AML Report.
3618
Copy sent to client.

The glazed terracotta from Hill Hall, Essex.

Justine Bayley
Ancient Monuments Lab.

A total of eight fragments of glazed terracotta, two pieces of glazed pottery and one piece each of unglazed terracotta and brick were examined (AM Nos. 815008-19). All were thought to date to the mid 16th century. The glazes were all analysed qualitatively by an energy dispersive x-ray fluorescence system (XRF) and the fabrics of all the pieces were compared .

The fabric of all the glazed terracotta was the same and was very similar to that of the unglazed terracotta and also to that of one of the glazed potsherds (AM 815018) which suggests they may all have been made from the same clay. The other potsherd (AM 815019) was of a different fabric and had a reduced core. The brick (AM 815009) was of a far coarser and quite different fabric to all the rest of the material examined.

The glazes on the terracottas (AM 815010-17) were all tin opacified lead glazes. This gave the white background on which a design was painted in one or more colours. The colours noted were blue, yellow and green and the colourants (identified by XRF) were respectively cobalt, antimony and copper. On some pieces (eg AM 815014) there were patches of different colours although no design was apparent. Analysis confirmed the presence of more than one colouring agent so it would seem that after the design was painted on, the glaze had run. Overheating would have caused this but it is impossible to say if the accident occurred in the kiln where the tiles were being glazed or in some other event, such as destruction by fire of the structure of which the tiles were a part. It is however noticeable that there is no extraneous matter stuck to the run glaze so the kiln overheating could be considered a rather more likely origin for these 'wasters'. Their general lemon-yellow surface was probably not an original feature but appears to be a decay product of the overheated glaze.

The glazes on the pottery contain far less tin than those on the terracotta but are still lead-based.