# MEDIEVAL TLE PROJECT PHASE 2: 

Buildwas Abbey, Shropshire<br>Archive Report 046.02



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## BUFAU

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Phase 2 Recording

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## Medieval Tile Project, Phase 2 Recording: Buildwas Abbey, Shropshire

## Introduction

In 1991 an initial survey of surviving Medieval tile pavements at Buildwas Abbey identified 14 areas within the guardianship area (Lisk 1991, 8-12). Two other areas, (Areas 15 and 16) on adjacent land belonging to the Coalbrookdale Power Station Social Club were recorded by Moore and Palmer (1994).

Tile Areas 1-14 (Figure 1) were recorded by members of Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit during November 1996. All areas, including a further area identified (Area 13a, Figure 5), were recorded, planned in detail and photographed (Areas 1-13 in black and white, Area 14 in colour). A photomontage of Area 14 was created from a series of prints (see A3 folder, site archive). All tiles with identifiable decoration were allocated a number, (using a separate numerical sequence for each area), traced, and subsequently inked. All inked tile tracings are stored in the site archive on 21 Al sheets of permatrace.

Tile designs were related to the Buildwas Type Series compiled by Lunt (1979), examples of which are shown in Figures 7-10.

## Area Summaries

A total of 2420 tiles in situ Medieval floor tiles was recorded in the 14 areas, the majority of which (2045) are situated in the Chapter House. In contrast to the 13 small external areas of tiles, the tiles in the Chapter House (Area 14) are a relatively recent construction, set in concrete during the 1970s by a former curator of the site ( G . Coppack, pers. comm.).

## Areas 1/2. Chapel.

Conservation work revealed that these two apparently separate areas were parts of a larger area, measuring approximately $1.30 \mathrm{~m} \times 1.12 \mathrm{~m}$. This area consists of 86 tiles, 31 of which had retained recognisible surface decoration. All patterned tiles were traced and numbered (Figure 2, tile archive sheet 1).

## Area 3. Chapel.

This area, measuring $0.92 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.90 \mathrm{~m}$, consists of 41 tiles, 11 of which had retained substantial surface decoration. These were traced and numbered (Figure 2, tile archive sheet 2 ).

## Area 4. Chapel.

This roughly rectangular area, measuring $0.39 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.61 \mathrm{~m}$, consists of 21 tiles, three of which had retained sufficient surface decoration for tracing (Figure 3, tile archive sheet $2)$.

## Area 5. Chapel.

This triangular area, set against the remains of two walls, measures $1.03 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.84 \mathrm{~m}$ and consists of 42 tiles, seven of which had retained sufficient surface decoration for tracing (Figure 3, tile archive sheet 3).

## Area 6. Chapel.

This small rectangular area, measuring $0.77 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.27 \mathrm{~m}$, is separated from Area 5 by a stone wall, and consists of 10 tiles, of which two decorated tiles were traced (Figure 3, tile archive sheet 3 ).

## Area 7. South Aisle.

This area, measuring $0.27 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.18 \mathrm{~m}$, between a pillar and part of an exposed wall, consists of five tiles, none of which had retained surface decoration (Figure 4).

## Area 8. Nave Church.

This four-tile square is next to a pillar and measures $0.21 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.20 \mathrm{~m}$. Only one tile had retained surface decoration (Figure 4, tile archive sheet 2).

## Area 9. South Aisle.

This small area of seven undecorated tiles is situated next to some stone steps and measures $0.43 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.20 \mathrm{~m}$ (Figure 4).

## Area 10. Nave Church.

This area, measuring $0.62 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.43 \mathrm{~m}$, consists of 23 tiles arranged in two triangles set diagonally against a single linear strip, of which three decorated tiles were traced (Figure 4, tile archive sheet 2).

## Area 11. North Transept.

This area, measuring $1.11 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.75 \mathrm{~m}$, consists of 51 tiles, none of which had retained surface decoration (Figure 4).

## Area 12. Entrance to Crypt.

This area, situated in the Crypt doorway, measures $1.59 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.82 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ and consists of 61 tiles, of which 14 decorated tiles were traced (Figure 5, tile archive sheet 3).

## Area 13. South Aisle.

This area, measuring $0.21 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.31 \mathrm{~m}$, consists of eight tiles, of which four decorated tiles were traced (Figure 5, tile archive sheet 2 ).

## Area 13a. South Aisle

This additional area, which was not included in the original survey (Lisk 1991), measures $0.23 \mathrm{~m} \times 0.68 \mathrm{~m}$ and is located next to a wall near to Area 13 . It consists of 16 undecorated tiles (Figure 5).

## Area 14. The Chapter House.

This area measures 8.45 m in length with a maximum width of 3.55 m , and comprises 2045 tiles, many of which are fragmentary. The area is located immediatcly below the entrance stairs, and continues into the centre of the room where it has been roped off between four pillars. A total of 588 decorated tiles was traced (Figure 6, tile archive sheets 4-21).

## Decorated Tiles

Two different types of decoration were identified; two colour glazes and monochrome line-impressed designs. Simple two-colour glazed designs were traced directly on to rolls of permatrace and wax rubbings were taken on cartridge paper of line-impressed designs. Tile drawings were subsequently inked and, when possible, tile designs were related to the type series devised for Buildwas Chapter House (Lunt 1979).

With the exception of Area 14, which is under cover in the Chapter House, the standard of preservation was generally poor. However, it was possible to identify many of the tile designs in Areas 1-13, although differentiating between the common red and brown monochrome glaze colours was problematic in view of surface loss. For this reason, only obviously black, yellow and grey-green glazes have been indicated in the plans of Areas 1-13.

Decorated tiles are summarised below according to area.

## Exposed Areas 1-13

Area 1/2
This area (Figure 2), which consists of 86 tiles, includes 10 tiles with black glaze and 31 decorated tiles belonging to the following tile design groups: B1 (1), B3(5), B6(1), $\mathrm{B} 7(1), \mathrm{B} 8(1), \mathrm{B} 9(6), \mathrm{B} 10(1), \mathrm{B} 13(2), \mathrm{B} 14(2), \mathrm{B} 26(10), \mathrm{B} 39(1)$.

Some diagonal patterning could be observed in the placement of rows of decorated tiles interspersed with rows of plain tiles, and four B9 tiles had been placed in a four-square arrangement. Two bulbous wasters, both decorated, were also visible in the pavement.

## Area 3

This area, which consists of 41 tiles, has suffered a great deal of surface damage and there are several blank areas where tiles are now missing (Figure 2). Approximately 12 dark grey/black tiles and one tile with yellow glaze are present and 11 tiles were traced which were attributed to the following groups: $\mathrm{B} 3(2), \mathrm{B} 4(1), \mathrm{B} 6(2), \mathrm{B} 7(1), \mathrm{B} 9(3)$, B58(2).

A further six tiles had retained traces of decoration but these were abraded and fragmentary and their designs could not be identified. Another possible four-square arrangement of B9 tiles, one of which is now damaged and another lost, was included in the pavement but there is no evidence for further patterning.

## Area 4

This small area consists of 21 tiles (Figure 3), five of which are a blue-black colour, and three of which were attributed to the following designs: B14(1), B123(2). Tile condition was poor and five further tiles showed surface decoration which was too abraded to identify.

## Area 5

Forty-two tiles remain in situ, but approximately half are shattered and all are in an abraded condition. Decoration remained visible on several tiles, three of which were attributed to the pre-existing Buildwas series: B20, B21 and B23. Four tiles were of a 'chequerboard' design executed in yellow glaze, a tile design previously unrecorded at the site (Figure 3). Six other decorated tiles, which were too abraded to identify, are also indicated in Figure 3.

## Area 6

This small area of ten tiles includes four decorated tiles, two of which are of identifiable designs (B19, B103), and one fragment of tile with a black glaze (Figure $3)$.

## Area 7

One tile is a grey-green colour and another has traces of possible decoration in this small area consisting of five tiles (Figure 4).

## Area 8

This area consists of four tiles, of which one is decorated (B10) and in a good condition, two are grey-green and one is black (Figure 4).

## Area 9

There are no decorated tiles among the seven tiles in this small area, two of which have retained total yellow glaze (Figure 4).

## Area 10

This area consists of 23 tiles, three of which have retained recognisible designs (B3,B4, B27), one of which has traces of unidentifiable decoration, and seven of which appear to have been black (Figure 4).

## Area 11

There are no decorated tiles apparent in this worn, damaged area of 51 tiles. One tile is grey/green and approximately 12 appear to have been black (Figure 4).

## Area 12

This area, consisting of 61 tiles, includes at least 25 decorated tiles, many of which are now too degraded for identification (Figure 5). The outer register of diagonally-placed tiles has sustained the worst damage, with substantial surface loss. Fourteen decorated, mainly line-impressed, tiles were related to the pre-existing type series (Lunt 1979): $\mathrm{B} 2(1), \mathrm{B} 19(5), \mathrm{B} 20(1), \mathrm{B} 21(1), \mathrm{B} 24(2), \mathrm{B} 30(1), \mathrm{B} 31(1), \mathrm{B} 38(1), \mathrm{B} 93(1)$.

## Area 13

This small area consists of eight tiles, six of which have retained traces of decoration, and one of which has a plain yellow glaze (Figure 5). Four of the decorated tiles were attributed to the pre-existing Buildwas type series: B4(1), BB6(2); B14(1).

## Area 13a

This area consists of 16 badly-degraded tiles from which any traces of surface decoration had been obliterated (Figure 5).

## Area 14: The Chapter House

A total of 2045 tiles is located in the Chapter House (Figure 6). All tiles with recognisible designs ( 588 in total) were traced and, with three exceptions, related to the Buildwas type series and quantified (Figures 7-10, Appendices 1 and 2, site archive file).

The condition of the tiles in the central area, between the four pillars, was superior to those situated immediately below the entranceway, although the edges of many of the tiles were covered by concrete which obscured some surface detail. The difference in preservation probably results from the greater wear from both visitors' feet and windblown material to the tiles nearest the entrance, whereas the tiles in the central area appear to have been roped off to prevent visitor access for some time. It is also possible that the curator responsible for re-laying the tiles in the Chapter House might have selected the better decorated and preserved tiles for the central area, placing the plainer, more worn, tiles nearest to the entranceway.

The tiles in the entranceway below the Chapter House steps, 823 in total, included only fifteen tiles with recognisible designs, several with traces of decoration, and 12 bulbous wasters. The remaining tiles have monochrome glazes. By contrast, the 1222 tiles in the adjoining central area were, with the exception of a border composed of mainly plain tiles, decorated. These included many fragments which were placed in circular 'roundels' (see Figure 6 and photomontage in archive folder). Many half tiles were placed together, some of which were joining pieces, others of which were not. Fragments from the same tile were allocated the same number, and fragments from non-joining tiles were allocated separate numbers.

All traced decorated tiles, both with either glazed or line-impressed designs, were numbered 1 to 588 , tiles with traces of decoration were indicated with the letter ' D ', and different monochrome glazes were also indicated (see Figure 6 and additional archive material: tile sheets 4-21, and Photomontage).

Area 14 is summarised as follows:

## Decorated tiles:

Traced: 588
Not traced:98
Monochrome glazes:
Black:373
Yellow: 184
Red:624
Green: 15
Brown: 111
Other:
Worn surfaces:52
With reference to the large Buildwas type series (although many of the types originally identified did not occur among in situ tiles in the Chapter House floor), totals of each tile type are listed beneath the examples in Figures 7-10. The tiles illustrated are the most complete examples of each type recorded. Unless otherwise stated, examples used are from Area 14.

In addition to known Buildwas tile designs, one tile fragment of a previously unidentified design, consisting of four enclosed rings, was discovered in Area 14 (Figures 6 and 10:Tile 268, photomontage), and four examples of a 'chequerboard' design (Eames 1980, design 2020), executed in yellow glaze, in Area 5 (Figures 3 and 10, see also area photograph).

## Bibliography

Eames, E.S. 1980 Catalogue of Medieval Lead-Glazed Earthenware Tiles in the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum, British Museum Publications Ltd, London.

Lisk, S.V. 1991 Medieval Floor Tiles on English Heritage Guardianship Sites in the Midlands, Warwickshire Museum.

Lunt, S. 1979 Unpublished Catalogue of Medieval Floor Tiles from Buildwas Abbey, English Heritage Museums Group Archives.

Moore, P. and Palmer, N. 1994 Buildwas Abbey, Shropshire: Recording of Tile Pavements 15 and 16, Warwickshire Museum.

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Figure 2.


Area 4.


Figure 3.


Figure 4.


Area 13.


Figure 5.



Figure 7
Medieval Tiles in Area 14, Buildwas Chapter House.
(Ref. Lunt 1979:Total/Tile No. of Example*)
*Area 14 unless stated otherwise



Figure 9

Medieval Tiles in Area 14, Buildwas Chapter House.
(Ref. Lunt 1979:Total/Tile No. of Example*)
*Area 14 unless stated otherwise


B92:1 (181)


B101:1 (220)


B119:1 (24)


B123:2 (32)


B93:1 (289)

B103:2 (Area 6:1)


B128:1 (511)


B120:2 (348)



B94:3 (527)


B104:1 (471)


B121:1 (467)


Unid. design: 1 (268)
Figure 10

Medieval Tiles in Area 14, Buildwas Chapter House,
except 'chequerboard' tile from Area 5 only.
(Ref. Lunt 1979:Total/Tile No. of Example*)

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## AREA 1/2




## AREA 4




## AREA 6




AREA 8



AREA 10



AREA 12



AREA 13a (new area)


AREA 14

## APPENDXX 1:External Areas 1-13

List of traced tiles by type (Lant 1979 and additions).

- :design unknown, *:illustrated, (S1-S3):sheet number

Tile No./Design No.
Area 1/2 (Archive Sheet 1)
1./B39
2./B3
3./B6
4./B10
5./B26 (waster)
6./B9
7./B9
8./B26
9./B9
10./B9
11./B7
12./B26
13. $/{ }^{* B}$ B2
14./B3
15./B9
16./B26
17./B26
18./B1
19./B26
20./B3
21./B14
22./B8
23./B7
24./B26
25./87
26./B3
27./B26
28./B9 (waster)
29./B14
30./B3
31./B13

```
Area 3 (Archive Sheet 2)
1. 1 B 9
2./B4
3./B9
4./B6
5./B9
6./B3
7./B6
8./B58
9./B7
10./B58
11./B3
```

Area 4 (Archive Sheet 2)
1./B14
2. ${ }^{*}$ B123
3./B123

Area 5 (Archive sheet 3)
1./Chequerboard
2./*Chequerboard
3./Chequerboard
4./B21
5./Chequerboard
6./B20
7./B23

Area 6 (Archive Sheet 3)
1./*B103
2./B19

Area 8 (Archive Sheet 2)
1./B10

Area 10 (Archive Sheet 2)
1./B3
2./B4
3./B27

Area 12 (Arcbive Sheet 3)
1./B93
2./*B38
3./B31
4. B21
5./B19
6./B19
7./B19
8./*B19
9./B24
10./B2
11./B30
12./B20
13./B24
14./B19

Area 13 (Archive Sheet 2)
1./B14
2./B4
3./B6
4./B6

## APPENDIX 2: The Chapter House, Areas 14

List of traced tiles by type (Lunt 1979).

- :design unknown, *:illustrated, (S4-S21):sheet no.

Tile No./Design No.
1./B4 (S4)
2./B3
3./B25
4./B7
5./B10
6./B12
7./B80
8./B12
9./B14
10./B9
11./B27
12./B3
13./B4
14./B4
15./B3
16./B3
17./B20
18./B3
19./B5
20./*B2
21. $/ *$ B111
22./B3
23./B14
24./*B119
25./B3
26./B3
27./B3
28./B14
29./B14
30./B3
31./B10
$32.1 * \mathrm{~B} 123$ (S5)
33./B5
34./B4
35./B3
36./B79
37./B14
38./B25
39./B3
40./B14
41./B20
42./B5
43./B20
44./B6
45./B20
46./B4
47./B40
48./B4
49./B4
50./B22b (S6)
51./B24
52./B19
53./B19
54./B19
55./B19
$56 . / \mathrm{B} 19 \times 7$
57./B19
58./B19
59./B20
60./B19
$61 . /$ B19 x 3
62./B19
63./B19
64./B19
65./B19
66./B24
67./B24
68./B20
69./B19
70./B22A
71./*B22B
72./*B24
73./B19
74./B19
75./B19
76./B19
77./B19
78./B20
79./B19
80./B19
81./*B23
82./B20
83./*B22C
84./B19
85./B20
86./B20
87./B24
88./B19
89./*B126 (S7)
$90 . / \mathrm{B} 19$
91./B19
92./B19
93./B19
94./B22B
95./B19
96./B19
97./B3
98./B19 x 4
99./B24
100./B24
101./B21
102./*B30
103./*B17
104./B14
105./B3
106./B21
107./B21
108./B21
109./B21
110./B21
111./B17
112./B21
113./B21
114./B17
115./B21
116./B21
117./B21
118./B20
119./B19
120./B19
121./B17
122./B12
123./B3
124./B21 (S8)
125./*B58/?73+96
126./B30
127./B14
128./B16
129./*B16
130./B12
131./B4
132./.B80
133./B25
134./B8
135./B36
136./B22A
137./B60
138./B3
139./B4
140./B7
141./B3
142./B3
143./B10
144./B3
145./B3
146./B3 (S9)
147./B58/773+96
148./B3
149./B6
150./B3
151./B3
152./*B124
153./B27
154./B4
155./B4
156./B29
157./B29
158./B3
159./B31
160./B2
161./B2
162./B18
163./B2
164./B10
165./B10
166./B8
167./B80
168./B60
169./B60
170./B7 (S10)
171./B3
172./B7
173./B4
174./*B13
175./B7
176./B7
177./B1
178./B21
179./*B122
180./*B66
181./*B92
182./B94
183./B3
184./B14
185./B3
186./B14
187./B14
188./B4
189./B4
190./B103
191./Unid.
192./B10
193./B77
194./B14
195./B27
196./B3
197./B10
198./B14
199./B4
200./B3
201./B6
202./B76
203./B10
204./*B20 (S11)
205./B7
206./*B14
207./B3
208./B6
209./B27
210./B6

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211./B76
212./B13
213./B9
214./B4
215./B3
216./B6
217./B27
218./*B80
219./B6
220./*B101
221./B13
222./B3
223./B14
224./B1
225./B8
226./B5
227./B5
228./B18
229./B1
230./B14
231./*B75
232./.B4
233./B27
234./B14
235./B14
236./ B27 ($12)
237./B75
238./B1
239./B1
240./B27
241./B6
242./B6
243./B6
244./B9
245./B1
246./B32?
247./B1
248./B8
249./B4
250./B25
251./B124
252./*B77
253./B14
254./B5
255./B5
256./B20
257./B21
258./B22A
259./B22A
260./B22A
261./B22A
262./*B22A
263./B22A
264./B5
```

```
265./B5
266./B2
267./B2
268./*Unid.
269./B22A
270./B22A
271./B22A
272./B22A
273./B224
274./B22A
275./B22D
276./*B22D
277./B19
278./B19
279./B22
280./B24
281./*B91
282./B25
283./Unid. (not traced)
284./B19
285./B20
286./B91
287./B3
288./B5
289./*B93
290./B6
291./B10.(S14)
292./B8
293./B25
294./B25
295./B4
296./B25
297./B3
298./B6
299./B7
300./B25
301./B25
302./B25
303./B25
304./B25
305./B7
306./*B7
307./B7
308./B9
309./B9
310./*B9
311./B9
312./B14
313./B3
314./B7
315./B3
316./B25
317./B3
318./B124
```

319./B3
320./B8
321./B4
322./B4
323. $*$ B10
324./*B40 (\$15)
325./B27
326./B22B
327./B21
328./B13
329./B7
330./B9
331./B27
332./.B20
333./B20
334./B20
335./B20
336./B22B
337./B20
338./B19
339./B19
$340 . / *$ B21 with 342 below, different tile
341./B21
$342 . / *$ B21 with 340 above, different tile
343./*B39
344./B4
345./B4
346./B3
347./B1
348./*B120
349./B6
350./*B67
351./*B18
352./B19
353./B111
354./B3
355./B5
356./B5
357./B120
358./B132 (S16)
359./*B134
360./B55
361./B25
362./B100
363./B136
364./B44
365./*B48
366./*B51A
367./*B51B
368./*B135
369./B42
370./B132
371./*B136
372. ${ }^{*}$ B50
373./*B44
374./*B47
375./*B135
376./B134
377./B57
378./B44
379./B134
380./*B46
381./B136
382./B47
383./B51B
384./*B57
385./B135
386./*B55
387./*B54
388./B7
389./B42
390./B135
391./*B138
392./B45
393./B57
394./B55
395./B136
396./B134
397. /*B43
398./B100
399. $/ *$ B45
400./*B137
401./*B132
402./*B100
403./B14
404./B9
405./B10
406./*B97
407./B9
408./B7
409./B4
410./B4
411./B4
412./B4
413./B3
414./B3
415./B3
416./B27
417./B10
418./*B3
419./B3
420./*B25 (S17)
421./B3
422./B4
423./B4
424./B4
425./B4
426./B3
427./B4
428./B4
429./B4
430./B12
431./B4
432./.B4
433./B4
434./B4
435./B4
436./B4
437./B4
438./B4
439./B4
440./B9
441./B12
442./B4
443./B4
444./*B27
445./B6
446./B60 (S18)
447./*B60
448./B60
449./B60
450./B60
451./B60
452./B60
453./B13
454./B4
455./B1
456./B18
457./B4
458./B94
459./B32
460./B18
461./B18
462./B9
463./B26
464./B21
465./B12
466./B4
467./*B121
468./B27
469./B17
470./B17
471./*B104 (in 5 fragments)
472./B91
473./*B34/35
474./B3
475./B3
476./B30
477./B17 (S19)
478./*B29
479./B29
480./B29
535./B29
536./B7
537./B1
538./B1
539./B1
540./B29
541./B27
542./B2
543./B3
544./B20
545./B19
546./*B4
547./B4
548./B79
549./*B61
550./B1
551./*B1
552./B1
553./B1
554./B1
555./B3
556./B7
557./B4
558./B25
559./B27
560./B8
561./B27
562./B26
563./B14
564./B24
565./B20
566./B3
567./B20
568./B23
569./B18
570./B6 (S19)
571./B61
572./B5
573./B16 (S19)
574./*B36, with 519 (S19)
575./B29 (S19)
576./B23
577./Unid.
578./B3 (S8)
579./B39 (S8)
580./B6 (S8)
581./B7 (S19)
582./B19 (S13)
583./B22A (S13)
584./B22A (S13)
585./B24 (S13)
586./B22A (S13)
587./B27 (S21)
588./*B28 (S19)


[^0]:    *Area 14 unless stated otherwise

