

POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM LONDON 1500-1700: POST-MEDIEVAL REDWARES – REVISED PUBLICATION PROPOSAL

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Background and aims

London-area red earthenwares were one of the main sources of everyday household and industrial ceramics used by Londoners in the 16th and 17th centuries. They dominate excavated ceramic assemblages across the region, but were not the only choice available to consumers. During the 17th century, fine redwares made in Essex, including black-glazed ware and Metropolitan slipware also provided an important source of domestic pottery, especially tablewares.

A major project to publish the main pottery industries supplying London during the 16th and 17th centuries was initiated with a volume on Surrey-Hampshire Border wares, published in 1992. The industries to be covered by the second volume are London-area post-medieval redwares, and fine redwares, largely from kilns in Essex. The third volume will cover tin-glazed wares. Work on volumes 2 and 3 is well advanced, but has been delayed for several years for a number of reasons. Both volumes were initially funded by English Heritage, with additional funding from CoLAT and the Museum of London. Proposals for the completion of volume 2 on post-medieval redwares c. 1500–1700, are outlined below. This will prove valuable not only for researchers working in the London area, but also for their study further afield, with examples known from sites as far away as Virginia in the USA.

The principal aim is to present as complete a type-series as possible of all identifiable redwares made and used in the London area during the early modern period, fully illustrated with line drawings and photographs. Questions of terminology and fabric characterisation will be dealt with in order to establish a standardised nomenclature; technology, production sites and documentary evidence will be discussed, and influences between industries considered, as well as their chronological development and distribution. Quantified data will be presented for the main sites on which the project was originally based, although the original selection of DUA excavations will be expanded to include significant sites excavated more recently by MoLAS (MOLA). In this way, the project can take advantage of the considerable body of evidence that has been recovered during recent years, rather than be brought to completion as a relic of research largely carried out in the previous century. The final publication will broadly follow the format created for the *Type-series of Medieval Pottery from London* and Volume 1 of *Post-medieval Pottery in London 1500–1600* in bringing together the evidence from archaeological excavation with that of the Museum of London's Ceramic and Glass Collection.

The scope of the project

The industries to be covered by this volume are: Post-medieval redwares made in the London area, at Kingston, Cheam, Woolwich, Deptford and other sites; and fine redwares, largely from kilns in Essex - Post-medieval fine redware, Post-medieval black-glazed

redware and Metropolitan slipware. The chronological span of the project has previously been limited to the 16th and 17th centuries, although it is proposed below that this be extended to give a broad outline of subsequent developments and thus avoid the problems of a somewhat artificial cut-off point at *c.*1700.

There is a high level of expectation among ceramicists and archaeologists regarding the forthcoming publication, both in this country and abroad, since the post-medieval redware industries supplying London are known mainly from summaries and interim publications and no comprehensive survey has yet been carried out. There is a particular interest in the United States, since the earliest colonies set up on the eastern seaboard were largely supplied by London (for example, the settlement established at Jamestown in 1607 appears to have used mostly London redwares for the first 20 years or so of its life). If the volume is to fulfil its considerable potential and do full justice to the Museum's reserve collection by making it accessible to a wider public than at present, then it should be illustrated as fully as possible, and this is what the proposed publication aims to achieve. Without doubt, the Museum of London houses one of the most important collections of ceramics in the country. It is particularly wide-ranging in scope, with much of its significance lying in the quantity of everyday, utilitarian pottery it contains, as opposed to the art-historical, aesthetic bias of many of our national collections. By its very nature as a social and urban history museum, all the pieces in the reserve collection were found in the London area and can thus be closely related to material recovered archaeologically from the same area. In this respect, the Museum and MOLA are in the unique position in this country of being able to combine two major bodies of data that are usually treated separately, to the benefit and enhancement of each. The effects of this will be to increase our understanding of the chronology of the various redware industries by relating the complete pots in the collection to the more fragmentary excavated material, and to give a social and historical context to the complete vessels. The project will also provide a far more extensive type-series of several major 16th- to 17th-century industries than has been possible to date, which can be achieved with a relatively small amount of additional funding.

Work carried out to date

A considerable amount of work has already been carried out on the redwares project:

- photography and illustration of much of the excavated material, as well as illustration of a large, representative sample of vessels from the MOL Ceramic and Glass Collection
- a detailed database of all pottery in the MOL collection and vessels from excavations
- partial quantification of key excavated assemblages included in the project
- the completion of some text sections

The completion of analysis and research, leading to the production of a completed text and figures in a MOLA monograph, is currently estimated at £45,388 (\$27,500). There may be some further costs not yet quantified.

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