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Tiles found beneath the Broadway, Winchester.

MEDIEVAL TILES FOUND BENEATH THE BROADWAY, WINCHESTER, 1937.

By J. B. WARD PERKINS.

DURING recent excavations in the Broadway, Winchester, a number of medieval tiles were discovered. An account of the circumstances of their discovery was given at the time by Mrs. E. E. Hooley, Hon. Curator of the Winchester City Museum, in the *Hampshire Observer* for December 18th, 1937. As, however, the tiles display certain unusual features, particularly as regards the technique of their manufacture, it has seemed worth while to publish a more permanent record. For permission to do so and for an account of their discovery the writer is much indebted to Mrs. Hooley.

The tiles were found at a point 40 feet north of the railings in front of the Abbey House, exactly opposite Busket Lane, at a depth of rather over 3 feet. This spot originally formed part of the grounds of St. Mary's Abbey, which were here bounded by the stream that ran roughly down the middle of the Broadway. They did not, when found, form a pavement, as was at first thought; they seem rather to have been stacked here, and then abandoned, after their removal from some pavement elsewhere in the Abbey buildings.

The majority of the medieval tiles of Hampshire belong to the common inlaid type. The design was first impressed upon the moist clay with a wooden stamp, and into the resulting hollows pipe-clay was spread to produce a level surface. The tile was then fired. This technique was introduced early in the 13th century, and some of the finest inlaid tiles belong to the earliest years of production in this country. Such are the important series of tiles that were used at Clarendon, near Salisbury, for the palace of Henry III.¹ Tiles of the same, and of closely similar, designs are extremely common elsewhere in Eastern Wessex, at Salisbury, at Amesbury, at Romsey, at Winchester and in a number of lesser monasteries and dependent churches in this region. Although closely related to each other, however, it is certain that all the tiles of this large series were not made at a single kiln and distributed to the houses where now they are found. The kiln discovered at Clarendon in 1937 was in use for a very brief period and can only have been intended to supply the needs of the palace.² The identical tiles at Salisbury and elsewhere may have been made with the same stamps, but they were made elsewhere. Subsequently, when these stamps wore out, fresh ones were cut.

1. *Ant. Journ.* xvi, 1936, 67-9, pl. xiv.

2. See forthcoming report by Dr. Tancred Borenius and Mr. John Charlton.



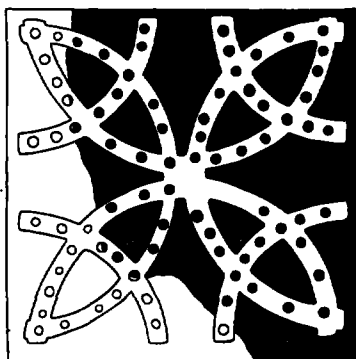
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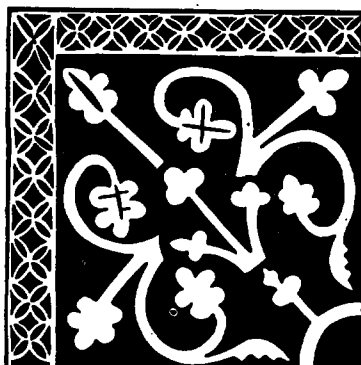
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But the tile-wright's craft was conservative ; and although some new patterns appeared, adaptations of the old lasted in use ; and it is clear that in certain areas, *e.g.* in Somerset, designs were still in use in the 15th century which derive directly from those of the 13th century at Clarendon and elsewhere. So too in Hampshire this 13th century series had a lasting importance. Not only are decorated tiles almost invariably of the inlaid type (or of the later, derivative, printed type¹), but many of the Clarendon designs find echoes well on into the 14th century, possibly even into the 15th.

The tiles found in the Broadway differ technically from the ordinary Hampshire tiles in that there is no pipeclay filling to the designs, which thus appear in depression (in one case in relief) against a flat ground. In one instance (the design is that of fig. 2) there do seem to be traces of inlaid pipe-clay, suggesting that the maker was acquainted with the inlaid technique ; and there is in the Museum of the Sussex Archaeological Society at Lewes a tile from Dureford which is of the ordinary inlaid type and was apparently made from the same stamp as fig. 3. The absence of pipe-clay from the majority of the Broadway tiles cannot be ascribed to the perishing of a former filling ; for in several instances the hollows of the design retain the original glaze. This glaze is of a thin brown colour, very sparingly applied, and many of the tiles are almost entirely free of it. It is possible that the absence of pipe-clay was due to a shortage of supplies, and that the tiles are to be considered simply as defective inlay-tiles (*Archaeological Journal* XCIV, 128). Nevertheless it is only to fig. 3 that the writer has so far been able to discover a parallel in the ordinary inlaid technique ; and it will be seen that one of the designs at least could never have been used in this manner.

That the Broadway tiles form a single group is clear. Not only are the nature of the clay, the depth of the impression, the quality of the glaze consistent throughout, but in one case traces of one design (fig. 3) can be seen on the back of a different tile (fig. 1), where, owing to careless stacking in the kiln, the glaze on the surface of the one has stuck to the back of the other. This was not the only indication that the maker was not highly skilled. His stamps were of wood, and he seems to have used a wood that was unsuitable for the hard wear required of a tile-stamp. Not only have they split along the grain in several cases, leaving a raised ridge across the resulting impression (*e.g.*, fig. 6), but at times large portions of the raised stamp have entirely broken away (*e.g.*, fig. 3). The inadequacy of the stamps is particularly clear in the case of the stag-and-tree design. The grain-marks are very visible ; and so

1. See Loyd Habery, *Medieval English Pavingtiles*, p. 53. The designs of these tiles were apparently printed direct upon the clay by means of a stamp coated with pipeclay. The result is very similar to, but less precise than, that obtained by the more laborious method of stamping and inlaying in two separate processes.

blurred were the edges of the design that they have had to be re-cut upon each individual tile with a sharp knife, a laborious process for which it is hard to find any parallel elsewhere.

This stag-and-tree design, of which a number of whole and fragmentary examples were recovered, is far the most interesting of the series. It differs from the others in that here it is the design itself which stands out in relief against a flat background. It cannot therefore like them be regarded as a defective inlay-tile. It is in the strict sense an embossed or relief tile. (See the writer's "English Medieval Embossed Tiles," *Archaeological Journal* XCIV, 128-153.) Embossed tiles are rare south of the Thames and Severn, and after the 13th century until the 16th they are hardly found outside East Anglia and the northern Midlands. An exception must be made of two tiles from Dureford and Tortington, both now in the Museum of the Sussex Archaeological Society at Lewes. The designs of these tiles are also found in the ordinary inlay-technique, but it is of course the design which appears in red, the background in yellow. Such an inversion of the common practice is frequent enough in France but exceedingly rare in England, and it may be that the presence of such tiles at Dureford and Tortington is due to some French connection.¹ More probably, however, they are freaks of the tile-wright's craft, to be ascribed to some such circumstances as gave rise to the Broadway tiles.

It is perhaps more than a coincidence that Winchester Cathedral possesses a few examples of embossed tiles (*Archaeological Journal* XCIV, 148, fig. 5, 5). These are now laid around the tomb-slab of Elizabeth Briscoe, just south of the Beaufort Chantry. They are in a sadly worn condition, but they deserve attention if only because they are the only medieval tiles of this type so far recorded from Hampshire. The designs are simple and cannot easily be dated with precision. But they are fully consistent with a late 13th or early 14th century date, and the history of embossed tiles in this country renders it most unlikely that they can in fact be much later. The maker of the Broadway tiles had then models from which to copy; and it is tempting to suggest that the stag-and-tree tile represents his clumsy efforts to reproduce the unfamiliar embossed technique, of which he had seen specimens in the Abbey.

Of the designs of the individual tiles there is little to be said. Fig. 5 is derived from the ordinary Clarendon-Salisbury series (*cf.* Shaw, *Ornamental Tile Pavements*, pl. XXXI, 3, from Great Bedwyn, Wilts) with the addition of a characteristic 14th century border. Fig. 6 too is hardly likely to be earlier than 14th century. On the other hand the maker of these tiles would hardly have copied from a tradition that was long obsolete and forgotten, and

1. The relief tiles of the French Renaissance style found their way into Sussex in the 16th and 17th centuries, *Sussex Arch. Colls.* xvi. 126-137.

it is unlikely that any embossed tiles in Hampshire would have been very much later than 1300. A date towards the middle of the 14th century for the Broadway series is consistent with all the available evidence. The only tile which calls for more detailed commentary is the stag-and-tree design. It is very tempting to recognise in this unusual subject an unintelligent representation of the familiar Templars' emblem of the Paschal Lamb. The "tree" is a garbled version of the forked pennon, the little cross below the body, here a meaningless feature, represents in the original design the shaft of the pennon grasped by one fore-leg of the lamb. Two examples of the paschal lamb are known on embossed tiles, from Swineshead Abbey, Lincs., (*Archaeological Journal* XCIV, 146, pl. I, 1) and from Whitland Abbey, Caermarthenshire (*loc. cit.*), and the motif seems frequently to have been used on tiles without any particular reference to the Templars.

The Broadway tiles cannot claim to be representative specimens of the medieval tile-wright's craft. By their eccentricities, however, they do serve to illustrate some of its technical aspects; and for all their naïveté of design and execution they form an unusual and attractive addition to the large body of recorded Hampshire tiles.