoley bowl was without doubt an extremely high status object. It is likely to have been 'curated' as an item of value and hence the discard date is

likely to be very much later than the manufacture date.

The dish may well have been purchased during the Burnell ownership of Weoley but discarded during that of the Berkeleys.

A third sherd from this vessel was found with sherds shown in **Figures A10. 2-3** (accession number



2000A2 87.12)

Figure A10.2: WC992 (far left) WC993 Spanish tin-glazed earthenware albarello fragments
Accession: 2000A2.87.12 Provenance: Moat, area of the North Tower NTE (2)

The sherds (Figure A10.2) were also reported on by J.G Hurst (see above) and illustrated (*ibid.*, Fig.27, 16, reproduced, right). The sherds date from the 14th-15th centuries and are from Málaga.



Figure A10.3: WC990 Spanish tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) sherd
Accession: 2000A2.87.12 Provenance: Moat, [illegible] R1

Stylistically the sherd (**Figure A10.3**) appears to be another Málaga product, probably dating to the 14th century.



Figure A10.4: Mercury Jar

Accession: 1963 1327 Provenance: Unknown but Oswald's excavations



Figure A10.5: Body sherds (French Whiteware WW03)
Accession: (left) 2000A2.130; (right) 2006.0141.16 Provenance: Moat (C1 USL); B1/2 (2)



Figure A10.6: French Whiteware handles (Fabric WW03)
Accession: 2006.0141.3 Provenance: Moat

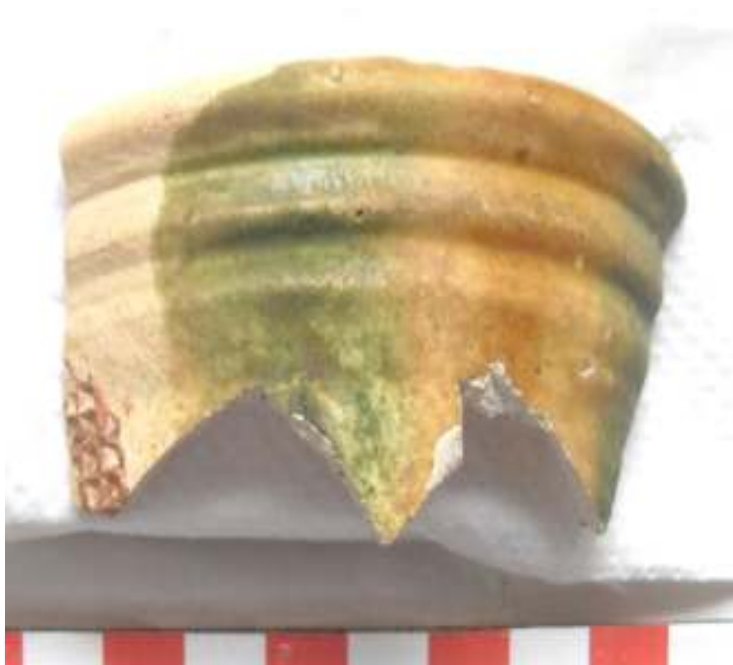


Figure A10.7: North French (Rouen-style) jug rim-neck (Fabric WW04)
Accession: 2006.0141.20 Provenance : Area of Stone Building (Tr 5 Bul)

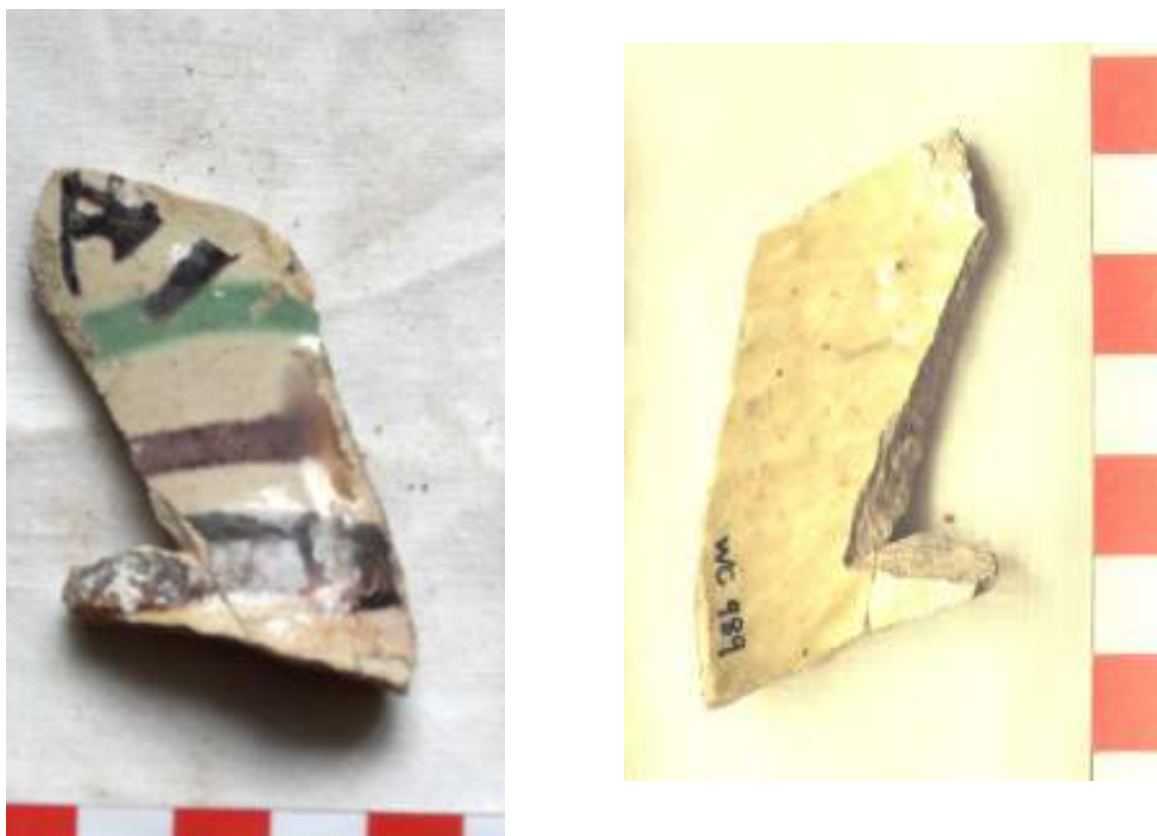


Figure A10.8: WC989 ?Late Saintonge

Accession: 2000A2.87.12 Provenance: Uncertain, presumed Moat (Sq6 Rubble Layer)

The interior of the sherd (**Figure A10.8**) has a good quality lead glaze showing pale yellow against the cream fabric. A possible source is SW France (late Saintonge ware).

From the general description of Saintonge Green and Brown ware and Saintonge Polychrome Painted Bands were given in Hurst *et al* 1986, 83-86 this sherd seems to belong to the same tradition, although there is no very close parallel. The former ware is characterised by bowl forms with painted decoration on the interior. However, Hurst *et al*'s observation that the surface beneath the decoration is white slipped beneath a lead glaze, making it difficult to distinguish from tin-glazed wares, holds true of this sherd. The internal yellow glaze is paralleled in the Saintonge Polychrome ware. The upper section of the decorative scheme could be part of the frond-like motifs seen on the Saintonge Green and Brown ware. A date in the second half of the 16th century is possible.

However, this sherd was seen by J. G. Hurst at the same time as the Spanish wares discussed above



(Hurst 1977, Fig.35, 69)

and is published with them, which by analogy he dates to c 1400. However the internal glaze is

atypical of the other Spanish jugs, as are the colours of the decoration. If it is Spanish, an early 15th century date would fit with the other Spanish imports at Weoley Castle. This date would also fit in rather better with what is known about Weoley, namely that there was high-status occupation of the castle in the 15th century but that by the later 16th century (if the sherd is Saintonge ware) the castle was no longer an aristocratic residence.



Figure A10.9: Siegburg (left) and Raeren (right) stoneware drinking jug bases
Accession: 2006.0141.2 Provenance : East Moat 'Top Co' (left); Unknown (right)



Figure A10.10: Raeren Stoneware drinking jug
Accession : 2006.0141.2 Provenance: Unknown



Figure A10.11: Raeren Stoneware drinking jug
Accession: 2000.A266.6 and 2000.A2.131 Provenance: Moat (E Moat 7a 1c)



Figure A10.12a-b: Showing details of stabbed decoration



Figure A10.13: WC33 Tin-glazed earthenware (?drinking) jug
Accession: 2000A2.20.65 M15 '61 Provenance: Unknown but possibly the Moat SE corner

Possibly South Netherlands