

Constructing Calleva: Relief-patterned tiles, a case study.

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My PhD project is a characterisation of the ceramic building material from Roman Silchester through analysis of the form and fabric of brick and tile used within the town. Employing ceramic analysis methods more traditionally used for pottery, the study uses geo-chemical and petrographic methods to determine the range of fabrics, and potentially identify production centres or raw material sources.

Relief-patterned flue-tiles are a distinctive form of Roman CBM which had a limited production timeframe. Examples from the Silchester assemblage represent six of the published dies in the 1994 corpus (Betts et al. 1994) along with one new recently published design. With the aim of understanding the organisation of the production and distribution of these roller-stamped tiles, where possible, all examples of each of the represented die types have been sampled. Geo-chemical and petrographic analysis of these fabrics has been employed to ascertain if the groups of roller-stamped tiles were manufactured using the same raw material resources or, as suggested by Lowther (1948), they are the product of itinerant craftsmen moving between production centres.