

# ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

## REPORT

235b

**SERIES/No**

CONTRACTOR

**AUTHOR**

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**TITLE**

Mediaeval Tiles from Beaulieu  
Abbey

Five tile samples from Beaulieu Abbey were examined by thin section analysis. Three of the tiles, nos. 3 (inlaid), 4 and 5 (plain), appeared alike enough under the petrological microscope to suggest the possibility of a similar origin. All three samples contained a scatter of large fragments of limestone (visible throughout the fabric of the tiles), together with frequent grains of subangular quartz, average size 0.20-.30mm. As these materials are fairly common it is not possible to be precise about likely origins, although a local source utilizing the Oligocene clays would be in keeping with the range of inclusions present.

The other two tiles lacked any sign of limestone inclusions and, in addition, were dissimilar to each other in section. Sample no. 1 (tile mosaic) contained numerous grains of subangular quartz, average size 0.10-.30mm., some flecks of mica and the odd piece of flint. This tile contained very much more quartz than the other samples, resulting in a more compact fabric.

In contrast, sample no. 2 (inlaid) had fewer, larger subangular quartz grains, up to 0.80mm. across, and frequent clay pellets. The white inlay of the tile consists of an extremely micaceous clay. There is nothing to suggest a particular origin for either no. 1 or no. 2, and both could possibly have been made fairly

locally, though from different clays. If this was the case for no. 2, then the white clay inlay may have been obtained from the pipe-clay of the Poole area, though it should be pointed out that a micaceous white clay used at the tile factory at Danbury, Essex was considered by Young to have been imported from Devon or Cornwall (in Drury and Pratt, 1975, 141-142).

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Drury, P.J. and Pratt, G.D. (1975) 'A late 13th and early 14th century tile factory at Danbury, Essex', Mediaeval Archaeology, 19(1975), 92-164.