

Weoley Castle:

A Reappraisal of and Report on the Pottery,

Appendix 4: Iron-Poor Fabrics: Whiteware



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.



Contents

An Archaeological Overview of Weoley Castle, Birmingham consists of the following reports; the high-lighted titles indicate which section the reader is currently examining.

Archaeological Archive

Weoley Castle – an appraisal of the surviving Archaeological Archive by Stephen J. Linnane

Weoley Castle – the reduced archive, 2.0 Pre-war Excavations

Weoley Castle – the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.1 The Trenches

Weoley Castle – the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.2 The Moat

Weoley Castle - the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.3 The Western Interior

Weoley Castle – the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.4 Periods I-III

Weoley Castle - the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.4.7 The Wooden Kitchen

Ceramics

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

Appendix 1: Early Cooking Pot Fabrics

Appendix 2: Deritend Ware

Appendix 3: Iron-Poor Wares

Appendix 4: Iron-Poor Fabrics: Whiteware

Appendix 5: Sandy Micaceous and Micaceous wares

Appendix 6: Late Medieval Wares

Appendix 7: Midlands Purple Ware and Later Fabrics

Appendix 8: Cistercian Ware

Appendix 9: Regional Imports

Appendix 10: Continental Imports

Small Finds

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

Weoley Castle: The Medieval Floor Tiles by Stephen J. Linnane

Iron-Poor Fabrics: Whiteware Figures A4.1-A4.21

Published code	Weoley Fabric	Bull Ring Fabric	Source	Location
Red-painted whiteware	RPWW	ww1	local	Appendix 4
ww2	WW09	ww2	local	Appendix 4
ww2	WW10	ww2	local	Appendix 4
ww3	WW01 = WW05	ww3	local	Appendix 4
ww5	WW06	ww5	local	Appendix 4
WCFabric 08	WW08	similar to ww5	local	Appendix 4
WCFabric 09	CMC04	not present	?	Appendix 4

WCFabric 08 is similar to Bull Ring Fabric ww5 but is sandier. It has abundant fine red quartz (iron-stained) and iron oxide inclusions <0.25mm.

Red-Painted Whiteware (Fabric ww1)



Figure A4.1 Sooted red-painted whiteware baluster jug sherds



Figure A4.2 Red-painted whiteware jug (inset shows detail of localised sooting on base edge)

Figures A4.1-3 are examples of the heavy but often localised sooting found on red-painted whiteware jugs. Sooting seems to be more common on these type of jugs than on any others, which seems to suggest that they were used differently from jugs in other fabrics. The sooting suggests that the vessels were standing in a small fire so that the jug contents could be heated.

Figure A4.3 shows one of the more unusual sooting patterns seen amongst the Weoley Castle pottery. The distinct zone of soot on the exterior (bottom row) suggests that the vessel had stood within another which protected the lower part of the vessel from the fire. However, the central area of sooting on the exterior base (top left) indicates that there must have been a small heat source beneath the jug as well. In addition the sooting pattern on the interior in part mirrors that on the exterior. A sooting pattern such as this indicates that the jug was put to a very specific use but one which is lost to us now. It is sooting patterns such as these that demonstrate that simple corollaries such as jugs were used for the storage and serving of liquids are much too simple, even if correct for the greater number of vessels.

Although no red painted decoration is visible on the jug, the fabric is the same as that used for Red-Painted Whiteware

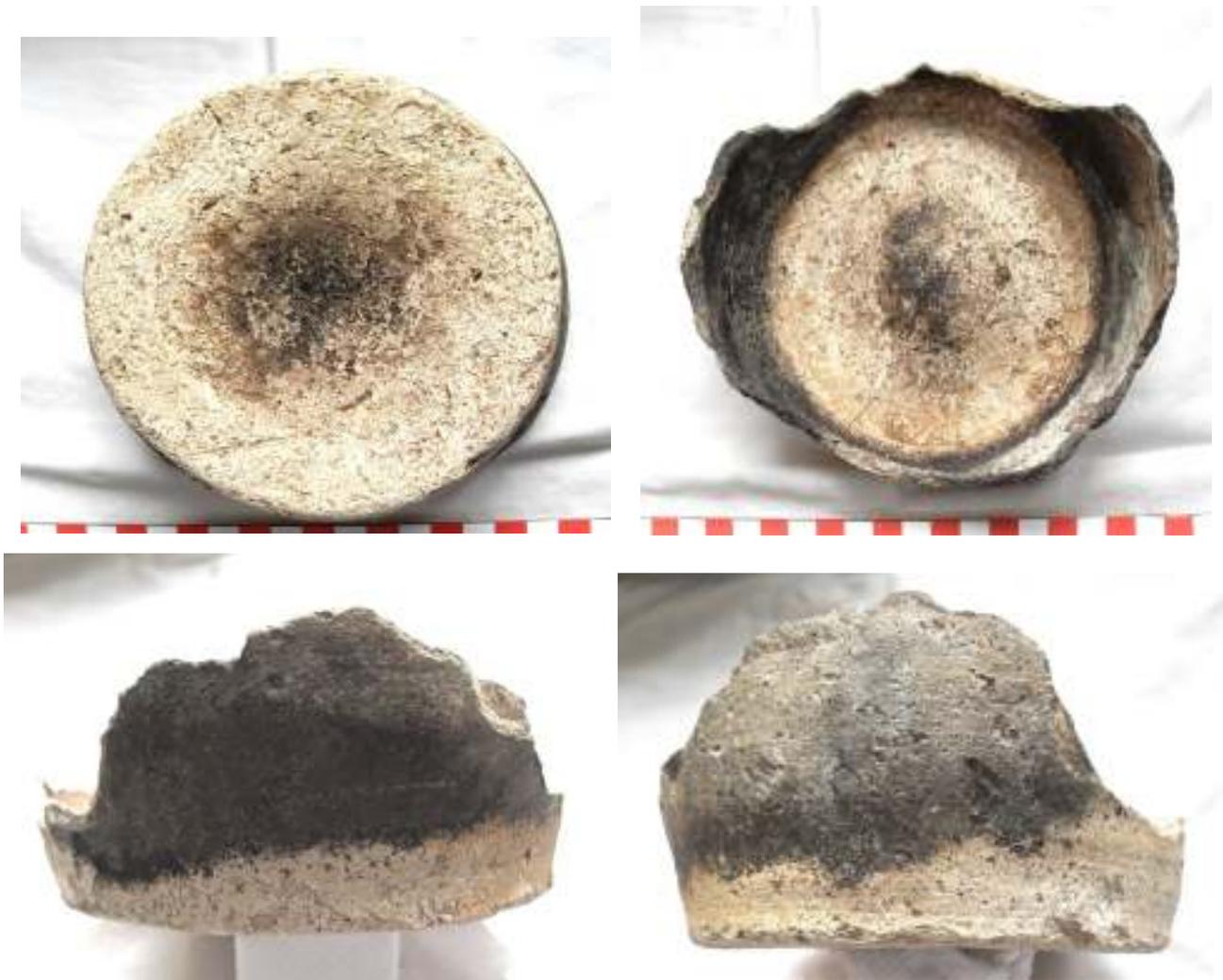


Figure A4.3: Sooting pattern on a whiteware jug
Accession: 2000A2.66.6: Provenance: Unknown, probably from Moat

Red-Painted Whiteware



Figure A4.4: Red-Painted Whiteware jug sherds from either a baluster or globular jug.



Figure A4.5: Red Painted Whiteware jug handle

Fabric ww2

Figure A4.6: Image BQ Whiteware jug sherd decorated with applied red clay curvilinear design
Accession: 2000A2.89.4 Provenance: Moat [?Mt A7?]



Figure A4.7 : Slashed Jug Handle
Provenance: Unknown (pre-War excavations)

Fabric ww3

Figure A4.8: Lower section of baluster jug
Accession: 2006.0141.7 Provenance: Moat (2c C2)

This flaring base indicates that this sherd is from a baluster jug. Immediately above the base are a series of deep tooled impressions, above which is an incised wavy line. This decoration produces an effect like a frill or folds of cloth at the hem of a dress. In view (a) traces of vertical combing are just discernible. Whiteware jugs with this type of decoration are known from Staffordshire (Ford 1995, Fig.15, 98-99) and Warwickshire (Mayes and Scott 1984) and date from the second half of the 13th century or beginning of the 14th century. The treatment of the base is very similar to **Figure A4.11** below

Fabric ww3

Figure A4.9: WC1 Green glazed whiteware baluster jug 1275-1325/50
Accession: M32 '50 Provenance: pre-War excavations

The handle (see **Figure 4.10** below) is very similar to WC1036 (Oswald 1962, Fig. 10.36) and suggests both vessels are from the same source

Fabric ww3



Figure A4.10 WC1 showing handle

Fabric ww3

Figure A4.11: Highly Decorated Baluster jug (inset, detail of base)

Note the small sherd adhering to the surface of the jug, which represents an accident during firing.

Fabric ww3



Figure A4.12: Details of decoration of baluster jug WC 98

The jug has elaborate but somewhat confused decoration. There are three main elements:

1. combed chequer-board pattern and combed vertical lines
2. comb teeth impressions within the square zones outlined by combing
3. incised chevrons

Pattern 3 seems to be confined to one side of the vessel and patterns 1. and 2. combined on the other side of the jug. The combination of the two designs is not altogether successful. The flaring base of the jug has been scored probably with the implement used for the incised chevrons. Although the illustrated sherds are all marked as WC98, there is some doubt as to whether they are all from one vessel. The smaller images seem to have subtly different patterns and may represent three further vessels. A sherd with an identical pattern to 1. (above), Accession 1990 A277, was marked 4B KR2. There is a good chance that the sherd is part of WC98. If so it must have come from one of the Moat deposits (Oswald's excavations).

Fabric ww3?



Figure A4.13: WC61 Whiteware baluster jug
Accession: 2000A2.20.115 Provenance: Moat outside kitchen south of chapel

NB a different vessel has this number in finds register



Figure A4.14: whiteware jug handle (Fabric ww3)



Figure A4.15: Whiteware rod handle (Fabric ww3)



Figure A4.16 Whiteware jug handle (fabric ww3)
 Accession: 2000A2.132 Provenance Black marshy deposits Trench 6 (Tr 6 Top B1)

The handle is broken in half along its long axis.



Figure A4.17: Decorated Whiteware Sherds (Fabric ww3)

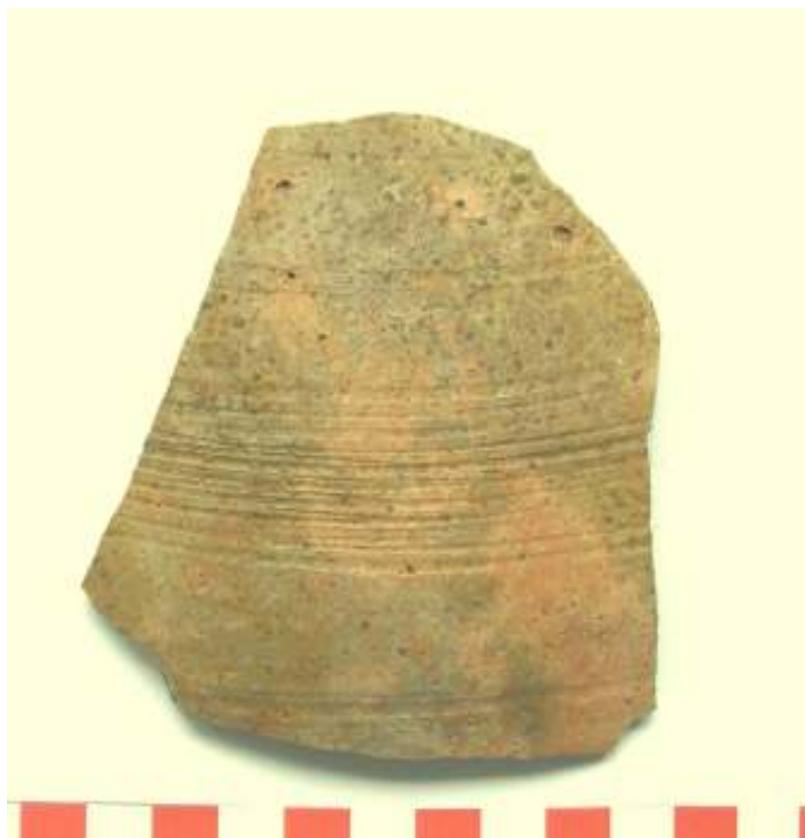


Figure A4.18: Fabric ww5 – body sherd from large jug
Accession: no number Provenance: Uncertain

The sherd was with a label reading WC 1963 E+ A Floor St Building but the sherd itself was unmarked.

Fabric WW5

Figure A4.19: WC97 ?Baluster Jug
Accession:1990 A 265 Provenance: Unknown

Other than the exterior surface colour this vessel has a white-cream fabric. The jug is wheel-thrown and is notable for its rather elongated neck. The lattice effect of the glaze on the shoulder and lower down the body is unusual and must represent a deliberate application of the glaze in this pattern.



Figure A2.20: WCFabric 08

Accession: 2000A2.87.4 Provenance: ?West side of platform

WCFabric 08 is similar to Bull Ring Fabric ww5 but is sandier. It has abundant fine red quartz (iron-stained) and iron oxide inclusions <0.25mm.

This sherd illustrates some of the difficulties inherent in the assemblage. The marking has been written over the unwashed sherd (top right). The marking itself is legible up to the final word ' WC PB 1955 Row 1 clay corresponding to upper p[.?.] but the description is hard to place within the excavation.

WCFabric 09 (unillustrated) is a hard clean whiteware fabric. It contains sparse rounded quartz grains c. 0.25-0.5mm and sparse rounded red iron oxide c. 0.25-0.5mm.



Figure A4.21: WC31 green-glazed whiteware face jug – later 13th/14th century
Accession: M328 '54 Provenance: From ?Moat (1954)

The vessel (**Figure A4.21**) has been heavily restored and it has not been possible to view the fabric closely. Details of the eye and nose have been made in red clay (brown under the lead glaze). There are no local parallels for this small anthropomorphic jug. Similar vessels are known from London and the form is known to have been made in Surrey whiteware and Brill-Boarstall ware (Bucks). The use of red clay on the face may indicate a West Midlands source.

A small jug, such as this, is likely to have been used as a drinking vessel. It is surprising that there is no mention of this vessel in Oswald's reports.