

Pottery from Thorner, West Yorkshire (TOR98)

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Introduction

Twenty-nine sherds of pottery, weighing 324gm, was submitted for identification and assessment. The pottery was catalogued in an Access 97 database recording common name code, form, number of sherds, number of vessels, weight in gm, part of vessel, description and action.

Description

Roman

A single sherd of abraded greyware (code *grey*) jar body sherd was present. The sherd came from the shoulder of a vessel with three slight cordons and was identified by B Precious, who comments that it is likely to be of 2nd to 4th-century date.

Anglo-Saxon

No pottery of pre-conquest date was present.

Medieval

Nineteen sherds of medieval pottery were found. Fifteen of these were gritty ware (code *gw*), a wheelthrown light-firing ware with coarse temper (all the Thorner examples contained fragments of coarse sandstone, probably of Lower Carboniferous age). This ware was introduced to the north of England at some point between the Norman conquest and the middle of the 12th century and rapidly became the standard coarseware used. Thorner itself is suggested by J Le Patourel to be one of the sources of this ware. Le Patourel has noted that there is a chronological progression from squared to rounded rim profiles with the squared rims being 12th century and the rounded ones 13th century. Examples of both are present at Thorner.

The remaining four wares present were each represented by single sherds:

- A cooking pot in a reduced fabric with coarse sandstone temper (coded here: *tor98c*). This might simply be an overfired/misfired sherd of gritty ware but the vessel appears to have a globular shape and angular rim which distinguish it from gritty wares. Furthermore it appears to have a coarser, albeit petrologically similar texture.
- A jug in a Northern English medieval whiteware (coded here: *nemw*). Like the gritty ware, this vessel has a light-coloured fabric with a coarse, sandstone-derived quartzose temper. However, in contrast to the gritty ware it contains several visible large flakes of muscovite (up to 2.0mm across) and so is likely to be derived from a different source.
- A sherd from a glazed jug made from a red-firing clay, but also with sandstone-derived coarse sand temper (coded here: *tor98b*). The glaze is mainly worn away but remains in two horizontal grooves, about 10mm apart, and is of brown colour.
- A sherd from a Humber ware jug or other large vessel (such as a cistern). Such

vessels were produced at a number of centres in the Humber estuary and are characterised by their silty texture. Humber wares were first produced in the early 14th century but are characteristic of the late medieval and early post-medieval period.

Post-medieval

Four sherds of post-medieval pottery were found:

- a handle from a Midlands purple jar or jug with thick brown/purple glaze (code *mp*). Such vessels were produced from the 15th century onwards but are particularly common in the 16th century.
- Two sherds from blackware cups (code *cstn*). One is a small vessel, with oval handle and enclosed form. The fabric is fine-textured with no large inclusions and might be a product of the Wrenthorpe potteries. It is likely to be of 16th century date. The other is from a vessel with a slightly coarser fabric and comes from a larger vessel, perhaps 20-25cm diameter at the rim and probably a conical profile. It might be slightly later in date (late 16th or 17th century).
- A sherd from a red earthenware dish with white slip-trailed decoration on the rim. The fabric contains sparse rounded dense off-white clay pellets and is probably a Coal Measure red-firing clay (code *stre*). In Staffordshire such vessels were first produced in the mid-17th century but this example is likely to have a northern source.

Modern

Two sherds of red earthenware flowerpots were found. Such vessels are likely to be of 19th or 20th century date.

Assessment of Potential

The Romano-British sherd is very worn and in isolation probably only indicates that the area was ploughed in the Roman period. This collection demonstrates the existence on or close to the site of occupation from the 12th-century onwards, continuing into the post-medieval period. The absence of post-medieval slipwares, stonewares and the like suggests that occupation ceased before the end of the 17th century when these types became extremely common.

Appendix One: Catalogue of Pottery

Plot	sfno	Trench	Cname	form	nosh	nov	wt	part	description	action
2	1	u/s 66m n	Mp	jug	1	1	46	bs	wide strap handle;4 vert grooves;purple glaze	
2	4		cstn	tyg	1	1	15	bs	oval handle;wide diam vessel;fine silty texture with sparse white fine sst frags	
2	5	28m w of plot 2a	gw	jar	1	1	4	bs		
2	6	36m w of pl 2a	tor98b	jug	1	1	4	bs	two widely-spaced horiz grooves;brown glaze;oxid red sst sand temp with gry core and black int	
2	7	82m e of boundary new route	stre	dish	1	1	6	r	white slip-trailing under plain glaze	
2	8	27m e of boundary	gw	jar	1	1	7	bs	red clay inclusions;sst sand	
2	9	27m e of corner	gw	jar	1	1	11	r	sst sand	draw
2	10		gw	jar	1	1	5	bs		
2	11		gw	jar	1	1	11	r	squared rim;sst sand	
2	12		gw	jar	1	1	9	base		
2	13		tor98a	-	1	1	7	bs	shl=14;off-white fabric with white rounded clay pellets;fried dark glaze;date?	
2	14	at corner old pipe	tor98a	-	1	1	6	bs	shl=13	
2	15	61m n of f boundary road	tor98c	jar	1	1	16	r	globular vessel;reduced grey; coarse sst inclusions up to 2mm across	draw
2	16	32m s of boundary (old trench)	cstn	tyg	1	1	10	bs	small cup;fine silty fabric - Wrenthorpe?	

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2	17	gw	jar	1	1	25	base	
2	18	12m n of corner	gw	jar	1	1	7	bs
2	19	36m s of tree boundary	gw	jar	1	1	12	r or Hillam ware?;
2	20	2m n of tree boundary	humb	jug	1	1	11	bs thick walled vessel; possibly cistern; fine shale/slate inclusions alongside quartzose sand
2	21		misc nky	object	1	1	42	lump large fragment of white silty clay (sparse musc laths); one flat surface covered with light green glaze
2	23	32m s of f boundary	misc nw	flp	1	1	4	bs
2	24		misc nw	flp	1	1	4	bs
2	25	23m s of f boundary	gw	jar	1	1	10	bs
5	0	u/s 62m n of stone	nemw	jug	1	1	19	bs light green glaze (iron not copper?); strap handle scar; reduced code and int; sst sand plus sparse flakes of muscovite
5	0	u/s 22m n of stone	grey	jar	1	1	7	bs abraded sherd with three grooves/cordons on shoulder (ID B Precious)
2a	0	subsoil in slot A	gw	jar	3	3	18	bs all contain sst sand
2a	0	topsoil in slot a	gw	jar	1	1	1	bs
2a	3	50m n	gw	jar	1	1	7	bs
