

MATERIAL FROM THE ‘MUSÆUM’ OF RALPH THORESBY (1658–1725) PRESERVED AT BURTON CONSTABLE HALL, EAST YORKSHIRE

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The museum of Ralph Thoresby (1658–1725) of Leeds was dispersed soon after his death and, until now, very few items therefrom have been traced. However, nineteen specimens have recently been discovered amongst the collections assembled by William Constable (1721–91) at Burton Constable Hall, East Yorkshire. The newly recognized Thoresby items at Burton Constable include geological, zoological, archaeological and ethnographic specimens. William Constable appears to have acquired them via Dr John Burton (1697–1771) of York. A manuscript list survives which indicates that Constable once possessed more than fifty-five items or groups of items, from the Musæum Thoresbyanum. At least seven of these ex-Thoresby items, not now traceable, can be shown to have passed into the museum founded by George Wallis (1731–1803), a gunsmith and antiquary of Hull.

RALPH THORESBY (1658–1725), the antiquary and historian of Leeds, will be best known to most readers of this journal as the founder of the Musæum Thoresbyanum, in its day ‘one of the most interesting in the first generation of English museums’.¹ Sadly, very few specimens from this once enormous and varied collection can now be traced. Fortunately, however, Thoresby himself produced a detailed catalogue of the contents of his Musæum in 1712. This catalogue of his ‘Antiquities, and . . . Natural and Artificial Rarities’ was printed for Thoresby in 1713, but was finally published only as part of his *Ducatus Leodiensis* in 1715.²

In the present paper, details are given of a newly discovered body of Musæum Thoresbyanum material which has survived, apparently unrecognized for two centuries, at Burton Constable Hall in East Yorkshire. The material in question once formed part of the cabinet of curiosities assembled by William Constable (1721–91) of Burton Constable.

William Constable was the son of Cuthbert Tunstall (c.1680–1747) of Wycliffe in County Durham, who – with the condition that he assumed the surname of Constable – had inherited Burton Constable from his uncle, the 4th Viscount Dunbar, in 1718. The many intellectual interests of Cuthbert Tunstall, who was described as ‘the catholic Maece-

nas of his age’,³ may have been the inspiration for William’s acquisition of a broad range of scientific interests, which he pursued with considerable enthusiasm. He built up significant collections of scientific instruments, geological specimens and shells, as well as a substantial herbarium. Following William Constable’s death, his ‘philosophical’ collections were eventually consigned to the attics, to lie largely undisturbed until the 1970s, when his museum was recreated for public view on the first floor at Burton Constable Hall.

In 1992, Burton Constable Hall was acquired with funds from the National Heritage Memorial Fund to be run as a country-house museum by the Burton Constable Foundation. Following the takeover, the work of recording the extensive collections commenced. It soon became apparent that there was far more uncatalogued material to be investigated, in cupboards and attics, than had previously been realized.

Circumstances of the discovery

The first of the Thoresby specimens to be found, a bronze or copper blade and associated ‘hone’ (see Fig. 5, below),⁴ came to light in a box of country-house detritus in 1993. Although these two items

were not immediately recognized as prehistoric artefacts, the legible label (glued to the 'hone')⁵ bearing Thoresby's name and catalogue page-number immediately gave cause for excitement. Not long afterwards, a small object carved from bone or ivory (see Fig. 8, below) was discovered at the back of a drawer in an eighteenth-century desk. It too bore a label referring to the published catalogue of Thoresby's collection, in which it is described as 'a *Roman Panuelium* or *Shuttle*'.⁶ At this point, the significance of a manuscript list in the Burton Constable archives, entitled 'Curiosities once belonging to Ralph Thoresby of Leeds',⁷ became apparent. This list, which is transcribed as an appendix to the present paper, appears to represent part of the inventory of William Constable's possessions which was drawn up shortly after his death.⁸ It includes details of no fewer than fifty-five items, or groups of items, which once formed part of Thoresby's collection. When the cataloguing of William Constable's geological collection commenced in late 1994, further surviving Thoresby items were discovered, which led to a thorough – and productive – search amongst the remainder of the collections at Burton Constable.

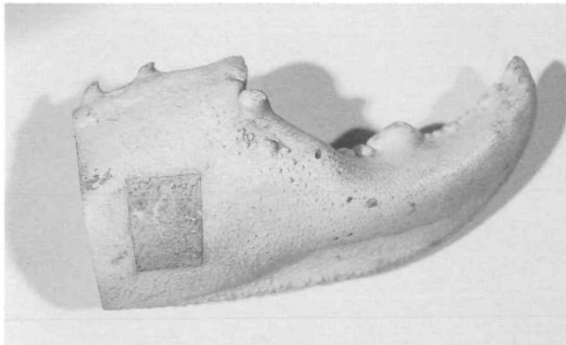
The various specimens identified as deriving from the *Musæum Thoresbyanum* were recovered from a variety of locations. A dried elk leg was still in an attic cupboard from whence other specimens had been taken some twenty years earlier to recreate William Constable's museum. Several fossils, a 'A round Bone of a Whale' and a 'Tooth-brush from Mecca' were found in various drawers of William Constable's geology cabinet. Other items had been on public display, their significance unrecognized, for many years. A large turtle shell from Ascension Island had already been suspended on the wall of the museum room. An Indian shield, which actually bears a clearly legible label identifying it as a Thoresby item, was likewise an open display. A terrapin shell from Barbados, a lobster claw and other items were lying unrecognized amongst specimens of Constable's zoological collection. The most recent finds are an Indian 'Book or Scroll . . . from Onar', discovered amongst printed books in the library, and – during the very preparation of this paper – a steel head of a tobacco pipe with a 'Plate over it for Security'. In all, over a period of three years, fifteen items or groups of items have been identified as specimens from Thoresby's museum.

The surviving specimens

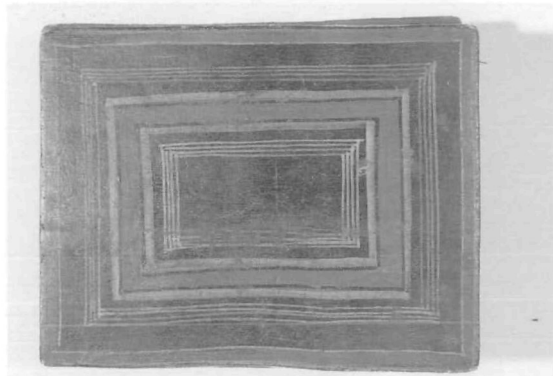
Of the specimens noted on the aforementioned manuscript list of 'Curiosities' once belonging to Thoresby, six items (or groups of items) are still clearly recognizable at Burton Constable. Indeed, five of the six bear handwritten labels confirming their identities. These items are listed below, with page-references to (and their original descriptions from) the first edition of *Ducatus Leodiensis*. The number in square brackets, preceding each quoted description, is the present accession number of the specimen in question; a transcript of the label present on the specimen is given in square brackets following the description quoted from *Ducatus Leodiensis*:

- | | |
|------|--|
| page | |
| 433 | [BCF 1132] 'A prodigious <i>Tooth</i> of an <i>Elephant</i> ; it is eleven Inches in Circumference, besides what hath been broken off . . . [from] . . . <i>Derbyshire</i> . . . and given me by Dr. <i>Hayford Wainwright</i> .' [Label: 'Elephants Tooth. / p. 433.']. (Fig. 1) |
| 438 | [BCF 5245] 'The Claw of a <i>Great Lobster</i> .' [Label: 'The Claw of / a Great Lob- / ster that [—] / had probably / been near a / yard long. / Thoresby P. 438.']. (Fig. 2) |
| 478 | [BCF 8000] 'A <i>Tooth-brush</i> from <i>Mecca</i> in <i>Arabia Felix</i> . . . being only a Stick, whose End for an Inch long is parted into small Fibres. Don. D. <i>Seb. Alchribel</i> .' [Labels: 'Wood from Mecca, of which / ye Turks make Tooth-Brushes / Thoresby p. 452 Ducut / Leod.' and '452.2[-]']. (Fig. 3) |
| 485 | [BCF 8006] 'A <i>Steel Head</i> [of a tobacco pipe] with Plate over it for Security. Don. <i>Godfr. Haddon</i> .' |
| 499 | [BCF 8001] 'A <i>Book</i> or <i>Scroll</i> of 17 Yards two Foot long, wrap'd up in <i>Quarto</i> eight Inches broad, from <i>Onar</i> in the Kingdom of <i>Canara</i> in the <i>East-Indies</i> ; it is to be writ upon with a <i>Slate Pen</i> . Don. D. <i>Tho. Wilson Merc</i> .' [Label: 'Novembr ye 3rd 1686 / bought at Onoaur . . . by me Ephraim Burdall']. (Fig. 4) |
| 565 | [BCF 8002–3] The ' <i>Brass Lance</i> ' and the ' <i>Hone</i> to sharpen it' which were originally found in association with an 'Urn' and ' <i>Securis Lapidea</i> ' at Broughton in 1676. [Label: 'The Hone to sharpen ye Danish / Lance. Thoresby p. 565 found in / the Same urn with the annex'd Lance, Mal / let fibula & odd [—]']. (Fig. 5) |

In addition to the above-listed items, four further Thoresby museum specimens, or groups of specimens, not on the Burton Constable manuscript list are also recognizable (by virtue of the handwritten labels they bear) at Burton Constable Hall, and are listed below in the format employed in the preceding list:

FIG. 1. 'A prodigious *Tooth* of an *Elephant* . . .'FIG. 2. 'The Claw of a *Great Lobster*.'FIG. 3. A '*Tooth-brush* from *Mecca* in *Arabia Felix* . . .'

- 433 [BCF 5242] The darker of the 'Two large *Teeth*, the one white, the other dark coloured, but of what Animals uncertain; three Inches in length, and four

FIG. 4. 'A *Book* or *Scroll* . . . from *Onar* . . . in the *East-Indies*.'FIG. 5. The '*Brass Lance*' and the '*Hone to sharpen it*' from Broughton.

- by the Indentings round. Don. D. Sar. *Dodgson*' [Label: 'p. 433.']. (Fig. 6)
- 459 [BCF 1133–1136] Four of the fossil lamellibranchs listed on this page, almost certainly falling within Thoresby's categories of '*Musculitae* from *Humber*, of a whitish Stone' and/or 'The *Tellenites*' [Labels: '459.34', '459.35', '459.36' and '459.21'].
- 473 [BCF 8004] 'A small *Indian Target*: this is not two Foot in Diameter, painted with green and yellow Branches upon a Scarlet Ground; in the Center is a Scocheon with a Sort of Harpy, or perhaps Lion passant gardant Or, in a Field of Vert.' [Label: 'An Indian Target. / Thoresby P. 473. / Lion Passant / Gardant.']. (Fig. 7).
- 558 [BCF 8005] ' . . . a *Roman Panuelium*, or *Shuttle*, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, yet not one broad in the very middle . . . ' [Labels: 'a Roman Shuttle / or Panuelium / Phil. Trans. No 244 / Thore p. 558.' and 'Thoresby P. 558']. (Fig. 8)

A further five specimens, not labelled but conforming so closely to descriptions and dimensions given in *Ducatus Leodiensis* as to leave little room for doubt

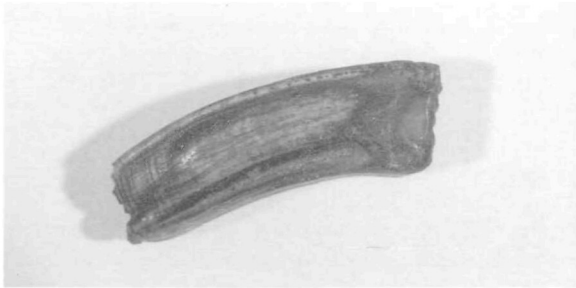


FIG. 6. The darker of the 'Two large Teeth . . .'

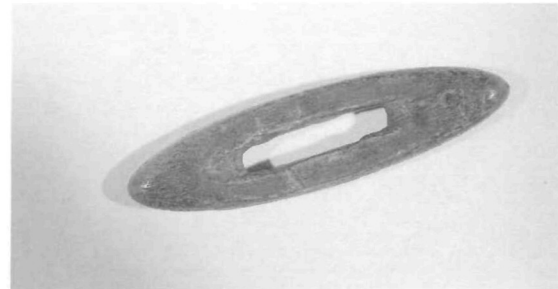


FIG. 8. The 'Roman Panuelium, or Shuttle.'

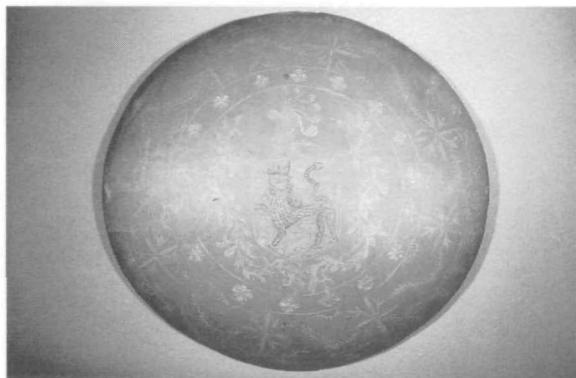


FIG. 7. 'A small Indian Target . . . with a Sort of Harpy, or perhaps Lion passant gardant'. Maximum diameter of shield 52 cm.

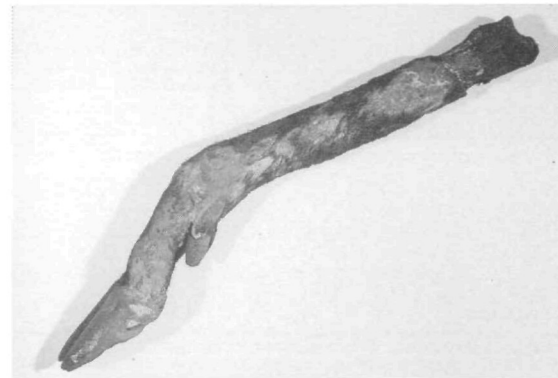


FIG. 9. 'The Leg of an Elk.'

that they derive from Thoresby's collection, are also present at Burton Constable:⁹

- 432 [BCF 5240] 'The Leg of an Elk two Foot two Inches long. Don. *Isaac Blackburn Pharm.*' (Fig. 9).
 433 [BCF 5241] 'The Tail of a very large scaly Creature; it is 14 inches in length, consists of 13 Rounds, each gradually less than other, from four Inches Diameter . . . to half an Inch . . . sent by *Sam. Molineux*, of *Dublin*, Esq;'.¹⁰ (Fig. 10).
 434 [BCF 5244] 'A flat . . . [tortoise] . . . from *Barbadoes*; the convex Work is composed of Black and Citrine, 13 entire round, or rather *Pentagonal* Figures, besides the Halves at the Edge. Don. *D. Netherwood.*' (Fig. 11)
 434 [BCF 5246] 'The large Sea-Tortoise brought from the Isle of *Ascension* in South America, by Dr. *Midgley* of this Town . . . it is near a Foot above three Yards in Circumference.'
 437 [BCF 5243] 'A round Bone of a Whale seven Inches Diameter, but little more than one thick. Don. *D. Fran. Place.*'

There are thus ten definite – and a further five probable – items, or groups of items, derived from

the Musæum Thoresbyanum present at Burton Constable.

The surviving specimens: some further details

Further information regarding some of the specimens surviving at Burton Constable has been gleaned from Thoresby manuscripts housed in the archives of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, at Leeds. Amongst these archive items is the manuscript album in which Thoresby recorded details of some of the donations to his museum.¹¹ It is, for example, noted therein that the 'old Roman shuttle' was given by 'Mr. Henry Gyles of York, the famous Glass Painter'.¹² However, the Bronze Age copper-alloy blade and so-called 'hone' are documented in much more detail. A letter to Thoresby from Stephen Tempest (1654–1742) of Broughton Hall, near Skipton in Yorkshire, describes the discovery of these items in the grounds of his house in 1676:

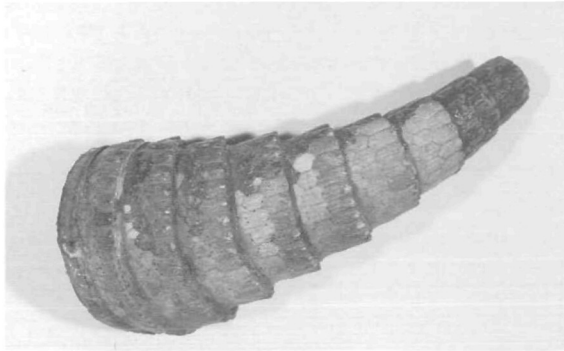


FIG. 10. 'The Tail of a very large scaly Creature.'



FIG. 11. The 'flat . . . [tortoise] . . . from Barbadoes.'

[endorsed] To Ralph Thoresby in Leeds
Sr

I have retained the favor of / yors, and will endeavour to give yu the / best satisfaction I can about the Urne / and the other things yu enquire after. / The Urne was found in the year / 1676: in one of my Padocks upon a / limestone Rock with its mouth do[wn] / The Rock made very cleane, the Urne / ten inches diamiter, and betwixt / six and seven inches deep, half an / inch thick, of a yallow Clay, filled / with bones, great part of them dust, / those that weare whole, had a little / hole bored through them, also in the / Urn was a Stone, a bout 5 inches / longe half round at each end, and sharp / edged, with a hole through the middle that a Man may put his Thumb through, / the stone cutt regularly, of a course Mar=ble, or hard Lime Stone; also in the Urn was / founde a little Hone, or Whetston extraordinary / smooth, and one brass Lance, Scarce 3 inches long, but very sharp, the whetstone a little more than / 3 inches long, and one broad. the bones, Lance, and / Whetstone, all bored through one end of them, with / the same instrument, the Urn was broken, and lost / when the house was repaired, and cleaned, and I att / London, two Men are living who found it, in digging / Stones for my Paddocks Walls. Sr. if yu ever come this / way I shall be glad to show yu the Mallitt, whetstone, Lance and a little Peece of a bone, which is all I / have saved. in the next field another workman / found a Roman knife as we suppose it to be. its sume=/thing more than half a yard longe and 2 inches broad and half an inch, thick at the back, its handle has 3 / or 4 holes bored through it. it was also found upon a / limestone Rock, marked with a stone, a greet boulder / a bout halfe a yard longe, sett upon the end, a bout an / inch apeared a bove ground. this Knife was found / a bout six yeares since. the next time I come to Leeds / I will pay my respects to you, in the meane time I am /

Sr your most humble servant
Stephen Tempest

Broughton

Octr: ye 23
1709¹³

The blade, 'hone' and associated items comprising this grave-group became celebrated objects during the early part of the eighteenth century. Thoresby wrote to Sir Hans Sloane concerning them, and this letter was published by Thomas Hearne – together with his own dissertation upon the items – in the commentary to vol. iv of his edition of Leland's *Itinerary*.¹⁴ The argument revolved around the issue of whether the grave-group was Romano-British – as Thoresby believed – or of Danish origin, as was argued by Hearne. Thoresby acknowledged the debate in the entry for the group in his published catalogue (p. 566). The blade from this group is one the very few items from Thoresby's museum illustrated in *Ducatus Leodiensis*¹⁵ and, along with the 'hone', clearly merits modern archaeological re-description. However, it is sufficient to note here that the data in Tempest's letter to Thoresby, combined with the latter's figure of the lost '*Securis Lapidea*' (in modern terminology a stone axe), suggest that the two surviving items from this grave group derive from a cremation burial dating from the Early Bronze Age.

With respect to the '*Book or Scroll . . . from Onar*', in what is now western India, Mrs Nalini Persad of the British Library (Oriental and India Office Collections) has kindly informed us that this rare item, which structurally appears to represent a fusion of Oriental and European technologies, is made of cloth impregnated with charcoal black. It contains some remaining text – much of which is written in Portuguese – applied with a slate pen, although most has been erased. Some of the Portuguese text seems to relate to stellar positions (possibly connected to navigational

activities), although Mrs Persad suggests that the main function of the volume may have been related to business notekeeping.

So far as the natural history items originally listed on p. 433 of *Ducatus Leodiensis* are concerned, it should be noted that the darker of the 'Two large Teeth' which Thoresby was unable to identify is one of the upper cheek-teeth of a horse. The 'prodigious Tooth of an Elephant' is apparently an incomplete mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*) molar or pre-molar, and the specimen which represents Thoresby's mysterious 'Tail of a very large scaly Creature' derives from a species of armadillo.

From Leeds to Burton Constable: the 'Burton Connection'

Thoresby's collection, and its almost total disappearance, has recently been discussed in this journal, by Peter Brears.¹⁶ So far as the present authors are aware, the only available source of truly contemporary detail relating to the fate of the collection,¹⁷ is a copy of *Ducatus Leodiensis*, preserved in the Leeds Library, which has manuscript annotations in red ink in the margins.¹⁸ This copy formerly belonged to Thomas Wilson FSA, of Leeds. His notes, however, have proved to be unduly pessimistic with respect to the fate of at least some of the specimens. Wilson records that following the death of Thoresby:

All the Stones Minerals Salts & c. thrown away, they having lain in a Garret like a Heap of Rubbish from 1726 to 1743, the Rain Snow & c. beating in on all sides and during that Time several persons rummaging them under-foot, so they became like a Dunghill for during that time if they ever had any Beauty if was quite spoiled.

Whilst Wilson's marginal notes are precise about the fate of some items, most specimens are bracketed together in groups, with a general note about what became of them. Thus, many of the specimens which came to Burton Constable – including some of those which survive – are recorded as having been destroyed. 'A young Cat (littered at Leedes)' was 'Rotten'. The 'Horn of a Rhinoceros' and the 'Leg of an Elk' are recorded as having been '... thrown away to clear the Room'. The 'Tooth-brush from Mecca' was amongst items which were 'rotten & cast away'. On page 486, it is noted that the ethnographic and social history specimens listed on several previous pages were 'spoil'd with Rain & Rust were Sold for 6s. to a Brazier and probably otherwise Stolen for Mrs. Thoresby was careless about their

preservation'. The '*Roman Panuelium*, or *Shuttle*' is included in a group described as: 'All Childrens Baubles & were thrown away'.

Concerning the surviving components of the Bronze Age grave-group, the note on page 566 reads: 'As to the Lance & Stone they were found but they are modern & Childish.' Paradoxically, Wilson's note on the previous page, relating to the stone axe from the same grave-group, states: 'Dr. Burton had it, it's worth all ye rest on this Head & Supposed to have been used by Celts or ancient Gauls before the Use of Iron & c. were found out.' Numerous other items, including the '*large Sea Tortoise*' (p. 434) and the '*round Bone of a Whale*' (p. 437) are also noted as having being acquired by 'Dr Burton'.

The Dr Burton referred to in Wilson's notes can surely be none other than Dr John Burton (1697–1771), the antiquary and physician of York. Certainly, the latter is known beyond doubt to have transferred ownership of his collection of Yorkshire manuscripts to William Constable in September 1769. A printed catalogue of these manuscripts¹⁹ survives at Burton Constable, bearing – at the foot of the final page – a written agreement, signed by Burton himself, stating that, in return for the documents, William Constable was to pay 'an Annuity of Fifty five pounds' to Burton's widow.

In view of the fact that many of the ex-Thoresby specimens which came to Burton Constable are known to have been acquired by a Dr Burton following Thoresby's death, and that the manuscript collection of Dr John Burton of York (almost certainly the same personage) was also acquired by that wide-ranging dilettante William Constable, it seems reasonable to assume that Dr John Burton (1697–1771) did, indeed, represent the intermediary by whom part of Thoresby's collection arrived at Burton Constable.

From Burton Constable to Hull: the 'Wallis connection'

It is interesting to note that, of the fifty-five items, or groups of items, cited in the Burton Constable manuscript list of specimens once owned by Thoresby, no fewer than seven of those no longer present at Burton Constable (items 14, 18, 23, 26, 30, 41 and 51) are recognizably listed in the 1833 sale catalogue²⁰ of the Museum originally built up by George Wallis (1731–1803), the gunsmith and antiquary of Hull²¹ but maintained and expanded by his son, George Wallis Jnr. (1770–1833). Both father and son are known to

have had a long-term connection with Burton Constable as gunsmiths, supplying guns, powder and shot to William Constable and his successors from 1760 onwards. It is not known, however, which George Wallis acquired the Thoresby items, listed below, from Burton Constable, or on what terms:

Wallis

cat. no.

- 58 A Spanish weapon resembling a Halberd, the staff is adorned with brass studs, the head engraved with the Castle of Xicena, in Valencia, where it was taken by Capt. Butler, when the English reduced that place to the obedience of King Charles III., A.D. 1706.
- 324 A large ancient cast iron Stirrup, said to have belonged to the Abbot of Kirkstall.
- 478 Piece of Queen Elizabeth's Walking Staff, inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl.
- 472 A Glove: worn by Mr. Francis Laytors [*sic*], of the Jewel house, in the time of Charles I.
- 338 Persian Slipper, made of red Turkey leather, with a cork sole, one inch thick, covered at the edge with gilded leather.
- 477 The Head of a Crosier Staff, made of copper, gilt and enamelled, in the form of a serpent; the scales of a

changeable blue, with a (*rather unnatural*) head, having two faces and two pair of short horns, perhaps designed for ears.

- 973 A Lachrymatory of reddish earth, found in a Roman burying-ground at York.

It is highly likely that item 23 on the Burton Constable manuscript list of Thoresby material ('a Piece of Queen Elizabeth's walking staff inlaid with Ivory & Mother of Pearl'), which was later to be listed (see above) as Wallis Museum No. 478, was ultimately acquired by the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society and is the specimen listed by Jukes²² as being present in the Society's museum in the Royal Institution on Albion Street, Hull:

. . . part of a walking stick which belonged to Queen Elizabeth, (table B1, case 3,) . . .

If this was the case, one of the most illustrious items from the Musæum Thoresbyanum almost certainly met its end on the night of 24 June 1943, when the Albion Street Museum was destroyed by German bombing.

APPENDIX

The Burton Constable manuscript list – in an unknown hand – of material from Thoresby's museum reads as follows:

Curiosities once belonging to Ralph Thoresby / of Leeds

page

- 432. 1 The Foot of a great Bear, 8 Inches broad, which is two / Inches larger than that in ye Repository of ye Royal / Society, yet that was even supposed to have been as big / as a Bull
- 2 A young Cat (littered at Leeds) with six feet & two tails, having / two distinct bodies from ye mid back
- 3 Part of the Horn of a Rhinoceros, blackish, smooth, and quite / thorough sollid
- 433. A prodigious fossil Tooth of an Elephant 11 Inches in Circumference. Derbys.
- 435. 4 The Skin of a Rattle snake, brown & ash coloured, four foot / within two Inches long
- 438. 5 The Claw of a great Lobster
- 453. 6 A Virginian Acorn Cup, an Inch & half diameter
- 472. 7 An Indian Bow, it is made of Brazil wood
- 8 Part of an Indian Quiver & Arrow
- 9 a Tomahaw, or fighting Club from North Carolina, upon one side / is drawn an odd figure supposed to represent one of their Idols. / upon

the bowing at the end, is a Lizard cut out of the same / piece of Wood

- 10 an Indian Shield, ten foot & half in Circumference, it is made of / light wood coverd first with leather, & then fine linen cloth / delicately painted with a variety of colours & workmanship / this was brought from ye East Indies by Capt. John ap Rice
- 473. 11 Another shield, hath upon a black ground an Indian painted & gilt, / with several Quadrupedes & reptiles about him, and hath ye sides / fastned together by Octangular Brass studs
- 12 a very curious Tamahauke, inlaid with seven rows of white Studs, / perforated, it is a desperate weapon being armed with a bluish / marble or Flint a foot long & sharp at both ends
- 13 a Turkish Scimiter, the Scabbard consists of two pieces of wood, coverd / with blue cloth fenced with red leather, which on the fore side / is cut into Branches, and laid upon various Colours. / This was presented by ye Dey of Algiers to Capt. Hen. Lumley, when / Admiral Russel with ye English Fleet lay before that place
- 473. 14 a Spanish weapon almost in form of an Halbert, the wood is adorned / with brass studs, the Iron engraved with ye figure of a Castle, / perhaps

- that of Xixona in Valencia where it was taken by /
Capt. Butler when ye English reduced that place
to ye Obedience / of King Charles ye third An.
1706
- 15 a Copper Soard or Antique Skeine found in
Ireland it is half a / yard long which has been
fastned in ye handle by nails as appears / by ye
first / hole were it is broke of
474. 16 an Old fashioned Wheel lock Pistol the stock &
Pomel curiously / inlaid with Ivory. (the pomel is
Wanting)
- 17 a Gantlet, which was faced with Velvet the studs
are gilt
- 18 an Antique Stirup but short, it is of Cast Iron ye
sole 7 Inches broad / it belonged to ye Abbot of
Kirkstal near Leeds Yorkshire
- 19 General Fairfax's Sword hilt the Guard or Basket
work inlaid / with Silver found at Nun Appleton
near York
- 20 a Spur of the like workmanship
475. 21 a Multiplication Table, tis a bout 2 Inches long &
1½ broad / yet can serve for any sum from a
Farthing to Ten thousand pound / it is supposed
to have belonged to ye Priory of Beauchief in /
Derbyshire
478. 22 a Tooth brush from Mecca in Arabia Felix, used
by ye poorer / sort of ye Inhabitants being only a
stick whose end for an / Inch long is parted into
fibers
- 23 a Piece of Queen Elizabeth's walking staff Inlaid
with Ivory / & Mother of Pearl
479. 24 an Indian Comb for such as have no Wigs, it is a
piece of hard / wood 7 Inches long & 2 broad cut
into five round sharp teeth / three Inches long
- 25 an Other that approaches nearer the form of ye
Europeans having / about forty teeth in ye
compas of an Inch it is 3½ long & 1½ broad / the
length of ye teeth are ye bredth of ye comb but
divided by a strong / Reed nailed in ye middle of
each side
481. 26 a Glove embroidered upon leather & lined with
Crimson Silk / which were Mr. Fran. Layton's,
who was a General to King Charles / ye first
482. 27 a Prussian boot for a boy, with an Iron rim for a
heel
- 28 a pair of Portuguese shoes for a Lady the upper
leather pink'd, as is / also ye red turkey leather
upon ye heels
- 29 a very odd Shoe the heel 6. Inches high, yet
length of ye Foot no more / than 5½ from ye toe
to the heel inclusive
- 30 a Prussian slipper of Red Turkey leather, the
Cork soal an Inch / thick, cover'd with gilded
leather
- 31 a brass Spur gilt
- 32 an odd sort of a jointed Spur with a six pointed
Rowel, but not / made to turn round
- 33 three others of Difrent sorts
484. 36 a Box of Fifty Nuremberg Cups of Turned work
admirably fine
485. 37 a Steel head of a tobacco pipe with a plate over it
for secu [paper torn] y
486. 38 a large pipe head of Clay, fit for a Brazilian
priest's Offering / who blesseth ye people with
its Smook
487. 39 John ye Baptist's head in a Platter, with this
Inscription in old / Letters Inter nat: Mulier
no. sure. maj. Joha: Bap. / found at York
487. 40 King Solomon's Judgement upon ye two Harlots
the head of a Crosier's Staff, it is of Copper gilt &
489. 41 Enamel'd in ye / form of a Serpent the scales of a
changeable blue very / natural, but so is not ye
Head which being designed for show on / both
side has a face & two Eyes on each side
499. 42 a Book or Scroll 17 Yards 2 foot long wrap'd up in
Quarto eight / Inches broad, from Onar in ye
Kingdom of Canara in the East / Indies: it is to be
writ upon with a Slate Pen
558. 43 Tesselated Pavement, or dice like squares of
Brick wherewith / the Romans used to pave ye
place where they set the Praetoriu[m] / or
Generals ten, they are of various sizes & colour,
from the ancient / Isuricum (Aldbrough)
559. 44 an Antient Roman Lamp that was dug up at
York, upon ye bottom / is F.U.G.ARI. VV.
563. 45 a Roman Brick with this Inscription LECXXVV.
from Chester
- 46 one of those Brass Instruments found near Bram-
ham Moor, 1709 / there were 5 or 6. of them of
different sizes they are somewhat in / the form of
a Wedge, with a hollow to put upon a shaft. Each
of / them hath an Ear or loop, what was the use of
them is not / Certainly known
564. 50 four other brass Cunei or Celts of a diffrent make,
Leland supposes / them to be Roman Chisels
used to cut their Stone & other materials / for
Building the Camps
565. 51 a Lacrimatory of Red Clay found at ye Roman
Burying place / at York
565. 52 a British or Danish Securis Lapidea, it was found
An. 1675. / in An Urn ten Inches Diameter, &
there with a Brass Lance & / a Hone to sharpen
it. The Mallet's head is the most curious & /
entire that I ever beheld. I suppose it to have been
a Mallet / where with the Priests slew their
Sacrifices
566. 53 a battle Ax of Stone, or Roman Securis
595. 54 a Clog or Perpetual Almanack it is of Danish
origin but / continued to this day in the Borders
of Wales whence this was / brought, upon each of
ye four sides are three Months, upon / one Edge
of it are the marks for ye Primes, upon the other

ye / days of the Month; every [—] is a large Notch for ye Sundays / the Symbols for ye Saints' Days are intersperc'd through the / whole. The Months & Festivals are distinguish'd by Hieroglyphical / marks, as the head of a Lamb, upon Lammas Day

The page numbers cited in the above list are those of the first edition of *Ducatus Leodiensis* and the accompanying descriptions are clearly quoted from that work, although often in abbreviated form and with some minor differences in spelling and punctuation. There are also two notable errors present in the list: the Abbot of Kirkstall's stirrup is actually listed on page 482 of *Ducatus Leodiensis* (not p. 474, where another stirrup iron is merely compared to that of the Abbot) and Francis Layton was 'of the Jewel House to' (rather than 'a General to') King Charles I (p. 481). The latter error is particularly interesting, since it might be taken to indicate that the information on the list was dictated verbally to its writer by someone reading from Thoresby's published catalogue.

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Notes and references

1. P. C. D. Brears, 'Ralph Thoresby, a museum visitor in Stuart England', *Journal of the History of Collections* 1 no. 2 (1989), pp. 213–24. For further biographical information on Thoresby see: D. H. Atkinson, *Ralph Thoresby, the Topographer; his Town and Times*, (Leeds, 1885); G. S. F. Forster, 'The first medievalist in Leeds: Ralph Thoresby, F.R.S., 1658–1725', in I. Wood and G. A. Loud (eds.) *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays presented to John Taylor* (London, 1992), pp. 251–70; P. Byrd and P. Brears, 'A pair of James I's gloves', *Costume* 24 (1990), pp. 34–42.
2. R. Thoresby, *Ducatus Leodiensis; or The History and Topography of the Ancient and Populous Town and Parish of Leedes* (London, 1715).
3. *Dictionary of National Biography*, sub nomine Constable, Cuthbert, M.D.
4. The perforated stone artefact described as a 'hone' by Thoresby appears, rather, to be an ornamental pendant – although the form of this particular example suggests the possibility of manufacture from a broken archer's 'wrist-guard' of a type not uncommonly found with Early Bronze Age burials.
5. This label, like most of those surviving on other specimens, is in the hand of William Constable.
6. Drs T. G. Manby and A. G. MacGregor have both, quite independently, suggested that this item (possibly fashioned from walrus ivory) is in fact a sword or knife guard from Anglo-Scandinavian (Viking) York. See A. MacGregor, *Bone, Antler, Ivory and Horn. The Technology of skeletal materials since the Roman period* (London, 1985), pp. 166–7.
7. East Yorkshire County Record Office, Beverley, DDCC/2/43B.
8. The hand in which this manuscript list is written corresponds to one of those in which parts of the 1791 inventory of William Constable's possessions were listed.
9. 'The Leg of an Elk': this unusual item, apparently preserved merely by drying, does indeed correspond with the measurement given by Thoresby. 'The Tail of a very large scaly Creature': the length and detail of the description given by Thoresby leaves no room for doubt that this is the specimen referred to. 'A flat [tortoise] from Barbadoes': it is unfortunate that the label, in William Constable's hand, glued to the underside of this item renders an earlier label inaccessible; the specimen has a leather loop for suspension. 'The large Sea-Tortoise': the shell of this item, which has been perforated for suspension, actually has a circumference of 9 ft 8 ins. 'A round Bone of a Whale': this pair of joined vertebral epiphyses is of precisely the dimensions given by Thoresby.
10. Samuel Molyneux was Secretary to George II when the latter was Prince of Wales.
11. Yorkshire Archaeological Society (Thoresby Manuscripts) MS 17.
12. Henry Giles (c.1640–1709); the fact that he was the donor of this specimen is not noted in Thoresby's published catalogue. However, Thoresby notes, in the course of his original description of the 'shuttle' (*Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* no. 224 (1698), that it was 'dug up in Mr. Giles's Garden' in York.
13. Yorkshire Archaeological Society (Thoresby Manuscripts) MS 9. Letters to Ralph Thoresby. It is worth noting that the date of discovery of the grave-group given by Thoresby in *Ducatus* is 1675, whereas Tempest's letter states that it was found in 1676.
14. T. Hearne (ed.), *The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1711).
15. *Ducatus Leodiensis*, p. 568, fig. 30.
16. See Brears, op. cit. (note 1).
17. This is other than the well known sale catalogue of 1764, which relates largely to the numismatic and manuscript component of Thoresby's museum which had been removed by his son to his house at Stoke Newington following Thoresby's death: *Musæum Thoresbyanum. A Catalogue of the genuine and valuable collection of . . . the late Ralph Thoresby . . . all of which will be sold by auction . . . at . . . Charing Cross, on Monday, March 5th and the Two following Days* (London, 1764).
18. The Leeds Library (Subscription Library), ref. no. 321.10.

19. *A Catalogue of Manuscripts, and Original Charters, Grants, &c Illustrating the various Branches of the History of the County of York . . . By John Burton, M.D. S.A.S.* Sadly, the greater part of the, once famous, Burton Constable manuscript collection was disposed of by auction at Sotheby's in 1889.
20. Anon., *Catalogue of a Museum . . . originally collected by the late Mr. Wallis, an eminent gunsmith in Hull . . . and considerably augmented . . . since his decease* (Hull, 1833).
21. A. G. Credland, 'Wallis of Hull', *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society* 9 no. 4 (1978), pp. 133–85.
22. Anon. [Jukes, A.], *A Guide to the Museum of the Literary and Philosophical Society, Hull*, (Hull, 1860).