

# The Library of Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682)

*Lucy Gwynn*  
*Queen Mary University London*

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Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

The survival of the 1711 sale catalogue of the library of Sir Thomas Browne and his heirs has given scholars of his work a privileged insight into his reading and book owning habits. Browne wrote on an encyclopaedic range of subjects and his prose bears the weight (implicit and explicit) of the many books and authors that contributed to his intellectual projects. As a consequence, his library and the 1711 catalogue have attracted intense interest from scholars, in spite of the absence of any physical trace of his books. This thesis examines the relationship between the catalogue and Browne's library as he knew and used it, striving for a bibliographical reconstruction whilst acknowledging the contingency and incompleteness of the catalogue. It also contributes to the critical study of Browne's works, assessing his book ownership for the elucidation of his texts, and considering his literary remains as an articulation of his reading. Quantitative analysis of the catalogue and a narrative of the life cycle of the library based on archival records are used to describe the library's contents and the practices of its owners. The local contexts of Browne's book ownership are outlined, together with the relationships of his works to his book sources, his museum collecting, and his position in the world of knowledge as articulated through library classification.

Browne is described as a book owner who showed little interest in the possession of a 'library' as a discrete, permanent collection, despite his profound engagement with books, and the high numbers of volumes that passed through his hands. Browne's library was also networked, linked to other collections through textual exchange, social relationships, book gifts, and conversations, indicative of a mode of seventeenth-century book ownership defined by fluidity and community.

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This work is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather John Cordy and my niece Una Sweeney.

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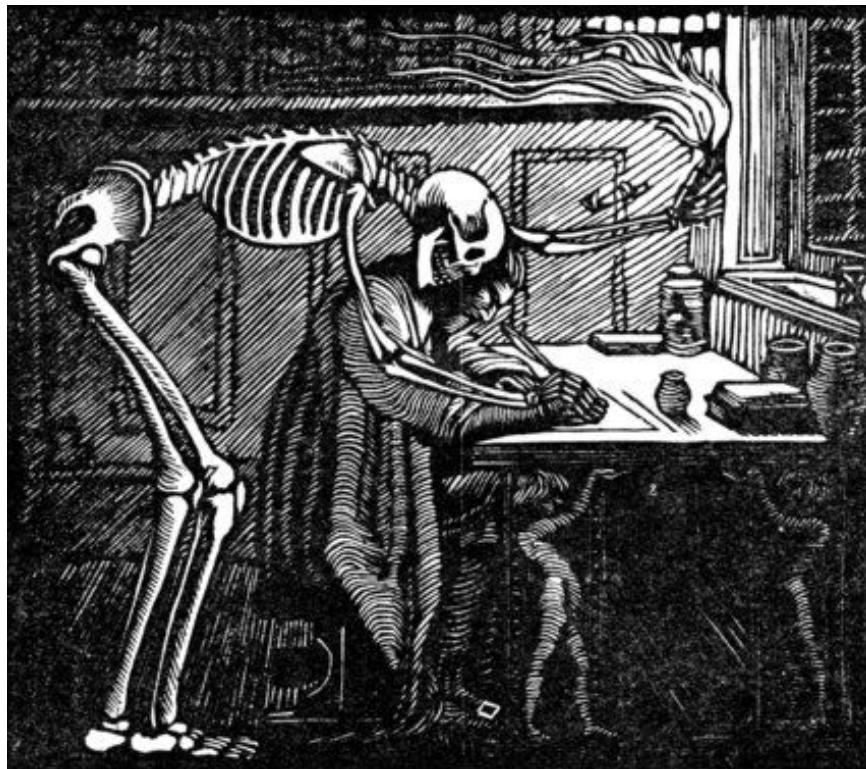
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## Abbreviations

GC	<i>Garden of Cyrus</i> (ed. Keynes, 1964), vol. I.
LF	<i>Letter to a Friend</i> (ed. Keynes, 1964), vol. I.
MC	'Musaeum Clausum' in <i>Miscellany Tracts</i> (ed. Keynes, 1964), vol. III.
PE	<i>Pseudodoxia Epidemica</i> (ed. Robbins, 1981).
RM	<i>Religio Medici</i> (ed. Keynes, 1964), vol. I.
SC	Thomas Ballard, <i>A catalogue of the libraries of Sir Thomas Browne and Dr Edward Browne, his son: a facsimile edition with an introduction, notes, and index</i> , ed. by Jeremiah S. Finch (Leiden: E.J. Brill / Leiden University Press, 1986). Citations to Finch's introduction or notes follow the facsimile edition's pagination. Items within the catalogue have been referenced by the pagination of the 1711 original, followed by the lot number: SC 1/18.
UB	<i>Hydriotaphia, or Urne-Buriall</i> (ed. Keynes, 1964), vol. I.
TB to EB, etc.	Correspondence by Thomas Browne and his eldest son Edward has been cited so frequently that it has been thought expedient to abbreviate their names where they occur. All correspondence edited by Keynes appears in vol. IV.
BL	British Library
NHM	Natural History Museum

## Introduction - Sir Thomas Browne in his library



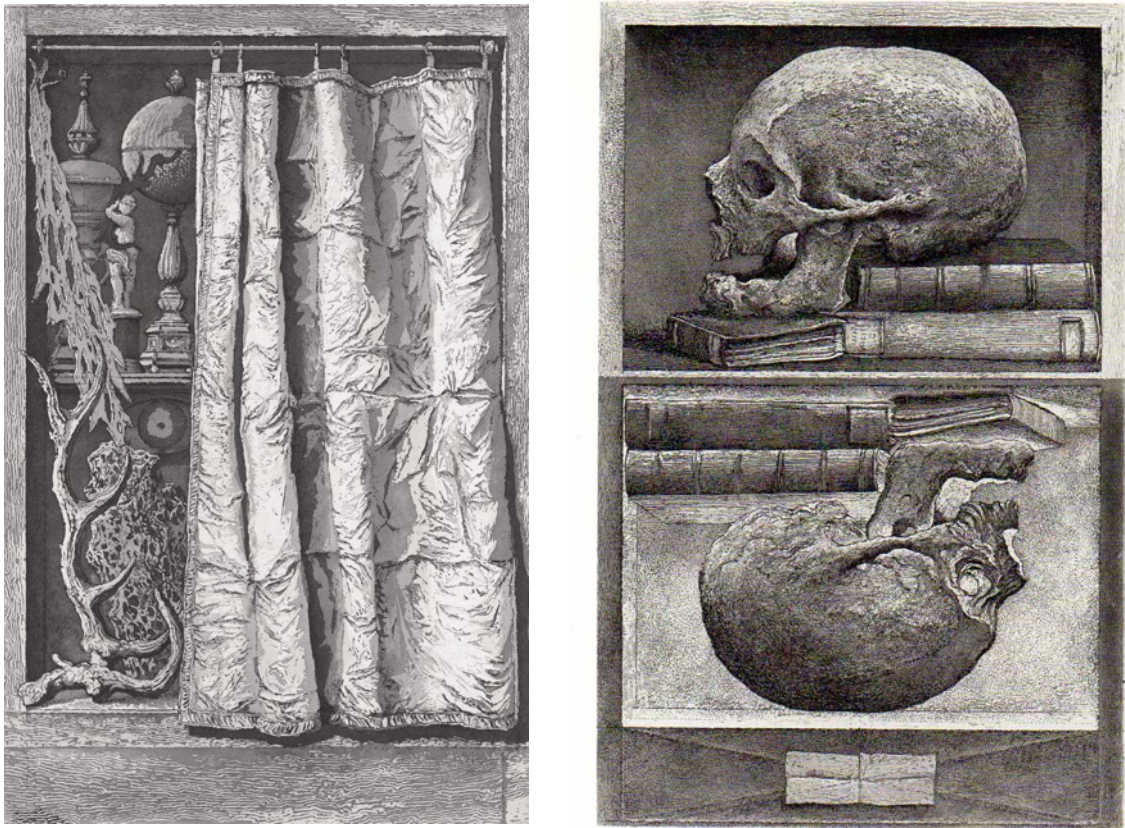
1. Gwen Raverat, *Sir Thomas Browne* (1910).

1.

When the surgeon, bibliographer, book collector, and balletomane Geoffrey Keynes produced the first authoritative bibliography of Thomas Browne's works for Cambridge University Press in 1924, he chose to include as a frontispiece a wood-engraving by his sister-in-law, Gwen Raverat (née Darwin).<sup>1</sup> Raverat shows Browne in his library, his body sheltered, his page lit and his pen guided by a long-shanked and benevolent Death. The library room is tidy: the desk is conspicuously clear of trash, bearing only the burial urns that inspire him, and an amphibious creature suspended in a jar of liquid. An hourglass is tucked onto the window sill. The books are neatly ranked upon a single shelf. The floor is innocent of screwed-up sheets of discarded drafts. Browne is a still point around which all forces move: Death's leaning frame;

<sup>1</sup> The engraving was reproduced again in the second edition: *A bibliography of Sir Thomas Browne* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. viii. For Keynes's life, see David McKitterick and Stephen Lock, 'Sir Geoffrey Langdon Keynes (1887-1982)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2014). Accessed online.





2. *Suite Musaeum Clausum*, by Erik Desmazières (2009).  
left: *Derrière le rideau*; right: *The skull of Sir Thomas Browne*.

the *putti* straining beneath the table; the night wind rushing in from the open casement. He is both alone and in a crowd, lit and in darkness, in a room and outside. Raverat is one of many of Browne's readers compelled to imagine his library.<sup>2</sup> Both artists and writers find inspiration in the relationship between the essayist and his books. Érik Desmazières, the French-Moroccan printmaker, takes his cue from Browne's *Musaeum Clausum*, the fantastical catalogue composed in the 1670s. He has dedicated several series of works to *la bibliothèque de Sir T.B.*, depicting small groups of antique books in worn detail, often with portraits or curiosities, held in compartments

<sup>2</sup> She was also not the only student at the Slade responding to Browne in the 1910s: her classmate Stanley Spencer buried two of his drawings in a tin at Cookham in a response to *Urne Buriall* in 1912. Tara Christie, "For Isaac Rosenberg": Geoffrey Hill, Michael Longley, Cathal Ó Searcaigh' in *The Oxford handbook of British and Irish war poets*, ed. by Tim Kendall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 542-563 (p. 544, n. 9). Raverat's friend Virginia Woolf characterised Browne's mind as 'one of the finest lumber rooms in the world — a chamber stuffed from floor to ceiling with ivory, old iron, broken pots, urns, unicorns' horns, and magic glasses full of emerald lights and blue mystery'. Virginia Woolf, 'The Elizabethan lumber room' in *The Common Reader* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1925), pp. 60-71 (p. 71).

and sometimes part-veiled by curtains.<sup>3</sup> Recent artistic responses to Browne exhibit a melancholy fascination with the overwhelming copiousness and the passage of time that both find an apt expression in the library. Desmazières's work juxtaposes books with bones as relics and mementos of lost time, and layers baroque gestures to effect a *mise-en-abyme*. *The skull of Sir Thomas Browne* is a copy, with a correspondent negative, of a photograph taken of Browne's skull positioned upon a pile of his books in the early twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> The same photograph is reproduced in W.G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn*, which opens with extended paraphrases of *Musaeum Clausum* and *The Garden of Cyrus* that follow on from a description of the study of the narrator's academic colleague Janine Dakyns: 'a virtual paper landscape [...] the paper had begun climbing from the floor, on which, year after year, it had settled, and was now up the walls and as high as the top of the door frame'.<sup>5</sup> Self-reflexiveness, vertiginous copia, libraries and Browne form a nexus for modern writers. Jorge Luis Borges — whose affinity to Browne is well attested — worked as a librarian and conceived a profoundly influential dystopian library in 'The Library of Babel'. Borges involved Browne in the self-reflexive structures of his essays.<sup>6</sup> In her fictionalised account of Kenelm Digby, Hermione Eyre envisages Digby's *trompe l'oeil* painting of the university library at Leiden as a cavernous semblance of the Library of Babel, within which the minute figure of Browne can be seen pacing, daydreaming and scribbling.<sup>7</sup>

The creative association of Browne's writing with library spaces is founded on the conspicuous account that Browne gives of himself as a reader and owner of books.

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<sup>3</sup> Desmazières's two suites of prints *Musaeum Clausum* and *Bibliotheca Abscondita* have been published in Érik Desmazières, *A cabinet of rarities: antiquarian obsessions and the spell of death*, text by Patrick Mauriès (London: Thames and Hudson, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> See Miriam L. Tildesley, 'Sir Thomas Browne: his skull, portraits and ancestry', with an introductory note by Sir Arthur Keith, and a report on the endocranial cast by G. Elliot Smith, *Biometrika*, 15 (1923), pp. 1-77.

<sup>5</sup> W.G. Sebald, *The rings of Saturn: an English pilgrimage*, translated by Michael Hulse (London: Vintage, 2002), pp. 8-9, 19-26.

<sup>6</sup> Roy Rosenstien offers a full explication of Borges' conversation with Browne in 'Browne, Borges, and back: phantasmagories of imaginative learning', in *Sir Thomas Browne: the world proposed*, ed. by Reid Barbour and Claire Preston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 296-310.

<sup>7</sup> Hermione Eyre, *Viper wine: a novel* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2014), pp. 167-168.

His prose twines a net of multiple authors, making continual reference to other texts, and overtly displaying the range of learning and the numbers of volumes that braced his achievements. This profusion of voices draws the reader into a community of learned and long-departed gentlemen which is neatly and evocatively embodied by the library, on the shelves of which books preserve ‘as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them’.<sup>8</sup> Browne elides the gap between himself and his audience, and writes as if his reader were standing at his shoulder, observing with him the scorched snails, the anatomised sparrows, the magnetised needles spinning in their bowls of water. Again and again, Browne’s readers find themselves pulled into Browne’s study — most eloquently at the end of *The Garden of Cyrus*, as he works at midnight in Norwich, whilst the huntsmen are up in America and the Persians are already past their first sleep.<sup>9</sup> Thus, conceiving Browne in his library has become a preoccupation of his scholarly critics as well as his artistic followers. His library is understood as an intellectual map whose features are traced upon his prose. Perceived incongruities in Browne’s arrangement of his sources have been recast as the consequence of books resting ‘cheek by jowl on his shelves, as companionably as you please’.<sup>10</sup> The reclusiveness and blinkered field of concern sometimes attributed to Browne casts his library as a ‘safe, leisurely’ retreat from ‘contemporary guns and politics’.<sup>11</sup> The space of the library, its contents, and its arrangement are felt to be immanent in Browne’s oeuvre.

In the context of such intense interest, it is more than a little mortifying to be faced with the almost total loss of Thomas Browne’s printed book collection. Extant volumes bearing the physical marks of Browne’s ownership, which might act as relics

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<sup>8</sup> John Milton, *Areopagitica and Of education*, ed. by K.M. Lea (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> GC, V, p. 226.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Royston Cawley, ‘Sir Thomas Browne and his reading’, *Periodical of the Modern Languages Association*, 48 (1933), pp. 426-470 (p. 435).

<sup>11</sup> As for Ann Cotterill, in *Digressive voices in early modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 127. Edmund Gosse sees Browne’s collections as analogous to his concentration on the small and proximate: ‘Passionately Browne pleads, as if pointing to his cases of butterflies, his hortus siccus, his anatomical preparations, and all the apparatus of his study in Norwich, for a patient and unbiassed examination of little physical things’. Gosse, *Sir Thomas Browne* (London: Macmillan, 1905), p. 35.

of his intellectual processes, can be counted — and perhaps, like Cornelia’s cremated corpse, even lifted — with the fingers of one hand.<sup>12</sup> Geoffrey Keynes succeeded in smoking out one volume bearing a donation inscription to Browne (a copy of John Evelyn’s *Sylva*) and another with an inscription of the title in Browne’s autograph (an edition of John Leland’s *Cyanea Cantio*).<sup>13</sup> He recorded a further clutch of copies that bore tangential or ambiguous provenances, some of which are associated with the Brigstocke family (descended from Browne’s granddaughter, Anne Brigstocke née Fairfax), or are known only through nineteenth and twentieth century auction catalogues and have since been lost to sight.<sup>14</sup> The recording and indexing of provenance data has become standardised and thorough in rare books libraries, but Browne’s commonplace name and his apparent reluctance to mark his books has meant that they sit unacknowledged in libraries across the globe. The paucity of physical evidence both limits enquiry into Browne as a reader and book owner and liberates it. Studies of the libraries of other seventeenth-century figures — Isaac Newton, Robert Hooke, John Locke, Robert Burton, Samuel Pepys — have been able to draw on a surviving corpus of books with inscriptions, annotations, personalised bindings, and other physical traces of ownership and use.<sup>15</sup> The absence of such books in Browne’s case necessitates the adoption of alternative methodologies if his library is to be recovered.

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<sup>12</sup> ‘En sum quod digitis quinque levatur onus’: the epigram to *Urne Buriall*, from Propertius.

<sup>13</sup> John Evelyn, *Sculptura, or, The history and art of chalcography and engraving in copper* (London : printed by J.C. for G. Beedle and T. Collins, 1662), Pierpont Morgan Library, Printed books, W. 03.B; John Leland, *Kykneion asma : Cyanea cantio* (London: John Streater, 1658), Cambridge University Library, Keynes.C.3.1.

<sup>14</sup> A summary of these is given by Peter Beal in ‘Introduction: Sir Thomas Browne’, *Catalogue of English literary manuscripts, 1450-1700*, compiled by Peter Beal. Accessed online. They are discussed further in chapter 2, below. A selection of books from the library of Owen Brigstocke was sold on the third day of a sale of valuable books at Sotheby’s, 19-21 December 1921, pp. 71-79.

<sup>15</sup> John Harrison, *The library of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Giles Mandelbrote, ‘Sloane’s purchases at the sale of Robert Hooke’s library’ in *Libraries within the library*, ed. by Giles Mandelbrote and Barry Taylor (London: The British Library, 2009), pp. 98-145; John Harrison and Peter Laslett, *The library of John Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Nicholas K. Kiessling, *The library of Robert Burton* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1998); Kate Loveman, *Samuel Pepys and his books: reading, newsgathering, and sociability, 1660-1703* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

2.

This thesis is Janus-faced. It is a bibliographical study of the books associated with Thomas Browne and his family, as they were recorded in catalogues, correspondence, journals and other archival sources. But it is also a critical study of Browne's works, looking at the significances of those books for elucidation of his texts, and at his literary remains as an articulation of his reading and book ownership. It strives to serve the conventions of two different disciplines, and persuade one to speak to the other. Historical bibliography and library history have a tradition of being inward-looking, collating data with precision and caution for its own sake, examining practices but refusing the possibilities of extending their conclusions to the motivations and habits of historical readers. In this respect they resemble historical musicology, which up until relatively recently presented itself in terms and structures which could not be accessed and assimilated by other cultural historians.<sup>16</sup> Literary criticism, on the other hand, looks to historical bibliography for a degree of certainty regarding book ownership and intellectual influences which its sources and its conclusions rarely support. The history of reading has become fundamental to the recovery of a writer's intellectual practice, relying upon bibliographical evidence relating to the historic book trade, as well as being attentive both to the theory and rhetoric of early modern accounts of reading and to the record of reader response captured in annotations in order to reconstruct a practice 'scattered in an infinity of singular acts'.<sup>17</sup> These efforts are only beginning to draw in the evidence of personal book ownership, which is both under-studied, and tends to be contingent and

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<sup>16</sup> Studies which initiated an assimilation of musicology into cultural and social history include Reinhard Strohm's *Music in late medieval Bruges* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), and Peter Holman, *Four and twenty fiddlers: the violin at the English court, 1540-1690* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> Roger Chartier, *The order of books*, cited by Heidi Brayman Hackel in her invaluable summary of the current field of the history of reading and its sources, *Reading material in early modern England: print, gender, and literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 4-12. The literature of the history of reading is discussed further in chapter 4 below.

fragmentary.<sup>18</sup> Throughout my dissertation I have sought to bridge this disciplinary divide, adopting a series of tactics to render a bibliographical exercise that speaks to historians of science and literature.

The renewed scholarly interest in Browne's library runs parallel to the reassessment of his life and work initiated around the time of his quatercentenary in 2005. As Kathryn Murphy notes, for much of the twentieth century Browne was 'a man without context', characterised as untouched by his political and intellectual environment and celebrated for his poetic achievement rather than his ideas.<sup>19</sup> Whilst early twentieth-century readers like Woolf and Raverat appreciated Browne as a stylistically compelling and rather loveable oddity, later critics censured him for a cynical evasiveness or a studied abstention from the violent politics and social disruptions around him.<sup>20</sup> Much of the recent scholarship on Browne has been determined to counter these assessments and demonstrate his involvement with the cultural and political affairs of his day. Two volumes of essays dedicated to Browne published in the late 2000s took the opportunity to couple his work with a broad range of contemporary intellectual and political phenomena, from antiquarianism and cabinets of curiosities to iconoclasm and Neoplatonism.<sup>21</sup> Claire Preston's instrumental monograph positioned Browne as a scientific practitioner within a community of gentlemanly scholars whose discourses were framed by civility and intellectual

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<sup>18</sup> Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer discuss sources for book ownership in the history of reading in their introductory essay 'Current trends in the history of reading', *Books and readers in early modern England: material studies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 2-3. Giles Mandelbrote pointed to the limited scope of the study of seventeenth-century book ownership in 2006, 'Personal owners of books' in *The Cambridge history of libraries in Britain and Ireland*, vol. II, 1640-1850, ed. by Giles Mandelbrote and K.A. Manley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 173-189 (p. 177).

<sup>19</sup> Kathryn Murphy, "'Between the paws of a sphinx": the contexts of Thomas Browne' in *'A man very well studied': new contexts for Thomas Browne*, ed. by Kathryn Murphy and Richard Todd (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 3-12. Murphy supplies a useful survey of Browne studies up to 2008 in her essay.

<sup>20</sup> See, for instance, the conspicuous article by Stanley Fish, 'The bad physician: the case of Sir Thomas Browne' in *Self-consuming artifacts: the experience of seventeenth-century literature* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972); and Cotterill, in *Digressive voices in early modern England*.

<sup>21</sup> *'A man very well studied': new contexts for Thomas Browne*, ed. Murphy and Todd; *Sir Thomas Browne: the world proposed*, ed. Barbour and Preston.

curiosity.<sup>22</sup> Kevin Killeen's study of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* located Browne's encyclopaedic project in relation to the great stream of Renaissance biblical exegesis, indicating the extent to which Browne's subject matter and his epistemological processes engaged with crucial contemporary dogmatic and political concerns.<sup>23</sup> Over the last decade, scrupulous archival work has uncovered a wealth of new material that situates Browne more firmly within his milieu, culminating in the monograph biography by Reid Barbour. Barbour offers the specifics of Browne's life as a London orphan, as a Continental medical student, as a citizen of Norwich, and as a writer, emphasising his proximity to the tumultuous episodes of the mid-seventeenth century, and stressing his connectedness to his historical environment.<sup>24</sup>

The books that acted as links of communication between Browne and the cultural community of early modern Europe have consequently become the subject of increasing critical attention. Evidence for Browne's ownership of and engagement with specific authors, drawn from meticulous study of intertextual references in Browne's works and the record of his reading supplied by his extant notebooks, underpins scholarly assertions of his encounters with his contemporaries. Readers and editors of Browne's texts — and particularly of the six editions of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* — have scoured his sources for indications of the directions in which he read and the dates at which new influences arrived in his sphere.<sup>25</sup> A prop to these source studies has been the printed catalogue of the sale of the libraries 'of the learned Sir Thomas Brown, and Dr. Edward Browne, his son', which took place in January

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<sup>22</sup> Claire Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and her more recent publications.

<sup>23</sup> Kevin Killeen, *Biblical scholarship, science and politics in early modern England: Thomas Browne and the thorny place of knowledge* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Reid Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne: a life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>25</sup> For instance, see Robert Royston Cawley, 'Sir Thomas Browne and his reading'; T.M. Westfall, *Sir Thomas Browne's revisions of Pseudodoxia Epidemica, a study in the development of his mind*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Princeton University, 1939); and especially Robin Robbins' magisterial examination of Browne's sources in his edition of *Pseudodoxia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

1710/11.<sup>26</sup> The possibilities of the combined evidence of Browne's literary productions and the sale catalogue resonate in an academic environment in which attention to sources and intertextuality, and to the history of reading and book collecting, are finding expression in a new wave of critical editions of early modern texts.<sup>27</sup> A new critical edition of Browne's works provided the background against which this doctoral project was conceived.

3.

The nature of the 1711 sale catalogue, and its possibilities as a representation of the library Browne knew and used, are the chief concern of this dissertation. My thesis participates in the recent reassessment of the conventions of historical bibliography and library history (partly in response to the renewed needs of historicism) as they begin to discuss the reading practice and intellectual intentions of book owners. In its pure form, historical bibliography sees any integration of bibliographical evidence with the biography of a book owner as 'an intolerable distraction'.<sup>28</sup> It would insist that the 1711 catalogue of the Browne library can cast light on the sort of library owned by physicians with the social standing and economic resources of Thomas and Edward Browne, but say nothing of what Thomas and Edward Browne themselves read or thought.<sup>29</sup> It has been suggested that the dominance of the library history field by professional librarians has encouraged a tendency to focus on the linear narrative of a collection's contents and its administration, at the expense of discussions of the

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas Ballard, *A catalogue of the libraries of Sir Thomas Browne and Dr Edward Browne, his son: a facsimile edition with an introduction, notes, and index*, ed. by Jeremiah S. Finch (Leiden: E.J. Brill / Leiden University Press, 1986).

<sup>27</sup> For instance, the Oxford University Press editions of Robert Burton's *The anatomy of melancholy* (1989-2000), John Donne's sermons (2013-ongoing), John Aubrey's *Brief lives* (2015), and the works of Francis Bacon (1996-ongoing).

<sup>28</sup> A. N. L. Munby, in his *Phillipps studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951-60), cited by Katherine Swift, *The formation of the library of Charles Spencer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Sunderland (1674-1722): a study in the antiquarian book trade*, unpublished DPhil dissertation (University of Oxford, 1986), p. xiv.

<sup>29</sup> Hugh Amory, 'Desire, knowledge, status: the library as index, or, *Habe nun, ach! Bibliographie durchaus studiert*', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 85 (1991), pp. 423-431 (p. 426). Amory's essay was a review of the then recently published editions of historic catalogues of the libraries of (amongst others) Robert Hooke, Robert Burton, Thomas Baker, and John Dee.



cultural reception of the library and its contribution to intellectual history.<sup>30</sup> Such unease is rooted in an awareness of the fragmentary nature of the extant evidence — even in apparently complete lists like the 1711 catalogue. Given the incompleteness of evidence of book ownership and reading, it is fatally easy to impose intention upon fragile bibliographical evidence, or to dismiss such evidence when it fails to match established notions of the book owner’s character.<sup>31</sup> The interpretation of historic library catalogues has been further hampered by the absence of a norm for historical libraries against which to compare an individual’s collections and deduce their personal tastes. Only recently, through digital humanities projects and online databases like the English Short-Title Catalogue, has there been success in analytical or quantitative studies of library collections, or broader surveys of such collections across the seventeenth century.<sup>32</sup> But there is currently no adequate sense of the ‘typical’ seventeenth century personal library against which judgements of individual tastes and habits might be made.

Yardsticks used to measure the libraries of individual readers have instead been a group of normative paradigms associated with ‘the gentleman’s library’ and ‘the country house library’. These categories distort assessments of early modern libraries in offering a shorthand for personal collections knitted to the values of a conservative aristocracy (values which were in themselves more various than such paradigms

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<sup>30</sup> For instance, by Richard Ovenden, ‘A new history of the Bodleian Library’, paper presented to *Library history: why what, how? (CERL seminar)*, University of Antwerp, 27 October 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Examples of the imposition of Browne’s intentions as a reader from the evidence of the sale catalogue are studied in chapter 1 below. T.A. Birrell supplies an example of the critical dismissal of bibliographical evidence in the case of John Dryden, when Dryden scholars initially doubted the records of his purchase of Roman Catholic devotional and controversial works at library sales which took place some years before his eventual conversion. Birrell, ‘Books and buyers in seventeenth-century English auction sales’ in *Under the hammer: book auctions since the seventeenth century*, ed. by Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (London: Oak Knoll Press, 2001), pp. 51-66 (p. 53).

<sup>32</sup> James Raven based his assessment of the production of the English book trade on titles in the ESTC in *The business of books: booksellers and the English book trade, 1450-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). David Pearson has also been attempting comparative surveys of small numbers of personal libraries: see bibliography for references. Jason Scott-Warren gives a summary of the problems inherent in the early databases, like the CD-ROM of *Private libraries in Renaissance England*, for the provision of such surveys in ‘News, sociability, and bookbuying in early modern England: the letters of Sir Thomas Cornwallis’, *The Library*, 6th series, 1:4 (2000), pp. 381-402 (p. 382).

allow). The gentleman's library is deeply private, stable in its contents, a plaything, a mirror of its owner's opinions and tastes — which may be superficial or scholarly — and simultaneously a performance of the mores of his class.<sup>33</sup> The country house library is either a showstopper assembled by the dilettante rich or 'purchased by the yard': an architectural set-piece of sofas and workbaskets, rather dull in its contents and an emblem of civility more than real enthusiasm.<sup>34</sup> Both models are assigned a commitment to outlasting their first owners and being preserved as patrimony. These archetypes feature aspects of private book ownership associated with the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For instance, Isaac Newton's books have been described as 'a working library, with its books there for use, not mere decoration' — a suggestion implying that a kind of frippery book collecting solely for appearance was available as an alternative to seventeenth-century book owners.<sup>35</sup> The persistence of such characteristics as a measure for all early modern libraries is in part due to the higher rate of survival of aristocratic libraries, their spaces and their archives. But the focus on the 'gentleman's private library' assumes a homogeneity of book owning practice within the aristocracy and implies that all early modern book owners modelled their collections on those of the male nobility.<sup>36</sup> As terms, they ignore the vitality of urban and professional book collections and the significance of a library like Thomas Browne's as a cultural exemplar.

The relationship between a book owner and his collection of books is further distorted by the use of descriptors like 'collector' and 'bibliophile'. 'Collector' designates a series of motivations and behaviours — obsession, possessiveness, acquisitiveness, hoarding, connoisseurship, and exclusiveness — which are assumed to be

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<sup>33</sup> See, for instance, Mark Girouard on libraries in *Life in the English country house: a social and architectural history* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

<sup>34</sup> For a challenge to this superficial view of country house collections, see Mark Purcell, 'The country house library reassess'd: or, did the "country house library" ever really exist?', *Library and Information History*, 18:3 (2002), pp. 157-174 (pp. 159-160).

<sup>35</sup> Harrison, *The library of Isaac Newton*, p. 59.

<sup>36</sup> The pervasiveness of this cultural model of 'simple diffusion, usually considered to descend from the upper to the lower echelons of society' has been noted by Roger Chartier, *The cultural uses of print in early modern France*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) p. 10, cited by Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and texts: the culture of collecting in early modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 28.

transhistorically consistent and relevant, and against which a seventeenth-century book owner's behaviour can legitimately be measured. For instance, some studies of seventeenth century collections are quick to note the range of subjects within an individual collection with some surprise — assuming the norm for private collections to be a degree of specialisation that belongs to the late modern period.<sup>37</sup> 'Bibliophile', in its turn, connotes a passion for books, their physical forms, their age, their rarity, their singularity, and their association with past owners and collectors, which is informed by Romanticism, bibliomania, and the modern book trade.<sup>38</sup> The shift over the centuries in the cognate attributes of the collector, and of his informing passions, curiosity and wonder, have been noted by historians of museum collecting and of science, but such challenges have not been made by library historians.<sup>39</sup> The unquestioned use of such categories assumes a continuous narrative in the development of practice, motivations and values in library ownership, so that phenomena in library catalogues and provenance history are always described as moving towards, or regressing from, the behaviours of modern book collecting.<sup>40</sup> I will argue that Browne's habits and intentions as a book owner offer a vital corrective to these definitions, and have chosen to avoid the term 'collector', preferring 'reader', 'book owner', and 'book user' as appropriate.

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<sup>37</sup> Pearson has pointed to the capaciousness of early modern libraries in 'The English private library in the seventeenth century', *The Library*, 6th series, 13:4 (2012), p. 383.

<sup>38</sup> These characteristics are compelling for some historical bibliographers, especially connoisseurship and exclusivity. Projecting such attributes onto their subjects has a whiff of a tendency to make seventeenth-century gentlemen clubbable, elected into their own ranks as perennial bibliophiles. One example is identified by Jason Scott-Warren in David McKitterick's discussion of the library of Sir Thomas Knyvett, in which McKitterick attributes Knyvett's vexation with his brother-book agent to 'the impatience with which all bibliophiles are familiar', ignoring the possibility that such tensions rose out of the very real difficulties of acquiring specific books via the early modern London trade. Scott-Warren, 'News, sociability, and bookbuying', p. 385.

<sup>39</sup> See, for instance, Stephen Bann, *Under the sign: John Bargrave as collector, traveler, and witness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 4-5; Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the order of nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone books, 1998), pp. 15-17; Alexander Marr, 'Introduction' in *Curiosity and wonder from the renaissance to the enlightenment*, ed. by R.J.W. Evans and Alexander Marr (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 1-19 (especially pp. 1-6).

<sup>40</sup> Kristian Jensen has pointed to the misleading tendency to position libraries along an assumed universal and continuous narrative, describing them as 'not yet' or 'already' manifesting certain traits. 'Should we write library history?', paper presented to *Library history: why, what, how?* (CERL seminar), University of Antwerp, 27 October 2015.

4.

Taking Thomas Browne and his library as a case study, the following dissertation is optimistic in the face of these difficulties. It examines the available sources through a range of methodological perspectives. The first two chapters reach for a comprehensive characterisation of Browne's library, first through quantitative analysis and following with an account of the life cycle of the library. These approaches put pressure on the evidence of the 1711 catalogue. Chapters 3 and 5 present the archival record of the contexts of Browne's book ownership, geographically and within the wider practice of museum collecting. Chapters 4 and 6 are based on close analysis of Browne's writing for evidence of his reading, and his attention to classification and epistemological methods. I present Browne as a book owner possessed of characteristics that counter the 'gentleman collector' stereotype. I identify him as a serious-minded reader, whose reading practices were varied and multivalent. I describe him as a generous and 'light-handed' owner of books, who was conscious of the significance of his volumes but very little interested in his library as a formal collection with an integrity that needed to be safeguarded, both in his lifetime and for posterity. Browne's library was not defined by boundaries, but networked: both physically, in terms of the sharing of volumes with neighbouring collections; and textually, as the contents of its volumes were processed and communicated. His treatment of his books and other collections was initiatory and conversational rather than magisterial and definitive, dealing in probabilities rather than certainties. I do not assert that Browne was singular in having such characteristics. Rather, I propose that Browne's qualities as a book owner were features of early modern book culture that have been obscured by the anachronistic norms described above.

The first two chapters examine the evidence of the 1711 catalogue. Chapter 1 questions the reliability of the 1711 catalogue, looking specifically at the extent to which the catalogue lists books that would have been unknown to Browne, and had been introduced to the list either by his descendants or the bookseller. It strives for a characterisation of the library in terms of its contents and its development over time without a misleading reliance on individual titles in the catalogue. I draw on David Pearson's surveys of seventeenth-century personal libraries to compare the evidence of

the 1711 catalogue to the catalogues of some of Browne's contemporaries and to the broader landscape of seventeenth-century book ownership. I present a range of coexistent possible explanations for the features of the catalogue (particularly the presence and absence of particular titles), without committing to definitive explanations. Chapter 2 deals more directly with the relationship between bibliographical and biographical narratives, describing how Browne acquired, stored, shared, and disposed of his books. It addresses the discrepancies between the testimony of the sale catalogue and other records of Browne's book ownership, and fleshes out the quantitative analysis of the first chapter by determining the open-minded and unselfconscious qualities of his relationship with his books.

Chapter 3 challenges the conception of the 'private' library as stable, discrete, and dedicated to the work of one person. It offers a survey of the book culture of Norwich and Norfolk, and posits a network of personal collections to which Browne had access via professional, scholarly and kin relationships. The exchange of physical books, and the communication of texts via correspondence and conversation, enabled personal libraries to be interconnected and responsive to the contents of neighbouring collections. In setting Browne's books within this context of sharing and circulation, the chapter questions the absolute quality of possession. The library was shared with and shaped by its other readers in Browne's household: his wife and children. The ownership of books by specific individuals within the household was a question of degree, subject to tacit and unfixed associations between readers. Possession was also negotiated through structures of civility and obligation across communities of aristocratic and urban book owners, which often cut across sectarian and political divisions. I portray Browne as a reader for whom all reading, whether solitary or in company, was the beginning of a conversation, with the author, with his family and friends, and with his God.

Conversation is also paramount in chapter 4, which turns from the archival record to the evidence of Browne's reading and book ownership in his written works. Tracing Browne's sources in his work brings to light inconsistent and disparate reading habits, which were nonetheless generative. I argue that Browne's intertextuality is a

continuation of the conversations identified in chapter 3, as ideas and data drawn from diverse communities of authors are digested, transformed, and redistributed in his writing. The chapter unpicks the wealth of mediated, indirect and implicit citations in Browne's essays, and focuses on Book VI of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* to detail the various and uncertain manifestations of his reading. Browne's reading does not follow a linear 'input-process-output' trajectory, but sprawls and circles about. His citations illustrate the different modes of his engagement with books over time — his immediate reactions to new material, reflection and meditation over long periods, and continual re-reading and reassessment. The chapter identifies the discrepancies between the sources apparent in *Pseudodoxia* and the evidence of the 1711 catalogue, and proposes that their testimonies can be mutually corroborative, but can rarely stand on their own. For the most part, Browne's engagement with individual works, his ownership of them, and their influence over him can be assessed only in terms of probability. The chapter presents Browne's writing (and *Pseudodoxia* in particular) as initiatory and conversational, constructing its own argument and simultaneously gathering together information and bibliographical data in the function of a reference work. Browne's works represent an amalgam of direct and mediated reading; of both the contents of his library, and a net flung more widely across the landscape of scientific knowledge.

Chapter 5 examines Browne's 'musaeum': the images and objects that formed a constituent part of his library collection, occupying the same spaces and contributing similarly to his intellectual life. It begins with a survey of the objects that appear in Browne's works and how he described, interpreted and enjoyed them. He develops a rhetoric of collecting in his writing that is articulated in his commitment to exact description and interpretation and in his adoption of encyclopaedic tactics to incorporate a wealth of material. The second half of the chapter lists the objects that passed through Browne's hands, as featured in his letters, in *Pseudodoxia*, and in the manuscript catalogues of Sir Hans Sloane's museum collections. Browne's collecting of images, specimens and artefacts manifests the same traits as his book ownership, defined by incompleteness, impermanence and a rejection of possessiveness. I argue that Browne's practice as an assembler of natural historical specimens, drawings, and antiquities demonstrate his loose sense of ownership and of the collection as a stable

set-piece. Browne was attentive to both the everyday and the exotic, and dedicated to the particularity of all specimens. The forms of curiosity in his writing and in his museum were actively applied to almost all objects. His consciousness of the incompleteness of man's vision, and the continual movement of objects through space and along an unceasing orbit of decay and renewal, made him a spectator, rather than possessor, of the material world.

The final chapter assesses the evidence of knowledge organisation and classification in Browne's writing and in his library. The qualities and structures of classification — identity, similarity, difference, hierarchy and order — were crucial to Browne's intellectual projects. They provided essential means for the examination and interpretation of the world. For Browne, the contemplation of the limitations of such structures was also a means of reflecting on the perfection of God's creation, and on man's fallenness in his failure to conceive its totality and particularity. The chapter reviews the manifestations of knowledge classification systems in Browne's works and in contemporary schemes for arranging libraries and museums, contrasting the absolute categories of philosophical method with the pragmatic and flexible systems practised by Browne and his peers. The organisational structures in Browne's writing owe a debt to the familiar hierarchies of Aristotelian analysis and the Schools. But his writing also celebrates idiosyncrasy, variety, and transformation, and reaches for signs of divine order through apparent chaos and the collapse of man's invented categories. The chapter also presents an emphatically speculative but, I think, persuasive case for the remains of a method of organisation in the 1711 catalogue that can be associated with Browne's arrangement of his own books. This pragmatic arrangement combined traditional disciplinary categories with other forms of differentiation, such as genre and form.

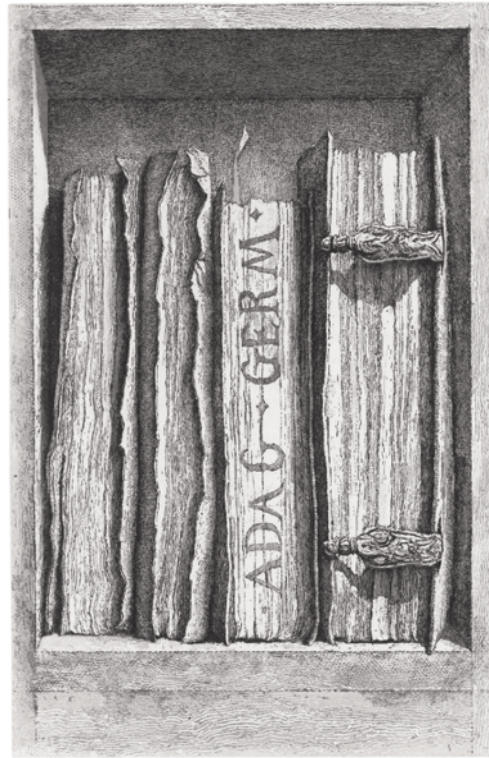
5.

This dissertation thus has twin intentions, aspiring both to open up the landscape of early modern book ownership through the example of Browne's library, and using the library to extend the critical study of his life and work. In gathering together the bibliographic remnants of Browne's book ownership, and engaging with his writing as

the record of his relationship with his library, I proffer a platform for future analysis of his sources and reconstructions of his intellectual life. I have also sought to use Browne's book owning as a microhistory, challenging the paradigmatic and dialectic frameworks that still pervade the history of personal libraries in the early modern period on the macro scale. The theoretical structures offered by neighbouring critical fields — the histories of reading, of the book, of collecting, of science and literature — have been introduced to support my discourse on early modern book ownership. Just as Browne found objects to defy categorisation, so I have found the themes of my chapters to be relevant across the entire thesis: taxonomy and the foregrounding of chosen objects are integral to the analysis of granular and sometimes overwhelming data in the bibliographic description of libraries and source studies; whilst conversation, exchange, generosity and an absence of boundaries pervade the history of Browne's books. Browne's library is shown here as representative of those characteristics that are just beginning to be recognised by library historians as idiomatic for personal libraries: instability, permeability, sociability, and adaptability.



## Chapter 1 - *Bibliotheca Abscondita*: the lost library and the hidden reader



3. *Fragment de la bibliothèque de Sir T.B. (1)*, by Erik Desmazières (2010).

The wistful exercise of studying a lost library — cataloguing books that once were, or might have been — is a profoundly Brownean one. His *Musaeum clausum, or, Bibliotheca abscondita*, composed in the 1670s, is a wish-list of books, paintings and objects which occupy a liminal territory between existence and pure imagination. Browne's fantastical catalogue appeals to those who have treasured Browne for his notorious 'oddity', through its strange admixture of the scholarly (including medical commentaries; draughts of sistrams, cymbals, and other musical instruments used for ancient worship) and the fantastical (richly detailed pictures of submarine landscapes, complete with agriculture); the carnivalesque (a drawing of a tightrope-walking elephant) and the sinister (a box containing an unguent which causes the plague; a Vestal virgin in her living tomb, made more ghoulish by the presence of the everyday furniture with which she must suffocate, her candle, table and chair); and the weird (an ostrich egg engraved with a depiction of the Battle of Alcazar; a ring from a fish's

belly, said to be that with which the Doge of Venice marries the sea).<sup>1</sup> The virtual cabinet that Browne populated from his imagination continues to provoke artistic response, including the series of melancholic etchings by Erik Desmazières, and the repetitions and elaborations of W.G. Sebald's *Rings of Saturn*.

But the imagined *Wunderkammer* is compelling not merely because of its variety and its playfulness. It is grounded in serious learning, and each of the objects listed slips between the actual, the potential and the fabricated. Browne includes books documented as having once existed and since been lost to time, such as the fragment of travel-writing by Pythaeus mentioned by Strabo in his *Geographica*.<sup>2</sup> Some items are more suppositious, making concrete hints from an existing record. Marcus Tullius Cicero's *Geographica* (requested by Atticus and mentioned by Cicero in a surviving letter in 59BC) and Aristotle's *De predicante* both sit in this category.<sup>3</sup> Others Browne has created from the tempting range of possibilities presented by historical events, including the acquisition by libraries in Rome of manuscripts from Ethiopia via Zaga Zaba, the sixteenth-century ambassador from the Ethiopian emperor to the King of Portugal who was later imprisoned by the Inquisition.<sup>4</sup> Yet others show Browne playing a topsy-turvy game with a title's intellectual origins — by listing King Solomon's *De Umbris Idearum* he implies that a work of the same title written by Giordano Bruno, who was fascinated with cabala and identified himself with Solomon, had in fact a Solomonic origin.<sup>5</sup> Still others are mischievous inventions, like Epicurus's *De pietate*.<sup>6</sup> The books in this hidden library dance across the lines between the probable and the impossible.

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<sup>1</sup> MC, pp. 112-119.

<sup>2</sup> MC, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> MC, pp. 109, 111. *De predicante* appeared in the list of Aristotle's works given by Diogenes Laertius in his *Eminent lives*. See George Yost, 'Sir Thomas Browne and Aristotle' in *Studies in Sir Thomas Browne* by Robert Ralston Cawley and George Yost (Eugene, Ore.: University of Oregon Books, 1965), pp. 41-103 (p. 60).

<sup>4</sup> MC, p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> MC, p. 112.

<sup>6</sup> MC, p. 112.

The richness and play of *Musaeum Clausum* also participate in a history of loss. Browne draws attention to the wealth of the heritage that decays and slips from man's grasp, irretrievable to all but 'a great Apollo'.<sup>7</sup> He takes care to account for its disappearance, recounting the many calamities that can befall these vulnerable physical vessels of intellectual achievement. He details the ways war leads to looting and destruction, as Zaga Zaba's manuscripts are scattered after the sack of Rome in 1527, and the Bishop of Mende's library is looted by Huguenots in the French religious wars. The effect of thefts (of manuscripts stolen from Julius Caesar Scaliger) and of persecution and exile (of Galen's commentator Amatus Lusitanus as a Jew exiled successively from Portugal, Ancona, and Dubrovnik, as well as Ovid in Tomis) are memorialised. Books are subject to repeated bouts of dispersal and destruction, as the manuscript narrative of the Anglo-Saxon expedition to Barbary is first looted from Fez by the Spanish king and then lost when the ship bearing the spoils sank. Works like Cicero's *De re publica* could fragment and survive only in portions. Even when recovered, Browne points out, the fragments can fall short of the expectations made of them, with Cicero's work 'very little answering the great expectation of it'.<sup>8</sup> Thus Browne illustrates the inevitable fragmentation and falling off that mankind's knowledge must suffer, but also regrets that human efforts to describe and understand the world must, in any case, fall short. In this respect *Musaeum Clausum* chimes mournfully with Browne's concerns in *Urne-Buriall* over loss and oblivion, and in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* over man's state of intellectual confusion following the Fall. Browne is acutely conscious of the part libraries have to play in this narrative of dissolution and incompleteness.

Consequently, the recuperative act in which the modern bibliographer engages resonates with Brownean intent. The student of the Browne library wrestles with instances of presence and absence, loss and fragmentation. In this chapter, I attempt to reconstitute the library that Browne knew through a quantitative analysis of the 1711 sale catalogue. I have adopted this approach as a means of describing, from incomplete and contingent evidence, the library collection in its entirety. A statistical

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<sup>7</sup> MC, p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> MC, p. 111.

approach avoids the temptations of over-interpretation and unequivocal reading of the catalogue, particularly of the presence or absence of particular titles in relation to Browne and his oeuvre. Features of the library (apparent gaps in Browne's book ownership, or the presence of unexpected books) have several potential explanations, so that a presence or absence can have a cloud of contingent interpretations around it. Consequently, I have found myself reasoning in a mode not unlike that of seventeenth-century antiquarians (Browne among them), presenting a series of potentially contradictory interpretations of incomplete evidence without committing absolutely to any one in particular. For Browne, this approach gives generous space to the appreciation of the possibilities of antiquarian evidence rather than denying the effects of oblivion through speculative restoration.<sup>9</sup> I have set out to achieve a similar rhetoric, reading the implications of these presences and absences for an understanding of Browne's intentions and priorities as a book owner, without the intrusion of theories that can only be suppositious. The quantitative analysis has been undertaken as an initiatory exercise, not intended to produce definitive answers, but to allow alternative perspectives onto the available evidence. To ignore the irretrievability of the library and to claim the intentions of Browne as a book owner as definitively knowable is, I argue, a failure of the bibliographer to recognise his or her own postlapsarian state, in which error springs from hubris.

This chapter will thus present a series of clusters of interpretations around each finding in its attempt to account for the characteristics of Browne's library (in the limited sense that we can know that library). It returns time and again to the same conjectures as possible answers to different questions — conjectures which get to the heart of our sense of Browne's purposes and intentions as a reader. We can reasonably assume that Browne owned certain books because of his intellectual or literary interest in them, although the extent to which proof of ownership can be read as intellectual engagement will be interrogated in my discussion of methodologies for historic catalogues. We can, in any case, get a strong sense of the intellectual shape of Browne's reading through his written works, so that a study of his relationship with

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<sup>9</sup> See Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, p. 132, p. 139.

his library is complementary to, rather than indicative of, his sources as a writer.<sup>10</sup> Akin to, but separate from, his intellectual purposes in owning books is the possibility of religious motives — the possession of books not simply for their textual content but for their role in prayer and meditation, perhaps related to their physical qualities as sacred objects. Browne may have come to own books that were expressions of his involvement in a circle of social and scientific civility.<sup>11</sup> A related incentive to book ownership is that of conspicuous or performed consumption — the extent to which Browne and his family bought books for the sake of being seen to do so by their neighbours and friends.<sup>12</sup> An intriguing aspect of Browne's book ownership is whether he was drawn to books for their bibliographic appeal, seeking out particularly rare or curious editions, or copies which were materially sumptuous. Browne may have come to possess certain books entirely by accident or mischance. Lastly, there are the interlopers, the books that appear in the records of Browne's library which had nothing to do with him. These fall into largely two categories — those belonging to other members of the family, and especially Edward Browne and his son, Thomas (known in the family as Tomey), and those which were introduced to the sale catalogue by the auctioneer, Ballard.

Explanations for the *presence* of books in the sale catalogue, like those just outlined, are generally reasonable and acceptable, even if we cannot at this distance settle on any one explanation in relation to a certain book. Speculations relating to the *absence* of particular books (titles that scholars have identified as having been owned or used by Browne) in the same source are much less satisfactory, often because the absences themselves have been identified through a questionable interpretation of fragmentary bibliographic evidence. There is conclusive proof that Browne owned some books which are not accounted for in the catalogue — for instance, copies of titles by William Briggs and Swammerdam which Browne describes in his letters to Edward which were not included in the 1711 sale. But otherwise, the gaps in the library are

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<sup>10</sup> Browne's written works as a bibliographical source are considered in chapter 4 below.

<sup>11</sup> Discussed at more length in chapter 3.

<sup>12</sup> Scott-Warren points out that 'a book owned is not necessarily a book read' in 'News, sociability, and bookbuying', p. 382.

identified through a comparison with a scholar's idealised (if informed) notion of Browne's reading based on an interpretation of his literary works, or on our knowledge of other contemporary libraries. The low proportion of theological books (13% of the catalogue, compared to a more usual 50% according to David Pearson's most recent survey of seventeenth-century private libraries)<sup>13</sup> is an example of a perceived divergence from the norm felt to beg an explanation. Among the potential causes for such an absence might be a straightforward lack of interest in the books in question on Browne's part. It might reflect a change in the library's holdings over time, as books were removed from the library because Browne lost interest in a topic or the titles were replaced by more current publications. There is the possibility that Browne was able to read in and borrow books from the libraries of his neighbours. And finally, books were 'lost' in the immediate afterlife of the library, before the compilation of the 1711 catalogue, either because they remained in the hands of the family, or because they were given away as personal gifts or bequests. Many of these attempts to rationalise both presence and absence of titles have been used by other scholars, in relation to seventeenth-century private libraries in general or to Browne's library specifically. But my argument differs in allowing these explanations to coexist, whilst still moving towards a meaningful recovery of Browne as a reader. I also insist that the identification of absences relies on an assumption of what *ought* to be in the library which is fundamentally questionable.

Browne emerges from the incomplete and ambiguous remains of his library as a dedicated and serious-minded book owner, for whom the act of acquisition was significant and the intention to read sincere. The shifts that can be identified in the library's composition indicate a broadening of interests and an increasingly vernacular character, as Browne's increasing resources allowed him to purchase more widely, and as the influence of other readers of the collection grew. In Browne's mode of book ownership, his generosity to other readers is apparent — an aspect of his scholarly persona to which he alludes in *Religio Medici*, saying 'I intend no monopoly, but a community of learning'.<sup>14</sup> His modesty as a book owner expressed itself most strongly

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<sup>13</sup> Pearson, 'The English private library in the seventeenth century', p. 383.

<sup>14</sup> RM, II.3, p. 74.

in his reluctance to preserve his collection for posterity. His commitment to the general society of readers, amongst whom Browne anonymously dispersed his books both during his life and after his death, is analogous to his faith in the benign reconstitution of the lost fragments of our bodies and our knowledge at the Apocalypse, when 'our estranged and divided ashes shall unite againe'.<sup>15</sup> Even the most incomplete or contested evidence, contemplated with appropriate caution, can enable recuperation and recognition.

*Shall these bones live?: interpretative obstacles to resurrecting the library and its owner through the catalogue*

Historic catalogues of books (like *Musaeum Clausum*, and like inventories of the now-lost contents of seventeenth-century houses, with their naming of quotidian but to us alien, transient objects) offer the modern reader an intriguing flea-market thrill. But the books in a historic catalogue also share a quality of ineffability with the objects in *Musaeum Clausum*, similarly occupying a slippery territory between known and unknown. Surviving catalogues of historic libraries most often take the form of household inventories, probate inventories, or sale catalogues rather than bibliographical descriptions or finding aids, and the descriptions of books are frequently minimal and inexact. Even when the fullest bibliographic details are available, even in an age of electronic databases and online union catalogues, the identification of editions and copies can miss its mark, especially if comparable copies of editions do not survive in public institutions. In focussing on the bibliographical identification of the titles named in a historic catalogue, the scholar can lose sight of its nature as evidence. These lists are read as if their purpose was bibliographic and ongoing, rather than commercial, fiscal, or economic, and relevant to a particular moment in the life of the collection described. The result is that the interpretation of such lists becomes too loaded, weighting the catalogue with an intellectual significance it was never intended to express; and to cause bibliographers to bemoan

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<sup>15</sup> RM, 1.48, p. 58, and see Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, p. 13.

their shortcomings, refusing to read them with an eye to their original function.<sup>16</sup> The following section examines the seductive appeal of the historic catalogue, the specific ‘problems’ of the sale catalogue as evidence, and the failures of interpretation in reading the Browne sale catalogue for signs of Browne as a book owner and reader. It concludes by offering methodologies which cooperate with, rather than deny, the form of the sale catalogue.

The historic catalogue, like *Musaeum Clausum* and the house inventory, conveys an interiority, giving access to a space from which occupants and owners have long since vanished. Modern editions of historic catalogues have often been presented in a way which accentuates the feeling of exceptional, even privileged access to a private and fragile space. The editors of the series of facsimile sale catalogues published as *Sale catalogues of the libraries of eminent persons* (1971-1975) claim that the catalogues ‘give an insight into the workshop of a man’s mind’. They repeatedly refer to the rarity of extant copies of such catalogues as if breathless at the extraordinary opportunity to stand on the threshold of the said workshop.<sup>17</sup> The sensation of opening a door into an otherwise hidden collection that mimics the inner life of its owner (a sensation often exacerbated when, as in Browne’s case, that owner has historically had a reputation for eccentricity and reclusiveness) has seduced scholars into making claims as to the significance of particular books to their owner which their appearance in the catalogue alone cannot justify. The historic catalogue seems to depict a collection whose objects rest motionless on the shelves, preserved within their treasure house, stable and unchanging, rather than, as I have been contending, a shifting, nebulous collection, in which incompleteness, fragmentation, and absence are described.

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<sup>16</sup> Giorgio Riello has pointed out that household inventories are to some extent fictive, somewhere between ‘records of an objective reality’ and ‘simple literary manifestations divorced from materiality’. Their indications concerning the intellectual and cultural tastes of their owners may be the result of their creators’ representational intentions, rather than a snapshot of reality. “‘Things seen and unseen’: the material culture of early modern inventories and their representation of domestic interiors”, in *Early modern things: objects and their histories, 1500-1800*, ed. by Paula Findlen, (London & New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 125-150 (p. 127, p. 136). On book inventories specifically see also Scott-Warren, ‘News, sociability, and bookbuying’, p. 383.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Publisher’s foreword’, in *Sale catalogues of libraries of eminent persons, vol. I: Poets and men of letters*, ed. by A.N.L. Munby (London: Mansell, 1971), p. vii.



The difficulties encountered by Browne scholars in the use of the catalogue of the 1711 auction of the library of Thomas Browne, his son Edward, and his grandson Thomas, are borne of the tension between its original purpose as a commercial advertisement and the expectations being placed upon it to act as a bibliographical tool. Browne scholars commenting on the catalogue have been very much aware of the intrusion into it of books which cannot have belonged to Thomas Browne. Some 20% of the lots in the catalogue bear imprints after Browne's death in 1682. A quantity of contemporary literature in French, Italian and English, and books of 'pastimes' (not all printed after 1682) clash with the learned persona apparent in Browne's published work. The scholarly reaction to the discomfiting presence of these apparently trashy or irrelevant volumes has been to dissociate them from Thomas Browne by attributing their presence to his relatives. Finch's answer was to assign them to Edward Browne's son Thomas, and he presents the younger Thomas as an idle and uncouth custodian of the library he inherited. He suggests that 'he never bothered to identify and dispose of books that were duplicated in his father's and grandfather's libraries', inferring that young 'Tomey' could not have been appreciative of or responsible for the more erudite books in his care, let alone purchase such books for himself.<sup>18</sup> We know very little about the unlucky Tomey, apart from the affection felt for him by his grandfather and aunts as a child, and his rather sordid death after a fall from his horse whilst drunk.<sup>19</sup> Peter Le Neve recounted that Tomey 'gave himself up to drinking', but alcoholism and intellectual activity are not mutually exclusive, and Tomey cannot be dismissed as a serious contributor to the Browne library on this basis alone.<sup>20</sup> Edward and his son cannot be used as a convenient means of distancing Thomas Browne senior from the less distinguished books in the sale catalogue. Similarly, either of them could be responsible for the acquisition of some of the more

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<sup>18</sup> Finch, 'Introduction', p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Dorothy Browne reported to Edward that his sisters Elizabeth and Frances were 'fayne sometimes to play him [Tomey] asleep with a fiddle'. TB to EB, 8 Apr 1677, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 76. For Tomey's life see J.F. Payne, 'Thomas Browne, 1673-1710' (revised by Michael Bevan), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2014).

<sup>20</sup> Peter Le Neve, 'Pedigrees of the knights', cited in Wilkin (1836), vol. I, p. ciii.

erudite titles in the catalogue which date from before 1683. The association of such titles with Thomas Browne senior cannot be taken for granted.

If the inclusion of books belonging to the younger Brownes has encouraged students of the catalogue to distance certain titles from Thomas Browne senior, the possibility of the introduction of books to the catalogue by the bookseller Ballard for commercial reasons has had the opposite effect — to associate titles with Browne that may have had nothing to do with him or his descendants. The practice of ‘salting’, in which the bookseller introduced his own stock to the auction of a personal library in order to get books to the auction block where they are more likely to sell than from the shop or the warehouse, was part of the landscape of the early modern book trade. Michael F. Suarez argues on the basis of his survey of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century sale catalogues that salting, whilst denounced by booksellers as dishonest, was widely practiced.<sup>21</sup> Evidence of salting by Ballard in the case of the Browne sale is weak and can only be based on our assumptions regarding Browne’s literary tastes. Ballard would only have had an incentive to salt if he had bought the entire library before the auction, but he was almost certainly selling it on commission on behalf of Tomey Browne’s heirs, in which case they, rather than he, would have profited from the introduction of other lots.<sup>22</sup> Further, I have found the character of the library analysed by date (in terms of subject and language content) to be fairly consistent before and after Thomas Browne’s death, suggesting that if there was any interference by Ballard, it was subtly done. But Finch, in his introduction to the facsimile edition of the catalogue (which has been the definitive account of Thomas Browne’s library) failed to mention any possibility of salting. Consequently Browne scholars have had no warning of the possibility that some titles listed in the catalogue had no connection with the Brownes at all. Bent Juel-Jensen is the only recent scholar explicitly to have noted the possibility of salting and its implications for how we read the 1711

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<sup>21</sup> Michael F. Suarez, ‘Methodological considerations illustrated by a case study in the provenance and distribution of Dodsley’s *Collection of Poems, 1750-1795*’, *The Library*, 6th series, 21:4 (1999), pp. 321-360 (p. 326).

<sup>22</sup> Katherine Swift states that Ballard dominated the trade in antiquarian and secondhand books between 1706 and 1734, and almost all of his sales were on commission. *The formation of the library of Charles Spencer*, pp. 80-82.

catalogue, in using it for his own arguments about Browne and his collections.<sup>23</sup> Salting adds a further degree of uncertainty as to the relationship between Browne and the books listed in the 1711 catalogue, illustrating the problems that can arise through treating a sale catalogue as a bibliographic account of a personal library.

Thus far, I have described the ways in which the sale catalogue does not function like a library catalogue, but provides a different sort of evidence, as a commercial production capturing a collection of books tangentially related to Browne fifty years after his death. I now turn to the problems that arise from attempting to read the sale catalogue as if it spoke of the owner's impetus for book owning, as scholars go beyond the contemplation of the dry bones of the catalogue and attempt to prophesy over them. There *are* ways of making the sale catalogue speak whilst being sensitive to its original purpose. It can corroborate indications from his writings that he read certain titles. The catalogue's chief use by recent Browne scholars has taken the form of footnotes which do no more than note the presence of a title in the catalogue to supplement an argument based on literary or archival evidence of his engagement with that work.<sup>24</sup> The catalogue can even nuance our understanding of Browne's reception of particular texts, as with Robbins' contention, based both on the evidence of the sale catalogue and on textual analysis of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, that Browne first encountered Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* via the enlarged English edition of 1640.<sup>25</sup> But I will be at pains to argue that the sale catalogue cannot speak for itself in characterising Browne as a reader, but offer only a supporting role.

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<sup>23</sup> Bent Juel-Jensen, 'Musaeum Clausum, or Bibliotheca Abscondita: some thoughts on curiosity cabinets and imaginary books', *Journal of the history of collections*, 4:1 (1992), pp. 127-140 (p. 128).

<sup>24</sup> For instance, Victoria E. Burke, 'Contexts for women's manuscript miscellanies: the case of Elizabeth Lyttelton and Sir Thomas Browne' in *Yearbook of English Studies*, vol. 33, Medieval and early modern anthologies (2003), pp. 316-328', pp. 321-2, nn. 24, 27, 28; Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, p. 165, n. 31; Killeen, *Biblical scholarship, science and politics in early modern England*, p. 74, n. 10. Very occasionally a scholar assumes the evidence of the sale catalogue to be so sound that they refer to Browne's ownership of a particular title without citing the catalogue as their source, as Kathryn Murphy does in "A likely story": Plato's *Timaeus* in *The Garden of Cyrus*' in *Sir Thomas Browne: the world proposed*, ed. Barbour and Preston, pp. 242-257 (p. 246 and p. 254).

<sup>25</sup> Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, pp. xxviii-xxix.

Finch's work as editor of the sale catalogue demonstrates a preparedness to take it at face value and to read too much into the appearance of particular titles. Finch assumes that the catalogue acts as an inventory of Browne's library, and associates particular copies of works in it with specific instances of Browne's reading by supplying cross-references between catalogue entries and references to books in Browne's correspondence and published works in his facsimile edition.<sup>26</sup> The cross-referencing of Browne's bibliographic notes with the contents of the 1711 catalogue rests on the premise that Browne always owned relevant books at the point at which they would have been most pertinent to him intellectually, rather than, for instance, borrowing them or quoting them from memory, and perhaps acquiring his copy later. Associating individual references in Browne's writing to specific copies also strengthens the impression that an imprint date appearing in the sale catalogue and the date at which Browne read or purchased that work are related. Such use of the sale catalogue reasserts the perception of it as stable and sufficient to Browne's needs as a reader.

Readings of the catalogue have also leaned too heavily on what we know of Browne's biography, and relied on imprint dates as indicative of particular titles' temporal position within Browne's intellectual activities. For instance, Finch suggested that some of the early grammars and school books (presumably the incunables at SC 10/74 and SC 11/75) had been in Browne's possession since his school days, and that medical treatises from doctors in Montpellier, Padua and Leiden were bought by him on his travels.<sup>27</sup> Frank Huntley gives an appealing description of Browne the undergraduate as an enthusiastic patron of the bookstalls on the High Street in Oxford.<sup>28</sup> The most recent study of Browne's library, by Gary Richmond, follows

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<sup>26</sup> Finch, *Catalogue*, pp. 83-141.

<sup>27</sup> Finch, *Catalogue*, p. 1. Among these doctors were Lazare Rivière and François Ranchin in Montpellier, and Fortunio Liceti and Johan Rode in Padua. For Rivière, see SC 24/53 (1653), SC 24/54 (1646) and SC 57/19 (1660). For Ranchin, SC 21/51 (1627), SC 25/94 (1645). For Liceti, see SC 6/39 (1652), SC 8/96 (1653), SC 19/85 (1618) and SC 19/86 (1612), SC 22/111, SC 22/112 and SC 22/113 (all 1640), and SC 29/19 (1640). For Rode, see SC 22/91 (1639) and SC 25/108 (1652).

<sup>28</sup> Frank Huntley, *Sir Thomas Browne: a biographical and critical study* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), p. 35.

Huntley's lead in stating that Browne's book collecting began 'in earnest' on his arrival at Broadgates College (whilst stripping Huntley's statement of its original and justified caution).<sup>29</sup> Richmond also suggests that the bulk of the dictionaries in the collection were purchased by Browne during his years abroad.<sup>30</sup> But these readings suppose that Browne's biography and his library have stable narratives which run parallel to each other, and which can be forced to meet. Associating particular books or groups of books with events in Browne's life in this manner may add biographical colour to our view of the library, but it ignores the effects of accident, caprice and limited resources on Browne's collecting habits. (In Finch's case, he had also made a bibliographical slip, since the titles in the sale catalogue by his Montpellier teachers Lazare Rivière and François Ranchin and by the Paduans Fortunio Liceti and Johan Rode were for the most part printed after Browne's move to Norwich).<sup>31</sup> Imprint dates can only give us the *terminus post quem* of a title's addition to the library. Browne did acquire some editions soon after they were printed, but others may have arrived secondhand, as gifts, from warehouses, or after several years (or even decades) of waiting for an opportunity to purchase.<sup>32</sup> Thus Reid Barbour's identification of several books from the catalogue as having been in Browne's possession since he was a schoolboy, and consequently contributing to his thinking in *Religio Medici*, is uncomfortably speculative.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gary Richmond, 'Sir Thomas Browne's library', *Antiquarian book monthly review*, 4:1 and 4:2 (1977), pp. 2-9 and 52-54 (pp. 3-4).

<sup>30</sup> Richmond, 'Sir Thomas Browne's library', p. 58.

<sup>31</sup> For Browne's time in Montpellier and Padua, see Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, pp. 109-181. He moved to Norwich in 1637.

<sup>32</sup> Browne's habits of acquisition are discussed at greater length in chapter 2.

<sup>33</sup> Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 46. Barbour cites a 1612 edition of Atheneaus (SC 7/26), Meursius's studies of Greek festivals and cults (SC 9/23), 1617 editions of Plato's *Timaeus* and Tertullian (SC 11/106 and SC 1/19), Spondanus's epitome of the annals of Baronius (SC 2/22) and other early imprints in the sale catalogue as evidence of Browne's 'precocious scholarship'. Any equivalence of the sale catalogue with book acquisition in the early portion of Browne's life must take into account his declaration in *Religio Medici* that it was written when he 'had not the advantage of any good booke', which may be rhetorical, but also draws attention to the disruptions and removals of the early period of Browne's life during which an early library could be lost or dispersed. RM, epistle, p. 10.

Resurrecting Browne the reader from the historic catalogue that survives him has also been a process of selection and categorisation. The sale catalogue, like the cabinet, presents a cornucopia of objects occupying a single plane. In order to make the collection meaningful and present it in descriptive prose, some of those objects need to be foregrounded, and some form of taxonomy introduced. Finch, in his introduction to the facsimile edition of the catalogue, followed a standard bibliographical practice in describing the library first by categorising the listed items into subjects, and then naming the books within those categories which struck him as exemplary or exceptional in relation to his preconception of Browne's character.<sup>34</sup> For Finch, and some other bibliographers, this process is grounded in bibliographical expertise, and can result in a sensitive reading of a collection (particularly when that reading explicitly acts as a challenge to existing normative models for the seventeenth-century personal library and its contents, setting it against similar sources for other libraries).<sup>35</sup> But it becomes less reliable when it is dependent on a necessarily subjective reading of Browne's literary works. Richmond's description of Browne's library, focussing on Neoplatonic texts, patristics, hermeticism, alchemy, and cabala, gives the distinct impression that Richmond is presenting the library he wants to see, or expects to see. In the worst instance, Richmond claims that Ben Jonson's works must have been among Browne's 'most cherished books', because three copies are listed in the sale catalogue. There are so many reasons why the sale catalogue's testimony cannot support this — including salting, an accidental repetition in the cataloguing process, the donation to Browne of a duplicate, and the ownership of personal copies by other members of Browne's household — that to attribute Jonson's repeated appearance to Browne's affection seems flagrantly naive. It is also careless, since two of the three copies of Jonson (SC 46/98 and 58/114) date from 1692, ten

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<sup>34</sup> This approach is used, for instance, by Clive Wilkin-Jones in his account of Norwich City Library ('Introduction', in Clive Wilkin-Jones, ed., *The minutes, donation book and catalogue of Norwich City Library, founded in 1608*, Norfolk Record Society, vol. LXXII (Norwich, 2008)); by Nicholas Kiessling on Anthony Wood's library (*The library of Anthony Wood* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2002), pp. xx-xxii); by Julian Roberts and Andrew G. Watson on the library of John Dee (*John Dee's library catalogue* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1990), pp. 28-37); and by the editors of Samuel Jeake's library (*A radical's books: the library catalogue of Samuel Jeake of Rye, 1623-90*, ed. by Michael Hunter, Giles Mandelbrote, Richard Ovenden, and Nigel Smith (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 1999), pp. xli-li).

<sup>35</sup> As, for instance, in the description of the Jeake library, *A radical's books*, pp. 28-37.

years after Browne's death.<sup>36</sup> Finch is more considered in his approach, but is unable to avoid drawing attention to those titles he finds especially pertinent at the expense of others. Such descriptions obscure the book owner's own intentions and priorities, foregrounding the books we associate with 'our' Browne and thrusting the other titles into the gloom at the back of the cabinet.

In the rest of this chapter, I present statistical analysis as a method for initiating a meaningful description of an early modern library known principally from a sale catalogue, answering a number of questions about that library and its composition. The analysis concentrates on the reliability of the 1711 catalogue as a bibliographic source, testing the possible extent of salting, and asking whether it can bear witness to the development of the library through time. It is legitimate to associate trends of change in a substantial collection of books with events in their owners' lives (as I do below), but not valid to read individual books in that collection biographically without specific additional evidence to justify doing so. A quantitative approach has the disadvantage of denying any sense of the quality of Browne's relationships with the individual books and their particular importance to him. As I have already argued, his reasons for possessing each volume were not always related to the significance of their content, and a quantitative analysis must ignore particular qualities in its initial findings. But quantitative analysis allows an interpretation of the catalogue which counters prior expectations of its contents rooted in a subjective conception of Browne's oeuvre. It also enables direct comparison with libraries owned by Browne's contemporaries and known through similar source material, confirming that in many respects Browne's library followed a familiar model. The description of Browne's library through numerical analysis provides a foundation upon which critical analysis can be based, refining interpretations of the sale catalogue and setting the collection within the context of contemporary book culture.

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<sup>36</sup> Richmond, 'Sir Thomas Browne's library', p. 53. Richmond may have been misled by the fact that the earlier copy (SC 45/67) is listed with two imprint dates, 1616 and 1640, the second and third volumes of Jonson's works not being issued until the latter date for the second folio edition — and might have been interpreted by Richmond as two separate copies. The 1692 imprint was the third folio edition. Ian Donaldson, 'Benjamin Jonson, 1572-1637', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2014). Accessed online.

*'Some private and probable conceptions': calculation as reconstruction, and the statistical recovery of the library*

In the sixth chapter of the sixth book of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, Browne uses a series of mathematical projections to calculate the 'populosity' of the Earth before the Flood.<sup>37</sup> The effort is characteristically Brownean, relying on 'fragments and broken records' from which even those things 'not usually observed' cannot 'advantage our discourse'.<sup>38</sup> Browne estimates the rate of population growth based on the estimated longevity and productivity of the protagonists of the Old Testament, and follows the spread of the antediluvian population from Ireland to Mauritania. With equally characteristic modesty he disparages his attempts as 'private and probable', and puts aside any certainty to be determined by 'the Arithmetick of the last day'.<sup>39</sup> Once again, clarity is deferred until the apocalyptic moment when we no longer look through a glass darkly.

Something akin to Browne's caution attaches itself to the following efforts to describe the library belonging to the Browne family through calculation, which results in claims that are contingent, rather than definitive. The tabulated results give some sense of the constitution of the Browne library as described in the sale catalogue, but the decisions I have made in standardising and categorising the evidence of the catalogue and transforming it into a database have skewed the results in directions which appear to me to be rational and practical, but are to some degree 'private' and founded in personal judgement.<sup>40</sup> I have, for instance, chosen to record only the first or main author of a work, so that secondary authors, editors, compilers, or commentators who may be equally if not more significant than the author of the principal text are sidelined in the analysis of the contents of the catalogue. In order to control the different forms of author name, I have relied on the Library of Congress's authority records. The Library of Congress prefers vernacular forms to the Latinised

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<sup>37</sup> PE, VI:6, pp. 469-483.

<sup>38</sup> PE, VI:6, p. 471.

<sup>39</sup> PE, VI:6, p. 483.

<sup>40</sup> For some sample entries of the database created from the sale catalogue, see appendix 1 below.



names that feature in the sale catalogue, and the Library's identification of some authors is not infallible — which, together with my own lack of expertise in all the copious interests encompassed by the library, may have led to some misattribution of works.<sup>41</sup> All of the English language titles have been matched with items on the English Short Title Catalogue, except where the editions described are no longer extant, and their imprint information (edition, together with date and place of publication) is consequently relatively stable, but only about a third of the remaining lots have been checked against bibliographic reference sources.<sup>42</sup> I have accepted the language and subject categories provided by the sale catalogue (which may not correspond to Browne's intellectual arrangement of his books), and argue in favour of this decision in the relevant sections below.<sup>43</sup> In some cases — for instance, the lots containing multiple titles, such as library catalogues and pamphlets — categorisation of items in the sale catalogue is not possible.<sup>44</sup> I have taken the sale catalogue and compressed it within twenty-first-century standards and database structures, which has inevitably led to a loss of bibliographical detail and nuance. I refer throughout to the features of other seventeenth-century personal libraries as analysed by recent bibliographers, and draw on the work of David Pearson, whose analysis of the sale catalogues of five similarly sized libraries which reached the auction house between 1680 and 1698 is especially pertinent.<sup>45</sup> Not only is he reliant on the same type of source material with the same original function, but the libraries he examines are comparable to Browne's in size, and with one exception belonged to professional men

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<sup>41</sup> <http://authorities.loc.gov>

<sup>42</sup> <http://estc.bl.uk>. Other reference sources have included COPAC (<http://copac.ac.uk>), WorldCat (<https://www.worldcat.org>), Edit16 (<http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/>), and the Catalogue collectif de France (<http://ccfr.bnf.fr/>).

<sup>43</sup> The arrangement of the library on its shelves is discussed more fully in chapter 6 below.

<sup>44</sup> For library catalogues sold as batched lots, see SC 12/140 to SC 12/145. There is also, for instance, a collection of 'Narratives, Trials and other Pamphlets, 8 vol.', SC 45/71.

<sup>45</sup> David Pearson, 'Patterns of book ownership in late seventeenth-century England', *The Library*, 6th series, 11:2 (2010), pp. 139-167. Of the five book owners whose sale catalogues are examined, that of Humphrey Babington, a Cambridge college fellow, listed 917 books; of William Bassett, an Anglican clergyman, 1651 books; of Stephen Charnock, a nonconformist clergyman, 1330 books; of Nathaniel Coga, a Cambridge college master, 1554 books; and of Sir Norton Knatchbull, a member of the gentry and an MP, 1452 books. See pp. 141-2 of Pearson's article for summaries of their careers, and pp. 142-4 for an outline of his methodology.

(though not, unfortunately, physicians). Since Pearson asks many of the same questions of his data with regard to the frequency of titles and authors, the distribution of publication dates and places, and the proportion of languages, his results have been an invaluable yardstick against which to gauge my own findings. The similarities between Pearson's data and my own argues for the common effect of conditions within the book trade (as they affected the availability of books for purchase) upon the contents of the libraries being examined.

As regards the aptness of the sale catalogue as a source to 'advance our discourse', I have tested the data for indications of the limits of the catalogue as evidence of book ownership. Firstly, I sought to establish whether a comparison of the contents of the catalogue, when books printed after a particular date have been removed from the dataset, could support the correlation of imprint dates with acquisition dates. I have chosen three datasets according to imprint date. The first is composed of those titles printed before 1661, on the grounds that *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, *Urne-Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus* were composed in the 1640s and 50s, and the younger generations of Browne family readers would probably not have begun to influence the library's holdings before that date (Edward Browne was seventeen years old in 1661). The second set adds imprints up to 1684, reflecting Browne's death in 1682 whilst allowing for books produced in 1682 but with later imprint dates, a common practise in the book trade. The final set includes all the lots sold at auction in 1711. Secondly, I ask whether the results of a quantitative analysis of the library's composition in terms of language, author, and subject support the argument that books were added to the list by Thomas Ballard, and if so, what sorts of books had been introduced. Throughout the following section, these two issues will shed some light on the question of the suitability of the sale catalogue for the questions being asked of it.

*Languages in the library*

Language	Total (to 1661)	Total (to 1684)	Total (1711)	Percentage (to 1661)	Percentage (to 1684)	Percentage (1711)
Latin and Greek	980	1195	1320	70	62	55
English	225	407	634	16	21	26
French	91	171	334	6	9	14
Italian	74	94	99	5	5	4
German & Dutch	22	37	42	1,5	2	1,5
Spanish	19	19	19	1,5	1	0,5

Table 1. Totals and percentages of titles from the 1711 catalogue in different languages

The analysis of languages represented in the 1711 catalogue relies on the categorisations supplied by the catalogue itself, demonstrating the obstructive effects of bibliographical arrangement and categorisation, and affecting the integrity of the dataset. Titles in Hebrew and Arabic, and other ancient or oriental languages, have been folded in with the books in Latin and Greek, and German and Dutch have been lumped together. The numbers of books in Hebrew and other oriental languages are obscured, as are Browne's tastes as a reader of classical texts — whether, for instance, he preferred to have editions of Greek works with a Latin parallel translation as Isaac Newton did.<sup>46</sup> Mistakes — or mishaps — were certainly made in assigning languages, with single books (in French or Italian particularly) sometimes appearing in the wrong language section. If the arrangement of the books in the catalogue originated with Browne at an early date, rather than with Ballard's cataloguers in 1711, then any number of people could be responsible for apparent miscategorisation. Some potentially significant titles in minor languages are hidden within these categories. Among them is the 1647 edition of the works of the popular Occitan poet Pèire Godolin, which is not, as the sale catalogue would have it, in Spanish, but in a Toulousain dialect.<sup>47</sup> Reid Barbour attributes this misidentification of Occitan for

<sup>46</sup> Harrison, *The library of Isaac Newton*, p. 75.

<sup>47</sup> SC 42/5.

Spanish to a mistake by the sale cataloguers, but it may be a straightforward compromise made in the imposition of a simple language categorisation.<sup>48</sup> I have made every effort to ensure that any book with a language that falls within the sale catalogue's categories but which has been obviously misplaced is assigned its correct language in my database.

The proportion of titles in classical languages in the library of the 1711 sale catalogue is high enough to suggest that the Browne collection was exceptionally learned and contained a high proportion of books printed both in England and on the Continent for an international scholarly audience. In fact, this composition was not exceptional for private libraries of the period — or at least, for books from personal libraries that were sold at auction. David Pearson's analysis shows three libraries composed of roughly 50% Latin works, one library containing slightly more than half in Latin, and one library (that of Nathaniel Coga, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge) containing almost 75% Latin.<sup>49</sup> In this context, Thomas Browne's library is reasonably latinate, but not extraordinary. Where Browne's collection may have been exceptional was in the quantity of other European languages he owned. All five of the catalogues examined by Pearson show a spread of modern Continental languages, but Pearson only provides a figure for the sale of Charnock's library, of which 75 lots were in French, Italian and Spanish. By contrast, 206 lots in French, Italian, Spanish, German and Dutch printed before 1661 appear in the Browne sale catalogue, a figure which increases to nearly 500 when the later imprints are included. The kinds of modern language material held by Browne and Pearson's sample book owners seem to be similar, notably Bibles and dictionaries, but also including works by, for instance, Guicciardini and Machiavelli.<sup>50</sup>

In terms of the apparent development of the library through time, the relative proportions of languages appear to trend — for instance, the classical languages and

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<sup>48</sup> Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 136.

<sup>49</sup> Pearson, 'Patterns of book ownership', p. 154.

<sup>50</sup> Pearson, 'Patterns of book ownership', pp. 144 and 154.

Spanish shrink in proportion to the rest of the library, whilst English and French grow. The increase in the number of English and French books in relation to those in Latin and Greek could support Finch's opinion that Browne's own very learned library was, by 1711, mixed with the less latinate tastes of Edward and his son Tomey. We might, if following and extending Finch's line of argument, add Thomas's wife and daughters to the list of less sophisticated readers potentially influencing the collection's contents, or suggest salted books from Ballard as a cause for the trend. But the reason may be general rather than personal — an increase in productiveness in the British book trade over the course of the century, and a shift in that trade towards the vernacular. Pearson points out that the proportion of books in Latin or printed outside Britain were much higher in personal libraries in the early part of the century; in the case of Sir Thomas Knyvett (d. 1618), only 9% of his books were in English, whilst among the libraries of early seventeenth-century English bishops studied by Pearson, one contained only 24% British imprints, and another 27%. Such consistency in development across the contents of several seventeenth-century libraries suggests that the proportion of Latin titles in the Browne collection reflects a more general trend.

The changes in the proportion of books in modern European languages look more local to Browne and the 1711 sale. All the books in Spanish in the sale were printed before 1650. Perhaps Browne had lost interest in Spanish in the last decades of his life; or all nineteen were gifted to him by his Halifax friend Henry Power, and were present for sentimental reasons; or he (or another Browne) might have acquired them as a group from another friend or bookseller.<sup>51</sup> The leap in the number and proportion of books in French (especially when compared to the steadier increase of titles in other vernaculars) is considerable. Again, this could point to the effect of other readers with different tastes, or Ballard's commercial interests, on the catalogue's contents.

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<sup>51</sup> At least three of the nineteen Spanish books were given to Browne by Henry Power in the 1640s. See chapter 3 below.

*The library's age*

Decade imprint	1490	1500	1510	1520	1530	1540	1550	1560	1570	1580	1590
Totals	9	10	6	15	15	38	65	51	66	66	79
Decade imprint	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650	1660	1670	1680	1690	1700
Totals	95	127	131	151	165	303	239	202	216	233	83

Table 2. Totals of books in the 1711 catalogue by imprint decade

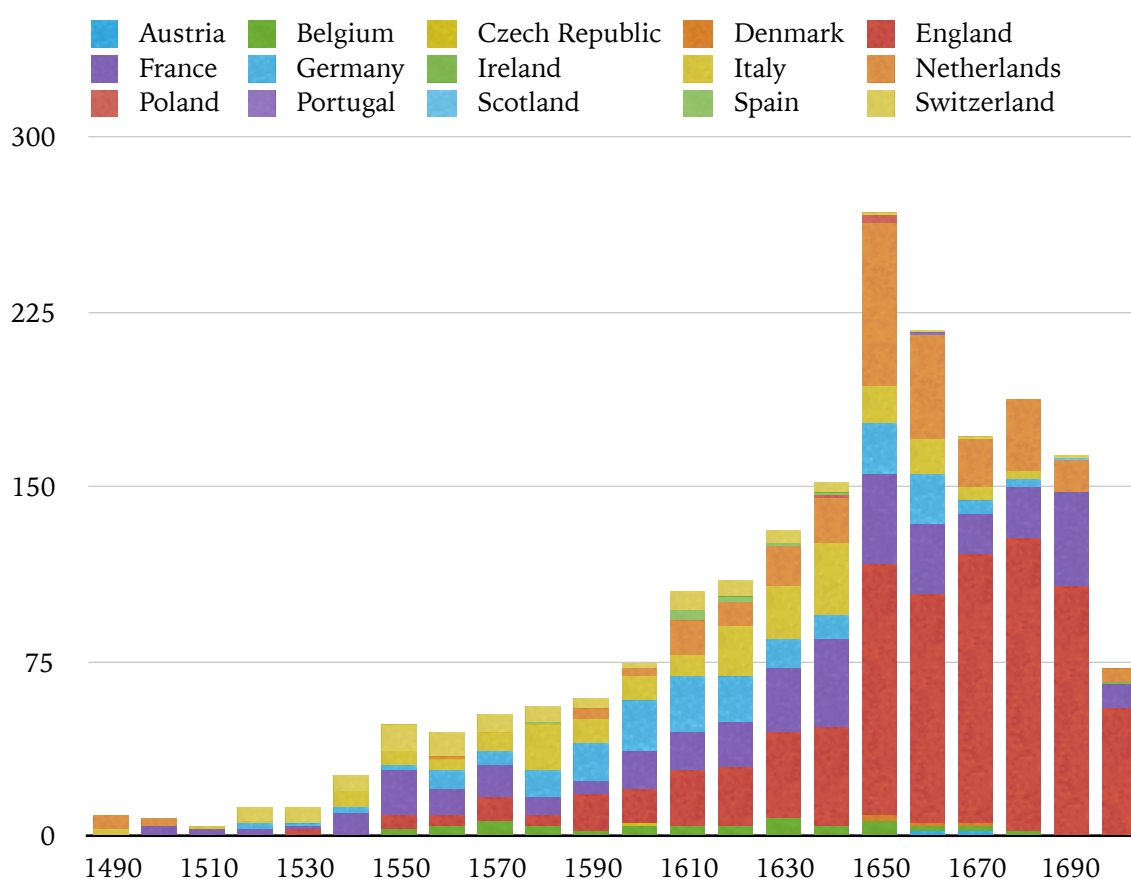
4. Publication dates and countries of the 1711 catalogue.<sup>52</sup>

Table 2 and figure 4 summarise the publication dates and countries for the library of the sale catalogue, and show the effect of personal book acquisition habits — but also crucially demonstrate the impact of conditions in the British book trade on private

<sup>52</sup> Countries are given in alphabetical order from the bottom of each column. Not all the lots with imprint dates have imprint locations, which accounts for the discrepancy in totals between table 2 and figure 4.

libraries. In material terms, the books sold in 1711 were overwhelmingly contemporary with Browne. The books printed during the decades of Browne's adulthood (1630-1680) represent 70% of the titles in the sale catalogue printed before his death. There is a steady increase in the numbers of books published in each decade, culminating in a near doubling in the number of books printed in the 1650s compared to those from the 1640s, followed by a tailing off of books printed in the 1660s and thereafter. The proportion of books printed in England and the Netherlands increases substantially from the 1650s (being nearly double the number of books printed in those countries in the 1640s). There is plenty in these results to justify a connection between the imprint dates of these titles and the date of their acquisition by the Brownes, given collaborating events in their biographies. On Browne senior's account, it would fit with an assumption that he was able to devote more of his time and money to developing his library as his financial situation became more secure. The pattern also chimes with his intellectual activities, as the 1650s saw the composition and publication of *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658) and of two enlarged editions of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1650, 1658). The sudden rise could indicate the historic point at which Edward Browne started making his own purchases as he reached adulthood and established his own library in London.<sup>53</sup> Edward's travels to the Netherlands might account for the increase in Dutch imprints. The relationship between bibliographical trends and biographical events is not straightforward, and I argue in the next chapter that whilst it is valid to associate statistical trends like this with the events of Browne's life, individual titles can only rarely be attached to specific points in his biography.

It is clear from Pearson's analysis of five other sale catalogues that these trends are also general, and, as I have argued, related to the fortunes of the book trade which provided Browne and his contemporaries with access to newly printed books. Pearson's chart of the distribution of imprint dates across the five catalogues gives an almost identical curve, peaking in the 1650s and petering out in the 1660s, 1670s and

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<sup>53</sup> Edward's move to London took place in the late 1660s, after his Continental tours. For Edward's biography, see Kees van Strien, 'Edward Browne, 1644-1708', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2014). Accessed online.

1680s.<sup>54</sup> In his article, Pearson does not make a connection between the trends across his sample and the availability of books for purchase, but the distribution of imprint dates in the libraries under discussion, and the output of the printing industry during this years are so contiguous that they must be related. James Raven describes an early modern book trade which remained tightly controlled until the 1640s, when the number of printing houses in London doubled to around forty, reaching fifty-nine by 1661, and dropping again as regulation was reintroduced in the decades following the Restoration.<sup>55</sup> His tallies for the production of titles by English printers from 1450-1850, taken from the English Short Title Catalogue, indicate that works were being published at rates reflecting this change, shooting up in the 1640s and declining from the 1670s.<sup>56</sup> Pertinent to Browne and his son, and their interests, is the increased freedom and consequent productiveness of English medical printing in the 1650s as the Royal College of Physicians lost any influence over the licensing of books.<sup>57</sup> The flourishing of the book trade had a pronounced effect on the contents of personal libraries across the country, in which case biographical events may only have been incidental or contributing factors. The number of books printed in the Interregnum years substantially outnumbered those produced in the 1640s and 1660s, and were more common in the market in subsequent decades, either secondhand or after extended periods in warehouses. This weakens the case for associating books' imprint dates with dates of their acquisition by Browne.

The trends of imprint place and date do not offer strong evidence of the introduction of books into the sale catalogue by Ballard, but it cannot be discounted either. Apart from the sudden rise in English imprints in the 1650s, the proportions of books from

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<sup>54</sup> Pearson, 'Patterns of book ownership', chart 3.

<sup>55</sup> Raven, *Business of books*, p. 46.

<sup>56</sup> Raven, *Business of books*, p. 8. Totals from the ESTC are not without problems, as Raven points out, since they cannot reflect the total loss of editions nor the size of print runs, but do include new 'titles' which are reissues of earlier editions with new title-pages, and variant editions.

<sup>57</sup> Adrian Johns, 'Science and the book', in *The Cambridge history of the book in Britain. Vol. IV: 1557-1695*, ed. by John Barnard and D.F. McKenzie; with the assistance of Maureen Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 274-303 (p. 285).



different countries remain consistent over the period of the library's life. There is a tendency towards a more monochrome library in the final decades. Italian imprints, which have been a fairly constant presence, disappear, and the last two decades of imprints are almost entirely English, with a few from France and the Netherlands. The proportion of books from France is high in the 1690s, and we know that these later imprints must have been more often in French than Latin, given the near doubling of French titles in later imprints. But as I have said before, whether this is indicative of Ballard's interference, or the influence of later readers on the Browne collection, is a point on which the evidence is not definitive.

So far I have discussed imprint dates as an indication of the reliability of the sale catalogue as a source for Browne's book owning, both in terms of the patterns of his acquisition as they might be indicated by imprint dates, and the extent of salting of the sale catalogue by Ballard. But the discussion of imprint dates also throws up the question of Browne's taste in books, and the purposes for which he collected them. The presence of incunables in the sale catalogue might raise hopes that Browne was a proto-bibliophile, conscious of the material importance of very early imprints as evidence of the history of printing in an age when incunables were only beginning to be prized.<sup>58</sup> Certainly the inclusion of fifteenth-century imprints in such a small library is noteworthy. Of the libraries examined by Pearson, none held fifteenth-century books and only 10.5% of the imprints belonged to the sixteenth-century.<sup>59</sup> But I suspect Browne's incunables were not an indication of great interest in their place in the history of printing, and that where he actively sought these books out, he valued them for philological rather than bibliographical reasons. Firstly, the extent of Browne's investment in these particular books is limited. Nine of the seventeen books printed in between 1490 and 1510 are contained in two *Sammelbände*, one of which seems to have reached Browne already bound together, either as a gift or an informal

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<sup>58</sup> The term 'incunabula' was first applied to books printed in the fifteenth century in 1639 (by Bernhard von Mallinckrodt, *De ortu ac progressu artis typographicae*, Cologne). Evelyn noted as he arranged for the removal of the Arundel Manuscripts to the Royal Society library in 1678 that he esteemed the oldest impressions very highly, 'almost equal to MSS'. John Evelyn, *The diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by E.S. de Beer (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 29 Aug 1678, p. 653.

<sup>59</sup> Pearson, 'Patterns of book ownership', p. 154.

purchase or exchange.<sup>60</sup> Thus these titles represent at most only two decisions by Browne to acquire them, rather than nine. The other fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century books fit with our existing knowledge of Browne's philological and medical interests, being either canonical (Cicero, Ovid, Pliny, Dante, and the Vulgate) or early works on medicine (such as John of Gaddesden). The 1502 Aldine Dante was the *editio princeps* of Pietro Bembo's authoritative text, and might have had philological worth to Browne.<sup>61</sup> I have found no evidence for Browne having been interested in the history of printing, and he joined many of his peers in viewing its technology with some suspicion (most markedly in Browne's preamble to *Religio Medici*, when printing is both the origin of 'Things evidently false' and 'Things of Truth most falsely set forth', and their remedy).<sup>62</sup> It would be impossible to maintain that the creator of the *Musaeum Clausum* had no interest in the history of books and the fables of their survival, but the appeal of the works of Gutenberg, Aldus, Jensen, and their peers seems largely to have passed him by. The few incunables he owned have philological significance that outweighed their bibliographic form.<sup>63</sup>

### *Subject coverage*

There is no formal subject arrangement in the sale catalogue, beyond the four divisions provided for the classical language books — 'Theologici', 'Philologici, historici, etc.', 'Medici, philosophici, etc.', and 'Mathematici'. In attempting a more detailed subject analysis, I have extended these broad categories to the other language sections, and added a second layer to the hierarchy of subject description. I have tried to designate subject descriptions according to the clusters I identify in the sale

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<sup>60</sup> SC 10/74 and SC 11/75. SC 10/74 survives, now disbound, in the British Library, and bears the ownership marks of Timothy Burrage, a Norfolk man and tutor to the family of Browne's friend Nicholas Bacon. The Norfolk origin of this lot questions the argument made by Finch which associates them with Browne's schooldays; Finch, *Catalogue*, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> SC 41/16. The degree of Browne's investment in philological, textual and hermeneutic issues is visible in all his work, and in the number of multiple editions, variorum editions, and commentaries to be found in the sale catalogue, which will be discussed further below. Kevin Killeen has recently drawn attention to his philological concerns in *Biblical scholarship, science and politics in early modern England*.

<sup>62</sup> RM, epistle, p. 9.

<sup>63</sup> John Harrison reaches a similar conclusion on the evidence of the incunable Sammelband in Newton's library; *The library of Isaac Newton*, p. 73.

catalogue, rather than applying categories taken from a pre-existing taxonomy from another source. Thus, if a title principally discusses geography or botany, but appears in the 'Theologici' section, I have categorised it as a theology book in the first instance. In doing so I hope to avoid projecting my own disciplinary assumptions on this description of the library, but also to preserve an arrangement which I believe reflects the classification of the books by either Thomas Browne or Edward.<sup>64</sup> I have also tried to avoid introducing modern classifications that would have been unrecognisable to Browne. Kiessling's edition of Robert Burton's library includes a subject index which may be more useful to modern scholars for including subjects like economics, meteorology, and psychology whilst acknowledging their anachronism.<sup>65</sup> But such intervention, however conscious, compounds the effect of obscuring the original owner's intentions and priorities by interposing modern disciplinary divisions. Similarly, I have avoided, for instance, a division between pathology and treatment of diseases in books on medicine, since early modern studies of particular diseases tend to describe both their pathology and their therapy; I have created other categories, such as 'current state' (descriptions of the politics, recent news, geography, economics of a state) or 'observations' (the published notes of a practicing physician) to describe books of a recognised early modern genre which have been grouped together in the catalogue but which sit across twenty-first-century disciplinary lines.

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<sup>64</sup> I argue for the presence of a taxonomical arrangement in the catalogue which predates Ballard's involvement in chapter 6.

<sup>65</sup> Kiessling, *The library of Robert Burton*, p. 372.

Subject	Number of books (up to 1661)	Number of books (up to 1684)	Number of books (1711)	Percentage (up to 1661)	Percentage (up to 1684)	Percentage (1711)
Medicine	289	404	457	20	22	18.5
History	223	318	386	16	17	16
Literature	174	239	364	12	13	15
Theology	201	256	322	14	14	13
Natural Philosophy	149	210	230	10	11	9
Mathematics	134	147	160	9	2	6
Philology	82	102	131	6	6	5
Geography	59	90	127	4	5	5
Philosophy	59	71	86	4	4	3.5
Politics	21	41	65	1	2	3
Conduct	6	12	34			1
Education	13	15	21			
Art	8	12	19			
Collections	2	7	16			
Law	3	5	11			
Music	3	5	6			
Practical	1	2	5			
Encyclopedia	0	2	3			

Table 3. Totals and percentages of titles in subject categories in the 1711 catalogue, with totals and percentages given for all imprints before 1684 and 1661.

The most striking feature of the sale catalogue library's subject coverage, and one which was noted by both Finch and Robbins, is the relatively low proportion of theological books. There is an expectation that a seventeenth-century library should have more religious books than are present in the catalogue. David Pearson, drawing on his database of English seventeenth-century personal libraries as well as his work on bishops' libraries, has recently reiterated his view that most privately owned

libraries of the period were at least half composed of books of a theological or religious nature.<sup>66</sup> Religious books, particularly Bibles and sermons, represented the most flourishing sector of the book trade, and given what we have already discussed about the effect of trade availability on the contents of personal libraries, it would be reasonable to expect a high proportion of theology. Finch and Robbins picked up on the apparent absence of specific sorts of religious books — English Bibles, controversial works, and sermons. Finch pointed out that the Geneva and Authorised Versions of the Bible were absent from the catalogue, and, in fact, the *only* English biblical texts present are a copy of the liturgical Psalms set to music printed 16 years after Thomas Browne's death, and a fragment of a paraphrase.<sup>67</sup> We know a little concerning Browne's taste in theological books from his biographer, John Whitefoot, who noted that he 'read the best English Sermons he could hear of, with liberal Applause; and delighted not in Controversies'.<sup>68</sup> But the theological books form a perfect example of the bibliographer's imposition of a sense of absence, which provokes a series of explanations for the (albeit reasonably) perceived gap. Among these explanations we can include Robbins' proposition that the English Bibles, controversial works and sermons passed to other family members and to friends at some point between Browne's death and the auction in 1711.<sup>69</sup> The proximity of so many clerical libraries (including those of Joseph Hall and Edward Reynolds, both bishops of Norwich, and the Norwich City Library) may have enabled Browne to avoid the necessity of purchasing theological material himself.<sup>70</sup> Sermons and controversial works could, moreover, easily have been hidden in the eight volumes of pamphlets which were sold in one lot at the auction.<sup>71</sup> Browne or his heirs might have given

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<sup>66</sup> Pearson, 'The English private library in the seventeenth century', p. 383.

<sup>67</sup> SC 48/1, *The whole book of Psalms: with the usual hymns and spiritual songs*, with music composed by John Playford, 1698, and SC 52/175, currently not identified, but described in the sale catalogue as 'Historic. Part of the Old testam. In sculpt. In verse (very old)'.

<sup>68</sup> John Whitefoot, 'Some minutes for the life of Sir Thomas Browne', in *Posthumous works of the learned Sir Thomas Browne, Kt. M.D.* (London: Printed for E. Curll and R. Gosling, 1712), p. xxxiv.

<sup>69</sup> Robin Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, p. xxii. I engage with the possibilities of posthumous disposal at more length in Chapter 2.

<sup>70</sup> A possibility explored further in chapter 3 below.

<sup>71</sup> SC 45/71.

these books away separately or retained them in the family, or Ballard might have chosen to sell them in the shop. Finally, of the five sale catalogue libraries sampled by Pearson, I find that only one includes several copies of the Bible in English (that of the Anglican clergyman William Bassett), with the other four libraries containing only one or two, if any.<sup>72</sup> A more general practice may be at work, in which English Bibles were gifted, or sold separately, to avoid submitting them to the indignities of the auction hammer.

In the case of absences from the library, as I have already argued in the introduction to this chapter, the number of causes can be myriad, and since there is no evidence to indicate that the books thought to be absent had been in the library in the first place, there is certainly no way of determining how and why they were removed. Engaging in such speculation is not fruitless, though, since it serves to emphasise the ineffable quality of a lost library, and the multiplicity of ways by which it may be fragmented. It is probably safest to conclude that the theological books are not ‘missing’ from the record, but were never there at all, and that Browne chose to focus his resources on, and was more engaged with, professional, moral and literary reading, at the expense of doctrinal engagement. I suspect that Browne was not exceptional, and that, particularly towards the end of the century, personal libraries were often not predominantly religious in character. Harrison’s analysis of Isaac Newton’s library shows a similar composition, with only a quarter of his books being on theological subjects.<sup>73</sup> In the case of theology, the catalogue may be showing us something of Browne’s tastes, rather than what we might expect to see.

If we accept that the proportions of the various subjects which make up the sale catalogue library can cast a little light on its owners’ tastes in books, then there are a few more observations to be made. Medicine is the largest section, occupying about a

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<sup>72</sup> *Bibliotheca Bassetiana: or a catalogue of Greek, Latin and English books in most faculties. Being the library of the reverend Mr. William Bassett, late rector of St. Swithin’s, London.* (London: Edward Millington, 1697). See catalogue numbers 21/95, 23/76 (an edition of the Douai version in quarto), 25/1 and 25/15.

<sup>73</sup> *The library of Isaac Newton*, p. 59. Pearson’s work on contemporary sale catalogues does not include division by subject, so a comparison with his sample is not possible. Pearson, ‘Patterns of book ownership’, p. 143.

fifth of the library — and whilst this indicates a collection which was an important instrument in the professional lives of the Brownes, the subject hardly dominates. Of course some other categories, such as natural philosophy and mathematics, were obliquely relevant to the Brownes' duties as physicians, but overall the subject coverage of the library is even-handed. Whilst the numbers of titles representing the Brownes' learned interests — philology, geography and travel, philosophy — are lower (around 5% each), together they are hardly negligible. On such evidence, Browne seems to have taken the library's role in his professional life seriously and to have been prepared to invest in medical books often printed in Europe. But he was also committed to buying books in a broad range of subjects. The only books that seem underrepresented are legal books and practical manuals (the kind that T.A. Birrell characterised as part of the panoply of the gentleman's library, given aristocratic obligations to act as landowners and magistrates), which may reflect Browne's position as a member of a learned profession, rather than as one of the landed gentry.<sup>74</sup>

Digging deeper within the subject analysis increases the number of statistical details which could be read as indications of the significance of some specialist material to Browne as a reader engaged in intellectual projects. For instance, the library contains a great number of dictionaries (sixty-eight lexicons and grammars in a philology section of 131) which agrees with our understanding of Browne's interest in languages, their structures and their interrelations.<sup>75</sup> Dictionaries do feature in Pearson's sample, but not in such numbers.<sup>76</sup> Over half of the art books are related to architecture, and the remainder focus on drawing the human body, suggesting that the Brownes' interest in art was more practical than aesthetic. The sixty-five books on politics could be offered up as a challenge to the characterisation of Browne as remote from his political times. Botany and natural history, the subjects of Browne's

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<sup>74</sup> T.A. Birrell, 'Reading as pastime: the place of light literature in some gentlemen's libraries of the seventeenth century', in *Property of a gentleman: the formation, organisation and dispersal of the private library, 1620-1920*, ed. by R. Myers & M. Harris (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1991), pp. 113-131 (p. 114).

<sup>75</sup> See particularly 'Of languages', especially pp. 70-76.

<sup>76</sup> Pearson, 'Patterns of book ownership', p. 148.

surviving correspondence with Christopher Merrett as well as of *The Garden of Cyrus*, together make up 40% of the natural philosophy section, followed by chemistry (including alchemy, 15%), physics (9%), and mineralogy (7%).<sup>77</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly given Browne's advice to Henry Power in the 1640s (*Materia Medicamentarum*, Surgery, and Chymistry, may be your diversions and recreations; Physic is your business'),<sup>78</sup> books on pharmacology (42) and surgery (5) are far outweighed by titles on anatomy (86, not including the art books noted above), disease studies, pathology and therapy (137) and general medicine books by ancient, Islamic and modern authors (92). The 'collections' category, including thirty-eight catalogues of printed books and manuscripts, points not only to their practical use as bibliographical aids, but could also hint at a Browne engrossed by the written traces of human knowledge.<sup>79</sup> If we do accept that the proportions of the books in the sale catalogue reflect the disciplines that Browne invested in (and roughly the proportions in which he invested in them), then there is material to be explored here. But a statistical analysis of such small clusters of books with an eye to Browne's taste or his purposes as a book owner leads back towards a reading of the sale catalogue as a self-sufficient piece of evidence, in which certain titles are artificially foregrounded. So I will move on from attempts to describe the library's contents in terms of subject in greater detail, and return to these statistical calculations as a background to the more specific explorations of Browne's reading and of his taxonomies in chapters 4 and 6.

As a final word on the subject analysis: it gives some indications of the reliability of the sale catalogue as a source for Browne's book owning, both in terms of the patterns of his acquisition of books through time, and in relation to the possible salting of the sale catalogue by Ballard. Consistency across the three datasets supports the

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<sup>77</sup> Another 15% of this section is composed of modern general works on natural philosophy.

<sup>78</sup> TB to Henry Power, [1646], ed. Keynes (1964), p. 172.

<sup>79</sup> Three encyclopaedias seems a very low total for a writer of encyclopaedic sensibilities like Browne, but this figure is rather misleading. These three titles are universal in their subject coverage: Theodor Zwinger's *Theatrum vitae humanae* (n.d.) SC 8/100; Nicholas Lloyd's *Dictionarium historicum, geographicum, poeticum, etc* (1686) SC 57/31; and François Pomey's *Indiculus universalis* in English (1679) SC 53/217. But the catalogue lists many other more encyclopaedic and commonplace works, including those by Stobaeus, Gesner, Rhodiginus and others.



argument that interference by Ballard was relatively limited, and was not substantial enough to affect the character of the library (although, of course, it might be in his interests only to introduce the sorts of books which might be associated with Browne, on the grounds that those were the sorts of books collectors would come to the auction to buy). The composition of the library does shift slightly over time. The medical, theological, natural philosophy and philological sections of the library become proportionally smaller, although they do continue to grow with the collection. At the same time, the literature section becomes a larger proportion of the whole, and the spread of subjects becomes wider — the smallest sections being the ones that appear to grow, including conduct books, education, and law. The subject areas which stagnate are those most closely related to our sense of Browne's professional and intellectual interests (medicine, theology, philosophy and philology) — encouraging the argument that the increased presence of other books must be due to the influence of less serious-minded readers, or of the bookseller. But again, this could equally be a reflection of a greater availability to readers of a wider range of subjects, as the book trade explored an expanding market. The shifts in the sale catalogue are sufficiently close to those which occurred in the English book trade at large that there is little scope for disentangling personal from wider commercial developments.

*Authors in the library*

	1661	no. of copies		1683	no. of copies		1711	no. of copies
Bible		26	Bible		28	Bible		30
Aristotle		12	Ovid		13	Ovid		15
Hippocrates		9	Aristotle		12	Hippocrates		13
Ovid		9	Hippocrates		12	Aristotle		12
Descartes		8	Descartes		9	Cicero		11
Fortunio Liceti		8	Thomas Bartholin		8	Grotius		10
Aldrovandi		7	Grotius		8	Descartes		9
Grotius		7	Athanasius Kircher		8	Thomas Bartholin		8
Francis Bacon		6	Fortunio Liceti		8	Homer		8
Giulio Cesare Scaligero		6	Aldrovandi		7	Horace		8
Marco Aurelio Severino		6	Francis Bacon		7	Athanasius Kircher		8
Tasso		6	Erasmus		6	Fortunio Liceti		8
Erasmus		5	Homer		6	Terence		8
Homer		5	Horace		6	Virgil		8
Athanasius Kircher		5	Livy		6	Aldrovandi		8
Tacitus		5	Giulio Cesare Scaligero		6	Francis Bacon		7
Gerardus Johannes Vossius		5	Marco Aurelio Severino		6	Erasmus		7
Georg Agricola		4	Tacitus		6	Fontenelle		7
Prospero Alpini		4	Tasso		6	Plutarch		7
Thomas Bartholin		4	Walter Charleton		6	Thomas Sydenham		7

Table 4. Authors in the 1711 catalogue ranked by the number of titles associated with them.

The dominance of modern authors — notably Descartes, Fortunio Liceti, Grotius, Francis Bacon, and Ulisse Aldrovandi — in the rankings is readily apparent. It is in the presence of authors such as these that Browne's library begins to distinguish itself

from the five sale catalogue collections examined by Pearson, taking on a more specialised hue. Four of the five Pearson libraries contained a work by Thomas Bartholin, but the other medics which Browne owned in multiple works (Scaliger, Alpini, Severino and Liceti) are entirely absent from Pearson's corpus. Pearson identified a concentration of English scientists and natural philosophers, including Francis Bacon, Kenelm Digby, Robert Boyle, Walter Charleton and John Ray in his sale catalogues, but Pierre Gassendi and Gerolamo Cardano are the only Continental scientists. Browne did own copies of Gassendi and Cardano, but not in sufficient numbers for them to appear in this table.<sup>80</sup> Descartes, Aldrovandi, and Kircher, in contrast with the Browne sale catalogue, were not popular in Pearson's sample. Unsurprisingly, the repeated appearance of the Bible is common to all six libraries. Pearson reports between ten and twenty editions of the Bible in each of his sale catalogues.<sup>81</sup> And many of the ancient authors which feature in Browne's top twenty, including Aristotle, Ovid, Tacitus and Homer, appear in all five of Pearson's catalogues, but Hippocrates, the founder of Western medicine, does not.

This ranking, like the other statistical features I have described, acts as a challenge to received ideas about Browne's favoured authors, and as a basis on which to move forward in critical analysis, rather than an answer in itself. I chose to produce a statistical author ranking to avoid plucking titles and authors from the sale catalogue unsystematically, as Richmond and Finch had. But having been produced statistically, the list cannot point us directly to Browne's most 'cherished' authors. The structures of the book trade, once again, have skewed the results. Printers confident of an audience for the works of Descartes and Liceti would issue their works separately as they were produced, but might not take a punt on less well-known authors, particularly physicians, until they had already established a reputation, at which point their works could be issued under one collective title. Browne owned numbers of 'collected works' by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers, including the twenty-one folio copies of 'opera omnia', observations, and medical epistles by practising doctors in the medical section. But his copies of some authors, for instance Descartes

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<sup>80</sup> Only the first twenty authors ranked by frequency of occurrence were included.

<sup>81</sup> Pearson, 'Patterns of book ownership', p. 144.

and Aldrovandi, are mostly first editions of individual works.<sup>82</sup> If we could trust in an inherent connection between the publication dates of these works and the date of their acquisition by Browne, it could be suggested that for Browne to have sought out these authors' works as they were first being published indicates a strong interest in them. But the connection is not inherent, and the claim can only be accepted with corroborating evidence from Browne's literary output.

Like my earlier detailed subject analysis, these statistical rankings are vulnerable because of the small quantities of books involved. Most of the authors that appear have equal rankings with each other (for instance, the eight authors in the 1711 list who are each represented by eight titles). The addition or removal of a single title by historical accident or bibliographical error would result in substantial rearrangement of the list. Besides which, a reader could own several works by one author without reading them, and break the spine of a single work through over-use. Nowhere is the potential disparity between ownership and intellectual engagement more clear than in these groups of authors jostling for supremacy. But such fragile results can still provide a springboard for analysis of Browne's written testimony of his reading, and leave us conscious of the many reasons for owning books other than reading them.

The apparent changes over time (analysed through imprint dates) in the lists of 'top' authors look specific enough to be indicative of the impact of personal taste in reading rather than merely reflecting the operations of the book trade. The initial impression given by the rankings is of a shift in the library's character, moving away from professional and instrumental material to broader and more leisured interests. As the books printed after 1661 and 1684 are added to the rankings, the numbers of classical authors increase — for instance, the sudden appearance of Cicero in the 1711 list, and the gradual ascendance of Homer and Horace. With the exception of Bartholin and Kircher, the physicians and scientists on the list (Liceti, Aldrovandi, Severino, Alpini,

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<sup>82</sup> Two of the nine copies of works by Descartes listed in the sale catalogue are first editions, his correspondence (1657) and the *Discours de la méthode* (1637). Three are editions published within ten years of their first publication. Three are translations into English. Three of the seven copies of works by Aldrovandi are first editions, *Serpentum et draconum* (1640), *Monstrorum Historia* (1642) and *Musaeum Metallicum* (1648).

Agricola, Scaliger, and Hippocrates) make the opposite movement. But here the fragility of the ranking becomes yet more obvious. The acquisition of a *Sammelband* of several works by a single author (like Tasso, several of whose works appear in a single lot, SC 41/5), the donation of a duplicate, or the purchase of a revised edition would cause an author's name to shoot up the ranking. The same is true of the statistical evidence amongst the author rankings relevant to salting. I expected that the addition of books from a source unrelated to the Brownes would lead to the increased duplication of titles, and consequently to a decrease in the number of authors only appearing once. But whilst the proportion of authors appearing only once appears to decrease in time very slightly (from 78% to 75%), there is no evidence of a strong trend. Ballard's additions into the sale catalogue, such as they were, cannot have been multiple copies of stock left unwanted in the shop or warehouse. If salting did take place, it was subtly done.

### *Conclusions*

I have spent this chapter arguing for the virtues of the statistical process as a means of avoiding the misinterpretations that spring from investing the sale catalogue with too much meaning, seeing it as a sort of cabinet or workshop with its own interiority and mystique. Such investment in the catalogue has resulted in too great a degree of expectation being placed on it to function as a tool for literary interpretation rather than the commercial record it is. In expecting privileged access to the mind of the owner through the catalogue, scholars like Finch have been at pains to identify the presence of unexpected books, and the absence of expected books, and to explain them in terms of a narrative of corruption and dispersal for which Browne's irreverent heirs were largely responsible. They find the sale catalogue to be full of shortcomings, and, like the recovered portions of Cicero's *De re publica* in Browne's *Musaeum Clausum*, 'very little answering the great expectation of it'.<sup>83</sup> Such a perception of the catalogue has been accompanied by the view that the titles contained within it must have significance for Browne, and can illuminate our understanding of Browne's intellectual views and priorities. These readings see the catalogue as sufficient evidence in itself of Browne's priorities and intentions as a book owner. I insist that the sale catalogue

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<sup>83</sup> MC, p. 111, item 13.

must be used in conjunction with other sources to be meaningful, and that a statistical analysis of its contents acts as a counterweight to a reading of the catalogue which otherwise relies on a subjective understanding of Browne as a reader.

David Pearson concludes, on the basis of his analysis of five late seventeenth-century sale catalogues, that ‘we should think of these libraries not so much as mirrors of the particular interests of their owners, but more as platforms or springboards from which their own ideas and perceptions of the world developed’.<sup>84</sup> He neatly expresses the limitations of the sale catalogue as a source. Pearson argues that these limitations are due to the comprehensiveness of personal libraries in the period, which contained books covering a wide range of views, so that ownership of certain titles cannot indicate approval of the ideas within them. I have argued in turn that the contents of sale catalogues like that of the Browne library were also dictated by the commercial development of the British book trade and consequent availability of books to consumers as much as by the readerly tastes of those consumers. But Pearson’s analogy of platform rather than mirror also describes the role of statistical analysis in the process of resurrecting a writer’s reading. A statistical breakdown of the Browne library as manifested in the sale catalogue provides a description of the auctioned library in its entirety, but one which falls short of conclusive statements about Browne’s book acquiring habits, his tastes, and those of his heirs, and the extent of interference with the library as it went to auction. Instead, the results can underpin close critical analysis, and rein in some of the excesses of the subjective use of the catalogue as a source.

Analysis by language, subject and author of the three datasets defined by imprint date shows a movement across fifty years (1661 to 1711) towards a library which is less latinate, less specialised, and more literary. This is accounted for by parallel changes within the British book trade, but there is space for the simultaneous influence of personal causes, as Browne had increasing resources to devote to non-professional reading, as his children and grandchildren exerted their influences on the collection, and as the book market began to offer a greater variety of genres and subjects. The

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<sup>84</sup> Pearson, ‘Patterns of book ownership’, p. 159.

changes in proportions of subject and language as later imprints in the sale catalogue are added are too small to support definitive hypotheses, and conclusions as to their causes must remain contingent. The same must be said for the statistical evidence of salting. The sudden increase of books in French and English printed between 1684 and 1711 raises some suspicions. Subjects that appear to be better represented in the complete 1711 list, compared to the earlier imprints alone — namely politics, geography, art, literature, and conduct books — may also be due to salted books. But the relatively stable proportions of the various subjects show that any salting did not have substantial impact on the character of the library, and there are continuities between the earlier imprints and the complete 1711 list. What I find intriguing about the evidence of salting is that the books which, from an initial subjective reading of the catalogue, I felt likely to be intruders — namely books from the early eighteenth century in French, and on subjects like duelling and courtesy — were not visible statistically. This does not negate the possibility of salting in some quantities, or show that statistics is too blunt an instrument to allow for subtle readings — but it does serve to emphasise that the two methodologies of statistical and subjective interpretations must be mutually supportive. It would be all too easy to overstate the extent of salting through a subjective reading of the sale catalogue, and to fall into the trap of too enthusiastically disassociating particular undesirable titles from the Brownes on that basis. On the other hand, even if the statistical evidence of salting is relatively weak, all of the books must be treated with some suspicion as to their origins. When treating of an individual book in the catalogue, we can no more rely on its having belonged to the Browne family than we can on Thomas Browne's engagement with or approval of it, without supplementary evidence from Browne's own testimony.

The process of describing the library of the 1711 catalogue quantitatively acts against the tendency to over-privilege the catalogue and its contents on their own terms. But statistics flatten out the library, and homogenise its contents by reducing them to figures and categories. The following chapters will further the reconstitution of the *bibliotheca abscondita* by mimicking the tactics adopted by Browne in his imaginative reconstruction of the *Musaeum Clausum* — giving an account of the library's creation

and loss; reassembling its cultural significance within a geographically specific setting; repopulating it with the books and objects that Browne knew; and re-elaborating the taxonomies and relationships that gave its constituent parts encompassing meaning. The statistical breakdown given here reassembles some of the bones, but providing a narrative for the library, accounting for the processes of accumulation, the collection's cost, its use, and its final dispersal as a means of shedding light on the significance of the library to Browne and his family, is the first step to putting flesh on the bones and making them live.



## Chapter 2 - The waters of knowledge: a history of the Browne library

Hi sunt magistri qui nos instruunt sine virgis et ferula, sine verbis et colera, sine pane et pecunia: si accedis non dormiunt, si inquiris non se abscondunt: non remurmurant si oberres, cachinnos nesciunt, si ignores.

This may serue for an inscription or motto in a librarie or studdie of bookes.<sup>1</sup>

The passage above is the only comment I have found — an oblique one — made by Thomas Browne on libraries, and his experience of them. Elsewhere he writes on the value of books and of different practices of reading, but this is the only moment in which he can be heard reflecting on the library as a collection. The extract from Richard de Bury's *Philobiblon* depicts the library as a crowd of benign teachers, generous, forgiving, and accessible. Browne's adoption of it asserts his understanding of the library as the site of conversation with a community of authors epitomised in their books. This positive portrayal of the myriad voices embodied by the library draws upon a tradition of appreciation for variety and open-mindedness in book culture, exemplified in Pliny's argument that there is no book so bad that there is not some good in it.<sup>2</sup> But in his writing on the great mass of titles available to the seventeenth-century book owner, Browne also adopted an opposing tradition, which maintained, with Seneca, that 'the abundance of books is a distraction' and that 'you

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<sup>1</sup> [These are the teachers who instruct us without rod or ferule, without words or anger, without bread and money: if you approach they do not sleep, if you enquire they do not hide themselves away: they do not grumble if you make a mistake, they know no laughter if you are ignorant.] Thomas Browne acquired this Latin excerpt from Richard de Bury's *Philobiblon* via Gabriel Naudé's *Apologie pour tout les grands personages faussement soupçonnez de magie* (1625). BL, Sloane MS 1843, fol. 25r.

<sup>2</sup> This sentiment recurs in the writing of Browne's contemporaries, including Robert Burton, Gabriel Naudé and John Dury. Burton, *The anatomy of melancholy*, ed. by Thomas C. Faulkner et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pt. 2, sect. 2, mem. 4, vol. III, p. 86; Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* (Paris, 1627), translated by John Evelyn, 'Instructions for erecting a library' (London, 1661), p. 20; John Dury, *The reformed librarie-keeper* (London: printed by William Du-Gard, 1650), p. 23.

should always read the standard authors; and when you crave a change, fall back upon those whom you read before'.<sup>3</sup> Browne was concerned with the perpetuation and multiplication of error that comes of reiteration and mistaken understanding. In *Religio Medici* he articulates his suspicions that a self-interested book trade contributes to such error, and declares that he would rather 'condemne to the fire those swarms and millions of *Rhapsodies*, begotten onely to distract and abuse the weaker judgements of Scholars, and to maintaine the Trade and Mystery of Typographers'.<sup>4</sup> His anxiety over the dross of literary culture is a driving principle of *Pseudodoxia*, in Book I of which he outlines the processes by which such perpetuation and multiplication occurs.<sup>5</sup> *Pseudodoxia* demonstrates by example the methods by which error may be cut away, reducing the bookish chatter of Browne's days to a state of learning 'as it lay at the first in a few and solid Authours'.<sup>6</sup> The two classical theoretical positions on book production and reception — which set abundance against quality, and rapacious consumption against thoughtfulness and contemplation — determined the ways in which Browne's peers discussed their book collections.<sup>7</sup> Late seventeenth-century book owners increasingly recognised that the library carried its own cultural and moral meanings, beyond the significance of its component books. In practice, Browne steered a course between these rhetorical stances. Both his reading and his ownership of books were shaped by an epistemological programme in which discrimination and

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<sup>3</sup> Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*, with an English translation by Richard M. Gummere (London: William Heinemann, 1916), letter II, vol. I, pp. 7-9.

<sup>4</sup> RM, I:24, p. 35. It is worth noting that this passage appears in the pirated version of *Religio Medici* of 1642, and is Browne's response to the rupture of civility identified by Preston in the unauthorised publication of Browne's earliest work (Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, pp. 11-17).

<sup>5</sup> PE, I, for instance, ch VI, in which the copying of errors between ancient writers is traced.

<sup>6</sup> RM, I:24, p. 35.

<sup>7</sup> The acquisition of as many books as possible was advertised as a virtue, for instance, in Alice Lucy of Charlecote by the preacher of her funeral sermon, Thomas Dugard: 'No sooner could shee hear of anie pious Book made publicke, but shee endeavored to make it hers, and her self the better for it'. Thomas Dugard, *Death and the grave: or a sermon preached at the funeral of that honorable and virtuous Ladie, the Ladie Alice Lucie, August 17. 1648* (London, 1649). On the other hand, Francis Bacon was clear that only some books were worthy of profound attention: 'Some Bookes are to be Tasted, Others to be Swallowed, and Some Few to be Chewed and Digested: That is, some Bookes are to be reade onely in Parts; Others to be read but not Curiously; And some Few to be read wholly, and with Diligence and Attention'. 'Of studies', in *The essayes or counsels, civill and morall*, ed. by Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 153.

generosity were essential, if the particularity of countless titles was to be both cherished and managed.

Presenting his public persona as a reader and owner of books in his literary works, Browne adopted a posture of humility and ill-preparedness, distancing himself from the intellectual plenty that libraries can supply. The most well-known instance is his defensive protestation in the preface to *Religio Medici* that it was composed when he had no access to good books.<sup>8</sup> Browne also drew attention to the lack of time he had to dedicate to his studies, snatching time ‘as medical vacations, and the fruitlesse Importunity of Uroscopy would permit us’.<sup>9</sup> His descriptions of nightly labour in the burnt oil of the preface to *Pseudodoxia* and the midnight conclusion to *The Garden of Cyrus* contribute to a scholarly persona which is under pressure, working in short bursts, and making do. His less public self-image is not as hurried, however, and he describes himself to his son Edward as a thorough and thirsty reader: ‘I take little pleasure to drinck of the waters of knowledge, *instar canis ad Nilum*, in the proverb, a Lick and away, if I can help it.’<sup>10</sup> Late in his life, Browne and his daughter Elizabeth spent their evenings working through a list of substantial folio histories together.<sup>11</sup> Browne’s letters and notes for his children show dedication to daily study as a means of developing and maintaining the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood, and grain from chaff (as with the questions he set for Edward ‘whereof you may single out one daylie to discourse upon it’).<sup>12</sup> Whilst publicly describing himself on the back foot as a reader and owner of a library, his private papers show Browne committed to his books and to sharing them with his kin.

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<sup>8</sup> RM, epistle, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> PE, epistle, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> TB to EB, 18 Jul 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 126.

<sup>11</sup> This list survives in Elizabeth Lyttelton's transcription in the volume known as the ‘Lyttelton Miscellany’, Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 8460, pp. 44-45. It was published by Keynes in *The commonplace book of Elizabeth Lyttelton, daughter of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1919).

<sup>12</sup> BL, Sloane MS 1869, fol. 51v, cited by Antonia Moon, “‘A fresh reading of books’: some note-taking practices of Thomas Browne’ in *‘A man very well studyed’: new contexts for Thomas Browne*, ed. Murphy and Todd, pp. 67-85 (p. 77). I discuss the sociable and shared aspects of Browne’s reading further in chapter 3.

This chapter describes Browne's practice as the owner of a collection of books by attempting a history of the library that bears his name. Whilst chapter 3 will shed light on the conversational library of community in the setting of Browne's social milieu in Norfolk, and chapter 4 will address Browne's behaviour as a reader responding to specific titles, this chapter focuses its attention on his relationship with books as material objects and his disposition towards his personal collection. The history of such a collection is in the first instance a linear narrative, tracing the library as a body from its acquisition through to its dispersal, from early modern bookshops to surviving bibliographical remains in modern institutions. But it also encompasses what library science calls the life cycle of the collection — the flow of individual books through the body of the library, as each one is bought, presented, shelved, read, damaged, lost, given away or sold on — and sometimes returned. The movement of books in and out of the corpus of the collection is complex, not contained by a straightforward narrative of an always accumulating juggernaut library. So, whilst the structure of the chapter follows a linear account of the library from acquisition to dispersal, it also describes the more haphazard movement of the books that came within Browne's sphere. As so often in this dissertation, the argument wrestles with the fraught relationship between the general category — here, the library — and the particular instances — the books. It is not always easy or appropriate to designate an individual title as being 'in' or 'out' of the library: Browne's notion of possession was too fluid. The relationships between Browne and his books were specific, rather than uniform, as his degree of interest or engagement in them varied. And the physical boundaries of the library itself were indeterminate, as the collection penetrated the household and the spaces beyond.

To capture something of the shape of this restless mass, the chapter's sources broaden from the 1711 sale catalogue to include the testimony of Browne family correspondence and journals, and Thomas Browne's own writings. These shed light on the ways in which Browne chose, sourced, and paid for books, how he stored them, shared them, and disposed of them over the course of his life, and their fate after his death. Looking at the choices Browne made in respect of his library brings us back to

conjectures raised in chapter 1 regarding the varying roles that books occupied in his life. The possibilities of donations, of restricted availability of certain books on the market, of possession of books for purposes other than ‘serious’ reading (such as religious contemplation, repeated or superficial reading of literature, or as material emblems of social status) nuance our interpretation of the catalogue and its presentation of Browne as a reader. The history of the library describes a careful and deliberate book owner, who bought books out of a sincere intention to use them, rather than through impulse, profligacy, an eye to the civilising social advantages of library ownership, or a collector’s drive to completeness. We find in Browne’s book owning a man who thought very highly of his books and their usefulness, but had very little consciousness of their worth as a collection, either to himself or to posterity.

The long view of the Browne library presented here also stands as a corrective to the narrative offered by Finch, which is incomplete, overstating the equivalence of the 1711 catalogue with the library Browne knew and assuming the uncomplicated reflection of Browne’s mental processes in its contents. Despite its faults, Finch’s assessment has been influential, and deserves to be examined at length. Consequently, this chapter will return to the problems of the use of the sale catalogue as evidence for Browne’s reading discussed in chapter 1. Presenting a narrative history of the library shows a collection that was subject to the significant contributions of other book owners within Browne’s family, as well as to depredations after Browne’s death. In other words, I emphasise that the catalogue is incomplete and, if one is looking for a mirror of Browne’s own reading, severely compromised. The argument below cautions against the superimposition of bibliographical and biographical narratives, and argues that whilst they may run parallel to each other, such narratives can only inform each other when sufficient evidence permits it. Thus, a subjective reading of Browne’s literary works cannot be used to interpret the relative importance to Browne the reader of titles in the catalogue, nor can titles in the catalogue be associated with particular periods of Browne’s life without support from external evidence. Being mindful of the nature of the catalogue as a product of commercial rather than bibliographical intentions is necessary to avoid over-enthusiastic identification and interpretation of apparent presences and absences of

titles from 1711. By coming to terms with the catalogue, and cutting away overzealous interpretations to consider the few and solid voices surviving in family correspondence and biographical testimony, we can feel our way towards a library that Browne would have recognised.

#### *Sources of acquisition*

Browne's immediate access to books for purchase was exceptionally good. Seventeenth-century Norwich had the most flourishing book trade of any British city outside London, and with the bulk of the book dealers and printers being based in the parish of St Peter Mancroft, which included the marketplace and Browne's home from 1650 until his death, he would have passed booksellers whenever he left his front door.<sup>13</sup> Browne's letters to Edward show how familiar the local booksellers were with him and his interests.<sup>14</sup> Two letters to Browne from a Norwich bookseller survive, describing the collaboration and trust existing between Browne and William Oliver. Browne received unsolicited volumes from Oliver on approval, and he was able to return books he had purchased or paid a deposit for when he was finished with them (as Oliver notes: 'Cave and Boyle I recd without injury therefore returned your kindness by your servant').<sup>15</sup> There would also have been less formal local opportunities for buying books, judging from similar examples of book ownership in the provinces. We know from Samuel Jeake's correspondence that his circle around Rye in Kent were dealing directly with each other and purchasing books from regular local auction sales of personal possessions, as did the yeoman book owners in Westmorland studied by Mark Purcell.<sup>16</sup> Comparable exchanges in Norfolk may

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<sup>13</sup> David Stoker, 'The Norwich book trades before 1800 — a biographical directory', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 8 (1981), pp. 79-125 (p. 89), and Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 262.

<sup>14</sup> 'This week a bookseller of this towne sent mee some newe bookes to vewe, among which was a Historie of Aethiopia, set out by one Ludolphus and translated into English, & now published in a thinne folio with some cutts in it'; TB to EB, 8 May 1682, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 223.

<sup>15</sup> Account of books offered for purchase to TB by William Oliver, Norwich bookseller, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 386-9; letter from William Oliver bound in Sloane MS 1843, fol. 39r.

<sup>16</sup> Mandelbrote, 'Personal owners of books', p. 183, and Mark Purcell, 'Books and readers in eighteenth-century Westmorland: the Brownes of Townend', *Library History*, 17 (2001), pp. 91-206.

account for the set of books now at the British Library (having been purchased at the auction of the Browne library by Sir Hans Sloane) which had belonged to Timothy Burrage, tutor in the household of Sir Nicholas Bacon of Gillingham.<sup>17</sup> Browne's book collecting was informed by a thorough knowledge of the current publishing scene, and he sourced particular purchases via the London booksellers, either through Edward, the Norwich book dealers or 'by the carts'.<sup>18</sup> In 1680 he was keeping up to date by making use of Robert Clavell's most recent cumulated summary bibliography of new English publications, a new tool which was the first systematic attempt to survey English publishing and arrange it by subject and format.<sup>19</sup> The Norwich booksellers gave access to London's book trade, which in turn provided titles from the Continental market. Browne instructed Edward whilst travelling in the Netherlands to 'buy no bookes but what are small and portable if any, for by London wee can send for such bookes as those parts afford'.<sup>20</sup> Despite this injunction, both of Browne's sons contributed to the library whilst abroad. Boxes and books were sent between Tom and his father between Yarmouth and La Rochelle during Tom's visit to France in 1660-1661, and Edward lists a number of books sent to Browne from Vienna.<sup>21</sup>

Browne's library also increased through donation, which is documented either through the survival of the copy in question, or in Browne's correspondence. Amongst the first category, the only copy known to have survived is John Evelyn's *Sculptura* (1662), with a dedicatory inscription to Browne, now at the Morgan

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<sup>17</sup> Sir Hans Sloane's purchase of Browne books and Timothy Burrage's connection to Browne are in more depth below, and in chapter three.

<sup>18</sup> A phrase frequently used by Browne in his letters to Edward, for instance in TB to EB, 14 Jan 1619/80, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 148.

<sup>19</sup> 'I find in the new catalogue of bookes sett out by Clavell, Theophyli Benoti's *Sepulchretum, or Anatomia practica*, and I have heard something of it before; it may probably bee a considerable work and concerne you to looke into it'. TB to EB, 4 Mar 1680/1, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 186.

<sup>20</sup> TB to EB, 22 Sep 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> For instance, TB to Thomas Browne, Jr, 4 Jan 1661, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 14; Edward's record of books sent to Norwich from Vienna include 'The Emperours comedy on his marriage [...] / A French manuscript being a Panegyrique of Women very odde / Chronica Hungarica. And the Voyage of Signr [sic] Ludovico of Fiume', BL, Sloane MS 1911, fol. 44r.

Library.<sup>22</sup> From Browne's correspondence we know that Henry Power contributed to the collection '3 old Spanish bookes I have found of my fathers', which are almost certainly among the sixteenth-century Spanish titles listed in the sale catalogue.<sup>23</sup> The alchemical manuscripts donated (or possibly bequeathed) by Browne's Norwich friend Arthur Dee were rare and highly sought-after, and became a defining element of Browne's collection.<sup>24</sup> In 1662, William Dugdale sent Browne a copy of 'that worke, whereunto you have been pleased to favour me with so considerable assistance' — his *History of Imbanking and Draining*.<sup>25</sup> In 1668 Browne sent his thanks to Christopher Merrett for a copy of his translation of Neri's *The art of glass*, published six years earlier, and in 1674 he wrote to Elias Ashmole with thanks for the present of 'your most excellent booke', which, Geoffrey Keynes suggests, is the copy of *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* which survived to be sold in 1711.<sup>26</sup> Even further afield, Edward acted as an agent, accepting gifts from Petrus Lambecius in Vienna and (possibly) Pierre Petit in Paris on Browne's behalf.<sup>27</sup> Browne's participation in the civil exchanges of books, artefacts and specimens between like-minded 'ingenuous' readers is explored more comprehensively in chapter 3, but here it should be recognised that Browne did acquire books as gifts, and that his relationships with such titles would be altered by the manner of their acquisition, sometimes endowing the contents with particular relevance, and sometimes giving the material gift a significance that has little to do with its intellectual character. Our interpretation of such donations in terms of Browne's reading needs to be attentive to the nuanced degrees of engagement that different forms of book ownership imply.

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<sup>22</sup> Cited by Finch, *Catalogue*, p. 19. John Evelyn, *Sculptura, or, The history and art of chalcography and engraving in copper* (London : printed by J.C. for G. Beedle and T. Collins, 1662), Pierpont Morgan Library, Printed books, W.03.B.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Power to TB, 10 Feb 1647/8, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 258.

<sup>24</sup> TB to Elias Ashmole, 25 Jan 1657/8, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 294.

<sup>25</sup> William Dugdale to TB, 5 Apr 1662, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 326.

<sup>26</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 24 Dec 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 351, and TB to Elias Ashmole, 8 Oct 1674, p. 298. A copy of the 1652 edition of *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* is in the catalogue at SC 47/56.

<sup>27</sup> Edward Browne, *A brief account of some travels in divers parts of Europe* (London: printed for Benjamin Tooke, 1687), p. 141; EB to TB, 30 Sep 1665, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 113.



The history of Browne's acquisition of a library must remain uncertain, the proofs for acquisition being fugitive and insubstantial. Browne stated in the preface to the authorised first edition of *Religio Medici* that he 'had not the advantage of any good booke' when he initially composed it in the 1630s, which, if taken at face value, implies that Browne did not start gathering books in a serious way until he was settled in Norwich.<sup>28</sup> But Browne's declaration, made in the preface to a work which was subject to revisions between its first composition and its arrival in print, is made with an eye to his audience, and cannot be taken too literally.<sup>29</sup> Browne's early career offers a web of paths for books into and out of his hands. He may have inherited books from his father, Thomas, who had been a Mercer in the City of London until his death in 1613.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the estate was mishandled by Browne's mother and stepfather, and such books as there were could have been dispersed in the aftermath. Browne could have acquired books whilst a student at Winchester and Oxford, which might have been sold on or recycled. He could also have stored books with family or friends during his Continental travels in the early 1630s; and if he did so, these might either have been held by them during his sojourn in Halifax and only returned to him when he settled in Norwich in 1637, or quietly mingled with their own books, wholly or in part. If no library was stored for Browne during his medical training, then all the books he read that were printed before 1637 must have been bought or given to him secondhand. An astonishing rate of acquisition in the decade between Browne's arrival in Norwich in 1637 and the publication of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* in 1646 would be necessary in such a scenario, given the number of texts that support *Pseudodoxia*.<sup>31</sup> But, in light of the absence in Browne of a strong sense of collecting which might have initiated a determined programme of buying at a particular moment, it is useful to

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<sup>28</sup> RM, epistle, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Barbour summarises these alterations in *Sir Thomas Browne*, pp. 276-278.

<sup>30</sup> Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Robin Robbins calculated from internal textual evidence that 'about 210 volumes in folio, 120 in quarto, and 120 in smaller formats, were used for the first edition'. Robbins tends to believe that Browne only acquired books after he settled in Norwich since 'he would hardly have been able to accommodate the substantial library needed for the compilation of *Pseudodoxia*' until that point. Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, p. xxii, and note.

take account of the indistinct and multiple routes books could take in and out of Browne's possession in the early decades of his life.

Analysis of Browne's published works shows that Browne was able to lay his hands on recently published works, even from the Continent, with some alacrity. Robbins identifies a string of titles that Browne was able to read and incorporate into the rapidly succeeding editions of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, including (for the two years preceding the 1650 edition) Helmont's *Ortus medicinae*, Aldrovandi's *Musaeum metallicum*, Bainbridge's *Canicularia*, and Gassendi's *Epicuri philosophia*.<sup>32</sup> Claire Preston has noted that Browne adopted neologisms within a year of their first printed use.<sup>33</sup> Browne need not necessarily have bought these books but accessed them by other methods (and only two of the four titles cited by Robbins for 1648 and 1649 appear in their first editions in the sale catalogue).<sup>34</sup> Anecdotal evidence from Browne's correspondence to his son Edward shows him in the act of purchasing books still damp from the press. Admittedly he would have had a special reason for acquiring Nehemiah Grewe's *Musaeum Regalis Societatis* as soon as it was published in 1681, since, as he reports to Edward, 'I perceave you are often mentioned'.<sup>35</sup> But he had, for instance, Paul Rycaut's *History of the Turkish Empire* (1679) within a year of its printing, and several times sent recent publications on to Edward in London.<sup>36</sup> That Browne chose to tell Edward of his acquisitions of new titles may indicate that such occasions were remarkable rather than routine. The distribution of imprint dates in the sale catalogue analysed in chapter 1 gave no definitive proof that the books' imprint dates and their acquisition dates were coterminous. So whilst we can argue that Browne was fully engaged with the print culture around him, the promptness with which he purchased new prints cannot be assumed as a standard.

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<sup>32</sup> Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, pp. xxv-xxvi. Further examples were identified by T.M. Westfall, and are cited in chapter 4.

<sup>33</sup> Claire Preston, "Meer nomenclature" and the description of order in *The garden of Cyrus*, *Renaissance studies*, 28:2 (2014), pp. 301-302.

<sup>34</sup> Aldrovandi's *Musaeum metallicum*, SC 18/24, and Gassendi's *Epicuri philosophia*, SC 19/95. Such evidence is discussed at more length in chapter 4.

<sup>35</sup> TB to EB, Jun 1681, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 194.

<sup>36</sup> TB to EB, 24 Nov 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 139-140.

Browne's choices as a consumer were circumscribed by limited availability, the result of conditions within the book trade that, as I argued in chapter 1, had a defining effect on the contents of contemporary libraries. These limitations complicate the connection between the imprint of a title and its purchase by Browne, and make it more likely that Browne relied on other sources for reading, rather than buying everything of interest for himself. Those books which in our retrospective view of intellectual history are the most significant were not always printed in large numbers. Scott Mandelbrote has found evidence in Isaac Newton's notebooks of the extended periods — sometimes decades — it might take before Newton found an opportunity to acquire a particular title.<sup>37</sup> James Raven notes that the cost of secondhand copies of popular books escalated dramatically where demand outstripped supply, so that successful titles could be very difficult to acquire.<sup>38</sup> Browne may have been exceptionally successful at hunting down rare titles, and it has been pointed out by Robbins and Cawley that many of his sources are those which were difficult for most English readers to access, because of their price, their scarcity, or their language.<sup>39</sup> But the sheer amount of detective work required in the seventeenth century to track down rarer titles needs to be borne in mind, particularly when considering the apparent absences in the 1711 catalogue.

*'What opinion have men of it, or what is the price?': the worth of the Browne library*<sup>40</sup>

Modern readers seldom like to see books, or collections of books, assessed by their financial worth. Culturally we perceive them to be more significant than the cost of their composite materials, than the price we originally paid or might hope to sell them on for. Our books can have worth individually through their intellectual contents (meeting professional, artistic, scientific and spiritual needs), and they may also have

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<sup>37</sup> Scott Mandelbrote, 'Isaac Newton, his library, and the history of scholarship', paper given to the Bibliographical Society, 20 Jan 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Raven, *Business of books*, p. 51. As noted in the introduction, the shortcomings of the book trade have also been noted by Scott-Warren, 'News, sociability, and bookbuying', p. 385.

<sup>39</sup> Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, p. xxxviii; Cawley, 'Sir Thomas Browne and his reading', p. 436.

<sup>40</sup> TB to EB, 4 Mar 1680/1, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 186.

worth collectively, as the manifestation of an identity that grounds us in our cultural and social milieu and that drives performative consumption. David McKitterick argues that the prices seventeenth-century consumers paid for books need to be assessed in conjunction with spending on other goods, since customers' decisions to spend on books, or clothes, or horses, or visits to the theatre, reflect social and family needs and expectations, and personal preferences, as well as monetary considerations.<sup>41</sup> The economic terms of Browne's book acquisition — what proportion of his income he devoted to books, the worth of the library collection as an asset, the ease with which he parted from his money for books — provide another perspective on the bibliographical evidence available for Browne's relationships with his books. We find Browne putting together a costly library, but also deliberating over decisions to buy books, never slipping into profligacy or indiscriminate enthusiasm. He shows the caution of a man who knows the worth of money, but also the value of good books. The spirit in which Browne reads is nuanced by such serious-minded book buying, in which he is aware of the sacrifices of comfort that he and other members of his household must make to pay for his books.

A book's worth fluctuates greatly at particular moments in its life, which complicates attempts to establish the value of a collection. Its production cost, its retail worth in a new and unbound state, its binding, its worth upon purchase secondhand, its worth as a chattel and as part of an estate, all reflect very different economic needs. As David McKitterick points out, early attempts to devise a system to estimate the retail prices of books (particularly those of F.R. Johnson and H.S. Bennett) were based on sources which expressed the cost of the book's production, rather than its retail price, which responded to the market.<sup>42</sup> Inventory valuations mislead as a representation of retail price, since they record the value of book collections to the estate; substantially lower than market value and sometimes no more than the worth of the paper as scrap. Prices as recorded in seventeenth-century sale catalogues and book lists are skewed by the retail cost of bindings, which vary significantly with the quality of the materials

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<sup>41</sup> David McKitterick, "Ovid with a Littleton": the cost of English books in the early seventeenth century', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 11:2 (1997), pp. 184-234 (p. 188).

<sup>42</sup> McKitterick, "Ovid with a Littleton", pp. 186-7.

and the use of gilding.<sup>43</sup> Luxury goatskin bindings with gilt work are included by Ballard's cataloguers in the descriptions of lots in the 1711 catalogue, as 'corio turcico & deaurato'.<sup>44</sup>

Two recent studies looking at the retail cost of printed books rely on the accounts kept by individuals who, by happy chance, both lived in Norfolk. McKitterick's study of John Buxton's expenditure in the 1620s and 30s shows Buxton usually spending around a shilling on each book, often bought upon publication via his London book dealer rather than in Norwich or secondhand.<sup>45</sup> Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths's extensive study of the account books of Alice L'Estrange at Hunstanton Hall note that the L'Estranges' expenditure on books is most often between a shilling and a pound per title, although, unsurprisingly, the cost of small publications like almanacs can be as low as 2d.<sup>46</sup> A bill from William Oliver is the only record of purchases of books by Browne to survive, and gives retail prices for eight books that agree with this range (although Peter Heylyn's *Cosmography* was purchased for the higher price of £1 4s).<sup>47</sup> If we take the low estimate that half the titles in the sale catalogue were bought by Browne for his library in Norwich (rather than purchased by Edward and kept in London), leaving 1225 titles, this gives a retail worth between £600 and £1200.<sup>48</sup> We can, I think, safely assume that the cost was closer to the higher sum. Sir Edward Dering, with a library of over 2000 books and a thorough familiarity with the book trade, declared in a parliamentary speech that 'Six hundred pound is but a mean expence in books, and will advance but a moderate Library ... I speak it not

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<sup>43</sup> McKitterick, "Ovid with a Littleton", pp. 186-7.

<sup>44</sup> There are only three examples: SC 5/20, SC 16.1/145, and SC 16.1/163.

<sup>45</sup> McKitterick, "Ovid with a Littleton", p. 210.

<sup>46</sup> Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption and gender in the early seventeenth century household: the world of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 199.

<sup>47</sup> William Oliver to TB, 27 May 1671, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 386. Heylyn's *Cosmographia* (London, 1670) is described by Oliver as 'Heylins Geography fol.'. A copy appears in the sale catalogue as SC 44/10.

<sup>48</sup> This is estimating a cost between 10s. and £1 for a book. Given the high number of folios and illustrated books in the collection, I believe it is valid to work with a narrower and higher range of average prices for Browne's books.

unknowingly'.<sup>49</sup> The high proportion of Continental books in the 1711 catalogue, commented on in chapter 1, would have added to the cost of assembling it since they were amongst the most expensive.<sup>50</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that Browne's far from moderate library cost him between £1000 and £1200. The library of Hamon L'Estrange was worth a comparable sum at his death in 1654.<sup>51</sup>

Given Browne's more precarious financial position it is the more noteworthy that he diverted his resources towards a library that could equal that of his gentry neighbours. Browne's circumstances were very different from those of his friend Sir Hamon as an aristocratic landowner (albeit one whose estates had been devastated by Civil War sequestrations). The L'Estranges had an income of over £2000 per annum in the 1620s, whilst John Buxton received £1085 6s 4d in 1629-1630 (admittedly, for him, an exceptionally good year).<sup>52</sup> The biography that prefaces the *Posthumous Works* of 1712 notes that Browne inherited a large fortune from his father, although we know that this fortune was considerably diminished by the actions of his mother and stepfather.<sup>53</sup> When he reached the age of twenty-one, he presented himself to the Court of Aldermen and declared himself satisfied that the terms of his father's will had been fulfilled, his uncle Edward Browne having stood bond for £500.<sup>54</sup> The availability of this money made possible his travels on the Continent and his further medical education, and would have funded purchases of books he might have made whilst abroad, if any. His medical training and foreign travel took up a great deal of

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<sup>49</sup> Sir Edward Dering, *A collection of speeches made by Sir Edward Dering knight and baronet, in matter of religion* (London, 1642), cited in 'Sir Edward Dering' by Nati H. Krivatsky and Laetitia Yeandle, in *Private libraries in Renaissance England: a collection and catalogue of Tudor and early Stuart book-lists*, ed. by R.J. Fehrenbach and E.S. Leedham-Green (New York & Marlborough: Adam Matthew Publications, 1992), vol. I, pp. 137-269 (p. 145).

<sup>50</sup> Raven, *The business of books*, p. 51.

<sup>51</sup> Whittle and Griffiths, *Consumption and gender*, p. 198.

<sup>52</sup> Whittle and Griffiths, *Consumption and gender*, p. 1; McKitterick, "Ovid with a Littleton", p. 193.

<sup>53</sup> 'The life of Sir Thomas Browne, Kt' in Thomas Browne, *Posthumous works of the learned Sir Thomas Browne, Kt, M.D. late of Norwich* (London, 1712), p. 1, and Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 33.

<sup>54</sup> Repertory of the Court of Aldermen, 19 Nov 1629, London Metropolitan Archives, COL/CA/01/01/44, fol. 20v and 21r.

his inheritance. Whitefoot reports in his minutes that he ‘left no great estate [...] having spent the greater Part of his Patrimony in his Travels’.<sup>55</sup> We have little firm evidence of his earnings as a physician, but his income during his years practising in Norwich must have been comfortable. He had a substantial clientele amongst prominent Norfolk families, and we know from his letters that he was constantly busy with the importunities of uroscopy, which enabled him to purchase a large house in the fashionable parish of St Peter Mancroft.<sup>56</sup> Rosemary O’Day has found examples of physicians making £300 per annum in Oxford in the 1660s, and £400 in Dublin in the 1650s, a more than adequate income — especially when compared with those of clergymen, who by the end of the eighteenth century still only had an average annual income of £275 in England.<sup>57</sup>

In spite of this apparently satisfactory financial position, Browne was anxious about expenditure and prodigality. Repeated recommendations to be provident scatter his correspondence with his eldest son Edward (‘Now is your time to bee frugal & lay up’), and in 1680 he alludes to his own experiences: ‘I thought myself rich enough till my children grew up’.<sup>58</sup> Whilst being clear that he expects Edward to be able to make £1000 a year as a physician in London, he warns ‘When you putt out your money bee well assured of the assurance & bee wise therein from what your father hath suffered’, presumably referring to an earlier loss through unlucky investment.<sup>59</sup> All this suggests that Browne was a thoughtful spender, and not inclined to fritter away his hard-earned but generous income. His caution can be seen in the list of suggested titles for purchase sent him by William Oliver, which he annotates with the remark ‘What is the price of Sandersons sermons’; and in his occasional enquiries to Edward

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<sup>55</sup> Whitefoot, ‘Some minutes’, p. xxxvi.

<sup>56</sup> For Browne’s relationship with his more well-to-do clients in the early period of his life in Norwich, see Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, pp. 265-269.

<sup>57</sup> Rosemary O’Day, *The professions in early modern England, 1450-1800: servants of the commonweal* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp. 243, 102.

<sup>58</sup> TB to EB, 22 Aug 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 156.

<sup>59</sup> TB to EB, 22 Aug 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 156.

on book prices in London.<sup>60</sup> Browne gave much attention to weighing up the relative merits of a new publication against its expense (as with Dr Morison's herbal, which 'I shall not persuade you to buy of 5 pounds price...' because the work was insufficiently 'criticall in the botanicks, especially in the nomenclature and distinction of vegetables').<sup>61</sup> Such caution presumably accounts for Cawley's claim that 'he was forever complaining about the costliness of books — and forever buying them'.<sup>62</sup> But Browne only seems to cavil at the expense when he feels that the quality of the publication falls short of the asking price, and when he judges a book to be fit for his needs, he is willing to pay. Cawley himself notes that 'He owned four volumes of Moses Pitt's *New English Atlas*, one of the most expensive books at the time', and his only complaint seems to be at the cost of binding such large and cumbersome sheets: 'Sir Jacob Astley had the first volume & the binding came unto twentie 2 shillings'.<sup>63</sup> Browne was willing to invest in the cost of producing expensive books through subscription, as for Nehemiah Grewe's *Anatomy of plants* (London, 1682).<sup>64</sup> The library described in the 1711 catalogue (with a high proportion of foreign imprints) suggests considerable expense. The Pitt *Atlas* is just one of a high number of illustrated books, nearly a tenth of the 1711 catalogue. Over a quarter of the books were in folio format. Some of these, such as the heavily illustrated anatomical studies, emblem books, atlases, and natural history, would have been very costly. The presence of such expensive publications in the context of Browne's cautious habits as a consumer demonstrate his commitment to his library, focused towards his professional and scholarly interests.

Browne's habits of discrimination when he made his choices as a consumer of books, or as an advisor in his son's purchases, illustrate his priorities as their owner and

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<sup>60</sup> William Oliver to TB, 27 May 1671, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 387, and, for instance, TB to EB, 4 Mar 1680/1, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 186.

<sup>61</sup> TB to EB, 6 Jun 1681, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 193. Browne refers to Robert Morison's *Plantarum historia universalis Oxoniensis. Pars II* (Oxford, 1680).

<sup>62</sup> Cawley, 'Sir Thomas Browne and his reading', n. 63.

<sup>63</sup> Cawley, 'Sir Thomas Browne and his reading', n. 63. TB to EB, 29 Nov 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 171-172.

<sup>64</sup> TB to EB, March 1682, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 219.



reader. His judgement of Robert Morison's *Plantarum historia universalis*, mentioned above, focuses on the intellectual usefulness of its content and the extent to which it contributes to the scholarly community's existing store of knowledge. Browne's assessment of the first volume of Pitt's atlas is that 'tis a fayre impression, & there are good discourses concerning the severall countries', and he is pleased to hear later that Edward has also subscribed for the volumes, since it 'may prove a usefull peece and a noble sett of volumes'.<sup>65</sup> But in Browne's articulation of his sense of the worth of books, their intellectual merits are not expressed in terms simply of verity or accuracy. When he asks Edward, in relation to Bonet's *Sepulchretum, sive Anatomia Practica*, 'What opinion have men of it, or what is the price?', he shows that his judgement of a book is not made in isolation, but responds to a recognition of its merits by a social group of ingenious gentlemen.<sup>66</sup> Pitt's atlas is, for Browne, not just useful but 'noble', an emblem of the achievements of a contemporary scholarship in which social and scientific authority are combined. Subscription to and possession of the atlas volumes confirm Thomas and Edward's position within the cultural and social milieu that produced it. Browne's assessment of books also shows his perception of their literary or moral value, for instance describing Drayton's *Polyolbion* as 'a prettie booke [...] in smooth verse', and encouraging Edward's reading of Martial since 'there is much witt & good expressions therein'.<sup>67</sup> His description of Rycaut's *History of the Turkish Empire*, as 'not unpleasant unto yourself when you have the time', confirms Browne's appreciation of reading as a fruitful pastime.<sup>68</sup> Browne's estimation of the value of books shows him as engaged in different modes of reading — modes which will be teased out in chapter 4. His evaluation of particular titles in response to other men's judgements is indicative of his involvement in the communal reception of new publications.

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<sup>65</sup> TB to EB, 29 Nov 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 171; TB to EB, 6 Jun 1681, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 193.

<sup>66</sup> TB to EB, 4 Mar 1680/1, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 186.

<sup>67</sup> TB to EB, Jun 1681, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 195; TB to EB, 24 Feb 1678/9, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 94.

<sup>68</sup> TB to EB, 24 Nov 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 140.

I touched on the possibility of Browne's interest in the physical and bibliographical characteristics of his books in chapter 1, arguing that his possession of the incunables listed in the sale catalogue was the result of philological interest rather than an appreciation of their significance for the history of the printed book. But according to the sale catalogue and the catalogue of manuscripts belonging to the Browne library made by Richard Rawlinson, he did own books which were exceptional due to their age or their richness of their material. The three lots described in the sale catalogue as possessing fine bindings — two copies of the Bible, and one of Zacharie de Lisieux's satirical novel *Gyges Gallus* — show that at least some books were lavishly presented. The catalogue includes some 'ancient' books of curious appeal, including the herbal and the 'Legenda aurea, or Lives of the Saints', both described in the sale catalogue as printed in 'old character'.<sup>69</sup> The library's manuscript holdings, as known to us through Rawlinson's catalogue, are a mixture of alchemical treatises, 'chirurgical and physical receipts', literature and travel writing.<sup>70</sup> The bulk of the non-print material listed by Rawlinson must have been valued by the Brownes for its unique content, but there are some items, such as the copy of *Eikon Basilike* 'Vers. Lat. neatly written', the 'poetical paraphrase on the VII Penitential Psalms, finely written upon vellum', the volume of 'very ancient MS. (poetry) upon vellum, finely illuminated' and a copy of the Qu'ran 'on persian paper, pointed and ruled with gold'), which speak of an appreciation of the curious, beautiful and ancient.<sup>71</sup> The religious nature of these finer manuscripts also hint at a form of contemplative religious reading that encompassed veneration of the text's physical manifestation, to which eye and hand responded with pleasure. The richness of these books may not have been of consequence to Browne. After all, it is Rawlinson who draws attention to such lavishness in his inventory. The attribution of such contemplative reading to Browne can only be speculative. But we

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<sup>69</sup> SC 44/38 and SC 44/6. Finch identifies the copy of the Golden Legend as being that translated by Caxton and printed by Wynkyn de Worde, but it could be a later, less prized edition.

<sup>70</sup> Bodleian Library, MS Rawl D 390, ff. 73-76, published in Thomas Browne, *Sir Thomas Browne's works*, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. IV, pp. 466-476.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Browne, *Sir Thomas Browne's works*, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. IV, nos. 1 (BL, Sloane MS 1825), 11 (Sloane MS 1853), 23 (Sloane MS 1907), and 7 (not identified at the British Library).

can know that the material aspects of Browne's book collection were far from bland and impoverished, and may reflect another aspect of his reading practice.

*'Indifferently arranged pell-mesle': storage and arrangement of the library*<sup>72</sup>

As the numbers of books in personal libraries proliferated, English book owners were increasingly conscious of the desirability of tactics for creating order and unity amongst their holdings, both to aid the retrieval of information and to present themselves as responsible readers. Collections of books could be made to embody wealth, authority, moral rectitude, intellectual and religious loyalties through taxonomical arrangement, physical presentation (including bindings and ownership marks) and architectural setting.<sup>73</sup> Ideals of physical order, classified universality, accessibility through good care, and self-expression through book ownership which had their roots in the Renaissance were codified by John Evelyn in his translation of Gabriel Naudé's *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, and were articulated in the care the Restoration gentry took over their libraries. Browne cared for the individual books he owned, but was less beguiled by that concept of 'the library' which Evelyn and his contemporaries found so fruitful. He had little interest in marking his books as his own using bookplates, bindings, or inscriptions. As I argue in chapter 6, the organisation of his books on their shelves was pragmatic and inconsistent, rather than schematic and complete. Browne's books seem to have been stored throughout the spaces of his house, rather than being gathered into a single, contained architectural set-piece. In Browne's approach to the management and storage of the physical books in his care, one can see a very different sort of book owner from the ideal depicted by Evelyn and Naudé.

In contrast with many of his fellow scholars, Browne appears never to have marked his books. Copies of books from the libraries of Hooke, Ashmole, Evelyn, Pepys, Newton, and dozens of their contemporaries survive in institutional libraries, recognised

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<sup>72</sup> Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, trans. Evelyn, p. 80.

<sup>73</sup> I discussed the collection as a conscious apparatus of social and cultural identity through its architectural setting in Lucy Gwynn, 'The architecture of the English domestic library, 1600-1700', *Library and Information History*, 26 (2010), pp. 57-70.

through bindings, annotations, ownership inscriptions, and pressmarks.<sup>74</sup> But no volume, except for those presentation copies inscribed by their donor, and the copy of Leland's *Cyanea Cantio* which bears Browne's autograph, can be identified as having belonged to Thomas Browne.<sup>75</sup> Exempla of Browne's own works with autograph corrections survive in some fifteen copies, though there can be no certainty that Browne owned any of these even if they passed through his hands on their way to other readers.<sup>76</sup> Geoffrey Keynes found (and purchased) a copy of Madame de Scudéry's *Clelia* bearing two ownership inscriptions by Browne's grandson Tomey, and a copy of an anonymous pamphlet with a signature ascribed (possibly by a hopeful bookseller) to a juvenile Sir Thomas.<sup>77</sup> Simon Wilkin added his opinion of this association in pencil ('Sr Thos Browne never wrote such a signature in his life') and Keynes thought so little of it that he omitted it from his bibliography of Browne.<sup>78</sup> Of the three dozen books I identified in the British Library as having been bought by Sir Hans Sloane at the 1711 auction of the Browne library, not one contained any indication of provenance, of annotation, or of a systematic shelving arrangement that predated Sloane's. Ownership markings are primarily a measure of security, to prevent loss or theft; their absence suggests a looseness in Browne's sense of ownership which regarded the possibilities of sharing and gifting books to be more important than an acquisitive protection of them.<sup>79</sup> He also eschewed such outward symbols of ownership as armorial bindings or bookplates which transformed books into consumer objects that bolstered their owner's social and scholarly reputation.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> See bibliography for examples of studies based on such evidence.

<sup>75</sup> The Evelyn gift of *Sculptura* mentioned above is an example of such a presentation copy. Leland's work is now at Cambridge University Library, Keynes.C.3.1.

<sup>76</sup> These are listed by Peter Beal, 'Introduction: Sir Thomas Browne', accessed online.

<sup>77</sup> M. de Scudéry, *Clelia: an excellent new romance* (London, 1678), Cambridge University Library, Keynes.B.7.15 and *Certamen religiosum: or, a conference between his late majesty...* (Southwark, 1649), Keynes.C.1.2.

<sup>78</sup> Wilkin's annotation appears on the verso of the front flyleaf.

<sup>79</sup> A thesis developed further in chapter 3.

<sup>80</sup> K. Sharpe and S.N. Zwicker interpret seventeenth-century physical markings (including armorial stamps, rebuses, personal emblems and mottos) as an expression of social power and hierarchy in the 'gentleman's library', 'Introduction: discovering the Renaissance reader' in *Reading, society and politics in early modern England*, ed. by K. Sharpe and S.N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1-37 (p. 5).

The effect of John Evelyn's methodical rebinding and marking of his books with emblematic devices and mottos was to create a coherent 'collection' in which the books were drawn together by their physical likeness. Such coherence was reinforced by the imposition of a comprehensive shelving and retrieval arrangement.<sup>81</sup> Browne's books float free of these unifying systems.

From what we can reconstruct of the storage of the Browne library in Norwich, the books in the collection were not subject to physical constraint within an organised setting. Browne moved his household only once after settling in Norwich, from his rented house in South Tombland to the purchased property in St Peter Mancroft in 1650.<sup>82</sup> This gave stability to the Browne library which must have aided its security, since the removal of collections always risks loss.<sup>83</sup> But the fluctuating size of a collection, as books are accumulated and removed, leads inexorably to problems of secure and appropriate storage. Working on a low estimate that only half of the lots in the sale catalogue were kept by Browne in Norwich, the books would have needed between 200 and 250 feet of shelves to accommodate them, or at least two large bookcases of ten shelves each ten feet in length.<sup>84</sup> And this does not include the profusion of manuscripts, prints, and other specimens and artefacts that Browne collected, which were as vital to Browne's intellectual activities as his printed books. The variety of objects being stored must have undermined an attempt at ordered shelving of volumes, an arrangement pointedly absent from the most detailed description to survive of Browne's house:

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<sup>81</sup> See Giles Mandelbrote, 'John Evelyn and his books', and Mirjam Foote, 'John Evelyn's bindings', both in *John Evelyn and his milieu*, ed. by Frances Harris and Michael Hunter (London: The British Library, 2003), pp. 71-94 and 61-70.

<sup>82</sup> Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 322.

<sup>83</sup> Fear of loss through removal motivated Browne's protégé Henry Power to make an inventory of his books in 1664, which survives at the British Library: Sloane MS 1346.

<sup>84</sup> This works on the assumption that a foot of bookshelf accommodates 4 folios, 6 quartos or 8 smaller format volumes. I have based this on Sir Roger Pratt's estimates for his 10 x 10 foot bookcases intended for his study at Rylston Hall, Norfolk. Roger Pratt, *The architecture of Sir Roger Pratt: Charles II's commissioner for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire: now printed for the first time from his note-books*, ed. by R.T. Gunther (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), pp. 174-5. For further discussion of seventeenth-century library furniture, see Lucy Gwynn, 'The design of the English library in the seventeenth century: readers and their book-rooms', *Library Trends*, 60 (2011), pp. 43-53 (pp. 45-48).

Next morning I went to see Sir Tho: Browne (with whom I had sometime corresponded by Letters tho never saw before) whose whole house & Garden being a Paradise & Cabinet of rarities, & that of the best collection, especially Medails, books, Plants, natural things [...]: Sir Thomas had amongst other curiosities, a collection of the Eggs of all the foule & birds he could procure, that Country (especially the promontorys of Norfolck) being (as he said) frequented with severall kinds, which seldome or never, go farther into the Land, as Cranes, Storkes, Eagles &c: & variety of Waterfoule:<sup>85</sup>

Browne's visitor, John Evelyn, was an interested observer of the architecture of library rooms, observing with approval libraries he saw as 'noble' or 'handsome'.<sup>86</sup> But here Evelyn describes the collection running through the entire property, which from other evidence we know to have been compartmentalised, broken into series of interconnecting spaces — the 'edifices, shops, yards, sellars, wayes, passages' listed in a 1704 document.<sup>87</sup> For Evelyn, Browne's books are remarkable not for the physical splendour or ordered arrangement of their storage, but for their quality, their coexistence with Browne's other collections, and their total encroachment into the living space. Browne's books, as Evelyn presents them, are not segregated, but meshed into his material world.

#### *Discharged servants: the disposal of books*

When Robbins looked at the apparent gaps between the evidence of Browne's reading provided by *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* and the testimony of the sale catalogue, he explained those gaps by characterising Browne as rather blasé. Seeing that a crucial title like George Hakewill's *Apologie ... of the power and providence of God* (1627) does not appear

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<sup>85</sup> Evelyn, *Diary*, ed. de Beer, 17 Oct 1671, p. 562.

<sup>86</sup> See, for instance, Evelyn's description of the libraries at Cassiobury Park ('nobly furnish'd', 17 Apr 1680, ed. de Beer, p. 682), and Oatlands ('very handsome', 20 Dec 1687, ed. de Beer, p. 873).

<sup>87</sup> Cited in Charles Williams, 'Residence of Sir Thomas Browne, M.D. at Norwich', *East Anglican*, n.s. 1 (1886), pp. 194-5.

in the 1711 library, Robbins concludes that ‘having served Browne’s purpose [...] it was left behind literally as well as metaphorically [...] it slipped out of mind like a discharged servant’.<sup>88</sup> Robbins’s interpretation sits well with the image of Browne as book owner that I have been developing — that is, with a loose and generous sense of ownership, willing to see his books pass on, not treating them as collected into a stable and enduring library. Perhaps Robbins also had in mind the discriminating Browne who could happily dispense with those books that ‘distract and abuse the weaker judgements of Scholars’.<sup>89</sup> Browne’s habits of note-taking (and, apparently, his retentive memory, described by Whitefoot) also enabled him to retain information without keeping the books, so that he could cite from books he had either owned before his travels, or borrowed at any point.<sup>90</sup> Robbins constructs an argument on Browne’s book owning behaviour from the apparent absence of a single title from the sale catalogue, supposing a narrative for one book’s participation in the library collection from the intertextual evidence of *Pseudodoxia*.<sup>91</sup> I have been at pains here and in chapter 1 to accommodate alternative reasons for such absences from the sale catalogue, including gifts and bequests of books out of the collection by Browne’s family before 1711, and Browne’s use of neighbouring libraries. Whatever the cause, there is a mismatch between the library intellectually manifest in Browne’s writing, and that described in the sale catalogue — a discrepancy also evident in Browne’s correspondence.

The Browne letters give a direct account of gifts made from the library, so there is certainty that some books were left as donations to others. Among these were a number of alchemical manuscripts, possibly given him by Arthur Dee, which he passed to Robert Paston.<sup>92</sup> But evidence of the programmatic removal of books from the collection by Thomas Browne (for resale or disposal because of physical decay or

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<sup>88</sup> Robbins, ‘Introduction’, *Pseudodoxia*, p. xxiv.

<sup>89</sup> RM, I:24, p. 35.

<sup>90</sup> ‘He remembered all that was Remarkable in any Book that he had read’. Whitefoot, ‘Some minutes’, p. xxix.

<sup>91</sup> I explore the validity of such evidence more fully in chapter 4.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Paston to TB, 19 Sep 1662, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 409.

obsolescence) is less concrete, and impossible to separate from evidence of weeding by Edward Browne after the amalgamation of his father's library with his own in the 1680s. The books recommended by Browne to his protégé Henry Power as essential reading for a physician at the beginning of his career, in his letters of the 1640s and 50s, might fall into this category. Several of the authors cited (including Oswald Croll, Johann Hartmann, and Brice Bauderon on pharmacopoeia and chemistry) were first published in the late sixteenth or very early seventeenth century, and are missing from the sale catalogue.<sup>93</sup> Given their intellectual roots in the first decades of the seventeenth century, it seems very possible that Browne or his son disposed of his copies later in their lives. Books sent by Browne to Edward appear to have been replaced with later editions by Edward on the evidence of the 1711 sale catalogue. For instance, the copy of William Briggs's *Ophthalmo-graphia* mentioned by Browne as being in his possession in 1679 must be the 1676 Cambridge edition, but the edition listed in the catalogue is that of 1685.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, Browne says in 1680 of his copy of Swammerdam's *Miraculum naturae* that it was published '7 or 8 years past' — it cannot, therefore, be the 1680 edition which features in the sale catalogue.<sup>95</sup> Even more intriguing is the school text book, *Scholae Wintoniensis phrases latinae*. Both Thomas and Edward Browne must have had their own copies (written by Browne's master at Winchester School, Hugh Robinson), and Thomas brought it to Edward's attention again in a letter in June 1681.<sup>96</sup> The copy in the sale catalogue dates from 1685, suggesting that there might have been earlier copies, but that the 1711 library held a replacement, perhaps bought for Edward's son Thomas, who would have been twelve in 1685.<sup>97</sup> We know from the condition of surviving early modern school books that they were subject to heavy handling, copious annotation, and recycling amongst

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<sup>93</sup> TB to Henry Power, 1646, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 255.

<sup>94</sup> SC 23/20.

<sup>95</sup> SC 23/13.

<sup>96</sup> TB to EB, 7 Jun 1681, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 197.

<sup>97</sup> SC 58/43.



students, all of which increase a copy's chances of disposal.<sup>98</sup> Pinning down individual titles which Browne might have owned but chosen to dispose of is almost impossible, since the presence or absence of titles in the sale catalogue are subject to multiple interpretations. On the basis of these examples, it is fair to assert that some books were disposed of, and that Browne did not keep his books for life. But it is not reasonable to claim that an act of disposal took place with regard to a particular title, such as *Scholae Wintoniensis phrases latinae*, as the evidence of the sale catalogue is not strong enough to bear it.

*'Content with six foot': The library after Browne's death*<sup>99</sup>

The history of the library after Browne's death — an apparently dispiriting one of dispersal and loss — has one last thing to tell us about Browne's attitude to his books. If he had wanted to ensure the preservation of the library and his association with it in perpetuity, he could have taken steps to do so. There were any number of institutions to which it could have been donated, or he could have ensured that his heirs secured its integrity thus rather than seeing it broken up. The anxiety that Browne expressed to Edward regarding the bequest of the Marquess of Dorchester's library to the Royal College of Physicians (which, it was hoped, would replace the library lost in the Great Fire) shows how strongly he felt the value of the donation of private libraries to public institutions.<sup>100</sup> And of his contemporaries, Ashmole, Pepys and Evelyn, among many others, were able to ensure the coherence of their collections for posterity in spite of their shortage of heirs. But Browne did not make provision for the future of his library after the death of his immediate heirs. Thomas Tenison wrote in his preface to the posthumously published *Miscellany Tracts* that Browne 'himself gave no charge concerning the manuscripts, either for the suppression or the publishing of them. Yet seeing he had procured transcripts of them, and had kept those copies by him, it

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<sup>98</sup> For more on the survival rate of school books and other cheap books like almanacs and catechisms, see D.F. McKenzie, 'Printing and publishing 1557-1700: constraints on the London book trades' in *The Cambridge history of the book in Britain: vol. IV, 1557-1695*, pp. 553-567 (p. 560).

<sup>99</sup> UB, V, p. 171.

<sup>100</sup> TB to EB, 29 Nov 1680, 3 Dec 1680, 13 Dec 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 171-174.

seemeth probable that he designed them for publick use'.<sup>101</sup> This benign neglect seems of a piece with his character as a book owner, his lack of a sense of an overarching collection corresponding with his concern to share his knowledge and his books widely, resulting in the dispersals outlined below. But it also springs from his modesty, both in an underestimation of the significance of his own holdings (bearing in mind that his enthusiasm for the Dorchester gift was due to the rarity of many of the books), and in his reluctance to ensure the ongoing association of his name with his collections. It is entirely in keeping with his approach to knowledge that he would rather his books be dispersed and shared with a wide readership, than frozen in perpetuity behind institutional doors.

The breaking up of the library after Browne's death tells of a degree of erosion which has been overlooked by previous bibliographers. Finch outlined the history of the dispersal of Browne's papers and manuscripts in his introduction to the facsimile of the sale catalogue, and let it stand as a narrative for the fate of Browne's printed books.<sup>102</sup> Those in control of the manuscripts after Browne's death (Dorothy Browne, Edward Browne, Elizabeth Lyttelton, and their kinsman Thomas Tenison) were almost certainly instrumental in the care of the printed books, but in treating the history of both portions of Browne's library as the same, Finch implies a greater degree of unity and simplicity than was the case for the printed books. As a result, Finch's introduction overstates the extent to which the catalogue documents the library Browne knew. The printed material had neither the cultural worth or the uniqueness of the manuscript collections, and was more vulnerable to disposal and fragmentation. Finch also supposes that the influence of Browne's heirs upon the library that came to sale in 1711 can be readily identified in the presence or absence of the sorts of books he associated with feminine reading — English Bibles, light reading, and sermons — but there is no evidence to support this.

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<sup>101</sup> This preface was not published in Keynes' 1964 edition of the *Tracts*, but is by Kevin Killeen, in *Thomas Browne: twenty-first century authors*, ed. by Kevin Killeen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 603.

<sup>102</sup> Finch, *Catalogue*, pp. 4-7; Peter Beal, 'Introduction: Sir Thomas Browne', accessed online.

The first complication in the library's afterlife overlooked by Finch is the involvement of Dorothy Browne both as a keeper and user of the library, and as an executor of Browne's will. Browne left all his possessions to his widow, so that a portion of the Browne library remained with Dorothy Browne at the house in St Peter Mancroft until her death in February 1684/5. Finch assumes that the library was moved almost in its entirety to Edward's lodgings in London immediately after Thomas's death (to relieve Dorothy of the trouble of dusting them).<sup>103</sup> But given that the library was a shared family collection, sited in both London and Norwich, I would argue that a substantial library remained with Dorothy and her daughters in Norwich, and volumes of books continued to move between the two family homes after 1682. Dorothy was responsible for any legacies and charitable gifts made by Browne 'wherewith she is fully acquainted'.<sup>104</sup> That she in turn named her two daughters Elizabeth Lyttelton and Frances Browne as her executrixes and principal heirs hints at specific legacies as communicated to them by her.<sup>105</sup> Thus there is a possibility that personal bequests of books were made in 1682 and 1685 without having left any archival trace. The allocation of books to family members, and personal gifts of books to friends, would account for losses of books from the library before it was listed by Ballard in 1711, possibly of the very volumes that were most meaningful to Browne.

Printed books might have followed two further routes away from Edward Browne's collection at this point. It is possible that a portion of the library remained in the house after Dorothy's death when it passed into the possession of Browne's friend and fellow physician Roger Howman.<sup>106</sup> Roger's son Edward later gifted a portrait of Thomas Browne to the church of St Peter Mancroft, and other effects or gifts may have been passed from the Brownes to the Howmans at the same time. Books were also acquired by Owen Brigstocke, the son-in-law of Edward's sister Anne Fairfax; some of the very few books to have survived with Browne family provenances appeared in a

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<sup>103</sup> Finch, *Catalogue*, p. 12, where he suggests that Dorothy retained 'only a few copies of her husband's published writings'.

<sup>104</sup> Thomas Browne, 'The will of Sir Thomas Browne', ed. Keynes (1964) vol. IV, p. 403.

<sup>105</sup> Will of Dorothy Browne, proved 17 Mar 1685, The National Archives, PROB 11/379/393.

<sup>106</sup> Anthony Batty Shaw, *Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich* (Norwich: Jarrold & Sons, 1982), p. 5.

sale of a portion of Brigstocke's library by his heirs in 1921.<sup>107</sup> Thus a far smaller portion of the Norwich Browne library may have reached Edward Browne (and ultimately the 1711 auction) than previously estimated. If we allow for the commitment of Edward's mother and sisters as readers, the possibility of bequests to friends, and the passing of books (including medical ones) to Howman with the purchase of the house, the books dispersed from the library would include not merely the Bibles, light literature and sermons traditionally associated with women's reading, but titles from across different disciplines and genres.

The effects of the custodianship of the library by Edward Browne and his son Thomas on the collection and its holdings is not documented, beyond conjectures that rely almost solely on the evidence of the sale catalogue. Books were added by both Edward and Tomey, who inherited his father's estate in 1708, and I discussed the possible source of editions printed between 1682 and 1710 included in the catalogue (the younger Brownes or the bookseller Ballard) in chapter 1.<sup>108</sup> Finch argued that interloper titles are identifiable in the sale catalogue, and points to the later imprints with very short title descriptions that appear at the ends of some of the sections, together with the sections of 'Libri Omissi' and 'English Folio's Omitted'.<sup>109</sup> These books are usually literature in English or French, and often include titles or editions duplicated elsewhere in the catalogue.<sup>110</sup> Finch claims that these titles must be Tomey's books, added to the sale in a rush when the catalogue was almost ready for the printers, which reinforces his argument that Tomey took no interest in the Browne library he inherited.<sup>111</sup> In doing so Finch places too much confidence in the catalogue, and determines that it is possible definitely to trace the source of individual titles in it. Of course the posthumous imprints cannot be associated with Thomas Browne, and

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<sup>107</sup> These five books are listed by Beal, 'Introduction: Sir Thomas Browne', accessed online. See N.J. Endicott, 'Sir Thomas Browne, Montpellier, and the tract "Of languages"', *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 August 1962, p. 645 for more on the Brigstocke sale.

<sup>108</sup> Payne, 'Thomas Browne, 1673-1710' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Accessed online.

<sup>109</sup> SC, pp. 57-58.

<sup>110</sup> The octavo editions of modern literature at SC 53/209 to 53/216 are an example of the sorts of books Finch is referring to, and includes copies of 'Spenser's Fairy Queen 1687', 'Rymer's Tragedies 1693', and Rabelais's Works, 3d. vol. 1693'.

<sup>111</sup> Finch, *Catalogue*, p. 13.

the books Finch discusses must have come from the younger Brownes or (a possibility Finch does not recognise) from Ballard. But Finch has chosen a single interpretation which ignores the reality of the catalogue as a commercial production, and in so doing offers a colourful but misleading representation of the library's readers. He fails to allow for the possibility of salting or for the cataloguers' flagging interest or shortness of time. The sections of 'books omitted' could result from the chaotic conditions under which the books were catalogued, a possibility made more likely by the frequent appearance of similar categories ('Libri Omissi' and 'English books omitted') in comparable contemporary sale catalogues.<sup>112</sup> The continuity of content across the statistical analysis of the sale catalogue in chapter 1 argues for a relatively consistent character as later imprints were added to the Browne library, belying Finch's insistent characterisation of Tomey as an uninterested, unsophisticated and unengaged library owner. This is a further instance of the over-interpretation of the catalogue due to a perception of it as straightforward bibliographical evidence. The catalogue cannot prove or justify the presence or absence of individual titles in the Browne library without explicit support from the Brownes' own testimony.

The final phase of the library's dispersal followed Tomey's death in 1710. It is plausible that some material, and perhaps some of the most significant printed books, was divided from the library before it reached the auction room. For instance, although the manuscripts and papers were advertised as included in the sale on the title page of the catalogue, they seem to have been sold to Hans Sloane and others privately before the auction, and they are absent from the lots in the sale catalogue.<sup>113</sup> If some of the printed books were particularly desirable to other collectors, they too might have been sold ahead of the auction, a practice by which seventeenth-century booksellers intended to secure their sale at favourable prices. Without firmer evidence this suggestion can only be speculative, but it offers a further example of the potential for the erosion of the main collection before it came to be catalogued in 1711. The disparity between the library of the sale catalogue and the library Browne knew is

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<sup>112</sup> For instance, amongst the catalogues for Thomas Ballard's auctions, *Bibliotheca Postlethwaiteana: or, A catalogue of the library of the Late Reverend John Postlethwait, D.D. chief master of St. Paul's School*. (London, 1714), which includes three sections of 'libri omissi'.

<sup>113</sup> Finch, 'Introduction', p. 5.

reasserted, and we face the possibility that some of the most significant titles to Browne as a reader never went under the hammer.

The only physical copies of books sold at the Browne auction I have succeeded in identifying with some confidence are those which were purchased by Sir Hans Sloane, and which made their way into the British Library collections. It has been evident since Wilkin's work as Browne's editor that Sloane purchased the bulk of Browne's family manuscripts and the three volumes of *horti sicci* now at the Natural History Museum. Finch succeeded in identifying a portion of Sloane's collections within the British Library using the alphanumerical pressmarks he found on the British Library copies of titles marked by Sloane in his copy of the 1711 catalogue.<sup>114</sup> Since then, the eight volumes of Sloane's catalogue of printed books have come to light, and an entry for the 1711 catalogue identified within it by Margaret Nickson.<sup>115</sup> Checking the Sloane library catalogue, I found immediately below the entry for the 1711 catalogue thirty-three titles with consecutive Sloane pressmark numbers which appear marked up in Sloane's copy of the 1711 catalogue. A further four titles from Sloane's marked up catalogue appear in his interleaved copy of Mercklin's *Lindenius Renovatus*, which he used as a catalogue for his medical books in Latin, with pressmark numbers from the same sequence as those appearing in the main Sloane library catalogue.<sup>116</sup> The coincidence of the appearance of these particular titles in Sloane's library catalogue, together with the existence of Sammelbände amongst the Sloane books in the British Library identical to those described in the 1711 catalogue, lead me to conclude that

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<sup>114</sup> J.S. Finch, 'Sir Hans Sloane's printed books', *The Library*, 4th series, 22 (1941-2), pp. 67-72.

<sup>115</sup> M.A.E. Nickson, 'Hans Sloane, book collector and cataloguer, 1682-1698', *British Library Journal*, 14 (1998), pp. 52-89 (p. 88, n. 21). The Browne sales catalogue appears on page 1135 of the catalogue, BL, Sloane MS 3972C.

<sup>116</sup> Georg Abraham Mercklin, *Lindenius Renovatus* (Nuremberg, 1686). BL, 878.n.8.

they were purchased by Sloane at the Browne sale.<sup>117</sup> Some of the copies are still identifiable by the Sloane pressmarks on their title pages, and of these a couple bear Norfolk provenance markings, though none bears a trace of the ownership of Thomas Browne.<sup>118</sup>

The tracing of Browne's books through the Sloane holdings of the British Library confirms that, at least in this small sample, Browne did not inscribe or annotate his books. The very minuteness of the sample (just over 1% of the 1711 catalogue) is a sombre reminder of the completeness of the library's dispersal, and of the time-consuming labour required to discover even the ghosts of its volumes. Sloane donated some of his duplicates to the Bodleian Library in the eighteenth century, which as Finch points out may have included books from Browne's collection, but William Poole has demonstrated that locating books associated with Sloane and previous owners at the Bodleian requires meticulous and often frustrated sifting through the Bodleian's shelves.<sup>119</sup> Some of the printed books may also have arrived at the Bodleian with Browne manuscripts through Richard Rawlinson. Documentary evidence of another buyer at the auction survives for Charles Spencer, 3rd earl of Sunderland (1675-1722), who purchased twenty-one titles.<sup>120</sup> The printed books of the Spencer library were absorbed into the library at Blenheim Palace, and were sold in the 1880s, so little chance remains of tracing Browne's unmarked books. That Browne's distinguished library collection could have disappeared so entirely is a mark

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<sup>117</sup> The first Sammelband remains in one volume: SC 41/5, containing Tasso, *Apologia del S. Torquato Tasso in difesa delle sua Gierusalemme liberata*; Salviati, *Dello infarinato accademico della Crusca, riposta all' Apologia di Torquato Tasso*; *Risposta del S. Torquato Tasso alla Lettera di Bast. Rossi*; *Replica di Camillo Pellegrino alla Risposta de gli Academici della Crusca* (Mantua, 1585). The second has now been broken up: SC 10/74, containing Theodulus, *Egloga* (Cologne, 1492); Johann Synthen, *Verba deponentalia* (Deventer, 1490); *Elegantiarum viginti precepta* (Deventer, 1495?); and *Libellus de modo confitendi et penitendi* (Deventer, 1492). See Goldfinch, 'Sloane's incunables', p. 211, and n. 27 for their identification as Sloane's.

<sup>118</sup> See chapter 3 for full descriptions of the Norfolk provenances.

<sup>119</sup> Finch, 'Introduction', p. 19; William Poole, 'Francis Lodwick, Hans Sloane, and the Bodleian Library', *The Library*, 6th series, 7:4 (2006), pp. 337-418.

<sup>120</sup> 'Books bought in Browns auction for ye Right Honorable the Earle of Sunderland', BL, Add MS 61658, fol. 136. Cited by Swift, *The formation of the library of Charles Spencer*, p. 81.

of his own lack of interest in preserving the collection either for its own sake, or for his posterity.

*Conclusions: 'There are no copyright laws here, no legal boundaries, no picket fences with the sign "Private, Keep Out"'*<sup>121</sup>

Alberto Manguel, in one of his many references to Thomas Browne in *The library at night*, allies Browne to a conception of the past which is cosmopolitan, borderless, infinite, and embodied in the library. Manguel presents a Plinian library, in which the souls of past men are connected through Brownean metempsychosis, and writers repeat what has been said before, hoping 'to say it just a little bit better'.<sup>122</sup> I have argued in this chapter that Browne's behaviour as an owner of books was in line with this pattern, preferring to treat books as units which move through time, passing from owner to owner rather than being captured and closeted. Browne's lack of consciousness regarding 'his collection' is a defining quality of his book ownership. His willingness to let go of books that had served their turn, the absence of a systematic taxonomical scheme or a separate architectural space for storage speaks of intellectual open-mindedness and modesty. The loss of the library, partly through his lack of interest in the physical trappings of ownership and the institutional structures of long-term preservation, stands as testimony to Browne's perception of books as instruments of knowledge, rather than as representations of his achievements as a consumer or of his own consequence as a scholar. The library's very vulnerability is an expression of Browne's commitment to the books within it, both for his own sake and for the benefit of their subsequent readers. Browne's library is without walls, and without divisions of property.

Browne invested a good deal of his money in books, but only after judicious weighing of their merits within a matrix of social and cultural values. His intentions were focused on his reading, but his habits and priorities as a reader changed continually, shifting with his literary, professional, spiritual or social needs. Consequently his relationships with his books were not homogenous, but varied with each item in the

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<sup>121</sup> Alberto Manguel, *The library at night* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 317.

<sup>122</sup> Manguel, *The library at night*, p. 318.



library. His responses to certain texts shaded into his responses to their material qualities. The shape of the library was in part determined by the donation of books and the limits of the book trade's ability to supply Browne's needs, so that some titles he possessed might mean very little to him whilst others that were vital could not be found. Publicly, he distanced himself from books, reducing the debt his writing owed to his reading, implying that whilst they should be treated with reverence, they were not sacrosanct objects to be treasured up. Within his family his enjoyment of books was more frank, but remained pragmatic and focused upon their routine use. This more nuanced image of Browne as a reader and book owner counters the use of the 1711 catalogue as a direct reflection of Browne's library which can be drawn on as evidence in itself of his use of books. But it also demonstrates that for Browne, each title in his ownership remained distinct and defined by his use for it, rather than by its identity within 'his library' in relationship to other books and as an atom within a consciously formed whole. Chapter 3 expands upon the Browne library as a shared and networked resource, describing it as responding to and contributing to a bookish milieu within Norwich and Norfolk, offering further channels for the free flowing of books and knowledge.

## Chapter 3 - 'The cheapest way of beneficence': the private and the shared library

To this (as calling my selfe a Scholler) I am obliged by the duty of my condition, I make not therefore my head a grave, but a treasure of knowledge; I intend no Monopoly, but a Community in learning; I study not for my owne sake onely, but for theirs that study not for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

In *Religio Medici*, Browne made a manifesto of intellectual generosity, styling the education of one's neighbours as the ultimate form of philanthropy. It is equal to other forms of charity ('It is no greater Charity to cloath his body, than apparell the nakednesse of his Soule') and it costs the giver nothing. To be backward in sharing knowledge is sinful, 'the sordidest piece of covetousnesse, and more contemptible than the pecuniary avarice'. In *Religio*, Browne echoed Francis Bacon's sentiment that intellectual conversation is the best form for man's generation, as Browne hoped to 'beget and propagate' his knowledge in the head of his friend and avoid the 'one thought that dejects me, that my acquired parts must perish with my selfe, nor can bee Legacyed among my honoured Friends'.<sup>2</sup> This section of *Religio* reads as an impassioned commitment to the uninhibited exchange of knowledge and the unhesitating gift of Browne's personal achievements to the learned community around him. Browne envisaged such exchange partly in terms of social affinity and allegiance: 'It is an honourable object to see the reasons of other men weare our Liveries, and their borrowed understandings doe homage to the bounty of ours'.<sup>3</sup> But for all Browne's benevolent instinct, he pointed to men whose souls are naked, and whose ignorance is pitiable. The vulgar, described in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, have faults which

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<sup>1</sup> RM, II.3, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> RM, II.3, p. 74. Cf. Bacon in *The New Atlantis*, in which (according to Marjorie Swann's interpretation) he privileges man's marriage to the pursuit of knowledge over the less productive heterosexual marriage, whose progeny distract from man's true posterity, his ideas. Swann, *Curiosities and texts*, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> RM, II.3, p. 74.

cannot be ‘redressed’ with books.<sup>4</sup> Their errors need to be deprived of ‘their alimantal sap’.<sup>5</sup> Whilst Browne advocates a community of learning, he is clear that some people remain outside its networks.

The following chapter expands upon Browne’s conception of the learned community and its limits as apparent in his works and in his behaviour as a book owner. It presents the manifold evidence of Browne’s involvement in numerous circles of social and intellectual exchange, including his family, his immediate neighbours in the city of Norwich, and his network of friends and clients amongst the Norfolk aristocracy. It identifies the mechanisms by which knowledge flowed between libraries; through neighbourly visits and viewings of collections held in private homes, through exchanges of books by loan or by gift, and through the inclusion of texts — verbatim or digested — in letters. Browne’s participation in this hectic movement supports those studies that portray him as fully engaged in local and international scientific, philosophical and religious debates, manifest especially in his correspondence with a circle of like-minded gentlemen scholars.<sup>6</sup> Browne’s friendships have been characterised as ‘intense’, and he has even been accused of making a fetish of them.<sup>7</sup> But the chapter also points to the boundaries of Browne’s community of learning, finding evidence of his desire for seclusion and exclusion with regard to his library. Here it touches on the concerns of a more critical assessment of Browne, which would recognise in the passage from *Religio* a writer who used copious literary references as ‘a veil of complexity against ignorant and unfriendly readers’.<sup>8</sup> Whilst a degree of prejudice was embedded in Browne’s attitude to the readers around him, I argue that

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<sup>4</sup> PE, epistle, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> PE, epistle, p. 3. Killeen is convinced that *Pseudodoxia* embodies a political assertion of control over the vulgar, and exhibits ‘a terror of the unfettered interpretation by which error multiplies’. He writes that ‘if it is discreet about those he detests, discretion is not silence’. *Biblical scholarship, science and politics in early modern England*, p. 219.

<sup>6</sup> This shift in the scholarly assessment of Browne is described in the introduction to this dissertation, and traced by Kathryn Murphy in “Between the paws of a sphinx”, pp. 3-12.

<sup>7</sup> Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 287; Cawley, ‘Sir Thomas Browne and his reading’, p. 427.

<sup>8</sup> Cotterill, *Digressive voices in early modern England*, p. 142. Swann similarly characterises Browne’s antiquarianism as possessing an impulse to consolidate his social relationships with his ‘worthy friends’, pp. 125-133.

it did not fall along straightforward political, religious or gender lines.<sup>9</sup> The reading of the Browne women and the diversity of Norwich book culture complicate the opposition of civil and uncivil readers, even as Browne's rhetoric on secluded and communal gentlemanly reading strengthened them. Exchanges of books and knowledge, and the conditions in which they took place, were complex and multivalent.

In addition to examining Browne's reading as evident in his bookish social milieu, the chapter insists that a bibliographical assessment of his library and its contents cannot be executed in isolation from the lively book culture around him. Recent studies of library collections in private hands in seventeenth-century Britain have drawn attention to their communal nature. Giles Mandelbrote outlines the culture of sharing, borrowing, mutual donation, and copying that existed within a network of book owners in Derbyshire.<sup>10</sup> In another example of exchange within a circle of neighbouring library owners, Mark Purcell finds yeoman book owners in Westmoreland purchasing books directly from each other, in lieu of the formal book trade.<sup>11</sup> Richard Ovenden describes a network of antiquarian book collections in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century that was 'deeply interconnected, the small with the large, the provincial with the metropolitan, the courtly with the professional', with complex networks of sharing and exchange.<sup>12</sup> Whilst Ovenden sees this as a distinguishing feature of antiquarian libraries in particular, Mandelbrote identifies it more widely amongst different types of libraries and book owners in the later period. He argues that to call such libraries 'private' or 'personal' obscures the extent to which books were borrowed, lent, and exchanged between household

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<sup>9</sup> Heidi Brayman Hackel has identified a shift across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the 'accepted markers of bad readers' away from the easily visible signs of class and gender, to more elaborate inward signs. *Reading material in early modern England*, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Mandelbrote, 'Personal owners of books', p. 174.

<sup>11</sup> Purcell, 'Books and readers in eighteenth-century Westmorland', pp. 91-206.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Ovenden, 'The libraries of the antiquaries (c. 1540-1640) and the idea of a national collection' in *The Cambridge history of libraries in Britain and Ireland, vol. I, to 1640*, ed. by Elizabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 527-561 (p. 531).

collections.<sup>13</sup> The non-institutional or domestic library was not, according to this account, a fixed and isolated treasury of books but a continually changing element within a system of interchange. A ‘collector’ in this environment demonstrated his scholarly persona through his preparedness to relinquish his possessions to his fellows, rather than sequester them.<sup>14</sup> Browne was not entirely dependent upon his own resources, and his library walls circumscribed only a portion of his reading. I have sought to trace the operations of a network of shared books in Browne’s environment, since its effects cannot be captured in a formal inventory like the 1711 catalogue.

This chapter examines the communities within which knowledge flowed, and their limits, both in theory and in practice. Browne expressed a commitment to knowledge as a shared property, but simultaneously held something of himself back. The chapter begins with an analysis of Browne’s declared position in his writing on the values of intellectual conversation and isolated study. The following sections look at the mechanics of knowledge sharing as they operated in Browne’s household, in his city, his county, and his country. The correspondence between Browne and his sons document their mutual engagement with books, particularly via gifts and exchanges once the family dispersed. Movement of books between individual members within the household is not so well documented, and must have been relatively informal and ephemeral. It is clear that the entire family, and their wider circle of kin, was committed to a shared practice of reading, and contributed to the library’s manuscript holdings by composing travel journals and letters crammed with observations, and by acting as amanuenses. Browne’s home city had a thriving book culture in the mid-seventeenth century, most obviously manifested in Norwich City Library and the numerous parish libraries. Many of those active within Norwich’s libraries were

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<sup>13</sup> Mandelbrote, ‘Personal owners of books’, p. 177-178.

<sup>14</sup> There were, of course, exceptions to this rule. Elias Ashmole, who became notoriously testy and acquisitive in his last years, kept tight control over access to his collections and manipulated that control to serve his ambitions. But even he encouraged visitors to his collections, and devoted time to assisting them (such as Robert Hooke, who was ‘made much of’ by Ashmole during his visit in 1679). See C. H. Josten, ‘Biographical Introduction’ in *Elias Ashmole (1617-1692): his autobiographical and historical notes, his correspondence and other contemporary sources relating to his life and work*, ed. by C. H. Josten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 229 and 1625.

closely connected to Browne, but they came from all parts of that sometimes vehemently divided city. Almost no documentation survives to link Browne to the libraries of his city, but their lively existence forms a crucial background to his activities as a book owner. Correspondence, journals and accounts record the many transactions of exchange and conversation between Browne and his aristocratic patients and friends across Norfolk, and from further afield, both in Britain and on the Continent. Having described the availability of books to Browne through visits, exchanges and donations from other libraries, the latter portion of the chapter presents Browne's writing as an extension of such exchange, articulating sociability in literary terms and proffering up a wealth of data gleaned from his reading. Whilst disparaging vulgar readers, and declaring his own need for solitary study, Browne simultaneously adhered to a model of reading founded on outward-looking connections, in which every engagement with books formed part of an unceasing and unbounded conversation.

*'The hopeful dominion of truth': Browne's rhetoric of community*<sup>15</sup>

The flow of information between libraries and between intellects, via letters, conversations, visits, and gifts, was essential to Browne's activities. *Religio Medici* articulates an ideal of literary community attached to collaboration and generosity, 'the cheapest way of beneficence'.<sup>16</sup> In his tracts and essays, Browne addressed specific auditors and brought them into conversation with a host of authors. *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* also begins with a declaration of his faith in openness and initiatory debate. In the address to the reader, Browne invited the contribution of observations on the work with 'experimental and judicious knowledge', and offered it up to be 'swallowed by any worthy enlarger'.<sup>17</sup> But *Pseudodoxia*, unlike Browne's earlier works, was conceived for a public, rather than with a particular intimate reader in mind, and its tone is more assertive and less companionable. As Claire Preston points out, in *Pseudodoxia* Browne addressed a group or class (the 'ingenuous gentry') whose members distinguished themselves according to the social virtues of liberality,

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<sup>15</sup> PE, epistle, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> RM, II:3, p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> PE, I:1, p. 4.

generosity, candour, honour, and high-mindedness.<sup>18</sup> The intrusion of those who failed to comprehend his informed language — and by implication fell short of such virtues — caused him real irritation. Browne recorded in a letter (*De enecante garrulo suo*) the extreme frustration he could feel towards tiresome chatterers. He railed against a man who ‘wearies me with his stories, trifles, and unceasing word-nonsense’, who ‘offers common-places as novelties’ and ‘mixes earth and sky, marries Tiber to Araxis, Tagus to Liger’.<sup>19</sup> Browne bonded with his community of readers through the creation of intellectual scapegoats, speaking longingly of ‘quiet doors and unmolested hours’ in the preface of *Pseudodoxia*.<sup>20</sup> His rhetoric against his wearying visitors chimes with Robert Boyle’s complaints to his sister over the curious visitors to his laboratory who took him away from his experiments.<sup>21</sup>

Browne described his intellectual work as generous and communal, whilst also delineating the limits of the community in which it was involved. Similarly, the fluidity and concordance of a commonwealth of seventeenth-century libraries had their limits. The shared aspects of Browne’s reading are exceptional in his practice, and leave traces in the historical record. But the chief business of the scholar, the reading of books and the consequent writing of books, is private and unremarked. The vast proportion of Browne’s work was by its very nature done alone. Browne declared that uninterrupted study was necessary for the quality of its productions, conscious that his work had been weakened through its ‘being composed through snatches of time’.<sup>22</sup> Time and space for study and reflection were clearly valued and provided for in Browne’s household, as apparent in his report of his daughter Elizabeth Lyttelton in her closet, and in the many exhortations Browne sent to his children to use their time for study.<sup>23</sup> In addition, Browne’s writing reveals a

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<sup>18</sup> Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, p. 88.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Browne, *Amico clarissimo, de enecante garrulo suo*, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes, *The works of Sir Thomas Browne* (1964), vol. III, p. 185.

<sup>20</sup> PE, I:1, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Steven Shapin, ‘The house of experiment in seventeenth-century England’, *Isis*, 79:3 (1988), pp. 373-404 (p. 384).

<sup>22</sup> PE, I:1, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> See below.

temperament tending to self-reliance and contemplation. Those critics who have characterised Browne as detached and in retreat have been able to do so in part because of the undeniable literary evidence of his inward tendency. Browne exhibited a profound inner watchfulness and an understanding of human nature based on self-observance, of ‘the Microcosme of mine owne frame, that I cast mine eye on’.<sup>24</sup> He insisted that singularity — his own, and that of each of his peers — was an essential mechanism for avoiding the errors sustained by group thinking, arguing that ‘a man should be something that men are not, and individuall in somewhat beside his proper nature’.<sup>25</sup> Private study and introspection permitted the confidence of Browne’s individual voice, which might otherwise be swamped by the ‘truths’ of the community.<sup>26</sup>

As a consequence, the opposites of conversational reading and isolated study coexist in Browne’s works. He described *Pseudodoxia* as a project ‘not to be performed upon one legg’, but drew attention in the same sentence to the essential isolation of such labour. The ‘Attemptor’ must smell of the oil of his nocturnal labours if he is to do it justice. And his most engaging account of time alone in his library simultaneously pulls his reader into the room to join him. In the final section of *The Garden of Cyrus*, Browne plants his desk at a particular point of the populous turning globe, at a specific time: at midnight, as the quincunx of heaven runs low, when ‘the huntsmen are up in America, and they are already past their first sleep in Persia’.<sup>27</sup> He reaches across the gap between his auditor and his own acts of reading and writing, bringing the reader imaginatively into the very moment of composition. These gestures are aesthetically attractive: Browne opens the door to his library room and reveals (through copious marginalia and citation) the loquacious books housed in it. At the same time he

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<sup>24</sup> RM, II:11, p. 87.

<sup>25</sup> PE, I:5, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> William N. West argues that Browne’s epistemological intention in *Pseudodoxia* is to promote mobility of belief, so that errors can be challenged and corrected by persuasion rather than the authority of magisterial voices (advocated by Descartes and Bacon). This necessitates the ‘single voice within a group’, and the encompassing of multiple perspectives. West, ‘Brownean motion: conversation within *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*’s “sober circumference of knowledge”’, in *Sir Thomas Browne: the world proposed*, ed. Barbour and Preston, pp. 168-187 (pp. 170-177).

<sup>27</sup> GC, V, p. 226.



makes explicit the isolation of the writer, and sustains his reader's fascination with the ineffable processes of his work. In weaving a path between the two readerly ideals of community and solitude, Browne achieves his epistemological goal, avoiding an insistence on his own magisterial and equally fallible individual voice, or dependence upon a potentially erroneous community.

#### *The Browne family as a reading community*

An account of Browne as a sociable reader and sharer of books must begin with his two sons to reach adulthood, Edward and Thomas, whose involvement with books reveals a shared library that travelled with them beyond Norwich via letters, extracts, and gifts. Whilst they still lived at home, they had access to their father's books and other collections. Edward's diary of the winter of 1663/4, when he was killing time at home between the end of his undergraduate degree at Cambridge, and his first journey to France, was written as a memorandum to himself of the things he had seen and read. Edward described himself reading from his father's books and manuscripts; on the 13 January, he made notes on his reading from Prince Radziwiłł's *Ierosolymitana Peregrinatio*, and from Martini's *Regni Sinensis à Tartaris tyrannicè*.<sup>28</sup> A few nights later he read 'two letters which my father had formerly received from Island, from Theodorus Jonas, minister of Hitterdale'.<sup>29</sup> When Edward and Thomas were away from Norwich, their correspondence with their father was a means by which Browne shaped their reading habits as well as a record of the books they contributed to the household library whilst on their travels abroad. Boxes and books were sent by the teenaged Tom in La Rochelle to his father via Yarmouth during Tom's visit to France in 1661-1662, and Browne wrote to Edward in the Netherlands to quell his enthusiasm: 'buy no bookes but what are small and portable if any, for by London wee can send for such bookes as those parts afford'.<sup>30</sup> Other books associated with the boys made their way into the library, such as 'a very little Tullies offices, which was ether yours or your

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<sup>28</sup> Edward Browne, journal for 1663-4, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 46: 'Radzivil in his third epistle relates strange storys of diving in the river Nile' and 'There are one million of soelgers to guard the great wall of China, which extends from east to west three hundred leagues: author, *Belli Tartarici Martin Martinus*'.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Browne, journal for 1663-4, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 46.

<sup>30</sup> For instance, TB to Thomas Browne Jr, 4 Jan 1661/2, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 16, and TB to EB, 22 Sep 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 30.

brothers'.<sup>31</sup> Browne's letters to both his sons contain continual incitements to read, and to read with propriety. Along with foreign travel, correct reading was part of Browne's programme to rid them of their 'pudor rusticus'.<sup>32</sup> He encouraged them to read French or Greek copies of the New Testament to improve their language skills ('In reading those bookes a man learnes 2 good things together & profiteth doubly, in the language, and the subject') or Plutarch for examples of military fortitude.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Browne praises Tom's dedication to reading whilst on board ship ('I must not fail to tell you how well I like it, that you are not only *Marti* but *Mercurio*'), but warns him off too much Lucan ('I hope you are more taken with the verses than with the subject, and rather embrace the expression than the example').<sup>34</sup> *Naumachia*, written for Edward, expands on reading and note-taking practice and urges Edward not to regurgitate his reading in quotations in his commonplace book 'which will be doing again what has already been done'. Instead, Edward should make abstracts 'to include all that is difficult and of note, whatever the author himself, the memory of like things, or natural genius supplies'.<sup>35</sup> Browne, like many of his peers, believed that reading formed the reader, and was deeply invested in the education and reading habits of his sons.<sup>36</sup> As a consequence, he was committed to sharing his books with them, and invited their intellectual and material contributions to his library.

The exchange of collections between Browne and his eldest son escalated when Edward settled in London to practice as a physician. Books, sketches, and anatomical drawings made their way from Norwich to London, particularly to assist Edward in

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<sup>31</sup> TB to EB, Feb 1676, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> TB to Thomas Browne Jr, 31 Jan 1660/1, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> TB to EB, 25 Feb 1676?, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 58; TB to Thomas Browne Jr, May or June 1667, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> TB to Thomas Browne Jr, May or June 1667, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 24; TB to Thomas Browne Jr, Feb 1667, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Browne, *Naumachia*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, p. 159.

<sup>36</sup> On seventeenth-century understandings of the physiology of reading and its influence on the character, morals, and physical wellbeing of the reader, see Adrian Johns, 'The physiology of reading' in *The nature of the book: print and knowledge in the making* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 380-443.

the preparation for his anatomical lectures at Surgeons' Hall.<sup>37</sup> Browne's letters to his son demonstrate his intimate knowledge of Edward's London library and its contents: 'You do well to make use of your Aristotle; Lacunus, epitome of Galen, you have of myne & it is useful to read it', 'you have also the Greek or septuagint translation of the other parts of Scripture'.<sup>38</sup> In 1679 the sight of a volume of botanical specimens prompts him to recall that 'You had a very good one or two if you have not parted with them'.<sup>39</sup> Browne developed a habit of sending relatively recently purchased books on to Edward once he has finished with them, especially in his last years.<sup>40</sup> The flow of information between the Brownes was not limited to entire volumes or objects, however: Browne's letters to his son are thick with bibliographical references and recommended reading ('Harveus *de generatione exercitat.*, viz. English, you may get one in English and read it often for it is an excellent piece and full of observations').<sup>41</sup> He also copied long extracts from his books for Edward, particularly if he believed them difficult to come by.<sup>42</sup>

The letters form a conversation to which the Browne library is always contributing, either through citations, ideas and anecdotes gleaned from reading, or as physical books. Both men showed an instinctive awareness in their correspondence of matters that will interest their reader. Edward took care on his travels to write letters so rich in observation that they became, like the letters of Browne's Icelandic correspondent

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<sup>37</sup> For instance, Browne sending his copies of the *Philosophical Transactions* to Edward when Edward's could not be found in the family home in August 1668 (Keynes (1964), p. 29); also 'a roll upon a stick with the figure of a naked man, wherein may be seen all the veynes of the body ... with directions in Latin', March 1682 (Keynes (1964), p. 217); and, among many other specimens, the 'ureters & vesica or bladder' of a carp, and the skull of a dolphin, 16 Jun 1676 and 3 Jul 1676 (Keynes (1964), pp. 64-65).

<sup>38</sup> TB to EB, 16 Jun 1676, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 63; 25 Feb 1676, 58.

<sup>39</sup> TB to EB, 28 Jun 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 120.

<sup>40</sup> Examples include a copy of William Briggs's *Ophthalmo-graphia* ('a pretty optick booke by Mr Briggs') in November 1679, and Swammerdam's *Miraculum naturae* in September of the following year. TB to EB, 3 Nov 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 135 and TB to EB, 22 Sep 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 165.

<sup>41</sup> TB to EB, 3 May 1676, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 60.

<sup>42</sup> For instance, Browne's extensive quotes from Scaliger's commentary on Aristotle's *de animalibus*, an edition which 'I beleieve is not common'. TB to EB, 22 Sep 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 130.

Porður Jónsson, part of the library in their own right.<sup>43</sup> Thomas's intimate knowledge of Edward's London library and its contents runs through their correspondence. When he writes (once again) to recommend taking a Greek New Testament to church, he adds 'you have also the Greek or septuagint translation of the other parts of Scripture', and in 1679 the sight of a volume of botanical specimens prompts him to recall that 'You had a very good one or two if you have not parted with them'.<sup>44</sup> Their mutual engagement is so intense that Browne sounds positively giddy at reports of Edward's anatomical lectures and the possible inclusion of material supplied by him; 'How did they like the newe way of dissecting the brayne, did you shoue the Ivory eye of the *Gladius piscis*, or the Dolphins head, or circumcision, or infibulation, etc., or reserved any for the next?'<sup>45</sup> Brent Nelson has described the relationship between Thomas and Edward as being one of 'lasting professional collaboration', in which the father set the son an example of 'membership and participation in the republic of learning'.<sup>46</sup> This traffic reveals something of the procedures by which the Brownes managed the copious material in their collections that might otherwise overwhelm their domestic spaces. Edward could draw on his father's library as a repository for material when he required it, and Thomas issued his cast-off books to Edward, the son's library acting as a form of off-site storage.

Surviving notebooks and journals written by Browne and his sons show them creating stores of data to be added to their library, and prompting intellectual dialogue. Antonia Moon's work on Thomas Browne's note-taking practices draws attention to his habit of reading with Edward in his mind as an audience.<sup>47</sup> In one of his notebooks, Browne set out 'several hints which may bee serviceable unto you & not ungratefull unto others', a remark implying that Edward shared his notes with his

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<sup>43</sup> See Thomas's appreciation of Edward's letters on his travels ('Your accounts are very good of all things, God blesse you') 22 Sep 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 31.

<sup>44</sup> TB to EB, 28 Jun 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 120.

<sup>45</sup> TB to EB, 8 Apr 1677, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 76.

<sup>46</sup> Brent Nelson, 'The Browne family's culture of curiosity' in *Sir Thomas Browne: the world proposed*, ed. Barbour and Preston, pp. 98-99.

<sup>47</sup> Moon, "A fresh reading of books", pp. 67-85.

own friends in London.<sup>48</sup> Moon argues that new audiences are implied throughout Browne's notebooks, particularly in their open-endedness, putting their emphasis on reading as exploration rather than a seeking for results.<sup>49</sup> The journals by Edward and Tom were composed for an anticipated audience. The diaries of their travels (including their trip together around the north of England and Edward's journals of his continental travels) recorded their encounters with people and curiosities in a way calculated to meet with their father's approval. The animated style of Tom's prose (like his description of a gentleman riding 'whale-like' through a Derbyshire rainstorm without his coat) and his habit of scattering literary references ('[we] conceiv'd this with our selves that wee had, *tandem aliquando*, overcome our dangerous passages with Eneas in Virgill, or rather with Heroical Tom Coriat as hee travailed over the Savoyard mountains *tandem et haec olim meminisse juvabit*') have the ring of an enthusiastic delivery to a familiar audience.<sup>50</sup> These journals, once written, were absorbed into the library as part of the family record and as repositories of scientific description, less formal than published travel journals like Coryat's, but still of value.

Thomas Browne the father was not the only family member addressed as the 'dear reader' in Edward's and Tom's journals, nor were they the only contributors to the library. A community of creator-recipients is implied for these manuscript productions.<sup>51</sup> The participation of Browne's daughters in the literary enterprises of the family is evident in the Brownes' correspondence, most especially in a letter from Edward which contains appreciative messages to each of his sisters in turn.<sup>52</sup> At least two of Browne's daughters were exposed to some of the same opportunities for improvement by Continental travel as their brothers.<sup>53</sup> Browne encouraged and

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<sup>48</sup> Thomas Browne, BL, Sloane MS 1869, fol. 12r. Cited by Moon, "A fresh reading of books", p. 77.

<sup>49</sup> Moon, "A fresh reading of books", p. 83.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Browne Jr, journal for 1662, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, pp. 26, 37.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Browne Jr, journal for 1662, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 40.

<sup>52</sup> EB to the Browne family, 5 Aug 1669, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, pp. 190-191.

<sup>53</sup> John Whitefoot noted Browne's 'indulgence and liberality to his Children, especially in their travels, two of his Sons to divers countries, and two of his Daughters in France, spent him more than a little'. 'Some minutes', p. xxxvi.

challenged his daughter Elizabeth in her reading much as he did his sons; when Elizabeth travelled to Guernsey with her husband in 1681 he writes that 'I am glad you carried good books and divers sermons'.<sup>54</sup> Her accounts of her travels were valued by Browne ('You discribed yr voyage very Prettyly'<sup>55</sup>) and she sometimes sent them unsealed and enclosed in her letters to Edward, so that they could be enjoyed by the brother before being forwarded to the father.<sup>56</sup> Browne also praised his daughter's dedication to her reading, writing to Edward that 'My daughter Betty [...] is very seldome out of health, though shee sitts often in cold wether 5 or 6 howers together in her closett reading & praying'.<sup>57</sup> Elizabeth even helped her father with the organisation and retrieval of material in the library on occasion: 'Betty & I searched for the Transactions, butt could only find the lesser part wherin that discours is not, butt I have sent you all myne which are loose'.<sup>58</sup>

Elizabeth recorded her own reading in a miscellany, a volume which documents reading as a social practice within the family. The volume itself was used and marked by several women in the family. Elizabeth's mother Dorothy had originally used it for notes on sermons and her own reading, and her sister Mary at a young age signed the front and rear flyleaves.<sup>59</sup> It also contains forty-odd pages of extracts from books and altered forms of poems in Elizabeth's hand. Victoria Burke has identified the sources of many of these, which include versions of poems by William Browne of Tavistock, Henry Wotton and Walter Raleigh, as well as prayers and other excerpts from Foxe's *Martyrs*, Du Bartas's *Divine Weeks and Works*, and Peter Heylyn's *Cosmographie*.<sup>60</sup> The miscellany bears further witness to the collaborative intellectual relationship between Elizabeth and her father. Elizabeth transcribed in it a list of twenty-eight titles which

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<sup>54</sup> TB to Elizabeth Lyttelton, Oct 1681, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 201.

<sup>55</sup> TB to Elizabeth Lyttelton, Jun 1681, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 197.

<sup>56</sup> TB to EB, 20 Jun 1681, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 198.

<sup>57</sup> TB to EB, 25 Apr 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 102.

<sup>58</sup> TB to EB, 13 Aug 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 29. See chapter 5 below for Elizabeth's contributions to the library's collection of drawings.

<sup>59</sup> 'Lyttelton Miscellany', Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 8460. Dorothy's use of the volume is discussed further below.

<sup>60</sup> Burke, 'Contexts for women's manuscript miscellanies', pp. 320-323.

she had read to her father ‘at nights’, together with ‘some hundreds of sermons’ and ‘Many other Books, Treatises, discourses of several kinds’.<sup>61</sup> These occasions of shared reading were sufficiently important to Browne for him to make a list of the works read, and to Elizabeth for her to copy that list into her own notebook. Browne also described them in his letters to Edward (‘Your sister Betty hath read unto mee Mr Ricauts historie of the 3 last Turkish emperours’).<sup>62</sup> Burke goes so far as to suggest that Elizabeth’s own reading habits as manifested in her commonplace book reflect her father’s interests, particularly in her transcription of a Turkish prayer and extracts of Elizabethan history.<sup>63</sup> The traces of Elizabeth’s reading show a close relationship with her father and the Browne library which mirrors that of her elder brother.

The commonplace book mentioned above also contains a record of the reading of Thomas Browne’s wife, Dorothy. The volume has been reversed, and written in from both ends. Rebecca Bullard recently identified the hand writing at the other end of the volume from Elizabeth Lyttelton to be that of her mother Dorothy.<sup>64</sup> Bullard’s work on the volume effectively counters the characterization of Dorothy as sweet but well-nigh illiterate, but it also adds to our knowledge of her relationship to the books in the Browne library, which J.S. Finch had reduced to dusting.<sup>65</sup> Dorothy used the commonplace book to record nine sermons that she heard in Norwich in the mid- to

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<sup>61</sup> ‘Lyttelton Miscellany’, Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 8460, pp. 44-45.

<sup>62</sup> TB to EB, 21 Dec 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 145.

<sup>63</sup> Burke, ‘Contexts for women’s manuscript miscellanies’, p. 320. It should be noted that Burke assumes the absolute reliability of the 1711 catalogue as a record of Browne’s library holdings when checking the titles references in the miscellany against it, p. 322.

<sup>64</sup> Rebecca Bullard, ‘“A bright Coelestiall Mind”: a new set of writings by Lady Dorothy Browne (1621-1685)’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), pp. 99-122.

<sup>65</sup> Bullard quotes Geoffrey Keynes on Dorothy Browne as too preoccupied with maternal cares to have mastered the art of spelling, p. 101. As quoted above, Finch writes that ‘perhaps Dorothy was glad to be rid of so many volumes needing dusting’, *Catalogue*, p. 12. It is clear from Dorothy’s notes that she was summarising the sermons she had heard from memory after having heard them in church. For instance, from ‘Mr Philips his sermon in Romanes i.3.4’: ‘first he spake of the high misteries unfolded in the text: and how unable hee should bee to declare thus things which the Angells desierd to looke into’, MS Add. 8460, p. 170.

late-1650s, and to transcribe verses of scripture and passages from her reading.<sup>66</sup> As Bullard points out, in contrast to Elizabeth's use of the volume, Dorothy's entries are all on religious subjects, and have 'a remarkable consistency of tone and purpose'.<sup>67</sup> Bullard suggests that Dorothy's use of this volume is proof of her religious and political conservatism, given the nature of the extracts she made from Jeremy Taylor's works, and the positions of the preachers she transcribes (including St Peter Mancroft's incumbent from 1654, John Boatman, and possibly some ministers ejected under the Protectorate).<sup>68</sup> But the notes come from a relatively short period of Dorothy's life, and may only represent a fragment of her reading. Because they lived in the same house, we have no paper record of the ways in which Browne and his wife might have shared their reading and responded to each other, but we can be sure that Dorothy Browne read many of the books with which she shared a home.

The Browne family correspondence and the notebooks in which they recorded their reading reveal the library as a shared resource supporting their intellectual collaboration. Such evidence strengthens the case made in chapter 2 proposing that the library manifested in the 1711 catalogue reflected the interests and activities of more individuals than Thomas Browne alone, and that books were retained by family members other than Edward after Thomas's death. For instance, there is no coincidence between books read by Dorothy and noted in her commonplace book, and the books listed in the 1711 catalogue (a discrepancy which Bullard attributes to the gift of these books to Dorothy's daughters rather than to Edward).<sup>69</sup> Each member of the Browne family had his or her own reading habits, as well as responding to the influence of Thomas Browne as *paterfamilias*. Consequently there were peripheral holdings of titles in the home remote from Browne's own interests. Browne's

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<sup>66</sup> Bullard, "A bright Coelestiall Mind", p. 104. The role of Bible reading and excerpting as a form of lay devotion amongst women in the seventeenth century is increasingly recognised by scholars. Kate Narveson points to the commonness of manuscripts like Browne's by the mid-seventeenth century, and the consequent distribution and repetition of sermons within the household, *Bible readers and lay writers in early modern England: gender and self-definition in an emergent writing culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 5-6, 199-201.

<sup>67</sup> Bullard, "A bright Coelestiall Mind", p. 104.

<sup>68</sup> Bullard, "A bright Coelestiall Mind", pp. 108-111.

<sup>69</sup> Bullard, "A bright Coelestiall Mind", p. 120, n. 55.



description of Elizabeth's reading shows that she had her own closet for studying, and it emphasises the physical discomfort that such reading entailed, as closets or 'inward rooms' were squeezed between chambers or at the corners of the house, without their own hearths. Dorothy's reading in its dedication to a single, contemplative purpose also implies solitary study, and we may assume that she too (at least in the 1650s) had her own closet.<sup>70</sup> Susie West, in her examination of the architecture of country house libraries in seventeenth-century Norfolk, offers a useful model for the patterns of book ownership within a family in which the household study, containing the principal book collection of the house, is coeval with private closets.<sup>71</sup> Books stored in the closets were more strongly associated with a particular family member and less open of access than those in a study or library, but the main library collection exerted a gravitational pull, so that mothers', sisters' and sons' closet collections become absorbed into the main inherited collection upon their death.<sup>72</sup> The discrepancies between the books known to have belonged to Browne family members and the library catalogued in 1711 suggest that this process of absorption was not comprehensive, but West's model of the coexistence of individual book collections and one central shared collection without definite division between them is an apt one. The Brownes' letters and journals describe a library whose books were not contained within a single room, but migrated around the home according to their readers' autonomous and mutual needs.

Elizabeth's miscellany is proof of the family's participation in a wider kin circle of reading and writing. The inclusion of transcriptions of family epitaphs (including those of her mother Dorothy and her nephew William Fairfax); of Thomas Flatman's poem celebrating her brother Edward's Continental travels; and of anagrams on

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<sup>70</sup> Bullard argues that the absence of Dorothy's children, or of her husband's concerns in the late 1650s (when he was composing *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus*) from her sermon and reading notes in MS Add 8460 reveals the notebook itself to be 'a space apart from domestic and familial concerns'. "A bright Coelestiall Mind", p. 107.

<sup>71</sup> Susie West, 'An architectural typology for the early modern country house library, 1660-1720', *The Library*, 6th series, 14 (2013), pp. 441-464 (p. 448).

<sup>72</sup> West, 'An architectural typology', p. 462. The availability of books associated with the space of an individual family member to other members of the household is argued by Hackel, who draws on the example of Abraham Cowley, who as a child read the copy of Spenser that lived in his mother's parlour. Hackel, *Reading material in early modern England*, p. 210.

Lyttelton's married and maiden names which, it has been suggested, were written by her kinsman Edward Tenison around the time of her marriage, indicate the use of the volume for family literary activity.<sup>73</sup> Burke explicitly places the manuscript within a tradition of women's miscellanies produced, not at court, university or the tavern, but in the context of the extended family.<sup>74</sup> Lyttelton later gifted the commonplace book to Tenison, thus ensuring its survival within the circle of cousins that had contributed to it.<sup>75</sup> Through it, the texts of the books in Browne's household are seen read, excerpted, digested, and rearranged — and finally redistributed, as the volume was shared amongst her cousins, who gave anagrams and other verse to it and finally inherited it. Another kinsman, Thomas Tenison, who, with Elizabeth, played a key role in the management of Browne's literary remains, forms a further strand in the family network around the library. Edward described an occasion on which he read a sermon to his sister Anne, 'Madam Fairfax', her future mother-in-law, and 'my dear sister Cotterell': in this instance, a shared act of reading reinforced the family ties created by marriage.<sup>76</sup> The sharing of data, texts and books, as extracts and observations via letters and journals, or in the form of printed books, was embedded in the social and affectionate cords that bound the Brownes and their kin together.

*Books in the city: Norwich, its libraries and its readers*

The Browne library operated fluidly, its contents and its spaces moving to respond to the needs of a family group. Like a cell, the book collection was not confined to these internal exchanges, but interacted with its immediate environment: the active book scene in the city of Norwich. Seventeenth-century Norwich had a flourishing book trade, and since most of the book dealers and printers operated in the parish of St

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<sup>73</sup> Burke, 'Contexts for women's manuscript miscellanies', pp. 323-4.

<sup>74</sup> Burke, 'Contexts for women's manuscript miscellanies', p. 317.

<sup>75</sup> Burke, 'Contexts for women's manuscript miscellanies', p. 318.

<sup>76</sup> Edward Browne, journal for 1663-4, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 51. Wilkin identifies 'my sister Cotterell' as one of Thomas Browne's daughters, married to Sir Charles Cotterell (1615-1701). Wilkin does not identify the daughter, and no record of such a marriage is mentioned by Roderick Clayton in 'Sir Charles Cotterell (1615-1701)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2014). Accessed online. Nor is a connection to the Cotterell family mentioned by Keynes. It must be assumed that Edward uses the phrase loosely, perhaps to refer to one of Cotterell's daughters, or to one of his own sisters staying at Cotterell's house (where a couple of days later he visits to take his leave, p. 52).

Peter Mancroft (which included the marketplace and Browne's home from 1650 until his death), Browne would have passed booksellers' stalls whenever he left his front door.<sup>77</sup> The following section outlines the libraries in Norwich and their possible connections to Browne, suggesting that although little direct evidence of his involvement with them survives, they nonetheless formed a critical background to his intellectual activities. The proximity of these collections and Browne's relationships with many of the characters engaged in book ownership in Norwich make it reasonable to suppose his participation in Norwich's book culture. The consequence was the availability to Browne of libraries with varied holdings, so that his reading, and that of his family, could go far beyond the books that had come into their formal possession through exchanges of purchase or donation.

Most of the libraries in Norwich were associated with its ecclesiastical institutions: episcopal libraries, parish libraries, and the Norwich City Library, which was founded for the benefit of preachers. The fortunes of all these libraries fluctuated over the course of the seventeenth century, but the 1650s and 1660s saw contributions from a range of Norwich's citizens, drawn from different social groups and professing a range of religious allegiances. The cathedral itself was without a library between 1574 and 1681, when it was re-established through the initiative of Humphrey Prideaux, newly appointed a canon.<sup>78</sup> Norwich's seventeenth-century bishops kept and maintained their own private libraries. It can be reasonably assumed that Browne had access to these, though Finch is in error when he names Richard Corbett as one of the bishops to have opened his library to Browne, since Browne arrived in Norwich in 1637, and Corbett had died two years earlier.<sup>79</sup> Corbett's successor, Joseph Hall, was a close friend of Browne's and his library was probably accessible to and influential for

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<sup>77</sup> Stoker, 'The Norwich book trades, p. 89, and Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 262.

<sup>78</sup> David Stoker, 'Local library provision: I, Norwich' in *The Cambridge history of libraries, vol. II*, ed. Mandelbrote and Manley, pp. 264-274 (p. 264).

<sup>79</sup> Finch, *Catalogue*, p. 1. It is generally accepted that Browne moved to Norwich following his incorporation as DM at Oxford on 10 July that year. See Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 260 and Robin Robbins, 'Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2014). Accessed online.

Browne.<sup>80</sup> Hall's books were sequestered in 1643, but were successfully secured for his use by members of his congregation, and presumably moved with him to the village of Heigham in 1647 when he was forced out of the bishop's palace.<sup>81</sup> That he continued his scholarly endeavours into his last years suggests that some if not all of his books travelled with him to Heigham.<sup>82</sup> Browne treated Hall in his final illness at Heigham, only a few miles west of Norwich, and its rector, Browne's 'loyal and faithful friend' John Whitefoot, preached Hall's funeral sermon.<sup>83</sup> Hall's successor, Edward Reynolds, had been a leader of the moderate presbyterian party at the Restoration, and was also a character Browne found sympathetic: 'of singular affability, meekness and humility, of great learning'.<sup>84</sup> Relatively little has survived of the libraries of either Hall or Reynolds, but David Pearson's survey of the contents of English bishops' libraries in the first half of the century gives an idea of their likely contents, describing collections of books chiefly in Latin, and printed on the continent; even-handed in their inclusion of material from across the sectarian divides; and including copies of the church fathers, Aristotle and Plato, classical historians, Aquinas, and the Continental reformers, amongst whom the Calvinists tended to feature more prominently than the Lutherans.<sup>85</sup> Hall's library must have been shaped along these lines. Of Reynolds' library most traces have disappeared, though there are some intriguing survivals including a fifteenth-century Wycliffite Bible.<sup>86</sup> Some connection between the Browne library and the episcopal book collections may have outlived

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<sup>80</sup> For Browne's relationship with Hall, see Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, pp. 290-91. Browne describes Hall in *Repertorium* as 'A person of singular humility, patience and pietie; his owne works are the best monument, and character of himself'; *Repertorium*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, p. 134.

<sup>81</sup> Richard A. McCabe, 'Joseph Hall, 1574-1656', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2014). Accessed online.

<sup>82</sup> For instance, *Resolutions and Decisions of Divers Practicall Cases of Conscience* (1649), *The Revelation Unrevealed* (1649), and *The Invisible World* (1652). McCabe, 'Joseph Hall'. Accessed online.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas Browne, *Repertorium*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, p. 134. The funeral sermon was published as *Israel Agchithanes: Death's alarum, or, The presage of approaching death* (1656).

<sup>84</sup> Thomas Browne, *Repertorium*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, p. 134.

<sup>85</sup> David Pearson, 'The libraries of the English bishops, 1600-1640', *The Library*, 6th series, 14 (1992), pp. 221-257 (pp. 228-230).

<sup>86</sup> Now at University of Manchester Library, English MS 81.

Browne: a manuscript of *Repertorium* was listed in the library of Bishop John Moore (1691-1707) in 1697.<sup>87</sup>

The lack of a cathedral library suggests a dearth of literary resources available to pious readers in Norwich at the second half of the century, but there were signs of life amid the small parish libraries. The library at Browne's parish church, St Peter Mancroft, was one of the largest, kept in the north porch. It was considered substantial enough in 1682 to warrant the purchase of 'a booke to make a catalogue of ye bookes in ye library' although the books recorded in it numbered only sixty-four.<sup>88</sup> The library's contents (as recorded in the 1690s) include some titles of high scholarship, including Buxtorf's *Concordantiae Bibliorum Hebraicae* and Aquinas's commentaries on the Gospels and the Epistles in Latin, in addition to two thirteenth-century Bibles. On the other hand some of the later donations included works of more general interest for a non-specialist audience, including a copy of Petrarch's works and Gesner's *De quadripedibus*.<sup>89</sup> Expenses at St Peter's during the 1640s and 1650s show the library space being used for convivial gatherings and meetings, and although it would be pushing the evidence too far to conclude these were literary in nature, they may imply the presence of an active and sociable book culture in the parish.<sup>90</sup> Stronger evidence of communal book consumption comes from the list of donors to the library, amongst whom are several names with whom Browne had professional associations. Alexander Anguish, from whom Browne purchased his house in St Peter Mancroft, gave two books. Dr William Rant, the physician who was consulted by Browne and their

<sup>87</sup> Edward Bernard, *Catalogi librorum MSS. Angliae & Hiberniae* (Oxford, 1697), p. 373, item 9621.

<sup>88</sup> Stoker, 'Local library provision', p. 264, and Michael Perkin, *A directory of the parochial libraries in the Church of England and the Church in Wales* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 2004), p. 308. The creation of a catalogue for such a small collection says more about the parishioners' sense of the symbolic importance of their books and the communal origin of the collection, or the need to account for their assets, than the need to maintain order and ensure retrievability.

<sup>89</sup> Michael Perkin, *Directory of parochial libraries*, p. 308 and Walter Rye, 'St Peter Mancroft, Norwich: its parish history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' in *Norfolk antiquarian miscellany*, ed. by Walter Rye, vol. II, pp. 321-363.

<sup>90</sup> The parish's accounts for the seventeenth century were published by Rye, in 'St Peter Mancroft, Norwich: its parish history', pp. 344-346. Expenses under the heading of 'books and library' consist mostly of new prayer books and service books, but in 1647 money was spent on a pair of bellows and andirons for the library, and in 1653 £5 were spent 'For beere, and wine, and tobacco, and pipes, and candell spent in the library amongst the p[ari]shioners and minister at several meetings'.

colleague Samuel Bave on the treatment of Sir Charles Le Gros,<sup>91</sup> and who communicated with Samuel Hartlib on Browne's work as a natural philosopher, made a donation of one book.<sup>92</sup> The Myngay family, whom Browne had treated as patients, gave seven books between them.<sup>93</sup> And the minister at St Peter's, John Carter, donated three books and a desk.

The absence of a cathedral library was to some extent balanced by the presence of the Norwich City Library. Founded in 1608 with the support of the City Corporation, and intended to offer a shared resource for the clergy of the city for the better fulfilment of their duty of sermon preaching, by the 1650s the City Library had fallen into disuse and disrepair.<sup>94</sup> But after John Carter had pointedly revoked the bequest of his books to the City Library due to its closure to readers, a new regime was initiated by John Collinges in 1657. Despite its roots in Collinges's presbyterian leanings, the reinvigorated Library's membership soon represented the full range of confessional tendencies amongst the clergymen of Norwich.<sup>95</sup> John Whitefoot, who managed to be close friends with the fiery Collinges as well as with the deprived bishop Joseph Hall, was a lifelong member and active donor.<sup>96</sup> The list of donations to the Library strengthens the case for an engaged and developed literary culture in Norwich. The list demonstrates involvement across Norwich society, from Bishop Reynolds (19 books), to William Oliver the bookseller (2 books), Thomasina Brooke, the widow of

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<sup>91</sup> Whittle and Griffiths, *Consumption and gender*, p. 107.

<sup>92</sup> Rant features as 'our common friend' in Browne's correspondence with Bave, 24 Apr 1642, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 243. The letter from William Rant to Samuel Hartlib, 1 Sep 1651, is at Sheffield University Library, Hartlib Papers 62/27/1a-4b. Transcription by the Hartlib Papers Project. Accessed online.

<sup>93</sup> The Myngays were one of the families apparently treated by Thomas Browne when in Norwich and by Edward when in London, and thus appear relatively frequently in their correspondence; e.g. TB to EB, 27 Dec 1678, 16 Mar 1680/1, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 89 and 188. Antony Myngay was also one of the witnesses to Browne's will; ed. Keynes (1964), vol. IV, p. 403.

<sup>94</sup> Wilkin-Jones, 'Introduction', *Norwich City Library*, pp. 7-9.

<sup>95</sup> David Stoker, 'Doctor Collinges and the revival of Norwich City Library, 1657-1664', *Library History*, 5 (1980), pp. 73-84 (p. 75).

<sup>96</sup> Wilkin-Jones, 'Introduction', *Norwich City Library*, p. 50.

William Brooke (22 books), and John Mann, alderman (21 books).<sup>97</sup> The donors to the St Peter Mancroft library can also be found contributing to the City Library. The records of the Library show donations arriving from individuals and the exchange of books between personally owned collections and the City Library. Such traffic hints at the origins of book gifts in private libraries in homes around seventeenth-century Norwich.<sup>98</sup> For instance, John Stinnet, rector of St John Maddermarket, returned a volume that had wandered from the City Library into his own collection together with seven books of his own by way of apology.<sup>99</sup> John Whitefoot donated his copy of Johannes Baco's works and in return purchased the duplicate copy of Epiphanius; Collinges gave thirty-eight folio volumes from his own library in exchange for the second duplicate copy of the Walton polyglot Bible.<sup>100</sup> The Library's accounts reinforce the sociable nature of Norwich reading. Upon its revival in 1657, subscription money went towards the purchase of pipes and tobacco for the members.<sup>101</sup> Collinges was so instrumental in the rehabilitation of the Library that he gained a reputation for expertise in library matters and was asked by Sir Henry Hobart to advise on the sale of his library.<sup>102</sup> The Hobarts, as cousins of Dorothy Browne, form another connection between Browne and the city's literary networks of which Collinges was a nexus.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Wilkin-Jones, ed., *The minutes, donation book and catalogue of Norwich City Library*, pp. 207-217. Edward Reynolds appears as donation 72, William Oliver 65, Thomasina Brooke 53, John Mann 61. It is indicative of the sectarian flexibility of Norwich's book culture that Oliver was, at the same time as making gifts to the presbyterian-leaning City Library, publishing violently anti-Presbyterian sermons; see Stoker, 'Doctor Collinges and the revival of Norwich City Library', p. 80.

<sup>98</sup> In a survey of 950 household inventories to survive for Norwich between 1584 and 1675, one in five include a few books, and many of those had several. John Pound, 'Government to 1660' in *Norwich since 1550*, ed. by Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), pp. 35-62 (p. 49).

<sup>99</sup> Stoker, 'Doctor Collinges and the revival of Norwich City Library', p. 76.

<sup>100</sup> Stoker, 'Doctor Collinges and the revival of Norwich City Library', pp. 77-78. The number of books Collinges was prepared to give for a copy of the Walton polyglot points to the difficulties of obtaining particular titles via the book trade, alluded to above.

<sup>101</sup> Stoker, 'Doctor Collinges and the revival of Norwich City Library', p. 75.

<sup>102</sup> Susie West, 'The development of libraries in Norfolk country houses, 1660-1830', unpublished PhD dissertation (University of East Anglia, 2000) p. 116.

<sup>103</sup> Stoker, 'Doctor Collinges and the revival of Norwich City Library', p. 79.

In spite of his associations with the bookish community around the Norwich City Library, Browne never joined the library, failing to follow the example of other Norwich physicians like John Ellsworth and Simon Blenkarne.<sup>104</sup> Only one transaction between Browne and the City Library has been recorded, although the dynamism of the library in the 1650s and 1660s, and Browne's links with the men administering it and contributing to it, strengthen the possibility of his association with it. Browne made a single donation to the library — an early seventeenth-century Plantin edition of Justus Lipsius in eight folio volumes, recorded in the library's minute book for 14 May 1666. Two quarto editions of *Religio Medici* and *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* appear with the Lipsius in the library's c.1707 catalogue, but in a different hand, so they were given at a later date, and perhaps after Browne's death.<sup>105</sup> The City Library would have been able to offer Browne resources in return. Whilst it was small in comparison to Browne's collection (200 titles in 1635, reaching 937 by 1706), the quality of the books was very high, and the two collections can be seen as complementary. The City Library collection was strong in areas in which Browne's library appears to be comparatively weak. The Library had a good Hebrew section, particularly dictionaries, translations and commentaries. Calvin and his English followers (William Perkins, William Ames, Richard Rogers, John Dod, George Webbe and William Bradshaw) were all well represented, as were writers on Arminianism, Socinianism, and the rule of bishops.<sup>106</sup> Part of the purpose of the City Library was to enable its subscribers to access expensive editions they would not have been able to afford individually. The multiple copies of two polyglot editions of the Bible (the Antwerp polyglot edited by Arias Montano and Walton's polyglot of 1657) are examples of this. In spite of its size, Norwich City Library was the most significant collection of theological titles in Norwich. Such distinguished and communal libraries were ones to which the Brownes' collection responded, as models and as alternative sources of books.

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<sup>104</sup> Wilkin-Jones, 'Introduction', *Norwich City Library*, p. 40.

<sup>105</sup> Wilkin-Jones, ed., *The minutes, donation book and catalogue of Norwich City Library*, p. 73, serial numbers 326, 327, and 328-335.

<sup>106</sup> Wilkin-Jones, 'Introduction', *Norwich City Library*, pp. 13-23.



*A world of curiosities: libraries in Norfolk*

Norfolk's aristocracy had a long and rich history of collecting and reading as well as writing books. A collection of books was first recorded at the Townshend manor of Raynham in 1483.<sup>107</sup> Amongst the libraries in seventeenth-century Norfolk, Sir Thomas Knyvett's of 1407 titles (in 1617) is the best known example.<sup>108</sup> The Paston library had reached 4500 volumes by the time it was sold in 1734 (after several decades of financial doldrums for the family). Whittle and Griffiths estimate that Sir Hamon L'Estrange's library numbered well over a thousand volumes by his death in 1654.<sup>109</sup> Other Norfolk aristocratic collections for which we have any record of size tended to hover in the low hundreds. These include the libraries of the Hobarts of Blickling (an inventory of 1676 lists 380 titles, though the probate inventory of Sir Henry Hobart lists 1100 in 1698); Sir Ralph Hare of Stow Bardolph (whose probate suggests a collection of around 200 books); Erasmus and Francis Earle of Heydon Hall (the probate of Francis Earle in 1671 lists 51 books); and Sir Roger Pratt at Ryston, who designed a library capable of holding around 400 volumes.<sup>110</sup> Book collections are known to have existed at many of those country houses visited by Browne in the course of his work as a physician, including the Cokes of Holkham Hall, the Buxtons of Channonz Hall, the Townshends at Raynham, and the Windhams at Felbrigg.<sup>111</sup> Some of these clients were also kinsmen, such as John Hobart;<sup>112</sup> others, like the L'Estranges and the Knyvetts, were prepared to pay him to travel long distances to give

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<sup>107</sup> West, 'The development of libraries in Norfolk country houses, 1660-1830', p. 7.

<sup>108</sup> J.T. Cliffe, *The world of the country house in seventeenth-century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 164, and David McKitterick, *The library of Sir Thomas Knyvett of Ashwellthorpe, c. 1539-1618* (Cambridge, 1978).

<sup>109</sup> Whittle and Griffiths, *Consumption and gender*, p. 198.

<sup>110</sup> Details of Norfolk libraries have been taken from David Pearson, *English book owners in the seventeenth century: a work in progress listing* (The Bibliographical Society, online publications: 2007, December 2013 version).

<sup>111</sup> For notes on Browne's clients amongst the Norfolk aristocracy in the 1650s, see Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, pp. 326-7.

<sup>112</sup> See TB to John Hobart, Aug 1654 and 31 Aug 1654, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 382-384.

treatment.<sup>113</sup> Browne's learning was an aspect of his character that his local friends felt compelled to record. His nephew by marriage Thomas Townshend wrote on his death that 'All scholars allow him to have the most curious Learning of all sorts & that his equal is not left'.<sup>114</sup> John Whitefoot wrote that 'he had read most of the Historians, Antient and Modern, wherin his Observations were singular, not taken Notice of by Common readers, he was Excellent Company when he was at leisure', thereby associating Browne's genius for literary fossicking with his stimulating conversation.<sup>115</sup> The readerly interactions thus memorialised were founded on a range of associations, amicable, professional, and scientific.

Browne participated in a learned aristocratic circle which devoted its energies to reading together, visiting each others' libraries and cabinets, exchanging gifts, and endorsing the learned and civil reputations of their acquaintances. Visiting local friends gave access to a network of country houses overflowing with books and treasures. Sir William Paston's travels to Cairo and Jerusalem in 1639-40 allowed him to gather a hoard of curiosities at Oxnead which he shared with his neighbours. His cousin Thomas Knyvett wrote to his wife that 'I might spend another week [at Oxnead] & not see all the rarities. Indeed heer is a world of curiosities'.<sup>116</sup> The frequency of such visits is recorded in Alice L'Estrange's accounts, which show her husband Sir Hamon tipping servants in at least nine other households each year, including the Hares at Stowe Bardolph, the Hobarts of Blickling, and the Townshends of Stiffkey and Raynham.<sup>117</sup> Each visit provided opportunities to explore each others' book collections and to share experiences. Browne called on the families he treated and through him Edward had the same opportunities, staying as a young man with his

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<sup>113</sup> Sir Hamon and Alice L'Estrange employed William Rant of Norwich as their primary physician, and additionally consulted with Thomas Browne, despite the inconvenience of the considerable distance between Norwich and Hunstanton. See Whittle and Griffiths, *Consumption and gender*, p. 107 for the L'Estranges' medical expenses.

<sup>114</sup> Thomas Townshend to Horatio, Lord Townshend, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes in *A bibliography of Sir Thomas Browne*, p. vi.

<sup>115</sup> Whitefoot, 'Some minutes', pp. xxviii-xxix.

<sup>116</sup> Thomas Knyvett to his wife, 8 Feb 1639/40, cited by Robert Wenley, 'Robert Paston and *The Yarmouth Collection*', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 41:2 (1991), pp. 113-144 (p. 115).

<sup>117</sup> Whittle and Griffiths, *Consumption and gender*, p. 193.

father's friend Charles Le Gros in Crostwight, where he 'had a great deal of discourse with [him], about his travails into France, the Low Countreys, and Italy, and about his pilgrimage to Loretto, and of the treasure which is in that place'.<sup>118</sup> Edward's 1663/4 journal described another, exceptional aristocratic collection accessible to him and his father: that of the Duke of Norfolk, inherited from Thomas, Earl of Arundel (1585-1646), a portion of which came with the duke to Norwich for the Christmas of 1663.<sup>119</sup> Browne was visited in turn by bookish men like Sir John Knyvett and Sir Philip Gawdie (both Norfolk landowners), who were so well versed in Horace and Juvenal that 'they never came butt they would have 2 or 3 howers discourse with mee about them'.<sup>120</sup> The correspondence between Browne and William Paston's son Sir Robert shows Browne fully participating in the civil exchange of information, books and gifts. In September 1662 Paston sent Browne the British and Saxon coins from his collection, together with a ring with a cameo of the head of Vespasian. Paston asked to borrow Browne's two manuscripts of material by Theodore de Mayerne in return.<sup>121</sup> Another gift of books to Browne is implied by the material evidence of some incunables from Browne's library, purchased at the 1711 sale by Sir Hans Sloane, and now in the British Library.<sup>122</sup> The four incunables bear the ownership inscriptions of Timothy Burrage, a Norwich man who became family tutor in the household of Sir Nicholas Bacon of Gillingham.<sup>123</sup> These are the vestiges of a network linked by visits,

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<sup>118</sup> Edward Browne, journal for 1663-4, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 49.

<sup>119</sup> 'I have seen of his pictures which are admirable; hee hath prints and draughts done by most of the great masters' own hands. Stones and jewells, as onyxes, sardonxyes, jacinths, jaspers, amethysts, &c. more and better than any prince in Europe', Edward Browne, journal for 1663/4, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 44. He saw 'Cornwall's collection of cuts' later in January, p. 47.

<sup>120</sup> TB to EB, 12 Jan 1680/1, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 179.

<sup>121</sup> Robert Paston to TB, 19 Sep 1662, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 409.

<sup>122</sup> SC 10/74, now BL, IA.47835, IA.4852, IA.47843 and IA.47828. See chapter 2 for further description of the incunables in this lot and their identification in the Sloane collection. I am grateful to John Goldfinch for his help with the identification of these copies at the British Library. John Goldfinch, 'Sloane's incunables' in *From books to bezoars: Sir Hans Sloane and his collections*, ed. by Michael Hunter, Alison Walker, and Arthur MacGregor (London: British Library, 2012), pp. 208-220 (p. 211, and n. 27).

<sup>123</sup> See John Venn, compiler, *Alumni cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge from the earliest times to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), part I, vol. I, p. 261, for the identification of Timothy Burrage.

viewings of collections, exchanges and loans, through which information and its physical vehicles flowed.

Correspondence discussing books consolidated the relationships initiated by Browne's professional care. The scholarly and medical aspects of Browne's reading went hand-in-hand in his exchange with Sir Hamon L'Estrange, in which the merits of different treatments for gallstones were discussed. L'Estrange sent Browne a list of the therapies he had already attempted for gallstones, including a list of his sources, among which were Elizabeth Grey's *A choice manual of rare and select secrets in physick and chyrurgy* (1653) and a 'week book by one Isaac Playford'.<sup>124</sup> He summarised for Browne his own experience of their effectiveness and asked him to respond to each in turn. This letter from a chronically ill patient was also an approach from an intellectual comrade, accompanied as it was by L'Estrange's manuscript response to Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*. L'Estrange's sense of the 'excellency' of the learning displayed in *Pseudodoxia* must have reinforced his respect for Browne's virtues as a medical advisor.

Two of Browne's Norfolk friends made very specialised contributions to his collection, being engaged in the sharing of the occult knowledge of alchemy between recognised adepts. Alchemy prompted some of the most significant donations to and from Browne's library. Arthur Dee, the eldest son of the Elizabethan magus and polymath John Dee, was a close friend of Browne's in Norwich, and spent much of his energies in later life trying to reassemble his father's dispersed library. Dee discoursed with Browne on alchemical projections and gave him a collection of alchemical manuscripts that Browne later lent to Elias Ashmole, an obsessive acquirer of all scraps relating to John Dee.<sup>125</sup> Browne's role in the circulation of alchemical materials in Norfolk is also evident in his relationship with Sir Robert Paston, the son of William and inheritor of Oxnead. Paston borrowed alchemical manuscripts from Browne and sent him letters comparing them to print editions ('The manuscript of Dunstan and Benjamin Lock, I

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<sup>124</sup> Hamon L'Estrange to TB, 16 Jun 1653, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 286-287.

<sup>125</sup> Browne's account of the acquisition of these manuscripts appears in his letter to Elias Ashmole, 25 Jan 1657/8, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 294. For more on Arthur Dee as an inheritor of his father's manuscripts, see *John Dee's library catalogue*, ed. Roberts and Watson, pp. 63-64.

find verbatim in print, but not the coronatio naturae, though I have the same figures in another manuscript, without explication upon them').<sup>126</sup> A copy of an extremely rare alchemical roll of emblematic verse and images, 'Ripley's Scrowle', has survived bearing both Dee and Paston provenances.<sup>127</sup> Browne may have functioned as the link between these two owners. Alchemy's apparently clandestine nature and its dependence on knowledge imparted to adepts encouraged the collaborative nature of its study within a select group of Browne's friends.

The strongest assertion of the knowledge sharing amongst the Norfolk aristocracy, and Browne's involvement in that traffic, is Browne's own writing. The works composed after *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* were epistles, more often than not addressed to a Norfolk friend. *Urne Buriall*, Browne's meditation on death, funeral rites, and posthumous fame, was addressed to Thomas Le Gros of Crostwight, son of the Charles Le Gros who had been so generous with his collections and his conversations to Edward Browne. Its sister essay, *The Garden of Cyrus*, was written for the 'discerning judgement' of Nicholas Bacon of Gillingham, and praised the wise ordering of Bacon's 'vegetable delights', with which Browne was clearly familiar.<sup>128</sup> Browne mentioned the Townshend seat Raynham Hall in the margins of his dedicatory letter to Thomas Le Gros, rooting both reader and writer in a shared geographic and social milieu.<sup>129</sup> A *Letter to a Friend* (1690), *Musaeum Clausum* and the other prose pieces published posthumously as *Certain Miscellany Tracts* (1683) were addressed to individual readers. According to John Evelyn, Nicholas Bacon was the chief recipient of these tracts.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Robert Paston to TB, 19 Sep 1662, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 409.

<sup>127</sup> Browne listed a copy of Ripley's Scroll amongst the manuscripts he inherited from Dee in his letter to Ashmole (25 Jan 1657/8, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. IV, p. 294) but it does not appear in the list of manuscripts owned by Edward Browne in Edward Bernard's *Catalogi librorum MSS. Angliae & Hiberniae*, p. 111. Nor is it in the inventory made by Richard Rawlinson after Edward Browne's death. One of the rare surviving copies of the scroll, now at the Wellcome Institute, bears the inscription 'Ex Museo Nob. Com. de Yarmouth', which, in referring to Robert Paston, brings it tantalisingly close to Browne. Ripley Scroll, Wellcome Library, MS 693.

<sup>128</sup> GC, epistle, p. 167.

<sup>129</sup> UB, epistle, p. 131.

<sup>130</sup> Evelyn's copy of the *Miscellany tracts* is now in the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, with his annotations. These include notes by Evelyn of the original dedicatees of individual tracts which were transcribed by Keynes, for instance, p. 49. His attributions are not certain, and have been contested.

Browne's essays offered the fruits gleaned from his reading to his network of friends. They contain passages so dense with bibliographical references that Browne seems to be walking with his reader along the shelves, judiciously introducing examples and anecdotes into the conversation as the books invite him. The opening paragraphs of both *Urne Buriall* and *Garden of Cyrus* read like this. In the first instance, Browne lists methods of 'carnall interment' drawn from the Bible, Homer, ancient and modern scholars, and in the second, he outlines the history of Persian gardens, using Genesis, Plutarch, Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, Cicero, Homer, and the modern scholars Benoît Court and Giambattista della Porta.<sup>131</sup> The effect is strengthened by the inclusion of abbreviated references in marginal notes. In *Urne Buriall*, these include such pointers as 'Gumbrates King of *Chionia* a Countrey near *Persia*. Ammianus Marcellinus.' and 'Arnoldi Montani *not. in Caes. Commentar. L. Gyraldus. Kirkmannus*' [i.e. Giraldi and Kirchmann].<sup>132</sup> Passing anecdotes and classical allusions are used in a similar way, for instance the introduction of the story about the death of 'the great *Antonio*' into *A Letter to a Friend*, which Browne had taken from George Sandys, and 'Juno sat cross-legg'd at his Nativity'.<sup>133</sup> Such tactics encourage the reader into a recognition of common ground, and draw him or her into a satisfying empathy with Browne. These essays give Browne's friends access to the best of his library, without the books having to leave their shelves. The multiple voices assembled in Browne's essays establish a recognition of the common ground shared with his reader. He coaxes his audience into further conversations, both with the authors so expansively cited, and with other readers and friends. Such intertextuality also fabricates an exclusivity analogous to the mysteries of alchemy, creating the 'veil of complexity' identified by Cotterill.<sup>134</sup> But the broad spectrum of political positions held by Browne's circle of clients and correspondents — from the L'Estranges, inciting a Royalist uprising in King's Lynn in 1643, to Browne's actively parliamentarian and later Whig kinsmen, the Hobarts of

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<sup>131</sup> UB, I, pp. 136-7; GC, I, pp. 180-182.

<sup>132</sup> UB, I, p. 136.

<sup>133</sup> LF, pp. 101 and 103. See also Thomas Browne, *The major works*, ed. C. A. Patrides, p. 391, n. 2 for more on George Sandys.

<sup>134</sup> Cotterill, *Digressive voices in early modern England*, p. 142.

Blickling — complicates any alignment of ‘unfriendly’ readers with specific political loyalties.

The local success of Browne’s incitement to scholarly conversation can be seen in Hamon L’Estrange’s response to *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*. L’Estrange’s manuscript takes chapter headings from *Pseudodoxia* (‘Basilisque, etc’, ‘Po: Joan’), summarises Browne’s arguments, and offers criticism that drew on L’Estrange’s own reading.<sup>135</sup> He compares, for instance, Browne’s conclusions on the working of magnets with his interpretation of William Gilbert, who was cited by Browne, and of Robert Norman and William Borough, who were not.<sup>136</sup> Other local responses to Browne’s work came to be printed: in 1656, a fellow Norwich physician, John Robinson published *A Calm Ventilation of ‘Pseudo-doxia epidemica’*, which made earlier conversations between the two doctors (‘what we have in private, without infringing the limits of Amity, more loosely discussed’) public and formal.<sup>137</sup> Robinson’s argument is less burdened with references than *Pseudodoxia* or Browne’s other essays, but he marshals Pythagoras, Aristotle, Scaliger, Athanasius Kircher, Cabeo and Kenelm Digby (among others) in his riposte. Thomas Lawrence discussed with Browne the presence of cockle, mussel and oyster shells in layers deep in the earth, instigated by their discovery in the digging of a well on Sir William D’Oyly’s Norfolk estates. These subterranean findings were analysed by Browne and Lawrence first in conversation (‘which I casually bolted out when you first mentioned it to me’), that Lawrence followed up with a lengthy letter to Browne, and finally had printed, combining his direct observations with proofs taken from Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, Hakewill, Erasmus and the Bible.<sup>138</sup> The cooperation of libraries, their contents, and their readers, is writ large in these neighbourly productions.

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<sup>135</sup> For L’Estrange’s lengthy response to Browne’s doubts over the Pope Joan story, see BL, Sloane MS 1839, ff. 73-89.

<sup>136</sup> Le Strange refers to William Borough’s *Discourse of the variation of the cumpas* and Robert Norman’s *The newe attractive*, which were published together in 1581 (51v).

<sup>137</sup> John Robinson, ‘A Calm Ventilation of “Pseudo-doxia epidemica”’ in *Endoxa, or, some probable inquiries into truth, both divine and humane* (London, 1658), p. 112.

<sup>138</sup> Thomas Lawrence, *Mercurius centralis: or, a discourse of subterranean cockle, muscle, and oyster-shells* (London, 1664), p. 2 and throughout.

*Knowledge sharing beyond Norfolk*

The mechanisms for library sharing within Browne's Norfolk milieu were replicated in his wider scholarly acquaintance. Visits were more difficult to arrange, but gentlemen nonetheless took the trouble to travel to Norwich to call on Dr Browne and to view his collections. One such visitor was Henry Power, Fellow of the Royal Society and author of *Experimental Philosophy* (1664), who left his home in Halifax to see, among other natural specimens, 'the Viper's head, you pleas'd to show mee when I was last at Norwich'.<sup>139</sup> Power also added his mite to Browne's library, in the form of '3 old Spanish bookes I have found of my fathers'.<sup>140</sup> John Evelyn was enticed to Norwich by the Duke of Norfolk partly by the prospect of calling on Browne, with whom he had corresponded, but not met before. Evelyn's meeting with Browne resulted in his thorough and evocative description of Browne's collections as 'a Paradise & Cabinet of rarities, & that of the best collection, especialy Medails, books, Plants, natural things'.<sup>141</sup> John Aubrey paid a visit which was too brief for Browne, but the warmth with which Browne (and, via Browne, his wife and daughters) sends his services indicates a rapport between the two men.<sup>142</sup> The addressee of Browne's *Musaeum Clausum* may have made a similar visit to view his collections: 'Of what in this kind I have by me I shall make no repetition, and you having already had a view thereof'.<sup>143</sup>

In lieu of regular neighbourly contact, Browne's wider scholarly network thrived on the exchange of books and specimens, bibliographical references, and excerpted and digested texts. Among the book gifts was the copy of John Evelyn's *Sculptura* (1662) with an inscription from Evelyn to Browne.<sup>144</sup> Other gifts were sent from Dugdale,

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<sup>139</sup> Henry Power to TB, 28 Aug 1649, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 263.

<sup>140</sup> Henry Power to TB, 10 Feb 1647/8, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 258.

<sup>141</sup> Evelyn, *Diary*, ed. de Beer, 17 Oct 1671, p. 562.

<sup>142</sup> 'I should bee glad to see you in these parts, when I might have more time to enjoy you then your last has afforded me'. TB to John Aubrey, 24 Aug 1672, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 373-375.

<sup>143</sup> MC, p. 109.

<sup>144</sup> Finch, *Catalogue*, p. 19.



Dee, Merrett and Ashmole.<sup>145</sup> Browne made gifts of books and manuscripts in his turn, including to William Lilly and William Paston.<sup>146</sup> In contrast with men like Evelyn and Ashmole, he seems to have felt no need to formalise those donations by making inscriptions, and no remnant of an inscribed Browne gift is currently extant.<sup>147</sup> Natural specimens and drawings further enriched such correspondence. These are detailed in chapter 5 below, but his interaction with his colleague Christopher Merrett is representative. Browne inundated Merrett with specimens, including the desiccated heads of a salmon and a couple of weasels, oak galls ‘as bigge as good Tennis balls’, some fungi, and ‘a few flies’.<sup>148</sup> He also sent Merrett at least twenty-one drawings of fungi, plants, fish, and birds, a number of which later appeared as woodcuts in John Ray’s *Ornithologia* (1676).<sup>149</sup> Nick Grindle has found physical evidence for the continual rearrangement of drawings in the collection belonging to Francis Willughby and John Ray, which, he suggests, is indicative of the fluidity and circulation of such collections, as loans — like that made to Ray and Willughby by Browne — arrived and departed.<sup>150</sup> Browne sent out natural specimens and their paper replications through channels like Merrett to the collections of others, where their data might multiply through publication, and populate further communities of libraries.

Browne’s letters to members of a national community of scholarly acquaintances sometimes followed the fatherly model he practised with his sons. His letters to a

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<sup>145</sup> See chapter 2, above.

<sup>146</sup> Browne had been plotting gifts to William Lilly for some years, eventually writing ‘I find you so hard a student in Astrol., I had thoughts some yeeres past to present some few Astrologie bookes unto you, but finding your librarie in your introduction soe compleat that litle could bee added, I was fayne to deferre such expressions unto better opportunities’. TB to William Lilly, 8 Feb c.1670, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 296.

<sup>147</sup> Giles Mandelbrote calls Evelyn’s persistence in recording his presentation of copies ‘somewhat tiresome’, ‘John Evelyn and his books’, p. 77. It seems safe to assume that if a presentation copy had reached John Evelyn from Browne, Evelyn would have made a note of the donation in the copy. For Ashmole’s tactical presentations of his history of the Order of the Garter, see Josten, ‘Biographical Introduction’ in *Elias Ashmole*, pp. 196-198.

<sup>148</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 1668-1669, pp. 346-355.

<sup>149</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 1668-1669, pp. 343-360.

<sup>150</sup> Nick Grindle, “‘No other sign or note than the very order’”: Francis Willughby, John Ray and the importance of collecting pictures’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 17:1 (2005), pp. 15-22 (p. 16).

young Henry Power, just commencing his medical training, show Browne taking care to direct the manner of Power's reading, advising him to 'betake yourself to Sennertus's *Institutions*, which read with diligence and care two or three times over'.<sup>151</sup> Other letters act as bibliographic guides, condensing his reading, providing references, scattering quotations like seeds for germination. Browne's correspondence with John Evelyn and William Dugdale falls into this category, facilitating the recipients' study rather than presenting a fully fledged argument to persuade.<sup>152</sup> In composing letters that act as bibliographical reference tools, Browne was in good company. They bear comparison, for instance, to the letters Evelyn sent to Samuel Pepys to support the latter's project to write a history of the British navy.<sup>153</sup> But Browne's ability to nose out the prescient details in his reading and to recontextualise them in such a way as to grant his reader space for their own reinvigorated interpretations was something peculiar to him. In an admiring letter, Henry Bates portrayed Browne as the discriminating reader and sharer of a world of books. Bates calls *Religio Medici* a *vade mecum*, a library that will fit into his pocket 'quintessentiated into the spirit of science' and filled 'with more varieties and delights then all the folioes and booke-follies of the time could afford mee'.<sup>154</sup> Letters to Browne contained responses to the reading he presented in his published works, like William Dugdale's request for the exact reference in Leland on Saxon burials as described by Browne in the *Garden of Cyrus*.<sup>155</sup> Indeed, the correspondence between Browne and Dugdale on the archaeological traces of ancient Britain, with its extensive quotation of ancient sources, marginal references, and scrupulous textual analysis of those sources, captures an intense exercise of collaborative reading.<sup>156</sup> Prolific annotations of *Pseudodoxia* by Christopher Wren, dean

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<sup>151</sup> TB to Henry Power, 1646, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 356.

<sup>152</sup> In a similar vein, see Preston's discussion of Browne's contingent style in *Urne Buriall* in contrast with Dugdale's more assertive antiquarian reconstruction, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, p. 133.

<sup>153</sup> Notably John Evelyn to Samuel Pepys, 30 Jan 1680 and 7 Jul 1680, in G. de la Bédoyère, *Particular friends: the correspondence of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 94-96, 103-116.

<sup>154</sup> Henry Bates to TB, 28 Aug 1647, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 353.

<sup>155</sup> William Dugdale to TB, 17 Nov 1658, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 309.

<sup>156</sup> This is particularly evident in the letters of 27 Oct and 11 Dec 1658, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 302-5, 312-16.

of Windsor, show Wren bringing a comparable degree of book learning to his engagement with Browne's texts.<sup>157</sup> The same degree of readerly engagement was shown, though less charitably, by Alexander Ross in *Medicus medicatus* (1645), bringing a range of sources and his own considerable learning to quash Browne's arguments in turn.<sup>158</sup> Similar treatments were brought to the press by Kenelm Digby, in his *Observations on Religio Medici* (1643), and in the annotations on *Religio Medici* by Thomas Keck (1656).<sup>159</sup> Such exchanges, though not always civil, show Browne's letters and publications as points of friction at which the personal libraries of his peers rubbed against each other and gathered energy.

### Conclusions

Just as classical and humanist traditions shaped the rhetoric of book ownership (idealising copiousness and spare sincerity in turn), they dictated how Browne and his peers discussed the space of the library and its sociability. Pliny the Younger had praised his study in a separate pavilion; Machiavelli wrote of the ritual of washing himself and changing his clothes before shutting himself in his closet; Montaigne extolled the virtues of 'solitude and asylum'.<sup>160</sup> Browne participated in this tradition in describing his closeted lucubrations. In contrast, the Roman Stoics warned against solitary study. Early modern commentators took their lead in turning away from self-indulgent 'monastic' isolation at the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>161</sup> But Browne's reading is never isolated, nor dependent on company. He advocated a generous

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<sup>157</sup> These annotations were transcribed and reproduced by Robbins in his edition of *Pseudodoxia*.

<sup>158</sup> Alexander Ross, *Medicus medicatus* (London, 1643). Examples of his range of theological sources can be found, for instance, in Ross's discussion of the Pope's temporal power, pp. 6-7, and of classical sources in his discussion of atheism, pp. 33-35.

<sup>159</sup> Kenelm Digby, *Observations on Religio Medici* (London, 1643), pp. 3-4, 122. Keck's annotations were published with *Religio Medici* from 1656 onwards, and were included in Wilkin's edition, see pp. ix, xxiii-xxvi, and pp. 1-158 in the 1846 edition.

<sup>160</sup> Pliny (letter 2:17) translated by Betty Radice (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 78; Niccolò Machiavelli, quoted in Manguel, *The library at night*, p. 190; Michel de Montaigne, for instance in 'Of three commerces', in *Essays*, translated by Charles Cotton (London, 1685-6), vol. III, pp. 68-69.

<sup>161</sup> John Evelyn was amongst the first in England explicitly to reject solitary learning in favour of 'a company ... of Gentlemen, and Refined Spirits'. John Evelyn, 'To the right honourable Edward, Earl of Clarendon' in Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, trans. Evelyn, p. vi.

learning, modelling his store of knowledge on a museum to be shared rather than entombed — a pattern which can be seen operating in his letters and in the visits, gifts, and loans he and his circles made. His peers Whitefoot, Hall, Collinges and Reynolds were part of a tight-knit bookish community in Norwich that succeeded in operating harmoniously in spite of doctrinal differences: and a lively reading culture is evident in both the Norwich City Library papers and the papers of the Norfolk county families. But Browne also held himself apart, and maintained a certain distance from the library activity around him. Browne's own collection (even if only half the size of that of the 1711 catalogue) was amongst the largest in the county, and yet left very little trace in the archival records outside those of the Browne family. Given the centripetal tendency of book collections, drawing in other literary materials, readers and scholars as they grow in size, the archival silence around the most significant library in Norwich seems all the louder.

The library is not a discrete entity bounded by walls and shelves. The book collections in private hands in seventeenth-century Norfolk were networked. Their contents were shared through physical exchange, through research visits, loans, and conversation. Both within the Browne household and beyond it, the ownership of specific books by individuals was fluid and contingent, often tacitly understood by the community that shared them. Consequently, the degree to which Browne's intellectual activities can be defined or limited by the library in his home is thrown into question. The effect of contact with particular books on an author's writing, in this landscape, cannot be reduced to terms of possession and the record of inventories and sale catalogues. Viewing the culture of reading in this period in terms of physical ownership, with discrete libraries between which books move only by purchase or exchange, masks the more complex, multivalent and fruitful exchange of knowledge gleaned from those books through conversation, letters, and note-taking. Men like Browne were not feasting in solitude on a finite supply of material but engaged in unending dialogue with authors and their fellow readers. They had access to the books on the shelves of their friends and to the reading of those friends that came at second hand — condensed, recontextualised, reinterpreted. Reading is generative and interactive, and the extent to which the interaction moved beyond Browne's interior conversation with

his books to more distant audiences varied with fluctuating social expectations, professional needs, parental cares, and intellectual generosity. Browne described Man's relationship with God in *Pseudodoxia* as umbilical and inseverable, 'one link and common connexion, one general ligament'.<sup>162</sup> The erudite traffic between Browne's mind, his books, his neighbours, and his fellow scholars was equally fluid, connected, and unbroken, even when Browne was alone.

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<sup>162</sup> PE, V:5, pp. 378-379.

## Chapter 4 - Citation and silence: Browne's written work as bibliographical evidence

The frontiers of the book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network.... The book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands: and its unity is variable and relative.<sup>1</sup>

Thus may we perceive the Ancients were but men, even like ourselves. The practice of transcription in our daies was no monster in theirs...<sup>2</sup>

*The Garden of Cyrus* is one of the most referential of Browne's essays. The dedicatory epistle carries no fewer than seven source references in its margins, four of which appear on the first page.<sup>3</sup> The initial paragraph of its first chapter is a flourish of literary comparisons, as Browne surveys Biblical and classical creation myths and the points at which they intersect.<sup>4</sup> In *The Garden of Cyrus*, Browne adopts a rhetorical pose of literariness, leading his addressee into a thicket rather than a quincunx of books. But it is a pose which has provoked intense suspicion in some of Browne's critics. Browne was not the original compiler of all the classical and biblical authorities that he marshalled in his essay, but took references and ideas — occasionally entire pages' worth — from other intermediary authors. Jeremiah Finch, in his essay on *The Garden of Cyrus*, established that the bulk of the material in the first chapter was taken by Browne from Benoît de Court's *Hortorum libri triginti* and Giambattista della Porta's

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *The archaeology of knowledge*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 25-6.

<sup>2</sup> PE, I:6, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia, Urne-Buriall ... together with The Garden of Cyrus* (London: printed for Henry Brome, 1658), fols. A5r-A7r.

<sup>4</sup> GC, I, p. 179.

*Villae*.<sup>5</sup> Finch's language positions him both as Browne's disillusioned admirer and his gleeful assassin. For Finch, the 'bubble of erudition collapses'; Browne is guilty of 'downright pilfering'.<sup>6</sup> His reading is characterised as shallow, consultative, and breezy, and his writing as 'merely filling in', re-hashing, giving an air of learning to an otherwise far-fetched enterprise.<sup>7</sup> Finch has seen through Browne's pretence and wants to pull him off his pedestal.

Browne's own thoughts on plagiarism are more complicated, and, whilst apparently inconsistent, are a necessary counterpoint to Finch's dismay. In Book I of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, Browne observes the widespread borrowing of material amongst the ancients, both in the fields of literature ('To omit how much of the wittiest piece of *Ovid* is beholden unto *Parthenius Chius*; even the magnified *Virgil* hath borrowed, almost in all his Works') and medicine ('Thus *Oribasius*, *Ætius*, and *Ægineta*, have in a manner transcribed *Galen*').<sup>8</sup> Later in the same chapter he wishes that 'men were not still content to plume themselves with others Feathers. Fear of discovery, not single ingenuity affords Quotations rather than Transcriptions'.<sup>9</sup> Whilst Browne is very conscious of plagiarism, his argument here is turned in on itself, since he has himself borrowed most of his examples of literary and scientific textual appropriation from Claude Saumaise.<sup>10</sup> The significances of plagiarism or appropriation for Browne, in this instance and elsewhere in his writing, almost defy interpretation. It is unlikely that he was unconscious of the irony in the passage.<sup>11</sup> He might have intended his silent borrowing as a recondite joke to amuse himself and perhaps a few readers

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<sup>5</sup> J.S. Finch, 'Sir Thomas Browne and the quincunx', *Studies in philology*, 37:2 (1940), pp. 274-282 (p. 275).

<sup>6</sup> Finch, 'Sir Thomas Browne and the quincunx', pp. 275, 282.

<sup>7</sup> Finch, 'Sir Thomas Browne and the quincunx'. See, for instance, p. 277.

<sup>8</sup> PE, I:6, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> PE, I:6, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> Claude Saumaise, 'Prolegomena' in *Pliniana exercitationes in Solini Polyhistoria*, see Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, pp. 669-670.

<sup>11</sup> Ian Donaldson assumes Browne was this unaware. Donaldson, "'The frippery of wit": Jonson and plagiarism', in *Plagiarism in early modern England*, ed. by Paulina Kewes (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 121.

familiar with Saumaise.<sup>12</sup> Or he may have been negotiating plagiarism and intertextual borrowing according to ethical distinctions and precedents which elude the modern ear. Stephen Orgel has argued that Browne conceived of plagiarism as a symptom of the original sin with which all men are tainted, and that the tension between Browne's rejection of 'transcription' and his practice of it is borne of the huge strain put on the concept of culture by the elimination of error demanded by the Baconian scientific project.<sup>13</sup> I argue that the methods of Browne's reading and of his appropriation of read texts salute the universal fallibility of readers and writers and strive to locate acceptable forms of appropriation within this postlapsarian confusion.

As a study of Browne's reading evidenced in his written work, this chapter argues that the re-use of material from other sources, and the use of intermediary sources, are characteristics of Browne's working habits which define his relationship with his books. In doing so, it responds to changes in the theoretical approach to scientific and literary texts. The movement of the history of science away from a narrative determined by the autonomous insights of great men, and towards the social contexts of scientific practice, allows Browne's incorporation of mediated or reported material to be reframed as a collaborative form of scientific conversation.<sup>14</sup> Further, Browne's work can be situated in relation to a history of reading newly attentive to early modern theories of reading which emphasise conversation, appropriation and digestion.<sup>15</sup> Browne's writing is now characterised as 'anti-magisterial', 'diffident', 'initiatory', and

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<sup>12</sup> The view of James Eason: See his note on the relevant passage in Eason's online edition of Browne's works, <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/pseudodoxia/pseudo16.html#note11> Accessed online, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Orgel, 'Plagiarism and original sin' in *Plagiarism in early modern England*, ed. Kewes, pp. 56-73, (pp. 67-68).

<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, Karen Edwards, *Milton and the natural world: science and poetry in Paradise Lost* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*; and Killeen, *Biblical scholarship, science and politics in early modern England*, pp. 20-22, for more on the historiography of science as a context for Browne studies.

<sup>15</sup> Adrian Johns, *The nature of the book*; Ann Moss, *Printed commonplace-books and the structuring of Renaissance thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); William H. Sherman, *John Dee: the politics of reading and writing in the English renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995); Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio, *Book use, book theory, 1500-1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2005). Accounts of reading practice in the period is less comprehensive, being attentive to anecdote and particularity. A useful critical summary of the field is offered by Hackel in *Reading material in early modern England*, pp. 4-12.



‘conversational’ — appreciating, rather than dismissing, Browne’s operation within a multivalent network of intellectual exchange, and placing its emphasis on the epistemological process more than its result.<sup>16</sup> In this more generous environment, it is possible to appreciate the chameleon variety of Browne’s scholarly habits as inconsistent, multi-directional, and disparate, but nonetheless fruitful.

Finch’s interpretation of Browne’s working habits suffers from its reliance on ahistorical assumptions concerning the autonomy and authenticity of the written text. Recent criticism has drawn attention to the collaborative sites of Renaissance authorship. For Scott Black, the early modern essay genre shows the willingness of the author to incorporate and mediate other voices, disclaiming authority and authorship.<sup>17</sup> Ann Moss’s work on printed commonplace-books and florilegia has demonstrated the intrinsic role of the appropriation and recontextualisation of material gleaned through one’s reading to an humanist education.<sup>18</sup> The compilation, abstraction, arrangement and retrieval of such material, and the consumption of it in a consultative mode, was also manifest in the encyclopaedias and other reference works studied by Ann Blair.<sup>19</sup> Finch’s commitment to the authorial voice means that for him any silently borrowed material represents a conscious deception by Browne, rather than evidence of different and historically specific scholarly practices. Browne’s works, to varying degrees, both form their own argument and offer readers a gathering of bibliographical and other information in the manner of a reference work. As such, they represent both the author’s library and his direct reading, and a net flung more

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<sup>16</sup> Edwards, *Milton and the natural world*, p. 51; Murphy, “A likely story”, p. 252; West, ‘Brownean motion’, pp. 170 and 178.

<sup>17</sup> Scott Black, *Of essays and reading in early modern Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 1-3.

<sup>18</sup> Moss, *Printed commonplace-books and the structuring of Renaissance thought*.

<sup>19</sup> Ann Blair, *Too much to know: managing scholarly information before the modern age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011). Blair traces consultative reading as a Renaissance scholarly technique, but points out that readers still on occasion required guidance on how best to approach a reference work, quoting Conrad Gesner: ‘the utility of lexica [sic] comes not from reading it from beginning to end, which would be more tedious than useful, but from consulting it from time to time [ut consulat ea per intervalla]’. Blair, *Too much to know*, p. 117. Both Blair and Moss note the convergence of the genres of commonplace-books and encyclopaedias towards the end of the seventeenth century.

widely across the landscape of scientific knowledge, using the many reference tools Browne had at his disposal.

Finally, this chapter allows for the multiple forms and dynamics of intertextuality in Browne's writing. Not every instance of intertextual influence sits declared on the surface of the text as an attributed quote, or within the paratext as a marginal reference. Rather, as Katrin Ettenhuber has pointed out, early modern texts could encompass a 'spectrum of intertextual alternatives': the collision of references drawn from different texts; the misremembered, suppressed, or submerged reference; the disowned reference; and references which were partially rewritten or creatively transformed.<sup>20</sup> Ettenhuber identifies 'hard' and 'soft' intertextuality operating in John Donne's Augustinianism, distinguishing between Donne's direct textual engagement with Augustine and his access through mediated forms.<sup>21</sup> Precisely this non-linear and mediated reading is evident in Thomas Browne's work, demanding a form of intertextual archaeology in which secondary and tertiary forms of mediation are uncovered. Finch's expectations of scholarly scrupulousness in citation are also unrealistic given the variable extent of the 'completion' of Browne's published works. Claire Preston presents Browne's intellectual process as 'a chaos gradually regulated and systematised', and argues that most of his works reached the press at different moments during this progression towards order, being only partially wrought.<sup>22</sup> Finch argues for a state of citational definitiveness which is at odds with Browne's initiatory stance.

The impressions that Browne's books made upon his written works are ambiguous, representing a wealth of different potential relationships between Browne and his intertexts. The presence or absence of citations in Browne's work, like the presence or absence of books in the 1711 catalogue, cannot provide straightforward proof of Browne's direct readerly engagement, but only contingent interpretations. Both

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<sup>20</sup> Katrin Ettenhuber, *Donne's Augustine: Renaissance cultures of interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Ettenhuber, *Donne's Augustine*, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, p. 212.

Browne's means of accessing reading material, and the ways in which that material manifests itself in his scholarly output, are fluid and multifarious, and neither can be fairly represented by the sale catalogue's tenuous proofs of ownership nor by the explicit citations in Browne's published work. The various manifestations of source texts in Browne's writing show him using a range of readerly techniques to access information, from the linear to the consultative and from the haphazard to the deliberate. Browne's reading was also multivalent; his writing could be provoked by internal inspirations and queries, or by external stimuli, which might take the form of new titles entering his sphere or, equally influentially, insights springing from a rereading of familiar texts. Browne's relationship with his books cannot be straightforwardly plotted onto his writing, as if a causal, analysable association existed between a range of inputs and outputs. Instead, the citations express a creative collaboration between Browne and his library, which, like the world he describes in *The Garden of Cyrus*, is sprawling, fecund, and copious.

*The ramparts of erudition: Browne's books and Browne scholars*

This chapter sets out to establish the patterns of Browne's reading which in turn inform our understanding of his library and his relationship with it. It is thus, in part, an interpretation of the source identification executed by Browne's editors and critics with their subjective accounts of his learning, the presence of mediated sources, and the need for a full and exact bibliographical account of textual influences. Beginning with a survey of these various stances and their effect on Browne's reputation as a reader, the chapter then identifies his reading habits as manifest in his published works. A close reading of Book VI of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* presents the different modes of Browne's reading in operation, and argues that these modes were concordant with his epistemological and rhetorical intentions.<sup>23</sup> Throughout, I identify those books which appear to have exercised the most influence over Browne and relate the evidence of his written work to our knowledge of his library through other sources, including the 1711 catalogue.

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<sup>23</sup> Book VI deals with historical, chronological and geographical questions. It thus offers the opportunity to examine Browne's engagement with a range of authorities in different fields, and avoids retracing ground already covered by T.M. Westfall, whose thesis on Browne's reading is largely based on an examination of Books II and III. Westfall, 'Sir Thomas Browne's revisions', especially ch. 4.

Finch's prosecutorial argument in relation to Browne's reading is untypical among scholars fully engaged with Browne and his sources. Earlier studies by R.R. Cawley and T.M. Westfall were able to note the features of Browne's working habits without framing them as intellectually sinister. Cawley, pointing to the incalculable contributions made by Browne's remembered earlier reading and by his network of intellectual contacts, recognised the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of citations as evidence of Browne's reading which eluded Finch.<sup>24</sup> Cawley identified Browne's debt to other modern writers for his citations and the structure of the chapters of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (including his extensive use of Raleigh and Scortia). He also discerned Browne's 'strange familiarity with the beginnings and ends of books', but did not dismiss it as evidence of a scholarly version of cheating.<sup>25</sup> For Cawley, as for Browne, such habits are indicative of universal uneven reading practices which Browne shares with 'the ordinary mortal'.<sup>26</sup> He presented Browne reading at different *tempi*; deeply concentrated, browsing, fanciful, obsessive, careless. His Browne read 'in a singularly hit or miss manner, skimming through volume after volume, seemingly without discrimination'.<sup>27</sup> And yet Cawley's Browne, with his photographic memory, his ability to spot disparate meanings and telling data across boundaries of genre and expectation, is a worthy contributor to the development of scientific thought.

Westfall, Cawley's student, is more guarded in his view of Browne's intellectual authority. His argument was a refutation of a nineteenth-century appreciation of Browne as a poet writing in prose, which had (according to Westfall) encouraged a view that his writings grew out of a spontaneous expression of conceptions and emotions rather than springing from any external impetus.<sup>28</sup> He intended to lay to rest 'once for all' the notion that Browne was disengaged from contemporary advances

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<sup>24</sup> Cawley, 'Thomas Browne and his reading', p. 428.

<sup>25</sup> Cawley, 'Thomas Browne and his reading', p. 443.

<sup>26</sup> Cawley, 'Thomas Browne and his reading', p. 443.

<sup>27</sup> Cawley, 'Thomas Browne and his reading', p. 435.

<sup>28</sup> Westfall, 'Sir Thomas Browne's revisions', p. 54.

in natural philosophy.<sup>29</sup> To this end, he dedicated his thesis to the changes made by Browne to the succeeding editions of *Pseudodoxia*, establishing correlations between additions to the text and the newly published works that provoked such changes. He uncovered invaluable information on Browne's working methods, but tended to rely too heavily on an association of books' imprint dates with their influence on Browne's ideas. The Browne that emerges is an adaptor and disseminator rather than an originator of scientific ideas.<sup>30</sup>

In the second half of the twentieth century, investigative work on Browne's references was executed by his editors. In the earlier modern editions, the need for comprehensive detection of Browne's sources was not felt to be so pressing as to justify the scale of the labour. A modern reader can normally follow his argument without such explication, even if something of the 'texture of his prose' is lost.<sup>31</sup> Thus, Geoffrey Keynes was willing to leave the untangling of the origins of Browne's quotations and data to another 'worthy enlarger'.<sup>32</sup> But as seventeenth-century studies responded to the New Historicism, and to an insistence amongst historians of reading on the material contexts of the book, editors were driven towards attempting full and exact accounts of their authors' sources. The Oxford University Press editions of *Religio Medici*, *Hydriotaphia* and *The Garden of Cyrus* by L.C. Martin, and of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* by Robin Robbins represent the first attempts to follow the thousands of allusions imbedded in Browne's prose to their sources, and identify further works whose influence had left marks unacknowledged by Browne.<sup>33</sup> It is on these two editions that this chapter rests most heavily, and their methodology deserves

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<sup>29</sup> Westfall, 'Sir Thomas Browne's revisions', p. 155.

<sup>30</sup> Westfall, 'Sir Thomas Browne's revisions', p. 156.

<sup>31</sup> Claire Preston, 'Introduction', in Thomas Browne, *Selected writings*, ed. by Claire Preston (Manchester: Fyfield Press, 1995), p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> Geoffrey Keynes, 'Introduction', in Thomas Browne, *Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes (1964), vol. I, p. ix, quoting Browne in the epistle to *Pseudodoxia*.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici and other works*, ed. by L.C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) and Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, ed. by R. Robbins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). The same drive for thorough identification of sources motivates the recent Oxford University Press edition of Robert Burton's *The anatomy of melancholy*, in the foreword to the source commentary of which J.B. Bamborough feelingly adopts the metaphor of the rampart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), vol. IV, p. ix.

examination. Neither Martin and Robbins are content simply to record Browne's sources but try to explicate his access to them, paying particular attention to the identification of intermediate sources. Both focus their attentions on the more definitely manifest philosophical and scientific references rather than on echoes of literary influences. Where a copy or edition of a cited work appears in the 1711 catalogue, they use that edition to provide an exact reference, which, as I have argued in chapter 1, is probably placing too much faith in the sale catalogue as an inventory of Browne's library. Fully aware of the difficulties of gaining purchase on the different manifestations of intertextuality in Browne's writing, both Robbins and Martin made use of the 1711 catalogue as a sort of life-raft, offering some confirmation of influence where so little could be definitively proved.

Robbins's intention was to establish Browne's position within the history of ideas, and to clarify the relative extent of Browne's intellectual originality or his dependence on the works of his predecessors.<sup>34</sup> He recognised that neither the sale catalogue nor the text of *Pseudodoxia* could provide a definitive and self-evident account of Browne's reading. He did form associations between the works he found cited in *Pseudodoxia* and the contents of Browne's library, and estimated that the library required by Browne for the composition of the first edition in 1646 would have contained at least 450 books.<sup>35</sup> But he did not argue that all the titles and authors he finds to have left their traces on *Pseudodoxia* were read by Browne. He drew attention to the commonalities he discerned between Browne and his contemporary authors, without seeking to establish definite connections. An instance of this is Robbins's notice that Browne's friend Joseph Hall alluded to the biblical verse 'I am black, but comely' in making a very similar argument (in his meditation 'Vpon the sight of a Blackemore') to that which Browne offers in Book VI of *Pseudodoxia* on culturally determined notions of beauty.<sup>36</sup> Robbins also remarks on instances when Browne himself is cited by his peers, including by his fellow Norwich physicians John Bulwer (in

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<sup>34</sup> Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 641.

<sup>35</sup> Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, p. xxi, n. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Song of Solomon, 1:5; PE, VI:11, p. 522; Joseph Hall, 'Vpon the sight of a Blackemore' in *Occasionall meditations* (London, 1630).

*Anthropometamorphosis*, 1653) and John Robinson (*A calm ventilation of Pseudo-doxia Epidemica*, 1658).<sup>37</sup> Robbins takes Browne's citations and, rather than straight-jacketing them into a pedantic narrative of Browne's supposed bibliographical experience, constructs them into a web of generative interrelationships.

The reassessment of Browne's work that followed the turn of the millennium is yet more committed to the community of conversations in which that work is embedded. Barbour follows Westfall in characterising *Pseudodoxia* as a 'work of the library', but concludes that its reliance on secondhand experience creates a work which is centred on human authority, perception and welfare — orchestrating a chatter of competing voices as one reasonable argument.<sup>38</sup> The growing recognition of the suspension or deferral of judgement as a feature of Browne's science repositions the politics of Browne's style and his beliefs. West and Edwards suggest that Browne chooses to avoid the magisterial authority claimed by Bacon and Descartes, establishing himself as a 'single voice within a group' and proffering to his audience the possibility that generally held beliefs could be understood differently.<sup>39</sup> Barbour and Murphy both point to Browne's commitment to the 'principles of persuasion', leading his reader slowly and without coercion towards a conclusion, or through a series of competing conclusions.<sup>40</sup> Recent scholarship, more attentive to the conversational voice in Browne's essays, is willing to engage with the submerged intertextuality from which Finch turns away. Kathryn Murphy's explication of *The Garden of Cyrus* demonstrates how productive this engagement can be. In her reading, the symbol of Plato's 'X in O' drawn from Browne's reading of *Timaeus* becomes 'the decussation which draws together all the digressive, copious and fecund elements of the essay to a single point'.<sup>41</sup> One particular philosophical work is shown transfiguring the spiritual

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<sup>37</sup> Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, p. xliii.

<sup>38</sup> Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 304; Westfall, 'Sir Thomas Browne's revisions', p. 86.

<sup>39</sup> West, 'Brownean motion', pp. 174-176; Edwards, *Milton and the natural world*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>40</sup> Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 301; Murphy, "A likely story", p. 252.

<sup>41</sup> Murphy, "A likely story", p. 247.

intentions of Browne's essay and supplying a symmetry of immortality which aligns it with its partner essay, *Urne-Buriall*.<sup>42</sup>

In the recent wave of Browne studies, attempts to pin down exactly what Browne had read tend to be avoided, in part due to a recognition that there can be very little certainty when it comes to evidence of his reading. It is no coincidence that the most strident criticisms of Browne's methods came from Finch, who overlooked the slipperiness of both the textual evidence and the 1711 catalogue, and felt himself to be on stable ground. Kevin Killeen acknowledges his debt to the mid-twentieth century bibliographers who tracked Browne's reading (including Cawley, Merton, and Chambers), and, in his monograph on *Pseudodoxia*, chooses not to address the extent of intertextuality in 'the thick and sedimented layers of intellectual debt in *Pseudodoxia*' himself.<sup>43</sup> Jessica Wolfe, as an editor of the forthcoming edition of *Pseudodoxia*, argues for an approach to editorial annotation which emphasises *conversations* rather than sources. Wolfe proposes the recreation of the threads of propositions and responses travelling across seventeenth-century Europe that provide the contexts for Browne's work, rather than a strict, and unsatisfactory, reconstruction of Browne's reading.<sup>44</sup> Wolfe's approach avoids the imposition of certainty on the ambiguous testimony of Browne's texts and of the catalogue, but it also risks masking what was idiosyncratic and particular in his intellectual experience, and planing over the function of his tastes and his practical access to books in defining the quality of his work. Examination of the citations in *Pseudodoxia* demonstrates that Browne's reading was not monotone and universal, moving consistently towards a known end, but various, vacillating, exploratory and inventive. Our understanding of Browne and his intentions as a

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<sup>42</sup> Murphy, "A likely story", pp. 248-252. By contrast, Finch's reading of *Timaeus*'s contribution to *The Garden of Cyrus* goes no further than the immediate surface of the text and is consequently dismissive: 'Although [it] undoubtedly did furnish Browne two paragraphs in the fourth chapter, there is no evidence of further borrowing from it, and no reason for believing that Browne consulted it more attentively than a dozen other works cited in his margins'. Finch, 'Sir Thomas Browne and the quincunx', p. 277, n. 11.

<sup>43</sup> Killeen, *Biblical scholarship, science and politics in early modern England*, p. 41.

<sup>44</sup> Jessica Wolfe, 'Annotating Browne's *Pseudodoxia*: sources versus conversations'. Unpublished paper given at *Edition as Argument, 1500-1700*, Queen Mary University London, 17 July 2014.



writer will be lacking if we evade the specific, complicated relationship he had with his books.

*'To promote my invention or relieve my memory'*<sup>45</sup>: Browne writing himself as a reader

Tracking the manifestations of other texts across Browne's published works demonstrates the substantial differences in the tone of their intertextuality. This section of the chapter points to differences in the representation of Browne's reading in his works which were as much due to his conscious manipulation of the rhetorical effect of citation as to his actual reading practice. He adopted different methods of citation in anticipation of the specific audience of each work and in accordance with his own desire to persuade or inform. For Browne, references to authors and titles are often a necessary element in the conversational structure of his argument. He can be seen declaring his sources openly or implicitly; with an intention to initiate further reading or with finality; with humour or with great seriousness; and with scholarly independence or as a gesture towards a common, civil culture. His referencing of books may be a literary pose, but it is one of which he was intensely conscious, and which reveals how he thought about and related to them. The presence of intertexts in Browne's work operates like a commonplace book or cabinet, as well as a conversation.<sup>46</sup> He assembled maniples of material and arranged them for the appreciation of his interlocutors, atomising, shuffling through and foregrounding data, authors, or quotations according to his needs. His arrangement and recontextualisation of his reading draws on the established patterns of commonplacing, clustering pertinent information around common themes of interest.<sup>47</sup> The generic fluidity of Browne's oeuvre, between his notebooks, letters,

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<sup>45</sup> RM, epistle, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> The use of terms such as museum, thesaurus, closet, cabinet and repository as literary constructs as well as in the description of physical collections is noted by Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and enlightenment: collectors and collecting from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 57, and expanded on by Paula Findlen, 'The museum: its classical etymology and Renaissance genealogy', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 1:1 (1989), pp. 59-78.

<sup>47</sup> See Moss, *Printed commonplace-books*, pp. 227-229 for prevalent methods for commonplacing, and the use of such techniques for literary productions, offering schemes for preserving variety without descending into confusion and excess. The congruity of composite writing and museums is further suggested by Stephen Bann's analysis of John Bargrave's collecting as an author-function, disseminating a subjectivity into his objects. Bann, *Under the sign*, p. 22.

tracts, and formal productions, encouraged the transfer of material thus harvested. In order to analyse Browne's reading across his entire oeuvre, I have restricted myself (in the main) to explicit citations of authors' names and book titles. This approach gives a better sense of the shifts in Browne's use of citation between his works which might otherwise be obscured by an overwhelming number of indefinite potential sources. But where sections of Browne's prose clearly manifest intertextual influence, but contain no direct citations or quotations, these are also sometimes referenced.

The prefatory letter to the authorised version of *Religio Medici* draws attention to its rhetorical nature, partly to excuse some sentiments which Browne anticipated might attract controversy, and to plead for 'soft and flexible' interpretation. It was composed, according to Browne's own testimony, for his own 'exercise and satisfaction', and its tone is meditative and questioning rather than persuasive. As a whole, *Religio* does not have the citational freight of the later essays, and authorities tend to be introduced to illustrate a point rather than forming part of Browne's argument. The most frequent references, as one would expect, are to the Bible. Browne also draws heavily on the Greek philosophers, particularly Aristotle and Plato, with some mystical allusions to Pythagoras.<sup>48</sup> Of the Church Fathers, Augustine is most visible, though only named explicitly once.<sup>49</sup> Browne both cites and quotes directly from Roman writers, particularly of literary and historical works: Cicero, Seneca and Horace most frequently amongst the first, and Livy, Josephus, Plutarch, Suetonius, and Lucan representing the second. These authors are quoted more frequently by Browne than the moderns, only a handful of whom (including Juan de Pineda, Paracelsus, Rabelais, and Regiomontanus) are named.<sup>50</sup> Martin identifies the influence of other books upon the text, some of them as sources for data (such as Juan de Acosta's *De natura novi orbis* (1589) on the presence of animals in the Indies after the Flood),<sup>51</sup> and some which Martin hears as literary echoes (such as the phrase 'the

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<sup>48</sup> See, for instance, RM, I:12, p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> RM, I:36, p. 47.

<sup>50</sup> RM, I:24; 1:31; 1:22; 1:15.

<sup>51</sup> RM, I:22, p. 23; Martin, 'Commentary', p. 297.

ligation of sense' which also appears in Robert Burton's *The anatomy of melancholy*).<sup>52</sup> In both cases, the associations are only suppositional, and although Martin points to the presence of these books in the 1711 catalogue when possible, the catalogue cannot make them any more definite. But the explicitly named authors in *Religio Medici* initiate a citation pattern which is visible across Browne's works: biblical and uncontentious theological sources, combined with Aristotle and Plato, and Roman authors, who sit alongside modern authors in the fields of natural philosophy, medicine and travel. In drawing these authors together in *Religio Medici*, Browne serves his immediate purpose of arguing the compatibility of modern medicine with religious faith. But the light touch of *Religio* also anticipates the citational flurries of his later works.<sup>53</sup>

Neither had these or any other ever such advantage of me, as to incline me to any point of infidelity or desperate positions of Atheisme; for I have beene these many yeares of opinion there was never any. Those that held Religion was the difference of man from beasts, have spoken probably, and proceed upon a principle as inductive as the other: That doctrine of Epicurus, that denied the providence of God, was no Atheisme, but a magnificent and high-strained conceit of his Majesty, which hee deemed too sublime to minde the triviall actions of those inferiour creatures: That fatall necessitie of the Stoickes, is nothing but the immutable Law of his will. Those that heretofore denied the Divinitie of the holy Ghost, have beene condemned but as Heretickes; and those that now deny our Saviour (though more than Hereticks) are

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<sup>52</sup> RM, II:11, p. 70; Martin, 'Commentary', p. 314. Martin cites Burton, 1.1.2.7 (1638, p. 24).

<sup>53</sup> It might be tempting to ascribe the relatively sparse citations in *Religio* to Browne's lack of books, and consequent dependence on his memory, during its composition. See his assertion to that effect in RM, epistle, p. 10. The canonical nature of so many of the texts could sustain an assertion that Browne was able to draw on them from memory. But the consistency in the kinds of authors that appear with those in his later works, and the contemplative effect of the reduced number of references, makes me reluctant to point to the absence of a library as the principle reason for this phenomenon.

not as much as Atheists: for though they deny two persons in the Trinity, they hold as we do, there is but one God.

That villain and Secretary of Hell, that composed that miscreant piece of the three Impostors, though divided from all Religions, and was neither Jew, Turk, nor Christian, was not a positive Atheist. I confesse every Countrey hath its Machiavell, every age its Lucian, whereof common heads must not heare, nor more advanced judgements too rashly venture on: 'tis the Rhetorick of Satan, and may pervert a loose or prejudice beleefe.<sup>54</sup>

*Pseudodoxia Epidemica* is, by contrast, the most bookish of Browne's works. The nature of the project required copious citation, both of the sources of error and of the reported evidence which supplied the possibilities of correction. Far more authors are named in the pages of *Pseudodoxia* than in Browne's other works, and many of the allusions are given specific title and page notations. Its scope is much wider than that of Browne's other works, taking in a range of fields from biblical exegesis to ancient history, geography, natural history, and folklore. But within each chapter of *Pseudodoxia*, Browne's reading is narrowly focused, tending towards a pattern in which the authorities for and against a proposition are presented, witnesses of conflicting evidence introduced, and tentative conclusions finally reached. *Pseudodoxia* was published in six editions between 1646 and 1672, some of them with substantial revisions which included the addition of further bibliographical references.<sup>55</sup> The introduction of new material can in some cases be interpreted as the influence of new books operating on Browne's text. But Westfall demonstrated how difficult it is to establish linear causal lines between the acquisition of a title and its manifestation in

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<sup>54</sup> RM, I:20, pp. 30-31. Directly named authors have been marked in green. This is a typical section in terms of distribution of literary citations in *Religio*, but a few sections (such as the succeeding section, I:22, which names Galen, Seneca, St Paul, Aelian, and Pliny, as well as Rabelais's *Pantagruel* and Bevis of Hampton, in the space of thirty lines) have much denser references.

<sup>55</sup> See Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, pp. lii-lix for a history of *Pseudodoxia* and the passage of its several editions through the press.

*Pseudodoxia*.<sup>56</sup> As in *Religio Medici*, Browne marshals ancient and biblical sources alongside modern natural philosophical and travel sources to furnish his argument. And whilst the number of texts is so large as to defy summarising, some authors do appear as constant touchstones: among them Pliny, Strabo, Xenophon, Ptolemy, Aristotle, Cabeo, Kircher, and Aldrovandi. In general, Browne tends to cite ancient and biblical sources more frequently than modern authors, whose explicit appearances are rarer, but whose influence underpins substantial sections of his argument. Browne also exhibits dexterity and flexibility in his modes of citation in *Pseudodoxia*. George Yost observes of his citations of Aristotle that Browne ‘uses all the words of asseveration, sometimes in the active, sometimes in the passive, with variations in word order and construction’.<sup>57</sup> In doing so Browne conveys the multiple potential relationships and transformations between his text, his cited authority and its new context. The presence of new imprints, the patterns of citations from different sources, and the adoption of mediated sources by Browne in *Pseudodoxia* is analysed in the next section of this chapter, but the passage below gives a representative demonstration of the relative density of named references compared to *Religio Medici*:

Many opinions are passant concerning the Basiliske or little king of Serpents, commonly called the Cockatrice: some affirming, others denying, most doubting the relations made hereof; what therefore in these incertainties we may more safely determine: that such an animall there is, if we evade not the testimony of Scripture, and humane Writers, we cannot safely deny: So is it said, **Psalm 91**. *Super aspidem et Basiliscum ambulabis*, wherein the vulgar Translation retaineth the word of the Septuagint, using in other places the Latine expression *Regulus*, as **Proverbs 23**. *Mordebit ut coluber, & sicut Regulus venena diffundet*: and **Jeremy 8**. *Ecce ego mittam vobis serpentes Regulos, etc.* That is, as ours translate

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<sup>56</sup> Westfall, ‘Sir Thomas Browne’s revisions’, ch. 4, particularly pp. 183-4. Examples are discussed below.

<sup>57</sup> Yost, ‘Sir Thomas Browne and Aristotle’, p. 73.

it, Behold I will send Serpents, Cockatrices among you which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you; and as for humane Authors, or such as have discoursed of animals, or poysons, it is to be found almost in all, in Dioscorides, Galen, Pliny, Solinus, Ælian, Ætius, Avicen, Ardoynus, Grevinus, and many more; In Aristotle I confesse we find no mention thereof, but Scaliger in his Comment and enumeration of Serpents, hath made supply; and in his Exercitations delivereth that a Basilisk was found in Rome, in the dayes of Leo the fourth; The like is reported by Sigonius, and some are so farre from denying one, that they have made severall kinds thereof: for such is the Catoblepas of Pliny conceived to be by some, and the Dryinus of Ætius by others.<sup>58</sup>

By the time Browne came to write *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus* in the 1650s, he was confident in the declaration of his sources and in the manipulation of citations in the service of his authorial persona. Both essays show Browne name-dropping common literary and philosophical references as he did in *Religio Medici*. The occasional lack of clarity of such citations through the omission of germane details asserted the shared culture of writer and reader ('De Fast. lib. 4 cum Car. Neapol. anaptyxi' is precise, but not perlucid).<sup>59</sup> But he also supplies extensive bibliographical references, usually to recent titles, rare works, or to individual modern editions of early texts, celebrating the singularity of his own learning and his library.<sup>60</sup> Examples of such citations include Stephanus Schoneveldt's *Ichthyologia* (1624), Arcangelo da Borgonuovo's commentary on Pico della Mirandola (1596), and Jacque-Louis

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<sup>58</sup> PE, III:7, p. 181.

<sup>59</sup> UB, I, p. 136, referring to Carlo di Napoli's commentary on Ovid's *De fastis*. In the first edition of *Urne Buriall*, the quantity of marginal annotations was a challenge for the compositor to incorporate in an octavo. They required minuscule superscript letters to differentiate them and disrupted the block of principal text, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> As mentioned in chapter 3, William West has written on the role of singularity in Browne's conception of intellectual endeavour, articulated in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*. West argues that for Browne, agreement within the community is no indication of rightness, and difference and singularity within the community have to be preserved to allow for the possibility of correction of error. West, 'Brownean motion', p. 183.

d'Estrabey's translation of Xenophon (1561).<sup>61</sup> Addressed to specific auditors, these two essays show Browne more skittish and curious in his reading, less methodical than in *Pseudodoxia*. Instead of insisting on his own authority as the interpreter of his sources Browne positions himself as the facilitator of a conversation, shaping the voices he encounters in his own reading and directing his reader towards the necessary books to give the discussion a future in which he himself may not have a voice. On occasion the crowded form of the marginal references becomes so abbreviated that authors therein are easily overlooked. A citation of Caelius Rhodiginus's encyclopaedic *Lectiones antiquae* (1516) and Joannes de Laet's *Novus Orbis* (1633), for instance, are nearly overwhelmed by the other books in both margins and text of the very last pages in the first edition of *Garden of Cyrus*.<sup>62</sup>

The usual suspects — Pliny, Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, Aristotle, Josephus — appear in both essays, but much less frequently than they do in *Pseudodoxia*. There is a greater variety of sources than in a portion of *Pseudodoxia* of a comparable length, particularly in *Urne Buriall*. Some of these sources are specialist and particular to the subject in hand (for instance, Kirchmann's *De funeribus romanorum* and Bosio's *Roma sotterranea* for *Urne Buriall*, Belon and Guillaume Rondelet for *The Garden of Cyrus*). But Browne can also be seen engaging in his most characteristic trait as a reader, leading his auditors into the most unexpected bibliographic corners to unveil tantalising material. In the section on the decomposition of different kinds of matter in chapter III of *Urne Buriall*, Browne draws on Homer's *Iliad*, a history of the Roman Republic by Wolfgang Laz, Petronius's *Satyricon*, Pliny's *Natural History*, and Vannoccio Biringuccio's treatise on metalwork.<sup>63</sup> The number of different modern authors present increased, which might be ascribed to the growth of Browne's library in the 1650s.<sup>64</sup> Equally, it may reflect Browne's willingness to make his prose carry the burden of copious bibliographical

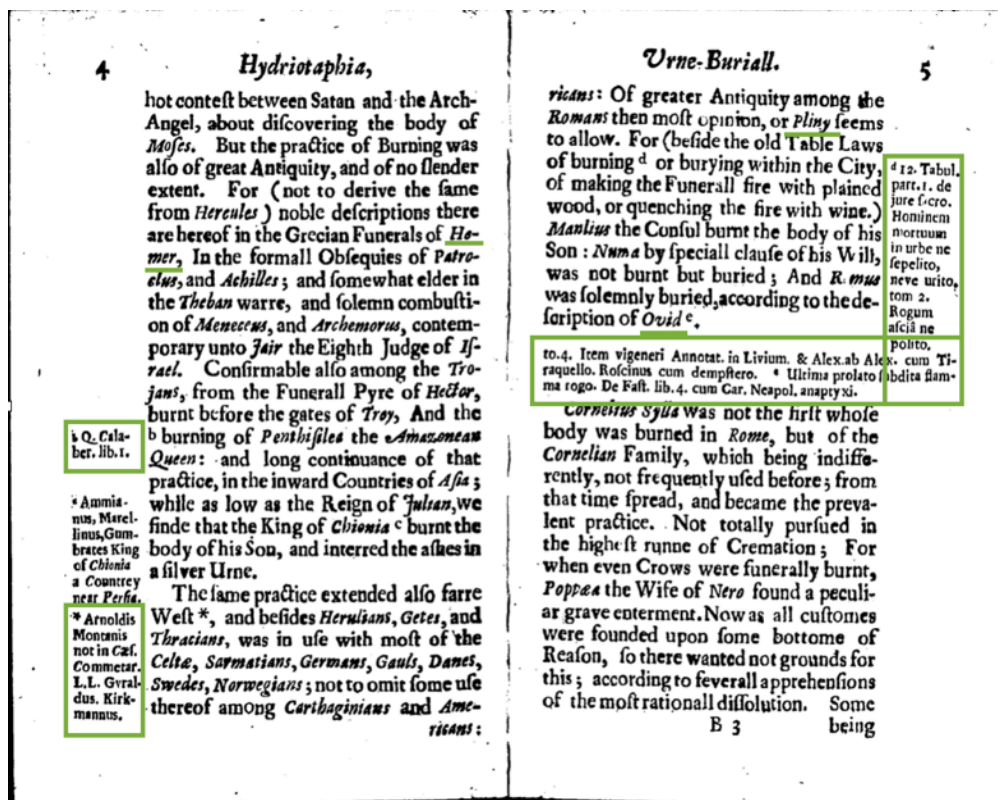
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<sup>61</sup> GC, III, p. 149, Martin, 'Commentary', p. 350; GC, V, p. 171, Killeen, 'Commentary', p. 924; GC, I, p. 131, Martin, 'Commentary', p. 340.

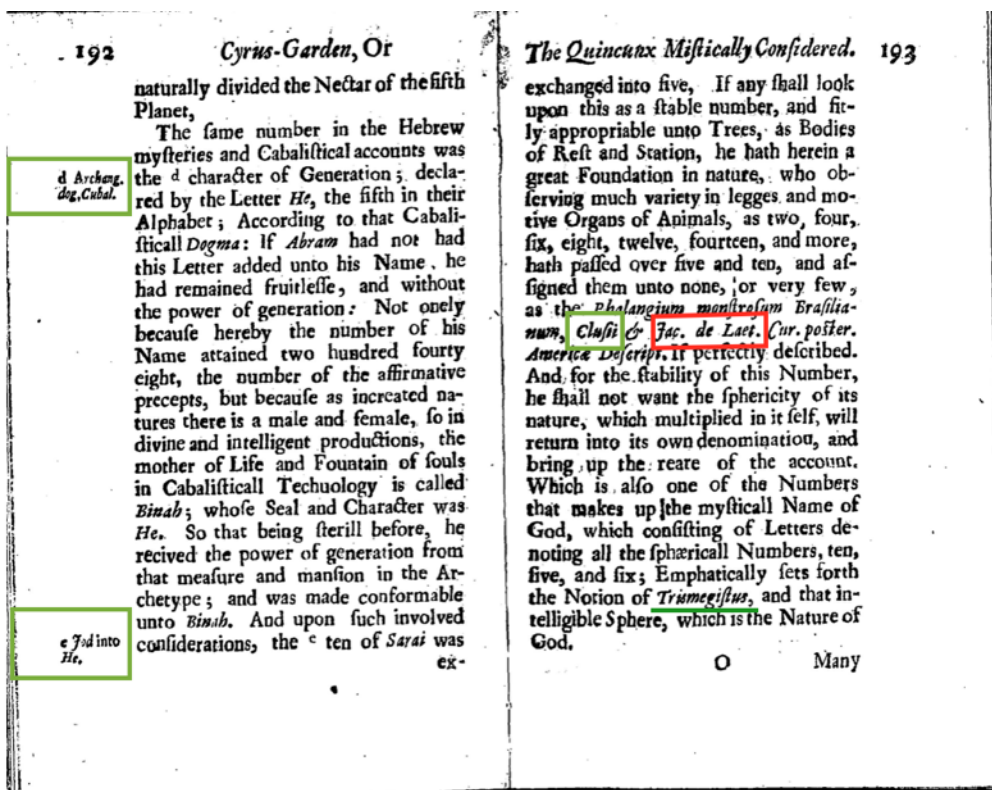
<sup>62</sup> Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia, Urne-Buriall...* (London: printed for Hen. Brome, 1658), pp. 191-193. Such is the confusion that the citations occasionally escape the notice of modern editors, as is the case in these two instances in Killeen's recent edition, *Thomas Browne: twenty-first-century Oxford authors*, p. 595.

<sup>63</sup> UB, III, pp. 149-150.

<sup>64</sup> See pp. 45-47 above.



5. An opening from the first edition of *Urne-Buriall* [...] together with *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658), with citations marked in green.



6. An opening from the first edition of *Urne-Buriall* [...] together with *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658), with citations marked in green (de Laet in red).



material when it serves the intentions or argument of that prose. Where it did not (as in the central chapter of *The Garden of Cyrus*, dedicated to listing Browne's direct observations of the appearances of the quincunx in nature) references to other books are almost entirely absent.<sup>65</sup> By contrast, the final chapter, which culminates in Browne's description of his nocturnal writing, returns to a conversational tone akin to *Pseudodoxia's* more miscellaneous chapters with a flurry of erudite queries. 'What that decussated Figure intendeth in the medall of *Alexander the Great*? Why the Goddesses sit commonly crosse-legged in ancient draughts, since *Juno* is described in the same as a veneficial posture to hinder the birth of *Hercules*? If any shall doubt why at the Amphidromicall Feasts, on the fifth day after the Childe was born presents were sent from friends, of *Polipusses*, and Cuttle-fishes? Why five must be only left in that Symbolicall mutiny among the men of *Cadmus*?'<sup>66</sup> The twinned essays of 1658 show Browne consciously portraying himself as a singular reader within a community of readers and adapting the narrative of his reading to suit his intentions as a writer.

The first section of *A Letter to a Friend* (first published 1690) gives a similar account of reading to the most literary portions of *Urne Buriall*. Some of the core texts of Browne's reading reappear, chiefly Hippocrates, Paracelsus, Belon, Cardan, Plato and Homer. There is a smattering of precise references to modern medical titles which have appeared very infrequently, if at all, elsewhere in Browne's works. Among these are Ognibene Ferrari's *De arte medica infantium* (1577), Ulmus's *Physiologia barbae humanae* (1602) and Angelo Vittori's *Medicae consultations post obit auctoris* (1640).<sup>67</sup> The marginal notes are as frequent and as expansive as in the earlier essays, occasionally quoting entire sentences from the cited source.<sup>68</sup> The second section, later incorporated and expanded into *Christian Morals* (1716), bears an entirely different form of intertextuality. In *Christian Morals*, the text is almost clean of explicit bibliographical references or quotations, which, together with the use of a formal

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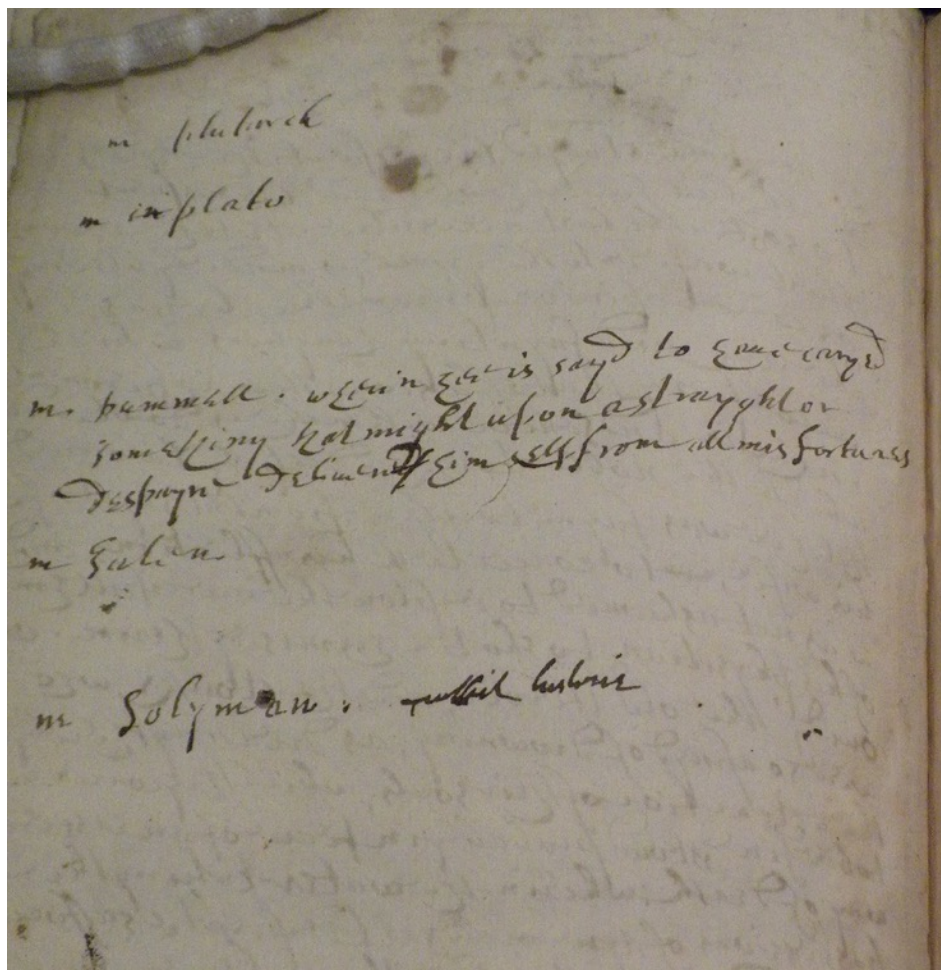
<sup>65</sup> GC, III, p. 142.

<sup>66</sup> GC, V, p. 173.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Browne, *Letter to a Friend*, ed. Martin, pp. 183, 181; Martin, 'Commentary', pp. 364-5.

<sup>68</sup> For instance, from Pliny's *Historia naturalis*, LF, ed. Martin, p. 181, and from Scaliger's commentary on Aristotle's *De animalia*, LF, ed. Martin, p. 182.

direct voice (addressing the reader as ‘thee’) gives the immediate appearance of an autonomous authorial production. This impression is reinforced by the relative lack of paratextual notes, which when they appear are short in length and tend towards the explanatory rather than the bibliographically precise. But the work shares generic features with the commonplace format, implying a degree of appropriation. Martin confirms that a considerable number of Browne’s aphorisms are paraphrases of existing remarks.<sup>69</sup> The extent to which the composition of *Christian Morals* was constructed from Browne’s books is also evident in the preparatory drafts surviving in manuscript. In the passage on suicide, executions, and the least painful forms of



7. Browne noting his sources on painful deaths, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl D 109, fol. 45v.

death, Browne used the verso of each page in his notebook to marshal his sources: ‘m plutarch/ m plato / m pummell. wherin hee is sayd to haue caryed something that might upon a strayght or despayre deliuer him self from all misfortunes/ m Galen/m

<sup>69</sup> For instance, ‘the strength of delight is in its seldomness or rarity’ (Thomas Browne, *Christian Morals*, ed. Martin, II:1, p. 218), taken from Juvenal (Satires, XI, l.208: ‘voluptates commendat rarior usus’).

Solyman' (see fig. 7).<sup>70</sup> Whilst the first portion of *Letter to a Friend* shows Browne using citations from familiar and specialist titles to stimulate and provoke his reader, *Christian Morals* is a tapestry of canonical extracts recontextualised, its value being as an aid to moral contemplation rather than its originality.

*Miscellany Tracts* show the chameleon tendencies of Browne's citation practice at their most pronounced. Some of the tracts, like the 'Observations on several plants mentioned in scripture', are even more loaded with bibliographical references than *Urne Buriall* or *Pseudodoxia*. In this instance Browne uses a smaller number of books in his attempt to navigate competing botanical nomenclatures (relying heavily but not exclusively on Pliny, Theophrastus, Dioscorides, Galen, Prospero Alpini, and the biblical commentators Montanus and Tremellius). But he is scrupulous in naming his sources on every occasion. For instance:

A Tree (according to the description of Theophrastus, Dioscorides and Galen) resembling a Mulberry Tree in the Leaf, but in the Fruit a Figg; which it produceth not in the Twigg but in the Trunck or Greater Branches, answerable to the Sycamore of Ægypt, the Ægyptian Figg or Giamez of the Arabians, described in Prosper Alpinus.<sup>71</sup>

Sometimes Browne's purposes are explicitly bibliographical, as in 'Of hawks and falconry' which surveys the shortcomings of the ancient authorities on hunting with hawks and recommends a number of medieval and modern sources in their stead:

You may peruse the two Books of Falconry writ by that renowned Emperour Frederick the Second; as also the Works of the noble Duke Belisarius, of Tardiffe, Francherius, of

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<sup>70</sup> Thomas Browne, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl D 109, fol. 45v. Cf. CM, ed. Martin, 2:XIII, p. 227. Some of these references were replicated as marginal annotations in the first printed edition by its editor, John Jeffery, but he left the material from Plato and Galen unattributed.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Browne, 'Observations on several plants', pp. 21-22.

Francisco Sforzino of Vicenza; and may not a little inform or recreate your self with that elegant Poem of Thaunus.<sup>72</sup>

By contrast 'Of languages, and particularly the Saxon tongue' gives a number of citations, including Henry Spelman, Isaac Casaubon, Aelfric, Bede, Petrarch and Rabelais, but also supplies a wealth of information which is not referenced.<sup>73</sup> Here Browne's aim is the satisfying transfer of knowledge rather than an initiation into further reading. There is an intense hermeneutics operating in 'Of Troas', which solemnly parses the geographical implications of descriptions in the Bible, Homer, Tacitus, and Strabo as well as the interpretations of contemporary geographers and antiquarians like Ortelius, Goltzius, and Jacopo Brocardo.<sup>74</sup> 'Of ropalic or gradual verses' demonstrates an entirely different, though no less erudite, kind of reading, lighting on a disparate set of authors (Homer, Hucbald of St Amand, Gaspard de Barth, Robert Fludd) and driving home the playful, off-the-cuff mode by affecting to sign off in haste: 'My occasions make me to take off my Pen'.<sup>75</sup> Whilst the sources in many of the tracts sit readily apparent on the surface of the text, 'Of garlands and coronary or Garland-plants' provides specific data without hinting as to its sources.<sup>76</sup> Browne either expected Evelyn to recognise his sources or trusted that their mutual civility would allow Evelyn to trust Browne's testimony without the citation of further authorities. Whilst the tracts vary in their subjects and in the degree of their intellectual legerdemain, Browne consistently returns to the group of authors he has cited throughout his career, including the ancient poets and thinkers, and his favourite natural philosophers, Belon, Rondelet, Cardan, and Scaliger.

Across Browne's oeuvre, he deliberately exploits the rhetorical advantages of bibliographical citations, excluding, occluding or incorporating them to serve the

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<sup>72</sup> Thomas Browne, 'Of hawks and falconry', in *Certain miscellany tracts*, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 64.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Browne, 'Of languages', in *Certain miscellany tracts*, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 71-83.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas Browne, 'Of Troas', in *Certain miscellany tracts*, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 88-94.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Browne, 'Of ropalic or gradual verses, etc', in *Certain miscellany tracts*, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 69.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas Browne, 'Of garlands and coronary or Garland-plants', in *Certain miscellany tracts*, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 49-52.

intentions of his prose. His own persona as a reader is an indispensable element in his civil attempts to persuade his auditor-interlocutor. But the animus of his reading can be identified along with such rhetoric, encompassing as it does the intense and the playful, the pedantic and the grand. There was a canon of books to which Browne was deeply attached, and which acts like guiding loadstones in the wilderness of texts that are manifest in his writing. His familiarity with these is so great that he is able to orchestrate them in any register, according to his need. It is reasonable to assert that these books formed part of Browne's library, and that Browne returned to them throughout his life. But to go deeper — to broaden our knowledge of Browne's relationship with his books beyond these titles and appreciate the operation of specialist works on his intellectual processes — a more microscopic approach is required. The following section treats the sources of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* archaeologically, peeling back the layers of its testimony on Browne's reading.

*'Collateral lapses and circumstantial deliveries': the mechanics of intertextuality in Pseudodoxia's Book VI*

*Pseudodoxia*, with its subject breadth, its development over several editions, and its dependence on copious citations, is the most appropriate of Browne's works for a close analysis of his reading. On its basis we can know that there is coincidence between the books cited in *Pseudodoxia* and the contents of the 1711 catalogue, and that the influence of books upon Browne's texts is multivalent and enigmatic rather than linear and apparent. By and large, the close reading of Browne's sources in Book VI confirms the features visible across his works more generally. But such minute attention also emphasises the instability and contingency of the bibliographical evidence in *Pseudodoxia*. This section begins by identifying the obscurities in its citations. Each title suggested by the text is subject to qualification in terms of its identity, since not all of the works referred to can be definitely associated with a published work. The degree to which a title can be asserted as influential is also variable. Whilst Browne mentions many authors and their books, the degree to which he engaged with them is not consistent. Other sources are present only by implication, and their identification depends on the subjective interpretation of the text by its editors, so that the influence of some works can be over-read whilst others

are passed over. In addition, not all Browne's intertexts were incorporated directly or deliberately. They occupy different positions on Ettenhuber's spectrum of intertextualities.<sup>77</sup> In particular, the arrival of sources in *Pseudodoxia* is often indirect, involving secondary and tertiary forms of mediation and originating in Browne's co-option of others' reading via reference works. Lastly, the very scale of *Pseudodoxia* and the copiousness of its sources is a burden as well as an opportunity. An analysis of implicit and explicit citations, together with assessments of their particular quality and significance in relation to the text, is shot through with compromise and incompleteness.

One ambiguity in Browne's citations in *Pseudodoxia* is the lack of certainty regarding their presence within the text. We can be sure of those made explicitly in the main text or in marginal annotations. The marginal annotations in Book VI most often provide biblical references such as the data on the seasons taken from the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua and Joel in chapter III of Book VI.<sup>78</sup> But, as in *Urne Buriall*, Browne also gave specific references to recent publications like Denis Petau's *De doctrina temporum*, from Book 9 of which Browne draws his discussion of the feasibility of calculating the age of the world through astronomical projections.<sup>79</sup> As in *Christian Morals*, Browne used the margins to attribute quotations to their authors, such as Juvenal's satirical remarks on the Egyptian veneration of leeks and onions.<sup>80</sup> Precise citations can be identified with confidence. Browne's most common citation technique is simply to drop in the author's name. Here, too, the exact source can normally be traced given its context. A name is usually joined in the text either by the evidence supplied by that author (for instance: 'For whereas Ptolemy hath set forth nine [distributaries of the Nile], Hondius in his Map of Africa, makes but eight, and in that of Europe ten. Ortelius in the map of the Turkish Empire, setteth downe eight, in

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<sup>77</sup> See above, p. 138.

<sup>78</sup> PE, VI.3, pp. 458-9.

<sup>79</sup> PE, VI.1, p. 452.

<sup>80</sup> 'Porrum et caepe nefas violare et frangere morsu': PE, VI:6, p. 478. It should be noted that in the 1646 edition, more of Browne's bibliographical references were integrated into the main body of the text; these had been removed to the margins in the second edition in 1650, and remained there in subsequent editions.

that of Ægypt eleven...')<sup>81</sup> or by a particular opinion or line of argument ('of this opinion was Andræas Corsalius, Plinie, Solinus, Dio Cassius')<sup>82</sup> which is enough to identify the precise passage within that author's oeuvre.

But these explicit citations represent only some of the books to which Browne alludes in *Pseudodoxia*. Browne frequently cites instances of fact which he must have derived from another authority which he omits to name. For instance, he must have had a source for the passage in which he names the peoples of Africa who are held to be black-skinned: 'So the people of Gualata, Agades, Garamantes, and of Goaga, all within the Northerne Tropics are not Negroes, but on the other side about Capo Negro, Cefala, and Madagascar, they are of a Jetty black'.<sup>83</sup> Robbins suggests Leo Africanus as a source, but notes that Leo lists Gualata, Agadez, and Gaoga as being 'among the Negro kingdoms', which leaves room either for another source, or for a misreading or mistranscription.<sup>84</sup> A single allusion or anecdote could have any number of sources. The reference to the prophet Elijah in chapter 10 of Book VI, for instance, is particularly capacious, since it could have reached Browne via Jean Morin, John Selden, Athanasius Kircher, or Johann Buxtorf.<sup>85</sup> In addition to these implied sources are the unnamed authors who are nonetheless explicitly referred to by a collective noun. Collective nouns are used as a shorthand: 'what Maginus and *others* relate of the Emperour of Æthiopia'.<sup>86</sup> They often come freighted with epistemological value: 'the best and learned Writers'; 'observable in good writers'; 'with probability denied by very learned Authors'.<sup>87</sup> Robbins sometimes unravels these, suggesting examples of potential sources, drawing on titles cited nearby, and

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<sup>81</sup> PE, VI.8, p. 495

<sup>82</sup> PE, VI.9, p. 504.

<sup>83</sup> PE, VI:10, pp. 510-511.

<sup>84</sup> Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1065.

<sup>85</sup> PE, VI:10, p. 515; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1069.

<sup>86</sup> PE, VI:10, p. 516. My italics.

<sup>87</sup> PE, VI:11, p. 521; VI:14, p. 533; VI:6, p. 483.

the evidence of the sale catalogue.<sup>88</sup> But he is as often forced to leave them unattributed, when neither the textual nor the bibliographical evidence is strong enough to go further than supposition. Browne also used epithets for rhetorical effect, referring indirectly to his learned authors to establish common ground for himself and his reader in the seventeenth-century community of learning, asserting the conversational tone of his work.<sup>89</sup> Books can be evident within the text whilst remaining anonymous.

<p>Modern Geographers and travellers<sup>a</sup> do much abate of this number; for as Maginus and others observe, there are now but three or foure mouths thereof; as Gulielmus Tyrius<sup>b</sup> long agoe, and Bellonius<sup>c</sup> since, both ocular enquirers with others have attested. For below Cairo, the River divides it selfe into foure branches, whereof two make the chiefe and navigable streames, the one running to Pelusium of the Ancients, and now Damiatia; the other unto Canopium, and now Roscetta;<sup>d</sup> the other two, saith Mr. Sandys, doe runne betweene these, but poore in water; of those seven mentioned by Herodotus, and those nine by Ptolomy, these are all I could either see, or heare of. Which much confirmeth the testimony of the Bishop of Tyre a diligent and ocular enquirer; who in his holy war doth thus deliver himself. We wonder much at the Ancients, who assigned seven mouths unto Nilus: which we can no otherwise salve, then that by processe of time, the face of places is altered, and the river hath lost its channels; or that our fore-fathers did never obtain a true account thereof.</p>	<p>Collective noun Named author Data demanding a source Source for specific data</p> <p><sup>a</sup> Robin Robbins suggests Henry Blount's <i>Voyage into the Levant</i> as an example. <sup>b</sup> William of Tyre was cited by Maginus and Hakewill. <sup>c</sup> Pierre Belon was cited by Maginus. <sup>d</sup> These lines are paraphrased from Sandys.</p>
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8. Extract from *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, VI:8, p. 494, with direct citations and allusions marked.

<sup>88</sup> For instance, Nathaniel Carpenter, Augustine and Richard Rowlands as the 'very learned Authors' who denied the existence of islands in antediluvian world geography, Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1047; or the 'Chymists' who argued for the relative influence of different elements in producing colour, p. 1063.

<sup>89</sup> For instance, his reference to Francisco Valles as 'the Spanish Physitian', PE, VI:5, p. 464. Such epithets are deliberately employed elsewhere by Browne, as in *The Garden of Cyrus*, and in the tract for John Evelyn on garlands.



<p>Others are so far from defining the originall of the world or of mankinde, that they have held opinions not only repugnant unto Chronology, but Philosophy; that is, that they had their beginning in the soil where they inhabited; assuming or receiving appellations conformable unto such conceits: So did the Athenians tearm themselves αὐτόχθονες or <i>Aborigines</i>, and in testimony thereof did wear a golden insect on their heads;<sup>a</sup> the same is also given unto the Inlanders, or Midland inhabitants of this Island by Cæsar. But this is a conceit answerable unto the generation of the Giants;<sup>b</sup> not admittable in Philosophy, much lesse in Divinity, which distinctly informeth wee are all the seed of Adam, that the whole world perished unto eight persons before the flood, and was after peopled by the Colonies of the sons of Noah; there was therefore never any Autochthon, or man arising from the earth but Adam, for the woman being formed out of the rib, was once removed from earth, and framed from that element under incarnation. And so although her production were not by copulation, yet was it in a manner seminall: For if in every part from whence the seed doth flow, there be contained the Idea of the whole, there was a seminality and contracted Adam in the rib, which by the information of a soul, was individuated into Eve.<sup>c</sup> And therefore this conceit applyed unto the originall of man, and the beginning of the world, is more justly appropriable unto its end; for then indeed men shall rise out of the earth, the grave shall shoot up their concealed seeds, and in that great Autumne men shall spring up, and awake from their Chaos againe.</p>	<p>Collective noun Named author Data demanding a source Source for specific data Possible allusion</p> <p><sup>a</sup> Given in the scholia for Aristophanes' <i>The Clouds</i>, which in turn was quoted by Aldrovandi in <i>De animalibus insectis</i> (1602).</p> <p><sup>b</sup> Robbins traces this to Hesiod's <i>Theogony</i>.</p> <p><sup>c</sup> Robbins traces this through Sinibaldus to Fernel, who in this way reconciled the two opposing views of Hippocrates and Aristotle on the origins of semen.</p>
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9. Extract from *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, VI:1, p. 441, with direct citations and allusions marked.

Other authors are entirely absent from the surface of the text, even though they had provided the epistemological and conceptual structures to which Browne's work responds. Robbins draws attention to the books he believes first prompted the

composition of *Pseudodoxia* and determined its framework — George Hakewill's *An apologie or declaration of the power and providence of God in the government of the world* (1630) and Francis Bacon's *Advancement of learning* (1605). He sees Browne's debt to Hakewill as both structural (deriving many of the topics of his chapters from Hakewill) and allusive, built of 'phrasal echoes'. Robbins hears Hakewill so loudly in Browne's text that he calls the lack of explicit references to Hakewill and his absence from the 1711 catalogue 'a massive invisibility'.<sup>90</sup> Browne's debt to Bacon is still greater, the Baconian aspect of the project ('to purchase a clear and warrantable body of Truth') articulated through a structure which corresponds to that of the *Advancement*.<sup>91</sup> On a smaller scale, Browne can be seen mimicking the structures of his sources at the level of the chapter, as in his discussion of the Nile, in which the organisation of his points follow the chapter headings of two uncited works, Giovanni Battista Scortia's *De natura et incremento Nili* (1617) and Luis de Urreta's *Historia ecclesiastica... de la Etiopia* (1610).<sup>92</sup> The degree of coincidence between such texts and *Pseudodoxia* and their recurrence as silent sources across the work makes their association with Browne entirely reasonable.

But evidence of literary influence can be unstable and depends on the ear of the critic. Martin, for instance, hears the echoes of George Herbert in his commentary of *Religio Medici* and notes the presence of the 1641 edition of Herbert's *The Temple* in the 1711 catalogue to reinforce his assertion.<sup>93</sup> The most persuasive of Martin's identifications associates an image of the homeward bee in Herbert's *The Starr* with the verse in *Religio* inserted by Browne in the authorised edition of 1643.<sup>94</sup> The coincidence of catalogue and textual evidence might indicate a moment in c. 1642 when Browne came under the influence of a newly acquired copy of *The Temple*, but Herbert's poems had run to six editions since its first publication in 1633, and we have no way of knowing

<sup>90</sup> Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>91</sup> Robbins, 'Introduction', *Pseudodoxia*, pp. xxxi-xxxiii. PE, I:1, p. 1.

<sup>92</sup> See Cawley, 'Thomas Browne and his reading', p.443; PE, VI:8.

<sup>93</sup> Martin, 'Commentary', pp. 293, 302, 314. *The temple* (Cambridge, 1641) appears at SC 54/266.

<sup>94</sup> RM, I.13, pp. 13-14. George Herbert, *The Starre* in *The English poems of George Herbert*, ed. by Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 267-270.

that Browne had not seen it, or owned it, before 1641.<sup>95</sup> The lines are not so similar, and the bee metaphor not so rare, that the influence can be called definite.<sup>96</sup> Neither the catalogue nor the text can support such claims concerning individual titles, and even when they corroborate they can lead to no more than reasonable supposition. Specifically, the suggestion of literary influence and the establishment of Browne within a literary tradition is more fraught than determining the contribution of philosophical and scientific works, since ideas and data can be traced more comfortably than echoing allusions. Browne himself was conscious of the instability of such evidence and on one occasion rebelled against it. In response to Thomas Keck's efforts to contextualise *Religio Medici* by his repeated identification of the influence of Montaigne, Browne argued that:

Many things are casually or fauorably superadded vnto the best Authors & sometimes conceats & expressions comon vnto them with others, & that not by imitation butt coincidence, & concurrence of imagination upon harmonie of production.<sup>97</sup>

What the reader hears as a source for a phrase may be a parallel thought, rather than an instance of emulation.

For the more defined influence of philosophical and scientific sources, discrepancies and apparent errors of transcription enable the stemmatic approach by which Robbins pursues a genealogy of Browne's data, following inaccuracies through secondary material to establish Browne's immediate source. In presenting the erroneous figures from Diodorus Siculus via Raleigh, and a mistranscription of 'manifesti' for

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<sup>95</sup> See the English Short-Title Catalogue. Accessed online, October 2015, [estc.bl.uk](http://estc.bl.uk).

<sup>96</sup> The last stanza of Herbert's poem shows his star returning bee-like to the heavens 'that hive of beams / and garland-streams', laden with the poet's soul. Browne's hive, less soaring, is the home to which the enquiring mind returns laden with the 'spoyles of nature' where it will remain 'buzzing thy prayes' until death. Similar reservations pertain to Martin's suggestion that the short phrase 'the ligation of sense' in *Religio Medici* derived from Browne's reading of Burton (see above, p. 147).

<sup>97</sup> Thomas Browne, Sloane MS 1869, fol. 20r.

'manifestae' in Scaliger's *Exotericae exercitationes* carried over from Daniel Sennert's *De chymicorum cum Aristotelicis et Galenicis consensu et dissensu* (1633), Robbins asserts his conviction that Browne acquired at least some of his data at one remove.<sup>98</sup> Browne calls Seneca's source on the failing of the Nile's annual flooding 'Calisthenes', whereas Seneca cites Callimachus. The wrong name is also given by Scortia, upon whom Browne relies for much of the chapter.<sup>99</sup> But just as often the inconsistencies frustrate such efforts. Robbins traces some of Browne's calculations of the chronology of the world in chapter 1 of Book VI, and of the 'populosity' of the world before the Flood in chapter VI, and finds a series of errors that prevent the definite identification of the derivation of Browne's figures. The numbers of years cited by Browne as taking place between Adam and the death of the Emperor Commodus, and between the death of Commodus and the birth of Christ, are inconsistent with those given in his source, Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*. Robbins suggests that Browne may have miscopied the figures or misread his own figures in his notes, or taken his figures from a secondary source which already contained discrepancies.<sup>100</sup> To add further confusion, the figures are inconsistent across different available editions of the *Stromata*.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, the totals given by Browne for the forces of Ninus and Semiramis at the siege of Bactra differ both from Browne's advertised source, Diodorus Siculus, and Robbins's suspected secondary source, Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*.<sup>102</sup> The chance of typographical or scribal error is lower in this instance, since the totals are quoted in English rather than as numerals. Cawley identified an occasion on which Browne himself had confused his sources when he states that Cardan had declared the Orellana (now the Amazon) to be the world's longest river; in fact, it is Maginus who believed the Orellana to be longest, whilst Cardan agreed with Arrian that the Ganges was longer.<sup>103</sup> But in both cases the inconsistencies allow for additional, unknown

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<sup>98</sup> PE, VI:10, p. 507; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1063.

<sup>99</sup> PE, VI:8, p. 500; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1057.

<sup>100</sup> PE, VI:1, p. 445; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1020.

<sup>101</sup> Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1020.

<sup>102</sup> PE, VI:6, p. 473; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1039.

<sup>103</sup> Cawley, 'Thomas Browne and his reading', p. 464; see PE, VI:8, p. 496; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1053.

immediate sources. In terms of Browne's argument these slips are negligible, but they confuse the lines along which information made its way from Browne's reading to his writing and make it impossible to determine his sources exactly.

Browne acknowledged the instabilities inherent in the transmission of texts that manifest in *Pseudodoxia*. He observed in *Christian Morals* the unfortunate errors made by other authors as they cite or appropriate material:

Quotation mistakes, inadvertency, expedition & human Lapses may make not only Moles but Warts in Learned Authors, who notwithstanding being Judged by the capital matter admit not of disparagement. I should unwillingly affirm that Cicero was but slightly versed in Homer, because in his Work de Gloria he ascribed those verses unto Ajax, which were delivered by Hector.<sup>104</sup>

Browne sees mistranscription, like plagiarism, as a function of universal human fallibility towards which the reader should be lenient. He distinguishes between 'capital truths' and 'collateral lapses', arguing that the first should be narrowly eyed but the second allowed to pass. Intriguingly, the notebook in which Browne drafted a version of this passage and other sections of *Christian Morals* dealing with scholarship (such as II:5 and III:21) also contains the section on plagiarism introduced into *Pseudodoxia*'s text in the 1672 edition.<sup>105</sup> Plagiarism, mistranslation, misquotation, and 'captious' controversy were associated concerns, perhaps becoming pressing for Browne as a result of the experience of publishing *Pseudodoxia*.<sup>106</sup> Browne found himself to be negotiating what was fair and acceptable in the appropriation of the work of other authors, upon which *Pseudodoxia* and his essays depended. Browne, like any other scholar, made countless case-by-case decisions to appropriate other texts in

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<sup>104</sup> CM, II:2, p. 260.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas Browne, BL, Sloane MS 1869, fol. 13r. The plagiarism passage, cited above, is PE, I: 6, p. 34.

<sup>106</sup> For Browne's thoughts on the inflexibility of 'captious Contradictors', see CM, II.3, p. 260.

a variety of transformations, and drew in hundreds more without being aware of it. The line between invented and thieved, performed and unconscious, read and unread, remained submerged even to himself.

A close comparison of the explicit citations and implicit influences in Book VI with the contents of the 1711 catalogue strengthens the evidence of a core of books around which Browne's scholarly practice revolved. Of the 125 works named in the text of Book VI, only just over half appear in the catalogue — not particularly encouraging evidence of coincidence between the two sources. But the pattern of citations in Book VI to titles that appear in the catalogue demonstrates their centrality. These books were more intensively used. With a couple of exceptions, the fifty-six titles that do *not* appear in the sale catalogue are only cited once by Browne.<sup>107</sup> These books feature in *Pseudodoxia* as clusters, supporting Robbins' suggestion that Browne took them from secondary sources. For instance, Julius Africanus, Eusebius and Orosius appear in one sentence in chapter 1, and are also cited together in Petau's *De doctrina temporum* (book XI, chapter 2, SC 6/36, 1627), whilst Palladio and Columella, cited in chapters 2 and 7, are given as references in Giambattista della Porta's *Villae* (SC 12/120, 1592).<sup>108</sup> By comparison, the books that appear in the catalogue are named repeatedly across the text. These include the key classical authors with whom Browne was deeply familiar. In Book VI, these are most frequently Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy. The modern geographers and theologians whose work forms the substructure of each chapter also appear in the catalogue (among whom Denis Petau, Jean Bodin, Henry Ainsworth, Anselmus de Boodt, Hernández de Córdoba and Giovanni Antonio Maginus feature prominently).<sup>109</sup> Bearing in mind the incompleteness of the catalogue as bibliographical evidence, it cannot be claimed that all the titles appearing in both the catalogue and in Book VI were definitely read by Browne in the process of composing *Pseudodoxia*, or that the titles absent from the catalogue were accessed only via a

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<sup>107</sup> The notable exceptions to this are Diodorus Siculus, and J.C. Scaliger's *Exotericæ exercitationes* (1550). Diodorus appears 11 times throughout Book VI, on which basis it is reasonable to assume that Browne either owned a copy which wandered before the sale, or that he had borrowed a copy from elsewhere. Scaliger's *Exotericæ exercitationes* is mentioned 4 times in Book VI, and 22 times across *Pseudodoxia* as a whole.

<sup>108</sup> PE, VI:1, p. 445; VI:2, p. 457; VI:7, p. 488.

<sup>109</sup> The only prominent exception to this being Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*.

mediating source. Two of the explicitly cited sources, Procopius and Richard Knolles's *History of the Turks*, were owned by Browne and appear in the list of books read to Browne by Elizabeth Lyttelton but are absent from the catalogue.<sup>110</sup> But Browne relied more heavily on the group of titles that do feature in the catalogue, bringing the library it describes closer to Browne's working practice.

The coincidence of titles featuring in the catalogue and in Book VI of *Pseudodoxia* may reflect the value attached to their authors as a canon, rather than their instrumental significance to Browne's studies. The authors who appear in both tend to be more prolific and more highly esteemed: the likes of Seneca, Augustine, Avicenna, Ortelius and Vossius. There is a certain inevitability about the fact that Browne owned these books and relied on them. But there is an additional trait amongst this group of titles which reinforces their contribution to *Pseudodoxia*. The imprints of the editions of these works in the catalogue are relatively early. Twenty-two of the fifty-six titles with confirmed imprint dates are sixteenth-century; each of the following decades contributes around ten more titles. This contrasts to the composition of the catalogue as a whole, which sees the number of books printed in each decade of the seventeenth century increase exponentially.<sup>111</sup> The relatively high proportion of imprints that were decades-old by the time *Pseudodoxia* was first published suggests that Browne already owned a body of the relevant books by the time he began its composition. It also adds weight to the hypotheses that Browne began to collect his library before settling in Norwich in 1637 or that he bought many of his books secondhand.<sup>112</sup> Much of Browne's composition of Book VI relied on books that might feasibly have been in his possession for a decade or more.

That being the case, Browne's reading can be characterised as operating in different modes through time — immediate reactions to newly acquired material, longer gestatory reflections, and continual re-reading and reassessment. Most of the alterations made to *Pseudodoxia* occurred between the first edition and the second,

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<sup>110</sup> 'Lyttelton Miscellany', Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 8460, p. 45.

<sup>111</sup> See chapter 1, fig. 2.

<sup>112</sup> The timing of the acquisition of Browne's library is discussed in ch. 2, pp. 8-9 of this thesis.

published in 1650. There were scattered additions in the earlier chapters of Book VI and two new chapters inserted at the end of the book.<sup>113</sup> Much of the new material is manifestly the result of the reading of relatively new books. For instance, the more miscellaneous final chapter of Book VI is indebted to three modern works: Gaffarel's *Curiositez Inouyes* (first published 1637); Kircher's *Magnes* (1641); and Cabeo's commentary on Aristotle's *Meteorologica* (1646).<sup>114</sup> Cabeo must have been new to Browne, but he might have seen the Gaffarel and the Kircher before 1646.<sup>115</sup> The new chapter incorporates material from titles of an earlier date, including Thomas Milles's anthologised *Treasurie of auncient and moderne times* (1613).<sup>116</sup> Milles's miscellany is identified by Robbins as a possible source for a further nine points of argument across *Pseudodoxia* in its first edition, making Browne's ownership and use of it before 1646 highly likely. Similarly, the chapter on gypsies, added in 1650, owes most of its material to Hernández de Córdoba, whose work had already been excavated for relevant material in the 1646 edition. Browne did not just acquire books, read them, and move on: the arrival of a new title within Browne's sphere could inspire a bout of re-reading.<sup>117</sup> Only in a very few cases, like that of Cabeo's commentary or Henry Power's *Experimental Philosophy* (1664) where the dates of publication and reception into *Pseudodoxia* match, can the influential moment of a particular text be precisely asserted.<sup>118</sup> In all other instances there is room for the re-reading of and re-

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<sup>113</sup> These final additions are comparable to the new chapters added to the ends of Books II and III identified by Westfall, 'Sir Thomas Browne's revisions', p. 181. Book VI's 'On gypsies' is exceptional amongst these additional chapters, presenting a structured argument rather than a series of miscellaneous queries.

<sup>114</sup> Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1078.

<sup>115</sup> The catalogue cannot give corroboration in either case, since the Gaffarel is absent, and the Kircher represented by a later edition (1654, SC 8/89).

<sup>116</sup> SC 44/12.

<sup>117</sup> Westfall finds occasions of similar re-reading and suggests that the publication of Nonnus's *Diaeteticon* in 1646 sent Browne back to his notebooks for his previous reading on diet (p. 163). He also finds a reciprocity in the influence of newly printed titles on Browne's experimental work for Books II and III. Not only do they suggest new experiments to him, but also, as in the case of Federico Cesi and Johannes Faber, support the results of his earlier published observations (p. 179).

<sup>118</sup> Browne inserts a couple of lines on the proposition of colour as 'modification of light' into chapter XII in the 1672 edition, drawing on Power and on Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* (1665). PE, VI:12, p. 524; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1075.



engagement with texts which may have been accessible to Browne (if not necessarily owned by him) for years before and after their first manifestation in *Pseudodoxia*.

The arrival of citations via mediating sources also illustrates the capaciousness of *Pseudodoxia*, and the limitations of a bibliographic source like the 1711 catalogue for describing the reading life of its author. Persuasive evidence of mediation is the appearance of an author as one name in a string of citations and the concentration of such references in proximity in another work. Cawley noticed, for instance, that many of the authors Browne marshalled in his discussion of the Red Sea appear within a few pages of each other in Raleigh's *History of the World*.<sup>119</sup> Raleigh is absent from the 1711 catalogue and from the list of books read by Elizabeth Lyttelton to Browne, but extracts from Raleigh are present in one of Browne's notebooks and in Lyttelton's own miscellany, suggesting that the family had access to at least one copy.<sup>120</sup> Scaliger's *Exotericarum exercitationum* is a further example of a frequently cited book which does not appear in the catalogue but does feature in Browne's notes.<sup>121</sup> Cawley, using internal evidence, identified some occasions on which Browne followed such mediated references to their original, but others where he did not.<sup>122</sup> The comparison of similar clustered references against the catalogue also allows for the possibility that Browne read some mediated sources in the original, but not others. Of the twelve authors quoted by Browne in his chapter on the Red Sea and *also* found within ten pages of each other in Hernández de Córdoba's *Didascalía Multiplex* (1615), only five do not appear in the catalogue.<sup>123</sup> Further citations from a short section of *Didascalía Multiplex* pepper the chapter on gypsies, with a similar pattern: twelve authors, five of whom are

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<sup>119</sup> Cawley, 'Thomas Browne and his reading', p. 444; see PE, VI:9, p. 505; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1061.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas Browne, BL, Sloane MS 1869, fol. 101r; Burke, 'Contexts for women's manuscript miscellanies', p. 321.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas Browne, BL, Sloane MS 1830, fol. 10r.

<sup>122</sup> Cawley, 'Thomas Browne and his reading', p. 461. Here Cawley shows that from among a string of references copied from Maginus on the mouths of the Nile, Browne had followed up on the reference to William of Tyre and added supplementary details from his work, but had not read the relevant passage in Pierre Belon's *Observations de plusieurs singularitez et choses memorables* (1553), instead copying Maginus's misrepresentation of Belon's observations. Neither work appears in the catalogue.

<sup>123</sup> PE, VI:9, pp. 504-506; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, pp. 1059-1062.

absent from the catalogue.<sup>124</sup> The mediating sources may, in such instances, represent a conduit through which Browne accessed his library, rather than marking the limits of his reading.

Browne's employment of works like *Didascalía* allowed him to cast his nets much further than the books immediately available to him, and to read in a directed, consultative mode as well as comprehensively. A model example of Browne's use of reference works occurs in chapter 10 of Book VI, in which he draws together a series of occasions on which animals and humans have changed the colour of their skin through the power of the imagination. Thomas Feyens's *De viribus imaginationis* (1607) provided Browne with references to the book of Genesis, Rhodiginus's *Lectiones Antiquae*, Ludovico Settala's commentary on the spuriously attributed Aristotelian *Problemata*, Heliodorus's *Aethiopica*, and (indirectly) Ficino in his edition of Plotinus.<sup>125</sup> Feyens's work, like Hernández de Córdoba's, is largely a compilation of bibliographical references arranged around a series of problems. The section from which Browne takes his references includes further material on the same subject drawn from additional sources,<sup>126</sup> and on this occasion Browne gives a marginal note to indicate to his readers that they will find further pertinent material in Feyens.<sup>127</sup> Browne's discussion of gypsies reshapes Hernández de Córdoba's argument, reordering his points and excising quantities of corroborating authorities.<sup>128</sup> The virtue of such books was that they acted as an effective conduit for information, providing paratexts for enabling consultation and pointing their readers towards relevant literature. In both Feyens and Hernández de Córdoba such paratexts took the form of a list of the authors cited in his work, and an extensive index of the subjects covered.<sup>129</sup> Feyens, like many of Browne's other sources including Aldrovandi's *Monstrorum historia* (1642)

<sup>124</sup> PE, VI:12, pp. 531-532; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, pp. 1077-1078.

<sup>125</sup> PE, VI:10, p. 513; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1067.

<sup>126</sup> Thomas Feyens, *De viribus imaginationis* (Louvain, 1608), pp. 112-115.

<sup>127</sup> 'Vide plura apud Tho. Fienum, *de viribus imaginationis*'. PE, VI:10, p. 513.

<sup>128</sup> Hernández de Córdoba, 'De Ægyptianis, seu Zingaris; et unde illis origo', in *Didascalía Multiplex* (Lyon, 1615), pp. 405-413.

<sup>129</sup> Feyens, *De viribus imaginationis*, pp. 7-8, and pp. 11-15; Hernández de Córdoba, *Didascalía Multiplex*, pp. [27]-[36].

and Rhodiginus's *Lectiones Antiquae* (1516), sits across genre divisions, offering the plentiful bibliographical citations and finding devices of reference books, whilst presenting arguments.

**114 DE VIRIBVS**  
 Albertus Magnus lib. 12. tract. 1. cap. 3. Marfilus Ficinus lib. 13. Theolog. Platon. cap. 1. Tartaretus 2. animæ articulo penultimo. Michael Medina lib. 2. de re&ta in Deum fide cap. 7. Cardanus lib. 12. de Subtilitate. Pererius super Genesim cap. 30. disp. 3. Toletus super 2. Phisic quæst. 13. Foroliuensis 3. techn. quæstio. 11. concl. 2. Thomas à Vega comm. in art. paru. cap. 49. Christoph. Vega 2. art. paruæ sect. 6. Fernel. 7. Pnyfiolog. cap. 12. Conciliator diff. 135. resp. ad 2. Scaliger exercit. 59. sect. 1. Valesius lib. 1. Sacræ Philosophiæ c. 11. Peramatus lib. de hominis procreatione cap. 17. Cittadinus lib. 3. cap. 15. Andreas Laurentius lib. 8. controu. anatom. quæst. 10. Archangel. Picolom. anat. prælect. lect. 1. Hercules Saxonia 4. Panthei cap. 30. Argent. com. 2. super artem paruam fol. 139. Baptista Syluat. lib. histor. Medic. historia 6. Rodericus à Castro tom. 1. de morbis mulier. lib. 3. cap. 9. Bonamicus lib. 4. de alim. cap. 38. Leuinus Lemnius lib. 1. de complex. cap. 6. Franciscus Picolomineus in lib. Phisic. disput. de facultate motiuâ cap. 23. Martinus Desrio in Disquis. Magicis quæst. 3. cap. 3. Andreas Cataneus lib. de intellectu. & causis mirabilium effectuum, Pomponatius lib. de incarnationibus, Langius, VVyerus, Gemma, Paræus, VVeynrichius, Codronchus, Libanius, Iason Pratensis, & multi aliq: quorum nomina non recordor, & loca quærere piget.  
 Huc accedit communis aduersus Glimm et aduersus

10. Thomas Feyens, *De viribus imaginationis* (Louvain, 1608), portion of p. 114, showing abbreviated references to other works.

*Pseudodoxia* shares some of these generic features, proffering citations to promote further study. In introducing material gathered from secondary or tertiary sources, Browne used the tools available to present a comprehensive, if judiciously vetted, survey to his audience. Whilst most bibliographical compilations avoided interpretation and left their readers to use their own judgement, Browne sought to persuade his readers towards better, more logical evaluation of the authors he presents. *Pseudodoxia* shows a commitment to presenting his reading for the benefit of his peers — a commitment reiterated in his notes for Edward, his letters to William Dugdale and John Evelyn, and in *Urne-buriall* and *Garden of Cyrus*. The responses of Dean Christopher Wren and Hamon L'Estrange to *Pseudodoxia* demonstrate their appreciation of its value as a bibliographical initiation. Their notes follow Browne's

citations and usually extend them, contributing their own references. Wren, for instance, adds notes from his own reading of Scaliger's *Exotericae exercitationes* throughout his copy of *Pseudodoxia*, as in Book VI, chapter 11, on the possibility of negritude being due to a curse on Noah's son Cham.<sup>130</sup> L'Estrange's *Observations* on *Pseudodoxia* also spring from the effort to pursue Browne's reading and combine it with his own: 'the books which fell within the small sphere, and epicycle of myne actiuity'.<sup>131</sup> Ultimately, such responses could feed back into *Pseudodoxia*, L'Estrange's notes on the whale beached at Hunstanton being added to the 1658 edition.<sup>132</sup> The function of *Pseudodoxia*'s citations, extending beyond the borders of its immediate argument towards future discussion, differs strikingly from that of Alexander Ross's response to Browne in *Arcana microcosmi*. Ross relies on many of the same sources, including Scaliger, Camerarius, and Rhodiginus, but insistently interposes himself between his sources and his audience: 'I read stories...', 'I have read of one...'.<sup>133</sup> Browne's citations were more self-effacing, closer to the neutral tone of the reference genre, and explicitly bent towards facilitating further study.

#### *A node in a network: conclusions*

We can know Browne's library through his published works, though the relationship between the two is never linear and definite. His commitment to an initiatory stance, offering intertextual citations as a means of promoting discourse, and his desire to harmonise a cacophony of competing learned voices led to works in which his library seems tangibly evident just beneath the surface. There is an identifiable core of books upon which Browne drew throughout his writing life whose titles also appear in the 1711 catalogue. These books, by both ancient and modern authors, were largely canonical, but the ways in which Browne used them for study and cited them in his work were specific to him. He had certain classical texts — Strabo, Pliny, Aristotle, Plutarch, and many others — at his fingertips, even if his use of them was not always exact. Ancient literature features prominently on the surface of Browne's works but

<sup>130</sup> PE, VI:11, p. 518; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 1071.

<sup>131</sup> L'Estrange, *Observations*, Sloane MS 1839, fol. 50r.

<sup>132</sup> PE, III:26, p. 272; Robbins, 'Commentary', *Pseudodoxia*, p. 880.

<sup>133</sup> Alexander Ross, *Arcana microcosmi* (London, 1652), pp. 74 and 80.

the influence of contemporary literature is more nebulous. He referred to a group of specialist modern texts in all fields, including theology, philology and medicine, and it is reasonable to suppose that these represent only a fraction of his scholarly reading. Browne's talent for identifying pertinent information across a wide range of genres was peculiar to his working habits and could verge on the playful or haphazard.

But we cannot read such citations as definitive proof of his ownership, and there is disagreement between the evidence of the 1711 catalogue and of the textual citations. As noted in chapter one, some of those titles which seem to have exerted the most influence on Browne's work are not present in the catalogue, although in a few cases we know that he had owned copies. Some citations arrived in *Pseudodoxia* via mediating sources, and among those, many tend only to be cited on one occasion and not to appear in the catalogue, implying that the mediated material was not in Browne's possession. But from among clusters of mediated citations, a fair proportion were represented in the catalogue, so Browne was not solely copying the material to which he had no direct access. Given this mismatch between Browne's reading as described in *Pseudodoxia* and his book ownership as outlined in the catalogue, it is striking that so many of the books cited in the work occur in the catalogue in early editions and might have been available to Browne during its composition. The real difficulty lies in pinning down any single title to Browne's ownership at a single moment. In all but a very few cases, Browne's reading of an individual work, his ownership of it, and its appearance in his sphere at a pertinent moment, can only be assessed in terms of probability and likelihood.

This uncertainty is the most revealing feature of Browne's citations. His processes as a reader and writer elude a model of input and output, and his relationship with his library can be appreciated as fuller, enriched by a generative confusion. The negotiation of the appropriate occasions for textual borrowing was fundamental to Browne's own understanding of his projects. His 'plagiarist', a mark of post-Edenic imperfection, was inevitable and his reliance on previous authorities both flawed and expansive. The copiousness of his dependence on other sources allowed for countless shades of intertextuality, performed, conscious and submerged. The persuasiveness of

his arguments hinged upon his ability to appropriate and recontextualise his sources according to the mores of his audience. The generic structures of the commonplace book and the reference work — with their deliberate avoidance of magisterial argument and drive to form order out of chaos — provided an environment in which Browne's adoption of direct and mediated source material could be acceptably presented. His essays function as nodes within networks, extending beyond their first lines and their last full stops, with their authority defined instead by their multivalent organisational schemata. His gathering of data from his books, apparently so haphazard and sprawling, is matched by the perpetually incomplete and indefinite accumulation of his museum objects, the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 5 - *Musaeum Clausum*: Thomas Browne's museum

With many thanks I return that noble Catalogue of Books, Rarities and Singularities of Art and Nature, which you were pleased to communicate unto me. There are many Collections of this kind in *Europe*. And, besides the printed accounts of the Musæum Aldrovandi, Calceolarianum, Moscardi, Wormianum; the Casa Abbellita at Loretto, and Threasor of S. Dennis, the Repository of the Duke of Tuscany, that of the Duke of Saxony, and that noble one of the Emperour at Vienna, and many more are of singular note.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Browne's *Musaeum Clausum* begins with a catalogue of catalogues. In the course of thanking his reader for the loan of a museum catalogue, and returning the favour by the gift of another, Browne names the 'printed accounts' of nine European collections of rare and singular things. In so doing Browne establishes the foundations upon which he intends *Musaeum Clausum* to be read. He provides a lineage for elite museum collecting, listing two medieval religious treasuries (that of the Basilica di Santa Casa in Loreto, and Abbot Suger's treasury at St-Denis), three princely cabinets (the Medici collection, that of the Albertine Electors of Saxony, and of the Habsburg emperors), and four museums belonging to renowned scholars (Ulisse Aldrovandi, Francesco Calzolari, Lodovico Moscardo, and Ole Worm).<sup>2</sup> In a single sentence, Browne marshals a wealth of properties and ideas associated with three distinct but cooperating types of early modern museum. The religious repositories spoke of saintly relics, ceremony and memento mori, and of embellished

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<sup>1</sup> MC, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> Work on *Musaeum Clausum* by Bent Juel-Jensen and Claire Preston has made clear its debt to such catalogues: Juel-Jensen, 'Musaeum Clausum', pp. 130-132; Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, pp. 166-174. The catalogues of most of these collections had been printed by the time *Musaeum Clausum* was composed: *La S. Casa abbellita* (Loreto, 1634); S.G. Millet's *Le Trésor Sacré: ou, inventaire des saints reliques [...] de l'Abbaye royale de St. Denis* (Paris, 1638); Francisco Calzolari's *Musaeum Calceolarianum Verunense* (Verona, 1622), edited by Andrea Chiocco; Ole Worm's *Musaeum Wormianum* (Amsterdam, 1655); and the publications of Ulisse Aldrovandi.

antiquities and precious gems suffused with spiritual resonance.<sup>3</sup> The princely collections evoked hermetic set-pieces, brimful with luxurious and exotic substances, sophisticated conceits all placed in elaborate emblematic arrangements in heavily guarded spaces.<sup>4</sup> And the scholarly or professional cabinets referred to encyclopaedic attempts to gather in the world in all its copiousness, being attentive to singularity and wonder as a means of understanding nature and its operations.<sup>5</sup> The introduction of these catalogues sets a pattern for Browne's tract, and he uses them like his museum objects, as microcosmic representations of complexly signifying entities in the macrocosm.<sup>6</sup> The catalogues, like all objects that were gathered into a museum, have a meaning which derives from their narrative and from their arrangement, and these meanings are precisely what makes *Musaeum Clausum* coalesce.<sup>7</sup> Each book, picture, or object in Browne's catalogue has a history, either spelled out within its catalogue entry or left for the reader to infer (for instance, 'Seneca's epistles to S. Paul').<sup>8</sup> *Musaeum Clausum*, in its inception amongst printed museums and its depiction

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the medieval antecedents to early modern collecting and discussion of the treasure of St-Denis, see Susan M. Pearce, *On collecting: an investigation into collecting in the European tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 100-107.

<sup>4</sup> The *studiolo* of Francesco de' Medici is described thus by Paula Findlen, 'The museum', p. 70. The princely cabinet is also described by Pearce, *On collecting*, p. 112-114, and MacGregor, *Curiosity and enlightenment*, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> For the characteristics of scholarly cabinets see Findlen on Aldrovandi and Athanasius Kircher in 'The museum', pp. 65-68; MacGregor, *Curiosity and enlightenment*, pp. 20-21; Giuseppe Olmi, 'Science, honour, metaphor: Italian cabinets of the seventeenth and seventeenth centuries' in *The origins of museums: the cabinet of curiosities in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe*, ed. by Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (London: House of Stratus, 2001), pp. 5-16, as well as further discussion below.

<sup>6</sup> The role of the cabinet or museum as a microcosm of the world or *theatrum mundi* is well covered in the critical literature, including: Pearce, *On collecting*, p. 112-114 and Foucault, *The order of things*, pp. 19-28. Findlen finds examples of printed or manuscript museum catalogues being referred to as 'reduced', 'little' or 'printed museums', Findlen, 'The museum', p. 64.

<sup>7</sup> Paula Findlen argues that the museum offered a framework which provided 'a macrocosmic gloss to every object it encountered' (Findlen, 'The museum', p. 63). For a summary of ways by which an object could signify in the early modern period see Pearce, *On collecting*, p. 114; and Paula Findlen, *Possessing nature: museums, collecting, and scientific culture in early modern Italy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 3-5. The formation of significance through categorisation and contiguity is discussed at length in chapter 6.

<sup>8</sup> MC, p. 112.



of objects as texts, demonstrates the integration of texts and objects — and of libraries and museums — as collaborating carriers of knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

*Musaeum Clausum* exhibits some of the encyclopaedic concerns of the published catalogues of contemporary Continental *Wunderkammern* and cabinets of curiosities. The collections it mimics most closely belonged to professional scholars whose museums operated as systems for interpreting the world around them in all its variety. Their investigative projects were dependent upon the gathering and arrangement of objects, as well as facts and ideas from the macrocosm of books.<sup>10</sup> Findlen indicates the encyclopaedic practices in Aldrovandi's collecting as he routinely counted the sum of facts within 'our microcosm', created printed catalogues with entries for items he did not possess to complete his collection with descriptive replications, and constructed a multi-volume lexicon of manuscript scraps bearing all his 'facts' arranged alphabetically.<sup>11</sup> *Musaeum Clausum*'s catalogue imitates these universalising and humanist tendencies. It scrupulously embeds its holdings into the textual record of the past, articulating events from antiquity (such as picture item 15, 'Three noble Pieces; of Vercingetorix the Gaul submitting his person unto Julius Cæsar; of Tigranes King of Armenia humbling presenting himself unto Pompey; and of Tamerlane ascending his Horse from the Neck of Bajazet'). It also connects artefacts to classical sources ('Some handsome Engraveries and Medals, of Justinus and Justinianus, found in the custody of a Bannyan in the remote parts of India, conjectured to have been left there by Friars mentioned in Procopius, who travelled those parts in the reign of Justinianus, and brought back into Europe the discovery of Silk and Silk Worms').<sup>12</sup> The descriptions of natural specimens depend on natural philosophical literature, like the spirits that are so volatile that they must be hermetically sealed, stabilised in

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<sup>9</sup> Findlen is particularly attentive to the early modern museum as a textual strategy for comprehending the world in 'The museum', p. 59 and onwards. This thesis is also adopted by Swann in *Curiosities and texts*, p. 9; Daston and Park, *Wonders and the order of nature*, p. 67, and others.

<sup>10</sup> Findlen, 'The museum', pp. 59-61, and Findlen, *Possessing nature*, p. 153.

<sup>11</sup> Findlen, 'The museum', pp. 64-66.

<sup>12</sup> MC, p. 117.

mercury, and only exposed to winter sunlight or the glow of the Bononian Stone.<sup>13</sup> Browne's attention is given in *Musaeum Clausum* to the filling of lacunae and the reassembling of fragments. The presence of the encyclopaedic work of collector-bibliographers like Aldrovandi, Ludovico Settala and Conrad Gesner in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* reveals their role as collaborators in his own encyclopaedic project.<sup>14</sup> I argued in chapter 4 that encyclopaedic literary practice reflected the collecting processes that created a cabinet, and I suggest here that the traffic of terms and structures went both ways.<sup>15</sup>

The distinction between museum objects and the words that described and defined them is further eroded by Browne's deliberate inclusion in *Musaeum Clausum* of objects that were familiar to him rather than invented or lost. In doing so, he destabilises the boundaries within which we might seek to contain Browne's skittish catalogue. After mentioning the catalogues of the great Continental museums, he adds: 'Of what in this kind I have by me I shall make no repetition, [...] you having already had a view thereof.'<sup>16</sup> We cannot be certain of Browne's seriousness in describing himself as an owner of 'this kind' of object, nor what he intends as belonging to such a category when the items inventoried veer between the real, the lost, and the fantastical.<sup>17</sup> Even as Browne places his emphasis on the remoteness of the objects in this hidden collection to first-hand experience, he makes knowing gestures towards items in his possession and which his first reader may already have seen on a visit to Norwich. The first item listed amongst the pictures, an image of the Tower of Pisa, the Torre Garisenda in Bologna, and the leaning tower of St Johann Baptist in Cologne, had its equivalent in Browne's library. Two drawings of the Italian towers are still extant in

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<sup>13</sup> MC, p. 119.

<sup>14</sup> See above, pp. 160, 169, for examples, as well as Robbins' commentary on *Pseudodoxia*.

<sup>15</sup> Findlen draws attention to the encompassing terms that travelled between museums and encyclopaedias including theatre, treasure, mirror, forest, and microcosm. 'The museum', p. 63. Stephen Bann identifies the collapse of an opposition between author/producer and reader/consumer in early modern patterns of collecting which parallels the work by Moss and Blair on encyclopaedias and commonplace books (Bann, *Under the sign*, p. 21).

<sup>16</sup> MC, p. 109.

<sup>17</sup> See p. 24 above.

the British Library with labels in Browne's hand.<sup>18</sup> Other objects included in *Musaeum Clausum* Browne had seen or at least heard described. An enhydrus (a stone which 'naturally include a little Water in them') was brought from Denmark to Robert Paston, who described it in a letter to Browne in 1674 as an amber holding a liquid inside.<sup>19</sup> By including possessions of his own or within his Norfolk affinity in the catalogue of *Musaeum Clausum*, Browne pokes fun at his own claims regarding its occluded nature. At the same time, in a typically Brownean gesture, he reaches across the space between him and his departed visitor and pulls him back to his house, his museum, and the conversations that took place there.

This chapter locates Browne's collecting practice within the multiple epistemological frameworks and exemplars that he played with in *Musaeum Clausum*. I argue that Browne's own 'museum' — the collections of animal and plant specimens, minerals, drawings, artefacts, and other objects that came into his house or under his gaze — was, like his library, characterised by fluidity and exchange. The informality of its structure is in some respects in opposition to Aldrovandi's collections which, as Findlen describes them, were intended only to increase, and to be preserved 'for the utility of posterity'.<sup>20</sup> But the Italian scholarly cabinets were not necessarily fixed, and the same kinds of inventories and catalogues that capture losses from library collections also record material flowing out of museums.<sup>21</sup> Browne and many of his acquaintances made a virtue of hospitality and generous donation. On the other hand, the owners of Italian princely museums (and, to a lesser extent, the scholarly collectors) maintained strict control over access, exercising power through possession and selective publication.<sup>22</sup> Browne's museum pervaded his household, as the objects he examined penetrated many of its spaces and extended out into the city and the

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<sup>18</sup> MC, 112; BL, Add. MS 5234, fols. 33 to 36.

<sup>19</sup> MC, p. 118; Robert Paston to TB, 10 Sep 1674, ed. Wilkin (1846), vol. I, p. 411.

<sup>20</sup> Findlen, 'The museum', pp. 65-66.

<sup>21</sup> For instance, in the discrepancies between the printed and manuscript catalogues of the Settala museum. MacGregor, *Curiosity and enlightenment*, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> For privacy and hiddenness as a quality of Italian museums see Findlen, 'The museum', pp. 69-71. Findlen argues that Italian cabinets attracted scholars and visitors even when they were kept in the most secluded parts of the home, and that difficulty of access could enhance the scholar-owner's reputation.

Norfolk countryside. In this it matches MacGregor's characterisation of the English museum as more diffuse in holdings and spaces than the Italian.<sup>23</sup> Browne's investigatory interests in gathering material objects chimed with those of his Italian peers, but he was able to engage in taxonomy and comparison without a defined and circumscribed space to operate in.<sup>24</sup> I argue that Browne's collecting was informed by curiosity and wonder, as he tended to read the remarkable for philosophical observations and to be comprehensive in his attention to detail. But that his engagement with wonder was limited to its scientific usefulness, avoiding indulgence or superfluity.<sup>25</sup> Many of the objects in *Musaeum Clausum* are useful as well as wonderful, like the cuttlefish ink extract used by Hippocrates for treating hysteria, the oil hourglass, and the perpetually moist stones or 'etiudros Alberti' which can act upon those with a 'dry temper'.<sup>26</sup> As an owner and student of the material world, Browne rarely behaved strictly according to the categories by which early museum collecting was understood, even as he borrowed them.<sup>27</sup>

This characterisation of Browne is based in two kinds of evidence. The first portion of the chapter explores Browne's account of his use of objects, drawing on published work like *Musaeum Clausum* and his correspondence and journals. There are manifest continuities between Browne's presentation of himself as a collector and the encyclopaedic tendencies both of the Continental museum owners he emulated and of

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<sup>23</sup> Arthur MacGregor, 'The cabinet of curiosities in seventeenth-century Britain' in Impey and MacGregor (eds.), *The origins of museums*, p. 201.

<sup>24</sup> Findlen argues that such spatial circumscription was necessary for humanist collecting. I will argue, here and in chapter 6, that Browne engages in arrangement and classification of objects within an infinite space, with endless continuation and variation being implicit, just as completeness within the cabinet was implied by the metaphors of the microcosm. See Findlen, 'The museum', pp. 63-64.

<sup>25</sup> For wonder as a property of seventeenth-century scientific endeavour, and its effect upon scientific description with reference to Boyle's work on phosphorescence, see Lorrain Daston, 'Description by omission: nature enlightened and observed', in *Regimes of description: in the archive of the eighteenth century*, ed. by John Bender and Michael Marrinan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 11-24.

<sup>26</sup> MC, p. 117.

<sup>27</sup> Brent Nelson is right to argue that Browne's collecting and possession of objects can be associated with humanist, empiricist and baroque epistemes, 'The Browne family's culture of curiosity', p. 82.

his own work in *Pseudodoxia*. Browne immerses his reader in his enjoyment of the physical qualities of the world — colour, smell, texture, and (especially in *The Garden of Cyrus*) the miniature or enclosed space. His concern for and pleasure in the tasks of naming and describing objects is compulsive. He dwelt upon issues of observation and interpretation, teasing through literal and deuteroscopic significances and recognising the discrepancies in the senses of different men observing a single phenomenon. He insisted upon the importance of contextual information in interpretation and was alert to the ease with which objects could find themselves attached to false contexts and provenances accidentally or wilfully ascribed. Browne as a collector operated in several epistemological modes simultaneously, able to treasure objects as exotic or singular whilst simultaneously treating them as representative and part of a common class or series. His objects were seen as fragments of an eternally incomplete investigation into the science of the Creation, stretching boundary-less from his study through kitchen and garden and into the landscape beyond.

The second section attempts a reconstruction of Browne's collections themselves, scanning Browne's writings as inventories and using the lists of objects with Browne provenances acquired by Sir Hans Sloane whose catalogues are now at the British Museum. This part of the chapter strives for an account of Browne's object holdings from a material rather than literary perspective. But it is necessarily incomplete, and must act like a microcosm, the cabinet of remaining scraps being a synecdoche for a much larger, more transitory collection.<sup>28</sup> Faced with difficulties similar to those associated with the recovery of Browne's book possessions — the incompleteness of the surviving lists, and their creation for purposes other than inventorying — it mirrors chapter 2, describing as far as possible the contents and size of Browne's 'museum', its storage and arrangement, its acquisition and disposal. The survey finds evidence for the fugitive character of Browne's 'museum', its indefinite spaces, its informality, and its position in his networks of social and scholarly exchange. It argues that, as with the Browne library, the division of ownership of objects between Thomas and Edward Browne is artificial. There was traffic of museum specimens and

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<sup>28</sup> MacGregor discusses the cabinet as *pars pro toto* in *Curiosity and enlightenment*, p. 58.

artefacts between father and son, and such sharing was both formative and integral to the functioning of the collection. As in chapters 1 and 2, I have used contemporary British and Continental collections for comparative context, including the Tradescant-Ashmole ark at Lambeth, the museums of the Royal Society and the Royal College of Physicians, and Robert Hubert's cabinet, as well as those of Aldrovandi, Worm, and Kircher. I find a range of individual practices which both collaborated with and eluded the protocols of collecting.

As with other 'perennial' practices like reading and the experience of emotions like wonder, the history of collecting and its attendant constructs has been given structure by dialectical categories (public/private, princely/scholarly, exotic/quotidian, and so forth). The history of collecting also wrestles with the tension between a narrative view — tracing one epistemological era to the next, or the structures of private cabinets to public and institutional museums — and a more wayward, personal and non-linear history in which practices and attitudes recur across centuries. Recent historians have tended to utilise categories and narratives whilst simultaneously pointing out their inadequacies. Findlen, for instance, finds the contradictory qualities of privacy and openness, exoticism, luxury and ordinariness to be precisely what makes the museum so suitable as an organising principle for cultural activity.<sup>29</sup> Brent Nelson and Marjorie Swann have found Foucault's epistemes helpful whilst pointing to their obscuring of individual agency, identifying practitioners like Browne whose collections encapsulate competing epistemological principles.<sup>30</sup> MacGregor self-consciously offers a teleological account in which seventeenth- and eighteenth-century collections act as 'precursors' to the great modern museums, whilst Ken Arnold and Stephen Bann adopt a synchronic approach, drawing on a few instances of early modern museums in all their specificity.<sup>31</sup> Neil Kenny in his history of curiosity, and Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park in their history of wonder, are suspicious of

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<sup>29</sup> Findlen, 'The museum', p. 61.

<sup>30</sup> Nelson, 'The Browne family's culture of curiosity', p. 82; Michel Foucault, *The order of things* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), see especially pp. 19-46. Swann points to the limitations of Foucault's epistemes as formative for collections, since they play down the role of social mores and individual agency, *Curiosities and texts*, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> MacGregor, *Curiosity and enlightenment*, p. ix; Ken Arnold, *Cabinets for the curious: looking back at early English museums* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 2-4; Bann, *Under the sign*, p. 9.

narratives of decisive change, with Daston and Park proposing instead that such sentiments were ‘undulatory, continuous, sometimes cyclical’.<sup>32</sup> As is the case for private libraries, the history of personal collections of objects that produced such narratives has relied heavily on literature and anecdotal evidence, rather than laborious and unreliable surveys of inventories. The narrative has also been skewed by its origins in the history of the institutional museums to which personal collections contributed. The history of a single historic collection like Browne’s can manoeuvre more nimbly through the types and expectations imposed by a more general narrative.

As in previous chapters, I have attempted here to avoid calling Browne a ‘collector’, feeling the term to be too freighted with characteristics particular to postmodern theories of collecting. The history of collecting has become intensely theorised as personal collecting has been analysed as an expression of the relationship between one human being and the material world in which intellectual processes, communal ‘cultural ideas of value, and the deepest levels of individual personality’ are articulated.<sup>33</sup> The activities of collectors have been attributed by some critics to their unconscious or repressed need for self-assertion in the face of emotional trauma. This reading tends to emphasise the abnormality of the collector’s collecting, identifying as typical characteristics an obsessive urge towards completeness and a belief in the absolute uniqueness of each possessed item.<sup>34</sup> Browne’s collecting may be called universalist, and even obsessive, but his fascination with the singularity of all phenomena is driven by a specifically seventeenth-century belief in the capacity of the unique property to illuminate the workings of the world, rather than a psychoanalytical drive for assertion through possession.<sup>35</sup> The contrary tendency in

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<sup>32</sup> See Alexander Marr, ‘Introduction’ in *Curiosity and wonder*, pp. 5-15 for a critique of grand narrative in the history of curiosity and wonder. Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the order of nature, 1150-1750*, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, objects and collections: a cultural study* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> See, for instance, Jean Baudrillard, ‘The system of collecting’, in *The cultures of collecting*, ed. by Jaś Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), pp. 7-24, and Patrick Mauriès, *Cabinets of curiosities* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), p. 129: ‘It is possible to define the ‘collector’ as a psychological type, a man with a mania for completeness. By taking objects out of the flux of time he in a sense ‘mastered’ reality’.

<sup>35</sup> Discussed further in chapter 6.

the history of collecting seeks to explain the value of museum objects and their acquisition in social terms, sometimes focussing on the value of the object in exchange<sup>36</sup> or ascribing value to the very fact that the object has been withdrawn from exchange and separated from any utilitarian function.<sup>37</sup> For Browne, the value of his collected objects was dependent on their potential contribution to philosophical enquiry and the sharing of that potential, an informal process of gathering, arrangement and dispersal which owed more to the copious and collaborative accumulations of the early modern encyclopaedia than the cultural capital of the twentieth-century vitrine.



11. *Bibliotheca Abscondita (I)*, by Erik Desmazières (2009). Objects based on a rhinoceros horn cup and an ostrich egg cup from the Habsburg Imperial cabinet, now at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

<sup>36</sup> Paula Findlen offers a summary of historians attentive to exchange and value in her introduction to *Early modern things*, pp. 10-12. She includes John Brewer on consumer society in eighteenth-century Britain, Simon Schama on the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, and Lisa Jardine and Richard Goldthwaite on Renaissance Italy.

<sup>37</sup> Krzysztof Pomian proposed museum objects as 'semiophores', objects whose value depends on their being 'without use' and removed from economic circulation (On Pomian see Marr, 'Introduction', p. 9 and Swann, *Curiosities and texts*, p. 78)



*Tottering and reeling: objects in Browne's life and work*

In his essay on repentance, Montaigne relates the inconstancy of the self he strives to report. He refers to the eternal revolution of the world, which causes the rocks of the Caucasus and the pyramids of Egypt to be in constant motion. It is impossible to capture anything in the maelstrom of universal movement: 'I cannot fix my object: 'tis always tottering and reeling by a natural giddiness; I take it as it is at the instant I consider it; I do not paint its being, I paint its passage'.<sup>38</sup> Collecting enacts the attempt to impose stability of meaning upon objects and protect them against their passage through time, partly by removing them from the world and placing them in a treasure-house, fixed into an organising and meaningful schema. In this section, I argue that Browne, like Montaigne, was aware of the giddiness and motion of the objects around him, and strove in his essays to paint their passage rather than make definitive claims on their being. Browne uses the epistemological strategies of the museum — naming, list-making, juxtapositions, appreciation of minute material qualities like texture and colour — to capture and present a world whose objects are infinitely various and changeable. This contingent and initiatory approach to the material testimony of the world is of a piece with his compilation of data from his reading.

*Musaeum Clausum* shows Browne adopting the ornate baroque literary devices that were co-opted in seventeenth-century collecting.<sup>39</sup> These include superimpositions, like the *Batrachomyomachia* carved on a pike's jaw, and the 'large Ostridges Egg, whereon is neatly and fully wrought that famous Battel of Alcazar'. There are inversions and distortions like the fair English lady 'drawn al Negro' and the agate which, if observed via a cylindrical mirror, depicts a 'perfect Centaur'. There are oddities and grotesques, including tight-rope-walking, dwarf-bearing acrobatic elephants. There are conceits, like the crucifix made of frog's bone, lurid provenances like the doge's ring cut from a fish's belly, and horrors like the 'pyxis Pandoræ' which 'begat the great and horrible

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<sup>38</sup> Montaigne, 'On repenting', in *Essays*, translated by Charles Cotton, vol. III, p. 27.

<sup>39</sup> For more on the exchange of terms and conceits between literature and museums, see Findlen, 'The museum', p. 67 and MacGregor, *Curiosity and enlightenment*, pp. 57-63.

Plague of Milan' and the depictions of vicious methods of torture. There is a *memento mori*, in the mummified corpse of a friar of Toulouse. Even signatures put in an appearance, in a portrait of Pope Leo X in which his face bears the signatures of a lion and a fox, a facetious dig at the morals of a notorious pope.<sup>40</sup> By his enthusiastic recreation of such figures in *Musaeum Clausum*, Browne immersed himself and his reader in the idioms used by contemporary cabinets to express the unsettling frictions involved in the exploration of a contradictory and threatening world. But simultaneously, through the knowing ironies of his invention and the inclusion of the real, Browne distanced himself from the extravagant jargon of cabinet geegaws. This section finds Browne avoiding such artifice and using an alternative set of museum tropes to convey a collection which is open, unboundaried, and full of movement.

The use of cabinets and museums as epitomes or microcosms of the world, expressing meaning through similitudes and juxtapositions, has already been touched on. Browne used the metaphor of the cabinet as world-in-miniature in his description of gardens with aviaries and fish ponds as 'the Epitome of the earth'; in his perception of himself as a microcosm; and, of course, in *Musaeum Clausum*, hidden to all but a 'great Apollo'.<sup>41</sup> He also believed that gardens and other collections portray nature's order, 'unto the wisdom of that eminent Botanologer', God.<sup>42</sup> Like Athanasius Kircher, Browne saw the world as 'a tangled web of meanings' which comparative and encyclopaedic collecting might penetrate.<sup>43</sup> Its objects could encapsulate clusters of meaning, from their surface operations to the copious metaphors they attracted through emulation and opposition, signatures and hieroglyphics. But Browne did not create meaning by imposing a fixed arrangement on his objects within an enclosed space. He understood his museum as connected to Creation, rather than mirroring it. Whilst (as I shall argue in the next chapter) Browne had faith in divine inscription by

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<sup>40</sup> Tautologies, grotesques, inversions, and other epistemological games are traced with some enthusiasm by Patrick Mauriès, *Cabinets of curiosities*, and Christine Devenne, *Cabinets of wonder*, photographs by Christine Fleurent, translated by Nicholas Elliott (New York: Abrams, 2012), among others.

<sup>41</sup> GC, epistle, p. 176; RM, for instance at I:34, p. 44 and II:10, p. 86.

<sup>42</sup> GC, I, p. 184.

<sup>43</sup> Findlen, 'The museum', p. 67.

God upon all his works, his specimens and artefacts speak insistently and contingently of their origins, of their context, and of their place within a series that stretches out into the world.<sup>44</sup> Browne indicated his trust in an ordered epitome but refused to form a definite articulation of such an order himself.

The continuities between the microcosm and macrocosm — the museum and the world beyond — are expressed in the rhetoric of *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus* which produces vertiginous tensions of scale, both in space and time.<sup>45</sup> Browne draws attention to his own physical insignificance in *The Garden of Cyrus*, as a man toiling at midnight on a single point on the massive turning globe, who ‘was never master of any considerable garden’.<sup>46</sup> He uses himself as an instance of one of the central themes of *The Garden of Cyrus*, the contiguity of the tiny and the vast. Browne relishes the miniature spaces of seed heads but imagines them on a giant scale, following insects as they wander in groves of burr spikes.<sup>47</sup> Of seeds he writes that their ‘exiguity and smallnesse [...] extending to large productions is one of the magnalities of nature, somewhat illustrating the work of the Creation, and vast production from nothing’.<sup>48</sup> The concomitance of the great and the minuscule in *The Garden of Cyrus* enacts the synecdochic aspect of the seventeenth-century museum; the representation of the world’s wonder and variety by fragments and single samples. Browne’s decussated patterns and the stretching out of small cells endlessly repeated into vastness mimic the experiences of standing in a museum or in a quincuncial plantation, at once enclosed and looking out along infinite vistas.

Similarly, much of the effect of *Urne Buriall* relies on the propinquity of living men to ancient lives. The remains of antiquity are proximate and ubiquitous, as the earth

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<sup>44</sup> See, for instance, Browne’s discussion of signatures in RM, II:2, p. 72.

<sup>45</sup> Browne’s unsettling shifts in spatial scale were appreciated by Coleridge, and, as Kevin Killeen points out, were not inconsistent with the rhetorical order of *The Garden of Cyrus*. Killeen, ‘Introduction’, *Thomas Browne*, pp. xiii-xiv.

<sup>46</sup> GC, V, p. 226; GC, epistle, p. 175.

<sup>47</sup> GC, III, p. 194.

<sup>48</sup> GC, III, p. 199.

(largely ‘still in the Urne unto us’) continually gives up its hidden treasures.<sup>49</sup> Lachrymatories and lamps contain the residues of activities of long-dead people: ‘sepulchrall Vessels containing liquors, which time hath incrassated into gellies’ and containers ‘yet retaining a Vinosity and spirit within them’.<sup>50</sup> The reemergence of such material relics into the light of the present day erases the centuries, as we are gnawed out of our graves and our skulls turned into drinking bowls. Vast spans of time are reduced to instants in the presence of human ashes; the promise of salvation ‘maketh Pyramids pillars of snow’.<sup>51</sup> Roman medals let us look on ‘the faces of many Imperiall persons’ as if we saw them in a crowd, and finally enable us to contemplate the final object of all antiquarian study, the ancient of days.<sup>52</sup> The museum that contains medals, urns, and skeletons dissolves the barrier between the present and the ancient past. In *Urne Buriall* Browne forces the reader’s sympathy for these cold remains through his use of the first person plural, whether in his archaeological reports (‘we found them to be bone or ivory’) or in rehearsing our common experiences of time, suffering, and mortality (‘we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest stroaks of affliction leave but short smart upon us’).<sup>53</sup> Our physical experience of the objects described in *Urne Buriall* and our knowledge of the human emotions to which the ancients were also subject makes the past unsettlingly close, whilst at the same time hidden or entirely lost. Browne alludes in *Urne Buriall* to the otherness of historical objects, shut away beneath our feet and made intriguingly unrecognisable by decomposition — thus becoming appropriate objects for inclusion and examination in a cabinet.<sup>54</sup> But he emphasises the closeness of such remains to everyday existence and the survival of quotidian substances like wood and bone, so that the material survival of the past is matter-of-fact as well as wonderful.

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<sup>49</sup> UB, I, p. 135.

<sup>50</sup> UB, III, p. 149.

<sup>51</sup> UB, V, p. 166.

<sup>52</sup> UB, II, p. 143; UB, epistle, p. 132.

<sup>53</sup> UB, III, p. 149; UB, V, p. 168.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Woolf argues that the historical culture of the early modern period witnessed a progressive ‘othering’ of the physical remnants of the past, as survivals became ‘exotic, foreign curiosities’ moving from utilitarian purposes to objects for collection. Woolf, *The social circulation of the past: English historical culture 1500-1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 12.

Cabinet-like lists also structure the prose of Browne's essays and drive it forward, creating groups of likenesses amongst both natural specimens and historical artefacts. The plants and seeds of the central chapter of *The Garden of Cyrus*, with its short paragraphs naming and describing successive samples, take the associated argument through densely populated nursery beds. The first chapter is more akin to a series of packed drawers, as Browne lists cross-shaped objects with a precision reminiscent of *Musaeum Clausum*, including 'the plain crosse upon the head of the Owl in the Laterane Obelisk' and the cross amongst 'the Hieroglyphics of the brasen Table of *Bembus*'.<sup>55</sup> The lists of reported contents of burial urns in the second chapter of *Urne Buriall* have a similar effect as 'an Ape of *Agath*, a Grasshopper, an Elephant of *Ambre*, a Crystall Ball, three glasses, two Spooones, and six Nuts of Crystall' are catalogued.<sup>56</sup> The first chapter of *Urne Buriall* functions even more precisely like a cabinet, as Browne describes a sequence of burial rituals in turn — the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Scythians, the Balearians, Chinese, Christians, Muslims and Jews — and expounds upon them, providing documentary context, occasionally alluding to their moral significance to spin out a skein of meanings. These catalogues of objects and practices are drawn from the copious gatherings of literary references that I examined in chapter 4, but in their immediate context they appear like the ranks of specimens and artefacts in the museums of Aldrovandi and Kircher.

Browne's use of his 'museum' collecting as a strategy for philosophical enquiry is also evident in his enjoyment of 'low delights', the material qualities of the objects around him. Observation of tiny details is for Browne a defining virtue of good scholarship: 'he that from hence can discover in what position the two first leaves did arise, is no ordinary observator'.<sup>57</sup> Observed objects could be captured and possessed, and the exact observation of nature's objects was 'the surest path to trace the labyrinth of truth'.<sup>58</sup> Such description served a scientific function, conveying phenomena in all

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<sup>55</sup> GC, I, p. 182.

<sup>56</sup> UB, II, p. 145.

<sup>57</sup> GC, III, p. 196.

<sup>58</sup> GC, V, p. 226.

their particularity to Browne's peers.<sup>59</sup> But the intensity of the physical sensations conveyed by Browne suggests a deeper, less instrumental engagement with the specimens around him which enjoyed their surfaces for their own sake. *The Garden of Cyrus* luxuriates in the textures, colours, and smells of the vegetable world. Browne replicates his pleasure in the 'prickled artichoak', the 'black and shining flies', the scaly covering of fishes, the reticulate grain of 'Russia leather', and the 'cottonary and woolly pillows' of cuckoo spit on leaves.<sup>60</sup> This enthusiasm is also evident in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* as Browne's descriptions convey the sensual qualities of his objects, from the siccous flesh of peacock carcasses to the languid light of a dying glow worm.<sup>61</sup> Browne is acutely aware of the wonder and fragility of the human body in his account of the waxy concretions around a decomposing corpse as 'the consistence of the hardest castle-soap', his description of 'the exility of bones, thinness of skulls, smallnesse of teeth, ribbes, and thigh-bones' and in his quotation of the psalmist describing the anatomy as finely wrought embroidery.<sup>62</sup> In taking care that we recognise the precise particulars being listed, Browne evokes a bristly, reeking, and disintegrating Nature.

Such expressive description allowed Browne to represent in a few examples the characteristics of a wider Creation, creating an intensely powerful microcosm. His precision also allowed him to stabilise individual specimens within their types or categories whilst capturing the texture of their singularity. Naming was also crucial in the categorisation of objects, and descriptive naming was one of Browne's strategies for ensuring accurate identification. The names Browne suggested to Christopher

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<sup>59</sup> See particularly Daston, 'Description by omission', pp. 13-14 and Brian W. Ogilvie, *The science of describing: natural history in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), pp. 8-13. Hypotyposis as a persuasive strategy in natural history is also examined by Alexander Wragge-Morley with reference to Thomas Willis's *Cerebri Anatome* (1664) and Nehemiah Grewe's descriptions of the Royal Society's museum in *Musaeum Regalis Societatis* (1681); Wragge-Morley, 'The work of verbal picturing for John Ray and some of his contemporaries', *Intellectual History Review*, 20:1 (2010), pp. 165-179 (pp. 167-171).

<sup>60</sup> GC, III, p. 193.

<sup>61</sup> PE, III:27 (para. 2 and 12)

<sup>62</sup> UB, III, p. 156; UB, II, p. 144; GC, III, p. 204: Psalm 139.14: 'Thou hast curiously embroidered me, thou hast wrought me up after the finest way of texture, and as it were with a needle'.

Merrett for a specimen of fungus are derived from its resemblance (to a number of observers) to different objects, including a crown, a turret, and a cupola.<sup>63</sup> On occasion Browne's descriptive names were so exact that he may have been teasing, as with the 'fucus marinus vertebratus pisciculi spinam referens, Ichthyorachus, or what you thinck fitt'.<sup>64</sup> Browne's correspondence with Merrett is profoundly conscious of the slipperiness of names for natural specimens, as he finds the same names sometimes used for different species, and single species given multiple names. Concern over conflicting names for phenomena was widely felt amongst Browne's peers, prompting John Ray to list all known names for single specimens of flora or fauna.<sup>65</sup> As an alternative to descriptive naming Browne could secure an identification by referencing an authority, as in the cases of the 'aquila Gesneri' and the 'canus carcharis alius Johnstoni, Tab. vi, fig. 6'.<sup>66</sup> The same tactic was adopted by the Tradescants and Elias Ashmole in their cataloguing of the Tradescant collections.<sup>67</sup> Browne complained to Merrett that he is 'much unsatisfied' with the names given to little birds by local men because of the uncertainty of their identification.<sup>68</sup> The best use of such specimens was to 'disclose unobserved properties' and communicate them effectively to others through description and nomenclature.<sup>69</sup> Effective naming which established a scholarly precedent also increased the prestige and authority of the namer, encouraging other natural philosophers to follow in Browne's wake.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Thus Browne suggests *fungus regius*, *fungus pterygoides*, or *lanterniformis*. TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Aug 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 344-5. As in *Musæum Clausum*, Browne gently mocks the conventions of his scholarly endeavours.

<sup>64</sup> For a seaweed 'resembling the back bone of a fish'. TB to Christopher Merrett, 29 Dec 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 351.

<sup>65</sup> Grindle, 'No other sign or note', p. 18.

<sup>66</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Sep 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 350; 13 Aug 1668, p. 345.

<sup>67</sup> John Tradescant, *Musæum Tradescantianum: or, a collection of rarities. Preserved at South-Lambeth neer London by John Tradescant*. (London, [1656]). See for instance the crustaceans, pp. 10-11, with references to Aldrovandi, Aristotle, Rondelet, and Bellon.

<sup>68</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 6 Feb 1668/9, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 356.

<sup>69</sup> GC, V, p. 226.

<sup>70</sup> Claire Preston discusses Browne's relationship to neologisms and scientific description in "Meer nomenclature", pp. 298-316. She quotes Edward Phillips' description of Browne's neologisms as 'good Bullion stamp and well minted', p. 299.

Knowledge of the origins of specimens and artefacts and of their placement within the web of ordered things was essential for their proper identification. Browne knew the instability and potential fraudulence of objects robbed of their proper context, saying of mummies that when they are displayed they are given ‘what Names they please; and unto some the Names of the old Ægyptian Kings out of Herodotus’.<sup>71</sup> He is attentive in *Urne Buriall* to the context of the archaeological find, cataloguing the urns’ contents, investigating the surrounding area with its ‘coals and incinerated substances’, and surveying other ancient remains across Norfolk in addition to documentary evidence for Roman and British settlements.<sup>72</sup> In his account of the monuments of Norwich Cathedral in *Repertorium*, Browne provides the precise location of each tomb within the space and relates the story of each occupant to establish them within a genealogical and heraldic narrative, mapping out a tissue of familial and geographical connections.<sup>73</sup> Browne’s observations in natural history record the sources of his finds and pin them to the landscape, from the large bone washed from the cliffs at Winterton to the godwits taken in the Norfolk marshes.<sup>74</sup> His diligence in preserving contextual information on occasion survived to be transcribed by Hans Sloane, as with the six crickets ‘in hac urbe captae. 1652. In Norwich’.<sup>75</sup> Correct interpretation of phenomena required the recording of specific associated data, even when the significance of that data is not immediately evident. Browne’s insistence on such detail ensured that his objects were rooted to their earlier place within a wider setting, as well as gaining newly created meanings amongst the other objects in his possession.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> UB, V, p. 167. MacGregor associates such spurious provenances with an earlier age of collecting, in the form of medieval relics, but it clearly persisted into the seventeenth century. MacGregor, *Curiosity and enlightenment*, p. 5.

<sup>72</sup> UB, II, p. 141.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Browne, *Repertorium*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, pp. 121-142.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas Browne, *Notes and experiments of the natural history of animals, birds, fishes and insects*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, pp. 350; 406.

<sup>75</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane’s collection of insects. NHM, Insects 1 (Murray Jones 13), fol. 38, items 281.

<sup>76</sup> Findlen suggests that this consciousness of the importance and instability of context is part of the function of the museum, pointing to Aldrovandi’s care over the manuscript ‘storia’ of his collection. Findlen, ‘The museum’, p. 65.



Browne's concentration on the individual relationships of his objects to things beyond the confines of the possessed collection complicates the association of informing concepts like curiosity and wonder to his collecting. The implied kinship with other specimens or artefacts means that no object is one of a kind, and only the credulous will be amazed by them.<sup>77</sup> Browne made efforts to distance himself from credulity or amazement in the first chapters of *Pseudodoxia*, and his friend John Whitefoot confirmed Browne's declared belief that 'Admiration [was] the only Product, either of Ignorance, or uncommon Knowledge, [...] so that tho' he [Browne] met with many Rarities, he admired them not so much as others do'.<sup>78</sup> In his collecting, Browne focused his attention as much on the proximate and routine phenomena of his own environment as on the exotic and extraordinary, insistent on the potential for significant singularity in the normal as well as the exceptional.<sup>79</sup> *Pseudodoxia* reflects this belief, its scope ranging from corks and needles floating in buckets to rare resins and precious jewels, in contrast to the deliberately and playfully extraordinary inventions of *Musaeum Clausum*. Browne's objective collation of the everyday material of life is again comparable to the methods of Ulisse Aldrovandi as characterised by Paula Findlen, as he sought to reveal nature both through its wondrous forms and in the fields and hills surrounding Bologna.<sup>80</sup> For Browne curiosity and wonder could be excited by common objects. The stone bottle from Browne's cellar which had grown a mossy crust was firmly placed within a domestic narrative, the storing of malaga wine, and yet was singular enough to justify its donation to the Royal Society with an associated report.<sup>81</sup> By observing minutely the tiny changes in everyday objects and

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<sup>77</sup> Such directed wonder is a form of *sprezzatura*, see Swann, *Curiosities and texts*, p. 26.

<sup>78</sup> Whitefoot, 'Some minutes', pp. xxviii-xxix.

<sup>79</sup> In *Religio Medici*, Browne argues that the mechanics of bees, ants and spiders are more curious than those 'Colossus and Majestic pieces', camels, whales, and elephants. He extends the idea to maintain that the most prodigal wonders are within us since man is a compendium and continent of wonder. RM, I.15, p. 24.

<sup>80</sup> Findlen, *Possessing nature*, p. 156. Renewed attention to common material is also identified by Ann Blair, who associates the explosion of information in the Renaissance to the application of new philological techniques to familiar Classical texts, as well as the rediscovery of texts and the opening up of new parts of the world to the West. *Too much to know*, p. 11.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Birch, *The history of the Royal Society of London* (London: A. Millar, 1756-7), p. 253. The donation was reported in the meeting of 27 February 1667/8.

treating all phenomena as potentially significant, Browne made all things marvellous, and contained wonder within a frame of intellectual purpose.

Browne's writing on objects also manipulated the constructs of possession and objectification as articulated in the early modern museum, suggesting that few objects could be categorically owned and expressing discomfort towards the appropriation of things. Part of the pleasure of *Musaeum Clausum*, and to a lesser extent *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus*, is that they allow Browne and his readers to imagine the possession of objects they could not own. *Urne Buriall* approaches the issue of ownership with both enthusiasm and squeamishness. With regard to hoards, Browne was emphatically acquisitive on behalf of living men, noting that 'Gold once out of the earth is no more due unto it', and lauding the 'ancient custom of placing coynes in considerable Urnes' for what such deposits can reveal of history: 'posterity will applaud them'.<sup>82</sup> Human disinterments were more problematic, and Browne was uneasy with interference and appropriation of corpses for purposes not obviously medical or philosophical, remarking that 'Antiquity [...] drew provocatives of mirth from Anatomies, and Juglers shewed tricks with Skeletons'.<sup>83</sup> He kept two calculi which he had excised from his aristocratic clients, but labelled them carefully with their names and titles, and the details of their surgery.<sup>84</sup> Such fastidiousness suggests that for Browne, human remains defied objectification, and continued to be the possession of the dead, demanding due civility. I argue in the following section that Browne's appropriation and use of living creatures was more ruthless, but nonetheless incomplete and nuanced. Not all the animals he observed were kept penned and captive, and they could be both scientific objects and affectionately regarded pets. Finally, Browne recognised the untenability of hoarding. The Walsingham urns and their bones survived because of their concealment in the earth, and antiquities and specimens might last better for not being secured in 'open and visible

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<sup>82</sup> UB, IV, p. 160.

<sup>83</sup> UB, III, p. 151.

<sup>84</sup> These two stones came from Sir Robert Gawdie of Claxton and Lady Holt of Thaxton. Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of fossils, corals and sponges. NHM, Fossils 1 (Murray Jones 21), fol. 289r, item 110; fol. 291r, item 113.

conservatories'.<sup>85</sup> Measures to ensure the century-long protection of collections — of bones or birds' eggs — are unpredictably ineffective, and Browne's response was a pragmatic refusal to treasure up his fragments, preferring to participate in their circulation.

In adopting the gestures of the museum (lists, descriptions and narratives, properties of wonder, categories of possession) Browne makes plain the instabilities inherent in the museum's structures. His most effective challenge to the steadiness of the collection is his depiction of its opposite, the continual movement — the natural giddiness — of the world in its cycle of decay and growth. The procreant sprawl of the biological world teeming through *The Garden of Cyrus* is at odds with the contained and inert museum, just as the dissolution of ancient relics in *Urne Buriall* defies it. The third chapter of *The Garden of Cyrus*, which observes the sprouting of 'nebbs' and the bursting asunder of seed capsules, culminates in a paragraph crammed with the upward motion, radiation, 'contraction, dilatation, inclination, and contortion' in plants, their responses to shifts in the weather and exposure to heat.<sup>86</sup> Browne's observations of seedlings, describing their minute transformations over a series of intervals, record their generation through time.<sup>87</sup> Worms, the most plant-like animals, are the most mobile, making long and waving or 'Tortile and tiring stroaks'; 'the hair-worm seldome lies still'.<sup>88</sup> And whilst in *Urne Buriall* the pure forms of right angle and circle contain and limit all bodies, in *The Garden of Cyrus* they build the spiralling geometries of growth, 'Helicall or spirall roundles, voluta's, conicall Sections, circular pyramids, and frustrums of Archimedes'.<sup>89</sup> The iteration of opposites in the essay, of darkness and light, green and blue, abstract contemplation and soily-fingered observation, even the simultaneous silence and articulation expressed in the sections

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<sup>85</sup> UB, V, p. 164.

<sup>86</sup> GC, III, p. 209. 'The rose of Jericho, the ear of Rye, which moves with change of weather, and the Magical spit, made of no rare plants, which windes before the fire, and rosts the bird without turning'.

<sup>87</sup> GC, III, p. 197.

<sup>88</sup> GC, III, p. 209.

<sup>89</sup> GC, III, p. 207. Cf. 'Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortall right-lined circle, must conclude and shut up all.' UB, V, p. 166.

of ‘omissions’ and enquiries, results in prose which is perpetually restless and off-kilter. Browne prizes the movement of the material world and chooses to paint its passage rather than pinning it into place.

*The paradise and the cabinet: the object collections belonging to Thomas and Edward Browne*

John Evelyn’s testimony of his experience of Thomas Browne’s collections in Norwich (‘a Paradise & Cabinet of rarities’) participates fully in the praxis of early modern collecting. For Evelyn two idealised sites are brought together in Browne’s household: the prelapsarian Eden, and the matrix of cultural and social signifiers represented by the museum cabinet and its objects of *virtù*. His lists draw attention to the size and copiousness of the collection: the ‘Medails, books, Plants, natural things’, ‘Cranes, Storkes, Eagles, &c: & variety of Waterfoule’.<sup>90</sup> The following section builds up a picture of that collection, arguing for the presence of substantial numbers of specimens and artefacts in Browne’s life. This record of Browne’s museum must, like *Musaeum Clausum*, be an inadequate reflection of the larger collection it seeks to represent. The documentary traces of its existence are as ambiguous in terms of their relationships to historical truth. I have therefore treated my findings as an early modern cabinet, organising them in Aristotelian categories, and assessing their relationship to Browne within each category. The list begins with a description of the minerals that were probably in the Brownes’ possession. These are followed by plant specimens, including living plants, dried specimens, and the *horti sicci*; and living animals, their remains, and associated animal substances. I then comment on specimens derived from the human body, artefacts (including antiquarian material), and finally drawings and other graphic works.<sup>91</sup> The survey ends with a series of suggestions regarding the collection’s total size, its cultural prestige and monetary value, sources of acquisition, its storage, and its disposal and ultimate loss. Although the following section is structured like a cabinet, I argue that the storage, organisation and disposal of Browne’s material objects were not characteristic of a set-piece museum. Each object remained distinct and defined by its usefulness, rather than by

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<sup>90</sup> Evelyn, *Diary*, ed. de Beer, 17 Oct 1671, p. 562.

<sup>91</sup> Although I have adopted early modern headings for this reconstruction, I recognise that there is inevitably some blurring of the categories, and have tended to follow early modern precedents in my division of specimens.

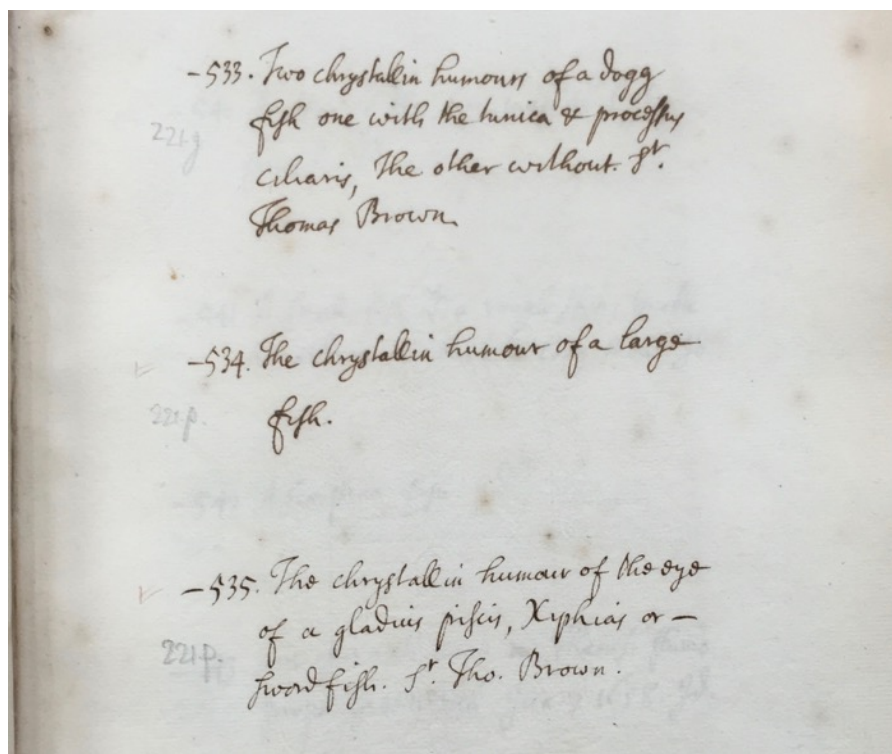
its position within a unified 'collection'. The contents of the museum were thus continually on the move rather than contained. There is no evidence that Browne arranged his objects within a taxonomical scheme which bestowed additional meanings through juxtaposition. Both acquisition and disposal of objects were social acts involving Browne's family and social network, and as a consequence his collection was fluid, part of a network of exchange. In this Browne's museum shared characteristics with his library, as outlined in chapter 2.

This reconstruction relies upon evidence from the correspondence of the Browne family, their journals, and their published work, and draws on the archive of Sir Hans Sloane's collections at the British Museum and its subsidiary institutions. Like Evelyn's testimony, and like the 1711 catalogue of the sale of the Browne library, all these documents have their own priorities and present a record of Browne's possessions which is filtered through subsequent intellectual needs and norms. A reconstruction derived from them is not only incomplete but has bias in distinct directions. The objects that Browne described in his correspondence were integral to his public or (in his letters to Edward) paternal persona: the things he anticipated would interest his interlocutors, not necessarily himself. This is yet more the case in the Brownes' published works, and their use as a record of possessions demands caution. The notes Browne kept of his experiments, like Edward's journals, are not as mediated, but tend to date from the last decades of Browne's life and thus only illuminate Browne's collecting over a limited period. The Sloane catalogues, now scattered across the departments of the British Museum and the Natural History Museum, are problematic. Sir Hans Sloane recorded objects with Browne family provenances in his handwritten catalogues of his acquisitions.<sup>92</sup> There are several Dr Brownes who contributed to Sloane's collections, and his slightly chaotic systems led to provenances being lost or confused. But a substantial number of catalogued items can be traced to Thomas and Edward Browne through these lists, which are new to

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<sup>92</sup> A hand-list of the Sloane catalogues was created by Peter Murray Jones, 'A preliminary check-list of Sir Hans Sloane's catalogues', *The British Library Journal*, 1988, pp. 38-51. I provide manuscript call numbers in the footnotes where possible, but not all the catalogues have been given call numbers at the time of writing. I have for clarity's sake also supplied the Murray Jones number in my references.

Browne scholarship.<sup>93</sup> Some few can be traced to objects still at the British Museum, but the separation of objects from their provenance occurred early in the museum's history. Browne's collection remains immanent within the museum, with coins, vases, fossils, stuffed birds and books silently bearing associations with him. Finally, I have used the albums of surviving drawings in the Browne archive at the British Library both as records of their object holdings and as museum objects in their own right.



12. A page from Sloane's catalogue of animals, NHM, Fishes, birds, quadrupeds 1 (Murray Jones 25), showing specimens associated with Thomas Browne.

### De mineralibus

The samples of rocks, metals, and fossils in the Brownes' collection were copious and subject to an unambiguous process of appropriation or exchange. A pebble on the shore became Browne's through the act of picking it up and putting it in a pocket; a more extraordinary sample of amber or diamond through purchase or donation. The

<sup>93</sup> A transcription of the catalogue entries associated with the Brownes, however tentatively, is given in appendix 2. I have included items unambiguously ascribed to Dr Samuel Browne or Alexander Browne in this transcription, to make clear the possibilities of confusion in the attributions. The presence in Sloane's catalogues of some objects belonging to Thomas Browne had been noted by several British Library and British Museum curators and contributors to Arthur MacGregor (ed.), *Sir Hans Sloane: collector, scientist, antiquary* (London: British Museum, 1994), pp. 69, 83, and 127, but not, as far as I am aware, pursued further.

archive describes two principal groups of specimens from different periods of Browne's life. The first is the collection of minerals used by Browne in his experiments in the 1640s on static materials, and described in Book II of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*.<sup>94</sup> These ranged from quotidian stones like coal and flint, to naturally occurring mineral compounds like arsenic and bitumen, and precious and semi-precious stones like emerald, jasper, alabaster, and diamond. Browne also used a series of organically derived hard resins in these experiments, some from as far away as North America and Indonesia. These, like the minerals, must have been bought by Browne or lent to him.<sup>95</sup>

The second group consists of the minerals acquired by Edward Browne whilst on his travels in Eastern Europe in the 1660s. Edward's research into mining in the Habsburg Empire was instigated in part by enquiries from the Royal Society, and he sent both reports and samples to Henry Oldenburg via his father.<sup>96</sup> But he also sent minerals and other objects for Browne's own possession, including the contents of this list, which included several specimens demonstrating the effects of spa water on different substances, as well as crystals and ores:

1. 20 Roman coynes from Sine. / 2. A Thunderstone. / 3. Iron turned into Copper / 4 a stone made by the bath at Eisenbach / 5. Stones from a quarry by Reistat. / 6. Mony Coloured by the baths of Glastitten./ 9. A Green bone from Herrngrundt. / 10. Mony coloured at Baden./ 11. Amethysts as they growe / 12 a piece of ore with a sparke of silver. 12. Little Amethysts & Cristalls. / 14 a fine piece of Cristalls and mir[?] Silver ore. / 15. / A stone against frights./ 16 mony coyned at Schremnitze, 17. Mony Coloured at the bathes of Banca ./ 18 Three ringes

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<sup>94</sup> PE, II:4, pp. 116-121.

<sup>95</sup> PE, II:4. It is likely that Browne owned the resins for pharmacological as well as experimental purposes.

<sup>96</sup> See TB to EB, 25 Jun 1669, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 46, and TB to Henry Oldenburg, 31 May 1669, 10 Jul 1669, 28 Jul 1669, 25 Oct 1669, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 365-369.

made of Elkes Clawes./ 19. The haire of a boy like woole. / 20  
Copper ore from Harrngrundt.<sup>97</sup>

Minerals from Eastern Europe appear among the Browne specimens listed in Sloane's museum, such as the 'stone from which the naturall vitriol shooteth in the mines at Schemnitz in Hungaria',<sup>98</sup> 'Petrified water out of the Bathe of Eisenbach near Schemnitz in Hungary' and 'A yellowish fluor or chrystall. A stone out of a stone quarry by Freystat in Germany'.<sup>99</sup> The samples listed by Sloane can only be associated with Browne by degrees, although Sloane ascribes a very small group of minerals specifically to Thomas Browne: three kinds of metal ore from Cardiganshire in Wales, and a talc 'ex Carinthia' which presumably also came via Edward.<sup>100</sup> But since a considerable portion of the 'Browne' specimens in Sloane's catalogue originated in the regions of Edward's mine investigations and we know that Edward was sending specimens home to Norwich, we can say that some of these must have passed through his father's hands. The minerals in Browne's sphere were appropriated from the surrounding landscape, lent, or given, within an active network of gathering and exchange.

### De plantis

The plant specimens in Browne's collections are more difficult to contain than the minerals, since the living beings that Browne observed occupy a spectrum between wild and owned. Among the notes on natural history made by Browne is a catalogue of seeds, possibly acquired from the botanical gardens at Oxford, and planted by him in 1667. Sixty-seven batches of seed were planted of which fifty-five are recorded as having germinated.<sup>101</sup> The list is set among a series of observations on the processes

<sup>97</sup> EB to TB, 8 Aug 1669, BL, Sloane MS 1911, fol. 45r.

<sup>98</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of minerals. NHM, Minerals 3a (Murray Jones 17), fol. 101r, item 187.

<sup>99</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of minerals. NHM, Minerals 3b (Murray Jones 17), fol. 211r, item 549; fol. 212r, item 553.

<sup>100</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of minerals. NHM, Minerals 1 (Murray Jones 15), fols. 264r-265r, items 718-720; NHM, Minerals 3b (Murray Jones 17), fol. 194r, item 94.

<sup>101</sup> Thomas Browne, *Notes and experiments of the natural history of animals, birds, fishes and insects*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, pp. 397-400.



of germination, as Browne set seed then repeatedly excavated them to follow their minute developments, the splitting apart of husks, the emergence of shoots.<sup>102</sup> What makes the list particularly evocative is its descriptions of the beds in the garden, as swathes of plants are located ‘in the long bed’, ‘to the stable’, ‘to the pale’, ‘to the south wall’, ‘next the kitchin’, and ‘all under the long walk’. The Browne garden — evidently not small — is a key site for Browne’s scientific investigation as well as the more prosaic provision of food and routine physic. It acts as a threshold, a space between the fields where Edward Browne went simpling, the villages where Thomas Browne found extraordinary trees,<sup>103</sup> and the closed spaces of the house, where dried specimens were fixed with gum to the pages of albums. The Browne natural history museum (and this is as true of the fauna specimens as for the flora) flourished in sites around the household yet also floated beyond it, defying attempts to contain or possess it.

*The Garden of Cyrus* gives a precise account of the variety of plant life under Browne’s gaze. Browne’s attentiveness to the tiny details and changes in the plants around him drives the essay forward, especially in the central chapter with its accounts of seeds germinated in water, its observation of leaf shapes, and its celebration of vegetal growth. For the most part, the plants in the essay are sufficiently common to have English names: artichoke, scabious, plantain, oak, walnut, alder, willow, milk-thistle, sycamore, pine, cherry, acorn, and plum. These profusions cannot be definitely allocated to Browne’s possession and could have been observed in hedgerows from horseback, or husbanded in flowerbeds. By contrast, in writing to Christopher Merrett of specific, rare plants, Browne drew attention to the fact that specimens have been appropriated to his collection. He said one sample of fungus (which he labels fungus phalloides): ‘I have part of one dryed still by me’ and of another (fungus rotundus major): ‘I [...] have half a one dryed by me’.<sup>104</sup> Some of the more exotic

<sup>102</sup> For instance, on acorns: ‘The like observable in Acornes where germen shooting from the acuter end splitteth the 2 sides, wch lye entire when the oake is sprouted 2 handfulls’. *Notes on natural history*, ed. Keynes, vol. III, p. 380.

<sup>103</sup> For instance, as Edward recounts in his journal of 1663/4, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 54. Thomas Browne sent an account of the trees of Norfolk to John Evelyn whilst the later was drafting *Sylva*, 14 Oct 1663, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 280.

<sup>104</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Aug 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. IV, p. 345.

specimens were given to Browne, and being thus subject to exchange were unambiguously his possessions.<sup>105</sup> The botanical material, more than any other, answers to the description given by John Evelyn in which the ‘whole house & Garden’ became a paradise. The plant collections, variously exotic and commonplace, dead and living, occupied spaces throughout the household from inner rooms to outer yards.

One form in which plant specimens were captured, stored and organised was as pressed leaves and flowers in albums. Such albums articulate in their form the blurred divisions between categories in Browne’s collections, as gathered simples are transformed into codices. The *hortus siccus* assembled by the Brownes and now in the Sloane Herbarium at the Natural History Museum contains within a quarto volume a substantial number of generic English plants, including a high proportion of marine material.<sup>106</sup> The poor condition of the specimens and their rather commonplace nature, the apparently continuous assembly over a prolonged period, and the haphazard arrangement and labelling (sometimes in Latin, sometimes in English, and with the hands of Thomas and Edward Browne scattered throughout) suggest that this album served the function of an informal field copy, rather than an investigative record.<sup>107</sup> There are two further volumes in the Sloane Herbarium which may be connected to the Brownes, since they bear consecutive numbers in Sloane’s catalogue sequence, were acquired at the same time according to Sloane’s accession list, and were created in Padua and Montpellier, Browne’s *almae mater*.<sup>108</sup> The Paduan album, in pristine condition, is attributed to Giovanni Macchion who produced *horti sicci*

<sup>105</sup> For instance, the drug from the East Indies given to Browne by ‘Mr Peirce’ and sent to Edward for identification by the East India Company in Leadenhall Street, and the Indian pickles from ‘Sir Peter Gleanes brother’. Thomas Browne to Edward Browne, 18 May 1679, 12 Sep 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 108, 160. For more on pharmacological material, see below, under ‘De artificiiis’.

<sup>106</sup> These include ‘quercus’ and a series of common grasses. NHM, HS 108.

<sup>107</sup> I am grateful to Dr Charles Jarvis, curator of the Sloane Herbarium at the Natural History Museum, for his remarks on the physical nature of the *horti sicci* and the evidence of their specimens’ arrangement.

<sup>108</sup> Sloane listed a group of five albums together in his catalogue of printed and manuscript books, BL, Sloane MS 3972C, p. 1216. Of these, two are not explicitly associated with Browne by Sloane; these are HS 106, from Padua, and HS 109, from Montpellier. Sloane believed HS 107 to have been assembled by Edward Browne ‘beyond sea’, and HS 110 to include ‘a great many’ samples added by ‘Dr. Thos. Browne.’, but neither of these albums bears any trace of Browne ownership.

commercially from the botanical gardens at Padua for a learned audience.<sup>109</sup> The Brownes had owned a Paduan *hortus siccus* at some point, since one is mentioned by Thomas to Edward in a letter, in which he notes that ‘you had a very good one or two if you have not parted with them’.<sup>110</sup> The Montpellier album is a smaller octavo, with its samples arranged for aesthetic effect.<sup>111</sup> But neither of these Sloane Herbarium albums bears any provenance markings to relate them to the Browne collection, and their connection must remain suppositious. Even without a definite Browne provenance, these volumes show the variety of purpose and assembly manifested in *horti sicci*, as collectors like the Brownes partook in a range of scientific practices which resulted in very similar objects.

### De animalia

The animals that Browne observed, both for their anatomical properties and their behavioural patterns, crept in and out of his gardens, hung suspended from his ceilings, lined the walls of his house in boxes, and furnished his table. Animal specimens form the most substantial part of the recorded collection belonging to Browne, and reflect two methods of observation: the anatomical process founded upon Aristotle’s methods, and the behavioural, drawn from Theophrastus.<sup>112</sup> His observations of animal behaviour, recorded in his notes, in *Pseudodoxia*, and in his correspondence, open a door onto the menagerie of creatures sharing his domestic space. Many of these were destroyed soon after they had passed under Browne’s gaze, but others were more completely owned, being domesticated or held captive for years at a time. Live specimens feature prominently in Book III of *Pseudodoxia*, in which Browne tested the behaviours of ‘inferiour’ species: insects, amphibians and reptiles. His observations reach a climax in chapter 27, where Browne offers a torrent of

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<sup>109</sup> NHM, HS 106. Charles E. Jarvis, ‘Seventeenth-century collections from the botanic garden of Padua in the herbarium of Sir Hans Sloane’, *Museologia Scientifica*, 14:1, suppl., pp. 145-154.

<sup>110</sup> TB to EB, 28 Jun 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 120. Edward wrote to Thomas in 1669 stating that he was sending a Paduan *hortus siccus* to Norwich from Vienna, though it is not certain that this was received safely. EB to TB, 11 Jul 1669, BL Sloane MS 1911, fol. 42r and 42v.

<sup>111</sup> NHM, HS 109.

<sup>112</sup> The arrangement of animals in Aldrovandi’s museum focused on affinities of behaviour rather than anatomy, though we know that Aldrovandi did engage in dissection. Olmi, ‘Science, Honour, Metaphor’, p. 8. Browne gave his attention to both approaches.

observations on the kinds of creepy-crawlies that might stumble across his path, including his test of the antipathy of toads and spiders, but also descriptions of the minute lives of worms, flies and bees, earwigs, ants, and glow worms.<sup>113</sup> These living insects were easily gathered and often dispatched without delay. He was more attached to his captive mammals and birds, mourning the loss of his hedgehog which ‘being putt into my garden gott away with 2 yong ones & I never look to find them agayne’.<sup>114</sup> The appreciation by Browne and his family of the social and aesthetic qualities of their domestic animals is evident in Elizabeth Lyttelton’s description of a stork: ‘the tamest stately thing that you ever saw, my Father thinks it one of the Prettiest of the kind’.<sup>115</sup> The most splendid member of Browne’s recorded menagerie was the golden eagle (or ‘aquila Gesneri’) which was kept by him for two years.<sup>116</sup> More exotic yet was the ostrich which made its way to Norwich, ate all the gillyflowers and ‘fed greedily upon what was green’ in Browne’s garden, made odd noises of a morning, and was the subject of much erudite conversation between Browne and his son Edward.<sup>117</sup>

The record of Browne’s fauna cadavers gives the fullest narrative of his donation and exchange of specimens. Browne’s correspondence with Edward and with Christopher Merrett is testament to the quantity of avian carcasses stored and distributed by Browne. To Merrett, Browne described substantial numbers of bird carcasses, including a pelican, a ‘white reed-chock’, and the forty birds burnt by a nervous attendant in the summer of 1666 when Browne had been driven out of Norwich by the plague.<sup>118</sup> Other birds are mentioned in *Pseudodoxia*, like the two kingfishers

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<sup>113</sup> PE, III:27, pp. 280-286. See also PE, III:20, p. 239, in which Browne makes observations on the sight of snails.

<sup>114</sup> TB to EB, 14 Jul 1676, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 68.

<sup>115</sup> Elizabeth Lyttelton to EB, 5 May 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 153.

<sup>116</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Sep 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 350.

<sup>117</sup> Thomas Browne, ‘On the ostrich’, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. IV, p. 337. See also BL, Sloane MS 1848, fol. 246v-248r. Preston discusses the ‘frequently hilarious’ correspondence between the Brownes on their ostriches, *Browne and the writing of early modern science*, p. 188.

<sup>118</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Sep 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 348; 29 Dec 1668, p. 353; May 1669, p. 362.

suspended by silk threads to establish if they act as natural weathervanes.<sup>119</sup> I have found no instances of mammals being kept by Browne as entire carcasses, but the birds were joined by specimens of fish. A great white shark, two feet long, hung suspended in his yard in the 1660s, and several sea-wolves (also called Atlantic wolf-fish) passed through his hands.<sup>120</sup> Some insect remains were also acquired (or retained): Browne's interest is indicated by his instruction to his son Thomas to put up 'any Pretty insects of any kind' and put them in a box for his father whilst travelling in France.<sup>121</sup> Seven groups of insects from Browne survived to be catalogued by Sloane, including six European mole crickets, caught in Norwich in 1652, and some 'flies' hatched from mealworms.<sup>122</sup>

Whilst these specimens were kept entire, most animal remains in Browne's collection were remnants of the anatomical process, which, like an archaeological dig, destroys the sites it interrogates. Usually these were bone material such as the skulls sent by Browne to Edward in London in anticipation of Edward's lectures to the Barber-Surgeons.<sup>123</sup> The Sloane catalogue lists an impressive number of small bones of common and exceptional animals: the knee bones of horses, monkeys, hares, oxen, sheep and bears, the heel bone of a pig, and the penis bone of a polecat.<sup>124</sup> But soft tissue was also stored and examined, sometimes over long periods. The brains of snipes, woodcocks and sparrows weighed by Browne during research for *Pseudodoxia*, in order to compare the proportional size of man's brain with that of other creatures, would have been difficult to keep in the long term.<sup>125</sup> But other organs were treated to

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<sup>119</sup> PE, III:10, p. 197.

<sup>120</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Aug 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 345. Browne remarks that sea-wolves were often hung up in homes in Great Yarmouth, so he was not singular in this practice.

<sup>121</sup> TB to Thomas Browne Jr, 22 Apr 1661, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 9.

<sup>122</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of insects. NHM, Insects 1 (Murray Jones 13), fols. 37r-38r, items 278-286.

<sup>123</sup> These include the skulls of a swan, a bear, and a polecat: TB to EB, 27 Dec 1678, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 89; 28 Jun 1679, p. 120; 26 Apr 1681, p. 189.

<sup>124</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of animals. NHM, Fishes, birds, quadrupeds 1 (Murray Jones 25), fols. 292r and 298r, items 556-7, 609-617.

<sup>125</sup> PE, IV:2, p. 296.

delay decomposition, like the urethra and bladder of a carp sent to Edward from the Norwich household's dining table or the salmon's head promised to Christopher Merrett, both dried for transportation.<sup>126</sup> Some soft tissue survived into the eighteenth century, as Sloane catalogued the heads of slow worms and vipers, owl's eyes, and the lenses and cornea of the eyes of fish.<sup>127</sup> These remains of dissection, portions of carcasses revealed by the knife, were kept in the collection even when their substances were difficult to preserve. But the destruction of specimens essential to anatomical observation necessitated a flow of carcasses in and out of Browne's possession.

### De humana

In spite of Browne's scholarly and professional interest in the human body there is very little record of his having collected human remains. In the process of helping Edward to prepare his lectures at Surgeons' Hall, Thomas sent quantities of animal remains, books, and anatomical drawings with his letters, but no specimens from the human body are mentioned. The only portion of a human to be transferred to Edward was the skin from the palm of a woman's hand, shed at the end of a fever.<sup>128</sup> Sloane catalogued two entries deriving from Browne's ownership, one described simply as 'kidney stones'. The other entry memorialises two Norfolk acquaintances, giving a full description of two stones that grew in the bodies of Sir Robert Gawdie of Claxton and Lady Holt of Thaxton, with the dates of their surgery.<sup>129</sup> The list of human specimens ascribed by Sloane to Edward Browne is more substantial, consisting largely of portions of the skeleton, calculi, and minuscule bones. These include thigh

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<sup>126</sup> TB to EB, 16 Jun 1676, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 64; TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Aug 1668, p. 346.

<sup>127</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of fossils, corals and sponges. NHM, Fossils 1 (Murray Jones 21), fol. 123r, items 141-143; fol. 51r, items 533-538.

<sup>128</sup> TB to EB, 28 May 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 113.

<sup>129</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of fossils, corals and sponges. NHM, Fossils 1 (Murray Jones 21), fol. 289r, item 110; fol. 291r, item 113. MacGregor notes similar attention to provenance in the labelling of human calculi — wondrous transformations from flesh to stone — in other contemporary cabinets, *Curiosity and enlightenment*, p. 159.

and arm bones, parts of the skull, sets of ear bones, and a group of bladder stones.<sup>130</sup> The relative paucity of this part of the collection implies both that human anatomical specimens were not easily available, and that what was acquired was not, or could not be, stored for long periods.<sup>131</sup> The confusion evident in the ‘humana’ section of Sloane’s catalogue, with its uncertain descriptions and provenance markings (‘98. Another arm bone? Id.’), shows how readily such specimens were separated from their identifying labels, and makes it particularly difficult to associate the human remains listed with Thomas or Edward Browne with much confidence.

### De artificiis

Records of Browne’s collection of artefacts are also scarce, save for his medals and coins, and archaeological finds. Most of the coins are referred to in a single letter to Edward, in which Browne mentioned a hoard of sixty coins from the reign of Stephen I, his purchase of sixty Roman silver coins, and the prospective gift of around thirty ‘British and Saxon’ coins from Sir Robert Paston.<sup>132</sup> A ‘larin’, one of the c-shaped bundles of wire used as coinage in Persia and the Middle East, was later sent by Edward to his father for identification.<sup>133</sup> Browne’s reputation as a scholar of coins is manifested in his letter to a Mr Talbot in which, to identify a single example, he drew on comparable coins in his own collection.<sup>134</sup> The two medals he described in his letters were gifts from aristocratic friends, and express assumptions of common political and cultural views: one a silver medal minted to commemorate the assassination of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey in 1678 and the other a medal of Cosimo

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<sup>130</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane’s collection of fossils, corals and sponges. NHM, Fossils 1 (Murray Jones 21), fols. 288r-293r, items 95-130. Among these is a bladder stone from a patient at St Bartholomew’s Hospital where Edward was physician from 1682.

<sup>131</sup> A similar lack of human remains is found in the collection of the Royal College of Physicians, as catalogued by Merrett in 1660. Christopher Merrett, *Catalogus librorum, instrumentorum chirurgicorum, rerum curiosarum, exoticarumque Coll. Med. Lond.* (London: Royal College of Physicians, 1660), pp. 42-3.

<sup>132</sup> TB to EB, 22 Apr 1661, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 8. Robert Paston confirmed the dispatch of his gift of coins to Browne in his letter of 19 Sep 1662, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 409.

<sup>133</sup> TB to EB, 15 Sep 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 163.

<sup>134</sup> TB to Mr Talbot, n.d., ed. Keynes (1964), p. 387.

III Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who had visited England in 1669.<sup>135</sup> More evidence of the Brownes' medals and coins may yet survive at the British Museum. Sloane's collection of medals and coins were listed, but the ten volumes have been lost.<sup>136</sup> The possibility of such survivals underscores the immanent quality of Browne's collections. Like the books that passed onto the shelves of the British Library without any markings to record their Browne provenance, medals, antiquities and geological specimens that were once in Browne's home may still be scattered amongst the drawers of the national museums.

Browne's possession of other material remnants of Europe's ancient past is implied by him in his published works and confirmed by the evidence of Sloane's catalogues. The catalogue of 'miscellanea' contains around forty entries which might be associated with the Brownes, but the use of 'Dr. Br.', 'id.', and 'from the same' to suggest provenance information is particularly rife, undermining certainty concerning these objects' provenance. The section begins unambiguously, however, with the four urns from the frontispiece engraving 'in Sr. Tho. Brown's hydriotaphia, found in Norfolk'. The third of these is described as containing bones and ashes, and a ring which was later listed separately with Sloane's gems and cameos.<sup>137</sup> The urns are immediately followed by associated archaeological remains including three entries for 'burnt bones belonging to an urn', a Roman lamp, and two Roman 'lachrymatories'.<sup>138</sup> The remaining antique objects listed by Sloane are more prosaic, consisting of Roman clay tiles, and 'ancient pieces of glass, porphyry, and marble.' Three small Egyptian faïence funerary statues (*ushabtis*) are listed in the same section of the catalogue, but — rather regrettably given Browne's fascination with Egypt — their entries are silent with

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<sup>135</sup> TB to EB, 5 Jul 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 124; 14 May 1681, p. 191.

<sup>136</sup> It has been suggested that they were destroyed by enemy action in the Second World War, but no record of such destruction survives. Murray Jones, 'A preliminary check-list of Sir Hans Sloane's catalogues', p. 39.

<sup>137</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of miscellanea. British Museum, Anthropology Library, unnumbered (Murray Jones 28), fol. 164r, items 109-112.

<sup>138</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of miscellanea, fol. 164r, items 115-122. The lachrymatories were identified within the British Museum's collections by A.W. Franks in the nineteenth century along with other items in Sloane's catalogues. They are now listed as Roman unguent bottles, at 1756,0101.120 and 1756,0101.121.



regard to provenance.<sup>139</sup> Finally, the section includes a couple of items acquired by Edward on his travels: a Roman key from ‘Hungaria’, and a brick from the Roman arch at Carnuntum on the Danube.<sup>140</sup>

A final category of man-made specimens is that of processed substances related to pharmacology. Some of Browne’s prescriptions survive, and illustrate his reliance on such materials as syrup of gillyflowers, spirit of sulphur, aloe prepared with rosewater, and Lady Kent’s Powder.<sup>141</sup> Sloane’s catalogue of miscellanea lists just under thirty medicines and medicinal ingredients associated with ‘Dr Browne’. Sixteen of these — essential oils of herbs like sage and anise, but also remedies for dysentery and snakebites — were, according to Sloane’s records, bought at the *spezieria* of the Augustine friars of Santo Spirito in Florence, possibly by Edward Browne.<sup>142</sup> Sloane also acquired medicines prepared by Edward himself including pastilles to be burnt during the ceremony of touching for the king’s evil.<sup>143</sup> Following this group of medicines are listed a group of everyday objects ascribed to ‘Dr. Br.’: wooden spoons, an abacus, ivory boxes, as well as two samples of balsamic resins from Peru, a ‘read’ medicine, and a ‘mixture of cantharides’, a notorious aphrodisiac derived from blister beetles.<sup>144</sup> Similarly marvellous and foreign drugs were included in *Musaeum Clausum* (like the ‘extract of Cachunde’ and the ‘Composition of the most effectual and wonderfull Roots in Nature’). Manufactured pharmacological substances, some of them exotic and imported, were an essential adjunct of the Brownes’ professional practice and their reputation. They were consequently integral to their collections.

### De picturis

<sup>139</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane’s collection of miscellanea, fol. 167r, items 135-137.

<sup>140</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane’s collection of miscellanea, fol. 168r, item 144; fol. 169r, item 148.

<sup>141</sup> TB to John Hobart, Aug 1654, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 382-3; Thomas Browne, ‘For the ague tho’ every day by Sir T: B:’ from the Harbord Household Book, ed. Keynes (1964), v. III, p. 464.

<sup>142</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane’s collection of miscellanea. British Museum, Anthropology Library, unnumbered (Murray Jones 28), fols. 59r-61r, items 596-611.

<sup>143</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane’s collection of miscellanea, fol. 61r, items 613, 621, 622.

<sup>144</sup> Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane’s collection of miscellanea, fols. 69r-72r, items 681-2, 693, 698.

Graphic material allowed the Brownes to pin down, refer back to, and pass on the visual qualities of the many subjects they investigated. Pictures sit between the objects and the books catalogued in *Musaeum Clausum* and they mediated between these two forms of captured knowledge in Browne's own collections. A portion of Browne's collection of pictures acted as a paper museum, an extension or replication of his books and objects. The Browne family correspondence refer to drawings with this function. Duplicates of printed illustrations were made to be compared with specimens, including the copies of images of the heads of ostriches in Bellon's *De la nature des oyseux* and Willughby's *Ornithologia* sent to Edward to set against his captive ostrich.<sup>145</sup> More frequently mentioned in the letters were sketches of specimens or artefacts in Browne's collections capturing soft tissue and fragile material in a transportable format. Browne mentions twenty-one drawings of fungi, plants, fish, and birds, which he offered to Christopher Merrett.<sup>146</sup> Some of these sketches initiated a transformation of data between media, from specimen to sketch to printed illustration, as a number were lent to John Ray and appeared as woodcuts in *Ornithologia*.<sup>147</sup> Many of the sketches he offers, such as those of the diver and the skua, were intended to act as surrogates for the actual specimens. Others were of more frangible subjects unlikely to survive a journey, such as fungi and sea urchins or fresh animal viscera.<sup>148</sup> Sketches of medals and antiquities were also produced, including a group of Roman vessels acquired by Edward which may correspond to the lachrymatories now at the British Museum.<sup>149</sup>

Some of these 'paper museum' drawings, representing discrete collectible specimens and artefacts, have survived in the albums among the Browne papers at the British

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<sup>145</sup> TB to EB, 5 Feb 1681/2, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 207.

<sup>146</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Jul 1668 to April 1669, ed. Keynes (1964), pp. 343-360.

<sup>147</sup> TB to EB, March 1682, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 219.

<sup>148</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Aug 1668, pp. 344-5; TB to EB, 21 Jun 1675, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 56.

<sup>149</sup> EB to TB, 1 Jan 1677, ed. Wilkin (1846), vol. I, pp. 454-5. A reproduction of the sketch of three 'lachrymatories', now at Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. CCCXCI is provided by Wilkin.

Library.<sup>150</sup> But the albums are much more expansive in their subject matter, reproducing the copious objects of travel that could not be taken home like souvenirs: landscapes, architectural forms and human beings. Among these are drawings of cities, fortifications, and spas collected by Edward; a drawing of the Pont du Gard by Thomas, bearing profuse annotations; the aforementioned sketches of leaning towers; and some charming coloured sketches of scenery and mines seen by Edward on his travels.<sup>151</sup> They record the elusive material culture of different cities, from the crowns of ostrich eggs suspended in Greek Orthodox churches, to wooden street carvings in Nuremberg and the doge's vessel of state.<sup>152</sup> The drawings of people vary from studies of costume to fragments of faces and distorted images produced with a cylindrical mirror.<sup>153</sup> The scope of subjects represented in the albums is much broader than in the drawings described by Browne in his letters, gathering together the flotsam of travel and recording its serendipitous encounters as well as its directed enquiries. The album drawings are also more variable in quality and formality, being sometimes highly finished professional products and sometimes inexpert, sketchy and incomplete.<sup>154</sup> There is little remaining evidence of a division between 'fine' artistic and documentary or pragmatic works, implying that Browne's appreciation of drawings could be simultaneously aesthetic and scientific.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> The most impressive are the sketches of birds and insects, including some of those reproduced in *Ornithologia*, as well as the spider 'drawne out in oyled colours upon an oyled paper' (TB to EB, Sep 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 159). I am grateful to Antonia Moon for confirming that some illustrations in *Ornithologia* were copied from original sketches originally belonging to Thomas Browne and now with the Browne papers at the British Library.

<sup>151</sup> For instance, a view of Belgrade, the fortifications at Rab, and the spa at Buda, BL, Add. MS 5233, fols. 12, 14, 16; fol. 68; Add. MS 5234, fols. 33-36; Add. MS 5233, fols. 80-82, and Add. MS 5234, fols. 39-40.

<sup>152</sup> BL, Add. MS 5234, fols. 46-56.

<sup>153</sup> BL, Add. MS 5233, fols. 29, 36, 4.

<sup>154</sup> The albums include some ink wash drawings of classical ruins around the Bosphorus of very high quality, BL, Add. MS 5234, fols. 78-9. Browne's sketch of the Pont du Gard, by contrast, is rapidly drawn without much consideration for aesthetic effect.

<sup>155</sup> The appropriateness of a categorisation of representations in early modern museums as either aesthetic or documentary is discussed by Alexander Marr, 'Introduction: picturing collections in early modern Europe', *Intellectual History Review*, 20:1 (2010), pp. 1-4 (p. 2).



13. The north side of Mount Luibel [i.e. the Ljubelj Pass in Slovenia].  
BL, Sloane MS 5234, fol. 39.

### On size

Browne's collections (made up of living plants, small animal bones, pebbles, and imperfect sketches as well as formal art objects and luxury goods) were even more ephemeral and vulnerable to dispersal than his collection of books. They are equally difficult to describe definitively in terms of size. But the numbers of objects to have been recorded by Browne and his successors give an insight into the kinds of objects that received the most attention. After the collections of coins (three mentions of coins account for roughly 150 individual items), the largest group of objects are the animal remains, which are more numerous than the minerals and plants combined. Mineral and plant specimens are roughly on a par, though plant specimens receive more attention in the correspondence, and do not survive at all in Sloane's catalogue

of vegetable matter.<sup>156</sup> The total number of live animal specimens is low overall, but not so within the context of *Pseudodoxia*, in which mentions of minerals, plants and animals are even-handed. The small number of human remains has already been remarked upon. The collection of drawings and prints was substantial, and there may be yet more images from the Browne collection dispersed across the manuscript catalogues of the British Library's manuscript collection and the British Museum's Department of Prints and Drawings, with their provenances lost.

	Browne correspon- den- ce	Pseudodoxia Epidemica	Sloane catalogues / <i>British Library</i> <i>albums</i>	TOTAL
Minerals	2	22	9	33
Plant specimens	10	14	0	24
Animal remains	26	18	32	76
Live animal specimens	6	13	0	19
Human remains	1	0	2	3
Medals and coins	7 [153]	0	0	7 [153]
Antiquities	0	0	13	13
TOTAL	52	67	56	175
<i>Drawings and prints</i>	34	0	123	157

Table 5. Numbers of museum objects associated with Browne, from across three different sources.

Establishing a sense of the size of Browne's collections in comparison with those of his peers is awkward, since there is a lack of sufficient documentation for comparable collections. Museum catalogues and inventories have the same documentary dissonance as library catalogues, rarely being 'lucid sources that provide a window on

<sup>156</sup> An indication, in part, of the difficulties of keeping botanical material together with its associated provenance information.

to a collection'.<sup>157</sup> They lack even the rudimentary stability for processing that early modern bibliographic description provides. There has been no survey for personal museums like that carried out by David Pearson for personal libraries.<sup>158</sup> The only context for these numbers is the scale of the large and renowned collections next to which Browne's fades into insignificance. Courten's museum cost him £8000 by 1686, and sold for £50 000 in 1702; the Tradescants' numbered in the thousands and was catalogued over 170 pages.<sup>159</sup> There are rare accounts of small aristocratic collections like Ralph Thoresby's which sold in 317 lots in the 1760s; or the Paston treasure of just over 200 objects, which correspond more closely to the Browne collection.<sup>160</sup> The writers of contemporary inventories rarely interest themselves in the monetarily lowly natural specimens and curiosities that made up the bulk of such collections, and, as we have seen in the case of the Sloane collections, private museums that were subsumed into larger institutional collections rapidly lost their provenance history.<sup>161</sup> Browne's collection participates in models of private collecting of which there were local examples, among them the Howards, the Pastons, and the Le Gros.<sup>162</sup> But whilst these collections were the subject of visits and reports, Browne's collections seem not to have made a direct impact on his contemporaries in their turn.<sup>163</sup> I have not found them mentioned in any late seventeenth-century guides for visitors to Norwich, nor are there accounts of visitors to it other than Evelyn's.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Jessica Keating and Lia Markey, 'Introduction: captured objects: inventories of early modern collections', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 23:2 (2011), pp. 209-213 (p. 210).

<sup>158</sup> Pearson, 'Patterns of book ownership', pp. 139-167.

<sup>159</sup> Carol Gibson-Wood, 'Classification and value in a seventeenth-century museum: William Courten's collection', *Journal of the history of collections*, 9:1 (1997), pp. 61-77 (p. 61); Tradescant, *Musæum Tradescantianum*.

<sup>160</sup> Whiston Bristow, *Musæum Thoresbyanum* (London, 1764); Wenley, 'Robert Paston and *The Yarmouth Collection*', p. 120.

<sup>161</sup> On this aspect of inventories see Giorgio Riello, "'Things seen and unseen'", pp. 126-8.

<sup>162</sup> These family collections were introduced in ch. 3 above. See also Wenley, 'Robert Paston and *The Yarmouth Collection*', and Edward Browne, journal for 1663-4, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, pp. 47-49.

<sup>163</sup> Edward Browne reports visiting the Howard and Le Gros collections in 1663: Edward Browne, journal for 1663-4, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, pp. 47-9.

<sup>164</sup> A survey of guides to Norfolk was effected using Early English Books Online. The Browne collections were of sufficient value for Sloane to be interested in acquiring them — at least in part — in the eighteenth century.

Other more renowned English museums (like Robert Hubert's museum in London which contained 260 specimens and was bought by the Royal Society for £100) were smaller in size. Prestige was more dependent on the nature of the objects and the ways in which they were promoted to encourage visitors than on the number of items on the catalogue.<sup>165</sup> Browne shows the same modesty in his collecting of museum objects as he does with his books, failing to insist on their recognition as an adjunct of his social dignity.

### On sources

As represented in the Browne letters and the Sloane catalogues, collecting was a communal act involving Browne's family, his aristocratic friends, and his local community. I referred to the social aspects of book acquisition in chapter 3, suggesting that the exchange of books and objects was a form of civil engagement and scientific collaboration. Edward's contributions to his father's museum were transformative. The minerals and curiosities sent from Vienna and Venice, the drawings of Central Europe, and the Roman vessels purchased in London demonstrated Edward's exceptional ability to collect on his father's behalf due to his geographic distance.<sup>166</sup> The letters also outline the contributions of the Browne women to the collection of drawings, as they recorded new landscapes for Thomas's interest and copied both specimens and printed illustrations.<sup>167</sup> The gift of coins, together with a cameo of the head of Vespasian, from Robert Paston hints at the generous donations made by local aristocratic friends who might also have been a source for the precious stones observed in *Pseudodoxia*, either as gifts or loans.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> R.H., alias Forges [Robert Hubert], *A catalogue of part of those Rareties collected in thirty years time with a great deal of Pains and Industry* (n.d.).

<sup>166</sup> See above. EB to TB, 11 Jul 1669, BL, Sloane MS 1911, fols. 42r-45r; EB to TB, 1 Jan 1677, ed. Wilkin (1846), vol. I, pp. 454-5.

<sup>167</sup> For instance, the draughts of Guernsey that Elizabeth Lyttelton sent after her marriage, EB to TB, Feb or Mar 1681/2, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 214 and the drawing of a spider by Dorothy Browne ('for your sisters dared not do it'), TB to EB, Sep 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 159. The contribution of Dorothy Browne and her daughters to Browne's drawings of specimens is not an isolated occurrence. For instance, Susannah and Anne Lister made a volume of drawings in preparation for their father Martin's *Historia Conchyliorum* (1697). Grindle, 'No other sign or note', p. 20.

<sup>168</sup> Robert Paston to TB, 19 Sep 1662, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 409; PE, II:4, p. 117.

Browne's two pieces of 'unicorn' horn were also gifts: one had come from a military uncle as spoils in the Thirty Years War, and the other came scorched from the Russian Imperial treasure via Arthur Dee.<sup>169</sup> By contrast, the golden eagle sent to Browne's 'worthy friend' Dr Scarborough in Ireland was an element in the exchange of gifts between two scholarly enquirers geographically remote from each other.<sup>170</sup> Browne was assisted by helpers who were adept at capturing natural specimens, and he regrets that Merrett's enquiry came too late, since 'many of my old assistants are dead & sometimes they fell upon animalls, scarce to be met with agayne'.<sup>171</sup> Natural history specimens were also brought to him after their discovery in the arenas of daily work: in fishermen's nets, or harvested fields.<sup>172</sup> Browne's appetite for extraordinary creatures attracted their donation by ordinary men and women, whose practical expertise he may have enlisted much as Aldrovandi sought the knowledge of local huntsmen and farmers.<sup>173</sup>

The transactions by which objects came to be in Browne's collection were various. Since ownership is bound up with notions of exchange, the modes of acquisition to which these objects were subject affected the degree to which they were possessed. The transfer of material from Edward Browne, Robert Paston, Dr Scarborough or a Yarmouth fisherman to Thomas Browne could be subject to tacit agreements concerning their temporary or permanent ownership, and the extent to which they were transferred from one owner to another. In particular, any division of ownership between Thomas and Edward of their museum is artificial: the traffic of the objects and drawings with their letters reveals their collections as a shared resource.<sup>174</sup> Their

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<sup>169</sup> As recounted by Edward Browne, *Brief account of some travels*, p. 102.

<sup>170</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Sep 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 350 and Thomas Browne, *Notes and experiments of the natural history of animals, birds, fishes and insects*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, p. 401. Browne had mentioned in an earlier letter that he had sent a specimen of a northern diver to Scarborough, TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Jul 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 343.

<sup>171</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, May 1669, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 362.

<sup>172</sup> For instance, Browne's shark 'taken among the Herrings at Yarmouth' (TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Aug 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 345), and the great spider 'brought mee out of the feilds, large & round & finely marked green' (EB to TB, Sep 1680, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 159).

<sup>173</sup> See Findlen, *Possessing nature*, pp. 154-156.

<sup>174</sup> Like the carp's bladder, the woman's skin, or polecat's skull mentioned above.



mutual investment can be seen in the number of drawings collected by Edward which bear annotations in Thomas's hand (sometimes even adopting Edward's voice as the father acted as amanuensis to the son).<sup>175</sup> Browne succeeded in attracting objects of curiosity which to a greater or lesser extent became his own. His personal transactions or appropriations of objects are not explicit in his letters or the archive, but could account for a considerable proportion of his collections. Consequently the balance of civil exchange or isolated endeavour represented by the museum remains unknown.

### On storage

The penetration of the Browne collection into the quotidian spaces of the household asserts its character as communal and unbounded by the physical structures of shelves or by the economic structures of ownership. The family correspondence speaks of the proximity of kitchen, garden, dispensary and laboratory in their functions and raw materials: in the dressing of the dolphin by Dorothy mentioned in the same sentence as Thomas's anatomising of its skull, and in the sending of the carp's internal organs to Edward after the Norwich household had consumed the rest at table.<sup>176</sup> The Harbord household recipe book, belonging to a Norfolk family and containing both prescriptions by Thomas Browne and a recipe for stuffed fish by his wife, also demonstrates the contiguity of food and medicine.<sup>177</sup> The ubiquity of the collections within the living space may have been related to their instrumental use, but it also implies that the Brownes participated in the display of curious objects for aesthetic appreciation and as emblems of shared cultural practice. The shark hanging in the Brownes' yard is similar to the sea-wolves that Browne saw hanging up in Yarmouth homes; it also mirrors the crocodiles suspended from domestic ceilings across Europe,

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<sup>175</sup> For instance, on the drawing of three medals, upon which is noted in Thomas Browne's hand part of his son's account: 'As I passed by Mohncks I went to vewe the place which is yet observed by the Hungarians'. BL, Add MS 5233, no. 48 and 49. Reid Barbour argues that Browne's co-option of his son's collections is pervasive, and almost invasive. Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne*, p. 421.

<sup>176</sup> EB to TB, 14 Jun 1676, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 60; EB to TB, 16 Jun 1676, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 64.

<sup>177</sup> ed. Keynes (1964), v. III, pp. 463-465.

including the hall at Oxnead, home of the Pastons.<sup>178</sup> Hanging animal specimens (like the forty birds hanging in the house until the arrival of the plague) was the most efficient means of storing them, but also imitated the published images of set-piece cabinets like those of Ferrante Imperato and Ole Worm.<sup>179</sup> The collection was given prominence in the public spaces of the house, transforming it into the cabinet of Evelyn's visit.

The organisation and containment of the collections did require the use of receptacles, even if these were not the formal compartments of a cabinet. The distribution of seeds in beds by sort shows the necessity of compartmentalisation to rigorous observation. The live specimens, like the hedgehogs, cranes and stone curlews, were kept in large cages, probably in the yard.<sup>180</sup> The medals were kept in a box or boxes.<sup>181</sup> Browne's 'eggs-within-eggs' were stored in a box inscribed with the label 'ovula in ovis', showing the use of labelled boxes strikingly like the trays and boxes in the engraving of Ole Worm's museum.<sup>182</sup> When cataloguing items from the Browne collection, Sloane on occasion used the texts which had been kept with the objects as identifiers. Examples of this practice include the description of two calculi, given in abbreviated Latin, and a label accompanying the ear bones of a cod, very similar in

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<sup>178</sup> TB to Christopher Merrett, May 1669, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 362; Wenley, 'Robert Paston and *The Yarmouth Collection*', p. 136.

<sup>179</sup> MacGregor cites the 'ostentatious suspension' of animal carcasses as an instance of the suffusion of the tastes of the princely collector into the arrangement of scholarly cabinets, *Curiosity and enlightenment*, p. 21.

<sup>180</sup> Browne describes such cages for his captured stone curlews to Merrett: TB to Christopher Merrett, 13 Sep 1668, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 350. He observed that it was not possible, in spite of reports, to keep cuckoos in warm rooms over the winter. Thomas Browne, *Notes and experiments of the natural history of animals, birds, fishes and insects*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, p. 406.

<sup>181</sup> Robert Paston sent his contribution of coins to Browne in such a box. Robert Paston to TB, 19 Sep 1662, ed. Wilkin (1835), vol. I, p. 409.

<sup>182</sup> TB to EB, 4 Jul 1679, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 121. A collection of eggs belonging to Francis Willughby has been discovered recently, stored in a compartmentalised drawer and with handwritten labels by Willughby, give a further idea of contemporary practice. Tim R. Birkhead, Paul J. Smith, Meghan Doherty and Isabelle Charmentier, 'Willughby's ornithology' in *Virtuoso by nature: the scientific worlds of Francis Willughby, FRS (1635-1672)* ed. by Tim Birkhead (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 268-304 (p. 276).

tone to Browne's letters to Edward.<sup>183</sup> Sloane's inconsistent use of languages throughout his catalogue entries — for instance, using Italian and Latin to describe the samples of medicines from Florence — also suggests that he was copying inherited labels, though not necessarily those written by the Brownes. The ease with which such labels could be separated from their specimens is evident in Sloane's uncertainty in identifying the samples of human remains. The verbose labels that Browne provided for at least some of his specimens shows the propinquity of text and object in his collections, as the testimony of each was confirmed or challenged by the other.<sup>184</sup> Printed books as well as special albums were on occasion used to store specimens or drawings, as Edward notes in the list of objects he sent from Norwich to Vienna: 'The Emperours comedy on his marriage / in which I put those flowers & the like which I drew live but they are worth nothing'.<sup>185</sup> The classes of object in the collection were not strictly categorised but bled into each other, as objects were loaded with text, and books with images.



14. Detail from the frontispiece of *Musei Wormiani Historia* (Leiden, 1655)

<sup>183</sup> Sir Hans Sloane's fossils, corals and sponges, fol. 291r, item 113. 'The bones in a large cods head or the auditory bones, observe how they ly & how they may conferre to hearing & read Casserius about that organ. As I remember he hath only the figure of a pikes head. You may now examine two cods heads they being common, the like bones are also in whittings & haddocks.' Sir Hans Sloane's collection of animals, fol. 50r, item 528.

<sup>184</sup> Discursive labelling and itemisation as an early modern practice is also observed by Stephen Bann in John Bargrave's catalogue, Bann, *Under the sign*, p. 8.

<sup>185</sup> EB to TB, 11 Jul 1669, BL, Sloane MS 1911, fol. 44r.

On loss

Browne's museum is defined by its fluidity. Items from it were often mentioned in his letters only as they passed out of the collection. Loss was sometimes accidental, as in the case of the forty birds destroyed in 1666. But use of the collection necessitated constant erosion. Deliberate destruction of natural history specimens came through their consumption, dissection or captivity, as in his experiments on the digestive habits of pickerel fish and shearwaters. Browne noted of the shearwaters: 'I kept two of them 6 weekes, & they refusing to feed I crammed them with fish till my servant was wearie & gave them over, & they lived 15 dayes after without any food or water'.<sup>186</sup> Browne may have appreciated the company of his tame birds, but he was not burdened with sentimentality when it came to dispatching them. Similar detachment is evident in his experiments in *Pseudodoxia*, in the removal of vital organs from different small animals to test their buoyancy.<sup>187</sup> And, of course, samples were sent not only to Edward Browne and Christopher Merrett, but also to a wider group of acquaintances and scholars, including William Dugdale and the Royal Society.<sup>188</sup>

Like Browne's library, his museum collection has disappeared almost without trace. Objects were more difficult to administer than books, and provenance data could easily separate from their related objects. The British Museum did not maintain the provenance histories of its holdings, and the books, artefacts and specimens that passed to the Museum from Hans Sloane were absorbed into the anonymous copia of the wider institution. Some Sloane associations were recovered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, allowing the identification of a couple of unguent bottles, and of the *horti sicci*. It required extraordinary will, like that of Elias Ashmole, to ensure that a personal museum collection secured the posterity of its original collector. Browne chose not to make this effort, a stance which he adopted in relation to his books, and

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<sup>186</sup> Thomas Browne, *Notes and experiments of the natural history of animals, birds, fishes and insects*, ed. Keynes (1964), vol. III, p. 413.

<sup>187</sup> PE, IV:6, p. 314.

<sup>188</sup> Fossilised bones sent by Thomas Browne to William Dugdale, 17 Nov 1658, ed. Keynes (1964), p. 309; the bones of a whale and a stone jar sent to the Royal Society, described by Robert Hooke, *Philosophical experiments and observations* (London: Royal Society, 1726), pp. 31-32.

which extended to his collections of specimens and artefacts. Browne as a collector had an interest in the individual objects and their scientific potential which overrode any sense of the intellectual or cultural significance of the collection as an encompassing entity. The enthusiasm with which Browne parted with his collected objects confirms that their value for him lay in their ability to convey information within a network of fellow scholars, rather than within a museum constructed for perpetuity, in which each object has its fixed place.

*'Not [...] a grave, but a treasure of knowledge': conclusions*<sup>189</sup>

In chapter 2, I rejected the term 'collector' for Thomas Browne as a book owner because of its connotations of acquisitiveness, possessiveness, and exclusiveness. In collating the evidence for Browne's object collections and examining his discourse of object ownership in his published works, I have argued that the collector's stereotypical qualities were equally alien to Browne as the owner of a 'museum'. In *Urne Buriall*, Browne showed enthusiasm for the appropriation of ancient remains, and the archival traces of his collections demonstrate the strategies he developed for the acquisition of material. But his willingness to relinquish specimens to his son and his scholarly acquaintances and his acceptance of the insuppressible movement of such objects through space and time limit his possessiveness. In failing to establish firm boundaries to his collection or secure its integrity for posterity, Browne exhibited a lack of interest in asserting possession and exclusive rights over the objects that came into his sphere. Indeed, his sense of ownership seems to have been conditional rather than absolute. When, in *Religio Medici*, he describes his own learning as a treasure, rather than a grave of knowledge, he makes clear that one of the determining qualities of a cabinet is its being open and shared, rather than locked and controlled.

Browne's modesty in the discussion of his collection of 'poor maniples' and his rejection of cabinet-like exclusivity is sufficiently pronounced that we may suspect him of establishing his collecting self against the grain of contemporary practice. He seems deliberately to have refused the potentials of object collecting as an articulation of self and of communal identity through the reflexes of taste, but sought instead a

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<sup>189</sup> RM, II.3, p. 74.

self-assertion through the practice of being *not* possessive and *not* exclusive.<sup>190</sup> Exchange was an integral aspect of seventeenth-century collecting, but Browne manifests very little consciousness of the value of a ‘collection’ as a cogent entity. Consequently, his collecting practice is informal and fugitive. He does not impose ownership through cataloguing like John Bargrave or Hans Sloane, nor through the status-garnering pictorial representation of *The Paston Treasure*. He refused the passion of admiration, but performed curiosity in his essays and found wonder in both the commonplace and the exotic. Browne was fixated with the notion of an object’s absolute singularity, but not compelled to possess it.<sup>191</sup> Whilst he celebrated the uniqueness of all specimens and works of art, his work sought to stabilise groups and series of objects through precise description and naming.<sup>192</sup> Such efforts to search out the proper relationships of things in the world had greater significance than the imposition of emblematic or programmatic meaning through recontextualisation. Browne was also convinced that the limits of Creation and of its variety were unknowable, and there could be no complete acquisition of ‘sets’.<sup>193</sup> He framed many of his specimens and artefacts in terms of their functional contribution to scientific or antiquarian knowledge, rather than asserting complete possession of them through a removal of their function.<sup>194</sup> There is little evidence of attempted mastery through objectification.

Evelyn depicts the scholarly Browne living in Edenic harmony amongst his paradise of superior collections. In fact, Browne’s relationship with the material world draws confidence from an acceptance of its position within the postlapsarian cosmic

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<sup>190</sup> His persona as a collector is so unlike the compensatory self-assertion through possession posited by the psychoanalytical school that a facetious counter-interpretation would see his refusal to develop an attachment to his objects as a sublimated response to the emotional trauma of his early orphanhood and the financial chaos of his mother’s second marriage.

<sup>191</sup> Cf., for instance, the commentary of Jean Baudrillard on collecting, which he insists on the singularity of possessed objects as a necessity for the collector, since their singularity allows that collector to recognise him or herself as an absolutely singular being. Baudrillard, ‘The system of collecting’, p. 12.

<sup>192</sup> RM, II:2, p. 73.

<sup>193</sup> Again, see Baudrillard, p. 8.

<sup>194</sup> Baudrillard, p. 7; Marr, p. 9.

narrative of decline and resurrection, in which continual movement, decay and regrowth render futile all attempts to secure and memorialise. As with his books, Browne avoided containing his physical possessions within a 'collection' structure, but concentrated on the passing virtues of each individual item as he found it useful to him. Amid the ebbs and flows affecting his library, his museum, and his world, Browne sought to treat with each object or book on its own terms to reveal its 'inward formes'.<sup>195</sup> But this position of detached attention to the object without the interpretative structures of taxonomies and preconceptions is impossible to maintain. Claire Preston has pointed out that the data gathered from specimens subjected to complete description cannot be processed and given meaning without arrangement and comparison.<sup>196</sup> The final chapter of this dissertation will consider the presence of such arrangements in Browne's library and his writing. It will discuss Browne's use of taxonomies and classification systems as the means of structuring his collections, and further address the significance to Browne of the relationships between individual items, their categories, and their existence as part of a comprehensive whole.

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<sup>195</sup> RM, II:2, p. 72.

<sup>196</sup> Preston, "Meer nomenclature", p. 307.

## Chapter 6 - Wreaths, honeycombs, and armies: ordering the world and the shelf

The Library is a sphere whose exact centre is any hexagon and whose circumference is unattainable.<sup>1</sup>

Until then I had thought each book spoke of the things, human or divine, that lie outside books. Now I realized that not infrequently books speak of books: it is as if they spoke among themselves. In the light of this reflection, the library seemed all the more disturbing to me. It was then the place of a long, centuries-old murmuring, an imperceptible dialogue between one parchment and another, a living thing...<sup>2</sup>

The library, as a single entity composed of infinitely various parts, unknowable in its vastness, and with its volumes engaged in their own conversation beyond the scope of human readers, prompts a vertiginous panic. Borges's Library of Babel, and the Aedificium of Eco's *Name of the Rose*, which drew in part on Borges for its design, articulate the terror of libraries without any fathomable arrangement, in which 'the maximum of confusion [is] achieved with the maximum of order'.<sup>3</sup> The Library of Babel, a beehive of 'an indefinite, perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries', contains all possible combinations of the letters of the alphabet and is thus 'total', its books expressing 'all that is able to be expressed, in every language'.<sup>4</sup> The library of

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<sup>1</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Library of Babel', in *Collected fictions*, translated by Andrew Hurley (New York: Penguin, 1998), p. 113. Borges gestures towards a hermetic formulation for God as a sphere whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere, which is directly referenced in Borges' short story *The Aleph* as a means of expressing the unencompassable. Borges, *The Aleph and other stories, 1933-1969*, ed. and translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1970) p. 26. It was a favourite notion of Browne's, featuring (for instance) in RM, I:10, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Umberto Eco, *The name of the rose*, translated by William Weaver (London: Vintage, 1998), p. 286.

<sup>3</sup> Eco, *The name of the rose*, p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> Borges, 'The Library of Babel', pp. 112, 115.



Eco's abbey contains only some ten thousand books, but its volumes are hidden in a labyrinth and codified by a convoluted system which ensures that 'only the librarian knows, from the collocation of the volume, from the degree of its inaccessibility, what secrets, what truths or falsehoods, the volume contains'.<sup>5</sup> Both fabular libraries offer precise and arbitrary order (such as the exact repetition of the numbers of pages, lines and characters in the books of Babel, and the geographical names and mathematical sequences of the rooms of the Aedificium). But these give no guidance in the face of confusion (the endless mutations of texts, the lack of relationship between the title-pages of the Babel books and their contents; the Aedificium's obfuscating labyrinth and concealed doors). Reliable catalogues and ostensible order are essential for the sanity of the wandering reader, the safety nets which hold him back from a plummeting loss of steady epistemological ground.<sup>6</sup> Catalogues are the subject of superstitious yearning in the Library of Babel, and there is no trace of logical arrangement in a repository where 'for every rational line or forthright statement there are leagues of senseless cacophony, verbal nonsense, and incoherency'.<sup>7</sup>

For both the Library of Babel and the Aedificium, the library stands as a mirror of the universe and its overwhelming, indefinite, and morally dangerous copiousness. Borges's narrator introduces his library as 'the universe', and the Aedificium is called 'a great labyrinth, sign of the labyrinth of the world'.<sup>8</sup> Both the universe of the library and the universe of man's knowledge need catalogues and classification for structure and stability. But the corollary is abbreviation and standardisation. In forming paths of navigation through the universe, categorising and serialising books and things, classification concerns itself with identity, similarity and difference.<sup>9</sup> Our certainty

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<sup>5</sup> Eco, *The name of the rose*, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> The narrator of 'The Library of Babel' reports increasingly frequent suicides using the bottomless ventilation shafts of the labyrinth; the first death in *The Name of the Rose* is the result of a fall from the library window.

<sup>7</sup> Borges, 'The Library of Babel', pp. 114-115.

<sup>8</sup> Borges, 'The Library of Babel', p. 112; Eco, *The name of the rose*, p. 158.

<sup>9</sup> For discussion of the concerns of logico-classification, see Walter J. Ong, *Ramus: method and the decay of dialogue: from the art of discourse to the art of reason* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983) and Umberto Eco, *The infinity of lists*, translated by Alastair McEwan (New York: Rizzoli international, 2009), especially pp. 217-238.

with regard to the thisness of a book — and our ability to catalogue and classify it — is always in question: particularly if, as Borges proposes, there is endless variation of texts and of interpretations.<sup>10</sup> Further, grouping a book according to shared characteristics, and separating it from other books by categorical differences, forces the arranger to decide which of its qualities or parts are determinate, and which accidental. A classification system requires absolute differences to be established between entities, and absolute divisions of classes. Otherwise, the system slips into chaos. For library classification, similarity in form and subject matter may be overridden by other, simpler mechanisms of retrieval. Alphabetical order, for instance, is arbitrary but effective. Lucan's *Pharsalia* could be shelved with other histories, with other epic poems, with other works from the first century AD, with other titles starting with P, or other authors initialled L. The issues of categorical difference, prioritisation amongst a wealth of similar individual specimens or phenomena, and the struggle to identify order in the superficially chaotic were implicit in my discussions of Browne's book and object collections in chapters 1, 2 and 5, and his copious source material in chapter 4. In this chapter, the place of taxonomy and its ramifications in Browne's work and his book ownership is addressed directly.

Abbreviation and classification are necessary but imperfect strategies for navigating the universe of the library. As Browne argues in *Religio Medici*, 'even in things alike, there is diversitie', and through the acts of summarising and arranging books, portions of their specificity and uniqueness are lost or ignored.<sup>11</sup> This chapter looks at the ways in which Thomas Browne acknowledged these processes as essential to the description and understanding of the world, whilst being troubled by the attendant loss of variety. The first half of the chapter considers this tension as manifest in Browne's philosophy, and the second half regards the same tension as it shaped the arrangement of his library. The first section offers a summary of various models for organising knowledge extant in the early modern period, and demonstrates their integral position in Browne's arguments. The systems of differentiation established by Aristotle and his disciples were fundamental to Browne's thesis of the cosmos and its

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<sup>10</sup> Borges, 'The Library of Babel', p. 115.

<sup>11</sup> RM, II:2, p. 73.

narrative, which posits God as the only satisfactory analyst of his diverse works. He writes of the Creation and Apocalypse in terms of genera and distinction: 'As at the Creation, there was a separation of that confused masse into its species, so at the destruction thereof there shall bee a separation into its distinct individuals'.<sup>12</sup> But the Aristotelian figurations of knowledge — the hierarchical and binary diagrams of trees and chains — compete in Browne's writing with other models for gathering and arranging data. Browne's belief in the unlimited horizons of knowledge (accepting that 'a large part of the earth is still in the Urne unto us') chimes with the insistent gaze of Francis Bacon on uncharted spheres.<sup>13</sup> The compartmentalised treasury arrangements and serial lists of objects and data in *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus* articulate the structures of metonymy, analogy and similitude articulated in contemporary cabinets and museums. The digressions and initiatory suggestion in Browne's work, gathering associated references and alluding to further bibliographical riches, also imitate the honeycombs used as framing devices by the compilers of encyclopaedias and commonplace books. His insistence on contingency and incompleteness, and his provision of an alternative to dendritic analysis in the form of the quincuncial network, speak to two twentieth-century models for knowledge organisation, which present structures of indefinitely extensible facets and multivalent rhizomes.

The second section presents Browne working against all of these structures, and insisting on category-defying movement and variety in his conception of the world. I argue that whilst Browne worked with a series of models for the organisation of knowledge and drew on them in his essays, he was most engaged — both scientifically and aesthetically — with categorical boundaries, instabilities and exceptions. Browne's epistemological stance, as I have argued throughout this thesis, was fully appreciative of contingency, nuance and singularity, and he was temperamentally unwilling to categorise and define too rigidly. The section analyses the refusal of definition and categorisation evident in each of Browne's early works in turn. *Religio Medici* finds pleasure in the upheaval of Aristotelian categories, and enjoyment in the

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<sup>12</sup> RM, I:48, p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> UB, I, p. 135.

internal contradictions of the microcosm. *Urne Buriall* denies apparently absolute categories in its themes of cyclical time, resurrections, transformations, and contingency. *The Garden of Cyrus* dances through an overwhelming series of analogies, resemblances, and correspondences, drawing on Theophrastian divisions whilst simultaneously allowing surging plant growth to burst through them. Finally, in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* Browne directly addresses the formal disciplines and arranges his encyclopaedia as a chain of being with Man at the centre, but also celebrates anomalies and hybridities and describes categorisation as a form of elision.

The third section looks at seventeenth-century designs of library and museum organisation and suggests some ways in which they relate to Browne's approach to classification. Such designs were relatively new, emerging as the size of libraries expanded and the landscape of new knowledge changed beyond a point where the divisions of the medieval schools could be a practical solution to retrieval. Programmes for library classification drew on contemporary schemes for knowledge organisation but were distinct from them. They focused on the navigation rather than the representation of knowledge and dealt with what had already been studied rather than vistas of knowledge still to be uncovered. Conscious of the library's composite nature, library theorists used analogies of armies or meadows rather than the single object metaphors that described the universe of knowledge. Just as Browne drew on familiar disciplinary schemes for structuring his work, successful schemes for libraries tended to be practical rather than grand, and prized nuance, precision, and usefulness before systematic and artificial schemes. Gabriel Naudé's optimistic and generous scheme, with its intention of clearing the paths to knowledge whilst preserving particularity and subtlety of meaning, parallels Browne's project. Naudé, like Browne, was committed to familiar structures of knowledge as a means of promoting collaboration within a community of learning incorporating multiple perspectives. I suggest that despite increasing investment in the conceptual structures framing collections over the course of the seventeenth century, programmes for collection organisation, like Browne's programmes for arranging his material, remained provisional and largely driven by amenability.

In the fourth and final section, I present evidence for the arrangement of Browne's own library, based on the listing of lots in the 1711 catalogue. I suggest that if the classification of Browne's library is in any way recoverable, it appears to have relied on incomplete but traditional and convenient schemes for arranging books. The sale catalogue printed by Thomas Ballard for the auction of the Browne library records an arrangement of the volumes by subject, author and genre which is far deeper and more detailed than the superficial headings ('libri theologici', 'historici, philologici, &c.', 'medici, philosophici, &c.', 'mathematici') would imply. There is no definite proof that this arrangement originated with Browne, rather than with his son or with Ballard and his cataloguers. Some of the comparable contemporary sale catalogues manifest very similar systems of subject organisation. I offer evidence to support both hypotheses, and explore tentative conclusions for a scenario in which the sale catalogue represents the arrangement of books as they had been on Browne's own shelves.

The processes of categorisation and classification as methods for interpreting the universe were formative for Browne, and he adopts and subverts them everywhere in his prose. Towards the end of the first section of *Religio Medici*, Browne argues that it is the need to systematise and to distinguish between specific and accidental differences that indicates man's frailty. God 'beholds the substance without the helps of accidents, and the formes of things'. He is, unlike man, able to know the substantial forms of things without having to depend on the analysis of their perceived properties.<sup>14</sup> The contemplation of the incompleteness of our human vision of a created cosmos is for Browne an act of worship, a recognition of his own fallibility placed next to God's clear and total comprehension. Browne is captivated by the tension between variety and order in the world as he explores it and determined to find ways of navigating it without losing the reality of its diversity. The dilemma of this tension is a source of aesthetic and intellectual pleasure. Discussion of categorisation and multiplicity, difference and contradiction is integral to Browne's declaration of his faith. Classification and the organisation of knowledge are central concerns for Browne, pulling together discourses of incompleteness, scholarly

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<sup>14</sup> RM, II:4, p. 77.

collaboration, and intertextuality. As such, it also gathers in these central themes of my discussion of Browne's library, making it an appropriate subject for the final chapter.

*Geometrizing the world: seventeenth-century models of knowledge organisation*

Browne's enjoyment of the variation and mutation around him arose in part from the friction between the world as he saw it and the models he had been given to comprehend it. The most fundamental of these were both hierarchical and Aristotelian in origin. The Porphyrian tree presented Aristotle's categories through the division of species into genus and differentia, continuing in a logical series until the individual instance is reached.<sup>15</sup> The categorisation of binary opposed groups of similar beings through the definition of meaningful, essential difference (rather than accidental or non-significant variation) provided a logical method for structuring the world, and resulted in a dendritic structure of increasing particularity. As well as forming a tree model for describing the natural world, Aristotle's method underpins the Neoplatonic great chain of being in which the universe and all its creatures are not only differentiated but ranked according to their parts and their senses. Browne upheld a belief in the divine order which he often expressed in geometrical terms: 'that streight and regular line, that settled and constant course the wisdome of God hath ordained the actions of his creatures, according to their severall kinds'.<sup>16</sup> But Browne sees our perception of that order as contingent, particularly if we accept, with Plato's *Timaeus*, that the world itself is a flawed imitation of the Demiurge's unchanging model, and that we must be satisfied with incomplete answers.<sup>17</sup> The chain of being provided an indispensable base for Browne's navigation of the world

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<sup>15</sup> For early modern uses of Aristotelian 'method', see Neal W. Gilbert, *Renaissance concepts of method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 8-11. Gilbert's summary is a vital reminder that Aristotle's method is in fact a construction of subsequent commentators, gathering and harmonising scattered references to method from across his corpus. See also Charles B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), and, on the malleability of the Porphyrian tree, Paul Blum, *Studies on early modern Aristotelianism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 275-312.

<sup>16</sup> RM, I:16, p. 25. The pure forms of square and circle also appear in GC, III, p. 207 and UB, V, p. 166.

<sup>17</sup> See Murphy, "A likely story", pp. 254-255.

and of his place within it, as when, in considering the metaphysics of angels, he argued that

there is in this Universe a Staire, or manifest Scale of creatures, rising not disorderly, or in confusion, but with a comely method and proportion: betweene creatures of meere existence and things of life, there is a large disproportion of nature; betweene plants and animals or creatures of sense, a wider difference; between them and man, a farre greater: and if the proportion hold on, betweene man and Angels there should bee yet a greater.<sup>18</sup>

Here Browne asserts that there is a method integral to the order of beings, that man is able to identify its categories and essential differences, and extrapolate from them. But the extent of Browne's faith in this system and its revelation to man is thrown into question by its context in *Religio Medici* which, I propose in the second section of this chapter, takes delight in undoing certainties.

Divisions of genera provided the structure for the classical texts upon which natural philosophy was largely founded, including those touchstones of Browne's investigations, Aristotle's natural histories and Theophrastus's herbal. Analysis via accidental and essential differences features in Browne's scientific writing, where he uses it as the underlying principle for his own hypothesis. For instance, Browne adopts Theophrastus's categories in one passage in *The Garden of Cyrus*, noting that

From seminall considerations, either in reference unto one mother, or distinction from animall production, the holy Scripture describeth the vegetable creation; And while it divideth plants but into Herb and Tree, though it seemeth to make but an accidental division, from magnitude, it tacitely containeth the naturall distinction of vegetables, observed by

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<sup>18</sup> RM, I:33, 43.

Herbarists, and comprehending the four kinds. For since the most naturall distinction is made from the production of leaf or stalk, and plants after the two first seminall leaves, do either proceed to send forth more leaves, or a stalk, and the folious and stalky emission distinguisheth herbs and trees, and stand Authentically differenced, but from the accidents of the stalk.<sup>19</sup>

Browne accepts here Theophrastus's proposition that the best means of categorising flora is according to the development of their stem, and consequently his four kinds of plants: trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, and annual herbs.<sup>20</sup> On that basis, Browne argues that the divisions of Genesis are equivalent to those of the Greek natural historians, and marries his two authorities. But, again, the context of this apparent reliance on essential difference incites doubt. Browne knew, and Theophrastus acknowledged, that his categories were rough and ready due to the difficulties of categorising plants according to Aristotle's analysis when the number and position of their parts (so crucial to Aristotle's division of the animal world) is 'indeterminate and constantly changing'.<sup>21</sup> *The Garden of Cyrus* derives its aesthetic and intellectual potency from its concentration on burgeoning growth, the property of the botanical kingdom which flouts systematisation.

The Porphyrian tree permeated seventeenth-century scholarship, but was being questioned and sometimes rejected wholesale.<sup>22</sup> Browne, with others, balked at discriminating between essential and accidental properties with sufficient certainty to sustain a system of classification. This reluctance sprang in part out of a growing emphasis on scrupulous observation, which led to an appreciation of the wealth of significant properties attached to a single phenomenon, and the uncertainties

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<sup>19</sup> GC, III, p. 198.

<sup>20</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into plants, and minor works on odours and weather signs*, with an English translation by Arthur Hort (London: William Heinemann, 1916), vol. I, p. 23-25.

<sup>21</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into plants*, vol. I, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, pp. 5-7 passim; Ong, *Ramus: method and the decay of dialogue*, pp. 1-8; and further discussion below.



associated with the replication of experience that might otherwise guarantee hypotheses founded on that experience. Browne's comprehensive attention to potentially telling details in his natural history observations was outlined in chapter 5. In *Religio* he observed the impossibility of achieving an exact replica of any individual, 'for the patterne or example of every thing is the perfectest in that kind, whereof wee still come short, though wee transcend or goe beyond it, because herein it is wide and agrees not in all points unto its copy'.<sup>23</sup> The ability to comprehend all properties and to distinguish between essential and accidental differences belongs solely to God, their appointer.<sup>24</sup> Peripatetic logic also prohibited relationships or similitudes between beings across the branches of division and forbade reflection on the presupposed principles of each discipline, an impropriety of which Montaigne noted: 'If you come to rush against the bar where the principle error lyes; they have presently this sentence in their mouths, that there is no disputing with persons, who deny principles'.<sup>25</sup> Browne made use of the outlines of Aristotle's categories, to provide the structure of *Pseudodoxia*, for instance, or the terms of his contentions in *Religio*. But he was also enthusiastic in his contemplation of the functioning of the disciplines, applied differential analysis to both natural historical specimens and ethical dilemmas, and found similitudes across genera.<sup>26</sup> Aristotle's procedure of establishing essential differences and grouping accordingly provided Browne and his contemporaries with the terms for contemplating systematisation and order, but it was most fruitful to him when he placed it under strain.

Aristotle contributed to a classical tradition for the division of knowledge which, adopted by the universities as the trivium and quadrivium, persisted well into the seventeenth century. The faculty disciplines provided a universal structure which was

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<sup>23</sup> RM, II:2, p. 73.

<sup>24</sup> Since he beholds the 'substance without the helps of accidents, and the formes of things'. RM, I:4, p. 77.

<sup>25</sup> Michel de Montaigne, *Apology for Raymond Sebond*, translated by Charles Cotton, vol. II, p. 363. Cited by Ann Blair, 'Bodin, Montaigne, and the role of disciplinary boundaries' in *History and the disciplines: the reclassification of knowledge in early modern Europe*, ed. by Donald R. Kelley (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997), pp. 29-40 (p. 37).

<sup>26</sup> In *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, *Christian Morals*, and *Garden of Cyrus* respectively. I expand on these features below.

resilient to adaption and extension, as evidenced by its usefulness in the arrangement of libraries, reference works and commonplace books.<sup>27</sup> Gesner began the structure of his *Pandectae* with the trivium and quadrivium, proceeded through the humanistic disciplines of history, geography, and natural philosophy, and culminated with the university faculties of law, medicine and theology. By bolting newer disciplines on, Gesner's map of learning provides disciplinary clarity in the blurry context of the miscellany whilst being hospitable to new areas of knowledge.<sup>28</sup> This broader, less regimented universe of knowledge in the commonplace book witnessed the reappearance in essays and prefatory material of the Senecan bee, gathering and digesting knowledge without a predetermined route.<sup>29</sup> Gesner extended the metaphor in the introduction to his edition of Stobaeus's *Anthology*, likening the authors and their extracts to the neatly aligned cells of a honeycomb for dipping one's philosophical proboscis — the playful, optimistic verso of Borges's dizzying galleries.<sup>30</sup>

The broad scope and magpie agglomeration of information — the encyclopaedic features of Browne's writing — were analysed in chapter 4, and are embedded in the texture of Browne's prose. Both *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus* contain passages of short, staggered paragraphs which hustle the reader through an array of ideas and facts sometimes only slightly or obliquely connected, drawing attention to the tacit correspondence of each to its neighbours. These series, like commonplaces, depend for their effectiveness on the familiarity of their logic to the reader, a shared recognition of the similitudes and narratives that bind them, and the graduated differences implicit in their outline. The opening paragraphs of *Urne Buriall*'s second

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<sup>27</sup> For libraries, see P.S. Morrish, 'Baroque librarianship' in *The Cambridge history of libraries in Britain and Ireland, vol. II, 1640-1850*, p. 219 and Alain Besson, *Classification in private library catalogues of the English renaissance, 1500-1640*, unpublished PhD dissertation (University College London, 1988), pp. 109, 191-196, and further discussion below. On encyclopedias, see Paul Nelles, 'Reading and memory in the universal library: Conrad Gessner and the renaissance book' in *Ars reminiscendi: mind and memory in renaissance culture*, ed. by Donald Beecher and Grant Williams (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2009), pp. 147-169 (p. 160).

<sup>28</sup> Nelles, 'Reading and memory in the universal library', pp. 160-163.

<sup>29</sup> For examples, see Black, *Of essays and reading in early modern Britain*, p. 21, and Rhodri Lewis, *Language, mind and nature: artificial languages in England from Bacon to Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Nelles, 'Reading and memory in the universal library', p. 152.

chapter are saturated with short lists, most sentences bearing clauses that tally three or four or five places, artefacts, tribes or historical figures:

‘Some Urnes have been found at Castor, some also about  
Southcreake, and not many years past, no lesse then ten in a  
Field at Buxton’  
‘old works, Rampiers, Coynes, and Urnes’  
‘Iceni, Dutotriges, Tascia, or Trinobantes’  
‘Norman, Saxon and Danish peeces of Cuthred, Canutus,  
William, Matilda’.<sup>31</sup>

Conjuring with such copiousness, Browne creates a map of associated ideas across Norfolk which is not temporally limited, but allows different eras to coexist. Such series also form abridged narratives for the reader to supplement from shared knowledge. The lists of Roman emperors in the same passage invite us not only to recall the history of Rome, but also the moral qualities and successive fates of ‘Vespasian, Trajan, Adrian, Commodus, Antoninus, Severus’, et alia.<sup>32</sup> Browne’s arrangement of his material and his abbreviations of the world rely on kinship and contiguity, rather than essences and pigeonholes.

The organisation of encyclopaedias and commonplaces depended on a common understanding of familiar schemes for contemplating existing knowledge. Browne was committed to the acknowledgement of latent information, being invigorated, as Francis Bacon was, by the possibilities he saw beyond horizons and hoarded beneath the earth. Browne’s insistence on the propinquity of concealed information in *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus*, and the contingent rhetoric of his writing (full of contrafactual phrases like ‘we are unwilling to question’ or ‘we shall not further dispute’) reveal his continual awareness of the vulnerability of his conclusions to a sudden influx of new information. Bacon’s concern was to map out not merely existing branches of knowledge, but to identify and arrange areas of study that were

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<sup>31</sup> UB, II, pp. 140-143.

<sup>32</sup> UB, II, p. 142.

under-examined, exploring and exploiting regions of the realm of knowledge that were currently wastelands without imposing definite limits.<sup>33</sup> His divisions according to the mental faculties were intended to allow a description of the universe of knowledge without committing Bacon to an epistemological system, and to ensure no branch of knowledge, even the neglected or undiscovered, would be omitted.<sup>34</sup> But where Bacon was determined to codify and alphabetise, Browne kept aloof of attempts to create comprehensive schema, and revelled in idiosyncrasy. Bacon and Browne met on their belief in the coherence of the body of knowledge and on the equivalence of rules and phenomena across different parts of philosophy. Bacon identified principles valid in civil governance that could be applied in religion and nature, and saw the trill of a musical note paralleled in the playing of light upon water.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, he supplemented the tree diagram with that of the pristine map with its uncharted territories, and with the sphere, across which the disciplines run like ‘veins and lines’, allowing the entire body of known things to be kept in sight rather than forced down isolated tunnels of enquiry.<sup>36</sup> Browne’s method of assemblage and association agrees with Bacon’s model, but he is content to gesture towards the underlying causes or principles, rather than, like Bacon, to insist upon their identification.

Refusing to determine analytical principles amongst his material, Browne structures it through metaphors from museums and cabinets. The pattern of organisation within the books of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* mimics the compartmentalisation of a museum collection, the entire work structured like the chain of being ascending from minerals to man, the world and the divine. Claire Preston identifies a further internal organisation within each book; Book II proceeding from natural minerals to artificial minerals, and thence to equivocal or ambiguous mineral substances and finally the significances of semi-precious gems.<sup>37</sup> Customary divisions provide the architecture

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<sup>33</sup> Sachiko Kusakawa, ‘Bacon’s classification of knowledge’ in *The Cambridge companion to Bacon*, ed. by Markku Peltonen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 47-74 (p. 47).

<sup>34</sup> Arthur Johnson, ‘Introduction’ in Francis Bacon, *The advancement of learning and New Atlantis*, ed. by Arthur Johnston (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. xiv.

<sup>35</sup> Bacon, *The advancement of learning*, ed. Johnston, II.V.3, p. 85.

<sup>36</sup> Bacon, *The advancement of learning*, ed. Johnston, II.IX.1, p. 102.

<sup>37</sup> Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, p. 119.

for much of *Urne Buriall*, particularly in the first chapter where paragraphs are organised according to the element by which interment can be effected (earth and fire, but also water and air), and according to a progression of peoples and religious traditions (the Chaldeans, ancient Germans, Egyptians, Muslims and Jews).<sup>38</sup> *Urne Buriall* also shows Browne engaged in an archaeologist's method of compartmentalisation, arranging his findings in box-like paragraphs according to their physical context or material associations. The paragraph listing the contents of the urns, including the 'extraneous substances, like peeces of small boxes, or combes handsomely wrought, handles of small brasse instruments, brazen nippers' is one such. Browne's use of 'extraneous' is in itself provocative, implying a clear division in his mind between the essential and the irrelevant in burial practices. Browne concludes from the common properties he perceives among these objects that they had belonged to 'persons of minor age, or women'.<sup>39</sup> Another compartment of concordant objects is made of the miraculous survivals of organic material found in urns, tombs, temples and peat bogs, including bay leaves, cypress wood, fir trees and egg shells.<sup>40</sup>

The meanings of such similitudes were extended and made more vibrant (and released from a reliance on serial juxtaposition) by Browne's adoption of signatures. He wrote in *Religio Medici* that 'the finger of God hath left an inscription upon all his workes, not graphically or composed of Letters, but of their severall formes, constitutions, parts, and operations, which aptly joyned together doe make one word that doth expresse their natures'.<sup>41</sup> The symbols left on the world by the hand of God here function like a tetragrammaton, a single sacred word in which rests revelation. Browne draws upon the world of affinities and hidden meanings described by Oswald Croll in which all creation can be interpreted as a library: 'Is it not true that all herbs, plants, trees and other things issuing from the bowels of the earth are so many magic books and

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<sup>38</sup> UB, I, pp. 137-139. The order of popular and religious traditions given by Browne is apparently determined by chronology or geography, but may have another logic which remains elusive.

<sup>39</sup> UB, II, p. 144.

<sup>40</sup> UB, III, p. 130.

<sup>41</sup> RM, II:2, p. 72.

signs?’<sup>42</sup> Signatures are legitimate for Browne because the Creator does nothing vainly: ‘natura nihil agit frustra’ is his ‘onely indisputable axiome’ in *Religio Medici*, and he cannot allow the lines of the hand to be ‘meere dashes, strokes, a la volee, or at randome, because delineated by a pencill, that never workes in vaine’.<sup>43</sup> But Browne maintains that sublunary man’s ability to read such marks is negligible. He returned to the possibility of ‘graphically’ signatures in *The Garden of Cyrus*, albeit cautiously, noting that ‘Some finde Hebrew, Arabick, Greek, and Latine Characters in Plants’ but that the letters ‘Acaia, Viviu, Lilil’ only seem to appear.<sup>44</sup> He pointed out that the tools of Christ’s passion are merely ‘precariously’ seen in the passionflower, and he was sceptical with regard to the resemblances identified by Giambattista della Porta in *Phytognomonica* (1588).<sup>45</sup> Browne’s cautiousness is further explained in *Pseudodoxia*, where he remarks that the ‘animal Representations’ found in plants are to be found only in rare instances rather than in many samples of the species in question: ‘There are, I confess, divers Plants which carry about them not only the shape of parts, but also of whole Animals, but surely not all thereof, unto whom this conformity is imputed’. He adds, in a twinkling tone, that the likenesses given by Croll and Porta are very often ‘but postulatory’, and require ‘a more assimilating phansie’ than his to be seen.<sup>46</sup> Signatures, as William West points out, were new ideas contributing to the discourse, employed by Browne even as he held them at arms’ length.<sup>47</sup>

Browne’s approach to classification, in which, discomfited by absolute categories and differentiation, he turned to expansive metaphors to encompass the variety and uncertainty of the world, resonates with the first late modern knowledge organisation system devised not on a tree-and-branch model. The librarian and philosopher S. R. Ranganathan developed faceted classification which allows books — and things — to be classified according to different characteristics across an entire map of knowledge

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<sup>42</sup> Oswald Croll, *Traité des signatures*, cited by Foucault, *The order of things*, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> RM, I:15, p. 24 and II:2, p. 73.

<sup>44</sup> GC, III, p. 207.

<sup>45</sup> GC, III, p. 206.

<sup>46</sup> PE, II:6, p. 141.

<sup>47</sup> West, ‘Brownean motion’, p. 182.

without prohibitions or rankings.<sup>48</sup> Like Browne and Boyle's comprehensive descriptive technique, the faceted system encompasses all the properties of the individual book and eschews designating a single property by which to categorise. Instead it anticipates multiple interpretations of a book's significance by subsequent readers. Ranganathan compared the faceted system to Meccano, using separate units which can be assembled in any permutation, allowing for almost infinite variety to be described, avoiding the reductiveness of binary systems.<sup>49</sup> He also likened the faceted system to a palm tree, with one single branchless stem within which all knowledge is encompassed (moving close to Bacon's emphasis on a coherent body of knowledge, 'which hath a dimension and quantity of entireness and continuance').<sup>50</sup> Browne in his turn used his discussions of classification and category to give prominence to the ecumenicity of man, and the commonalities of all created beings with their Creator. This is particularly evident in *Religio Medici* in Browne's rejections of national and sectarian differences, as he denies the antipathies and 'nationall repugnances' between French, Italian, Spaniard or Dutch, and says of Roman Catholics 'there is between us one common name and appellation, one faith, and necessary body of principles common to us both'.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, the suggestive networks of similarities, associations and kinships in Browne's work correspond to the tangled connections of poststructuralism and hypertext, in which texts and other signifiers are seen to have depth and complexity rather than simple linearity. Murphy suggests that Browne's quincunx acts as an alternative to dendritic analysis, proposing a 'taxonomy of synthesis' as *The Garden of Cyrus* traces similarities across all categories of beings rather than isolating them in their differences.<sup>52</sup> The lattice, looking increasingly like Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, acts as a lateral tool for exploring substances, rather than proceeding up the trunk of

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<sup>48</sup> S.R. Ranganathan, *Prolegomena to library classification* (London: Library Association, 1957).

<sup>49</sup> Ranganathan, *Prolegomena to library classification*, p. 223.

<sup>50</sup> Ranganathan, *Prolegomena to library classification*, p. 223; Bacon, *The advancement of learning*, ed. Johnston, p. 83.

<sup>51</sup> RM, II:1, p. 70 and I:3, p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> Kathryn Murphy, 'The teeming world and the Porphyrian tree: problems of taxonomy in Sir Thomas Browne', unpublished MPhil dissertation (University of Oxford, 2006), p. 13.

Porphry's tree.<sup>53</sup> The poetic devices of 'commodities, mysteries, parallelismes, and resemblances' in the essay are essential to the discernment of the elegant decussated order Browne describes out of a world which might otherwise appear formless and incoherent.<sup>54</sup> His series are pulled along by a thread of 'resemblances' and 'correspondencies', most explicitly in chapter 3. For instance, spherical motion (the geometry of the rolling sphere which 'in direct volutation, returns to the first point of contact in the fifth touch') leads Browne from his list of five pointed leaves (maple, vine, fig) to five-pointed stars in nature (starfish, sea urchins).<sup>55</sup> Umberto Eco points to a similar mechanism operating in Emanuele Tesauro's *Il cannocchiale Aristotelico* (*The Aristotelian telescope*, 1664), which in producing multiple metaphors for describing phenomena — the dwarf as more embryo than man, a human fragment, smaller than a finger, and so forth — offers a richness of perspectives which may ultimately generate scientific insight. The resultant 'hotch-potch' is the price paid to avoid the poverty of dendritic classification.<sup>56</sup> Browne darts between disciplines and kinds of proofs in his arguments: he scans across the cosmos in the space of a single chapter in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, and his essays move outward towards libraries of other texts, networked through oblique citations, direct quotations and dense marginal references.<sup>57</sup> The model of networks created for the poststructural universe of knowledge articulates epistemological issues already recognised and exploited by Thomas Browne.

*A swarm of distinct essences: Thomas Browne plays the systems*

Browne's work exhibits an attentive engagement with the generative gaps between the systems of knowledge organisation outlined above and the world as he observed it. In *Religio Medici* Browne is preoccupied with the infinity of variety, the inconsistency of categories, and absence of total knowledge. Murphy identifies Browne's discomfort in

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<sup>53</sup> Deleuze and Guattari's *A thousand plateaus* (1980) was intended to be read in a non-linear fashion. See Pauline Rafferty, 'The representation of knowledge in library classification schemes', *Knowledge Organization*, 28:4 (2001), p. 191.

<sup>54</sup> GC, I, p. 183.

<sup>55</sup> GC, III, p. 201.

<sup>56</sup> Eco, *The infinity of lists*, pp. 233-238.

<sup>57</sup> Robin Robbins, 'Browne's cosmos imagined: nature, man, and God in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*' in *Approaches to Thomas Browne: the Ann Arbor tercentenary lectures and essays*, ed. by C.A. Patrides (Columbia & London: University of Missouri Press, 1982), pp. 155-165 (p. 162).



the first step of Aristotelian categorisation, the movement from individuals in all their specificity (the primary substance) to their first group or species (the secondary substance).<sup>58</sup> The millions of individual human faces, ‘the common wonder of all men’, evidence this inescapable variety. Browne drives home the staggering variation present in the world by using the alphabet for an analogy (of which the books of Borge’s Babel are the escalated version): ‘consider how many thousand severall words have beene carelessly and without study composed out of 24. Letters’.<sup>59</sup> He is at pains throughout the essay to demonstrate the essential inconsistency of man (‘that great and true Amphibium’) both in his ethics, with his ‘divided Antipathies and contrary faces’, and in his material instantiation.<sup>60</sup> Man’s body is subject to categorical transformations just as all things in the material world are unstable: the flesh ‘nothing but an elementall composition, and a fabricke that must fall to ashes’; all creatures ‘but the hearbs of the field, digested into flesh in them, or more remotely carnified in ourselves’.<sup>61</sup> In some respects such alterations are to be wished for: ‘to dye, that is, to cease to breath, to take a farewell of the elements, to be a kinde of nothing for a moment, to be within one instant of a spirit’.<sup>62</sup> Finally, Browne argues in *Religio* that decisive analysis of essential and accidental difference cannot be made when man’s knowledge is so fragmented. Browne identifies this both specifically in terms of man’s knowledge of man (‘No man can justly censure or condemne another, because indeed no man, truely knowes another’) and with regard to the mysteries of faith and philosophy: ‘since I was of understanding to know we knew nothing, my reason hath been more pliable to the will of faith’.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Murphy, ‘The teeming world’, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> RM, II:2, p. 73.

<sup>60</sup> RM, I:34, p. 45, II:7, p. 81.

<sup>61</sup> RM, I:37, pp. 47-48. See again II:14: ‘Thus I perceive a man may bee buried alive, and behold his grave in his owne issue’, p. 92.

<sup>62</sup> RM, I:37, p. 48. ‘Those strange and mysticall transmigrations’, likened to that of the silkworm, anticipate the transformations of flesh within wombs and urns outlined in *Urne Buriall*.

<sup>63</sup> RM, II:4, pp. 76-77; I:10, p. 19.

Browne accepts the indefiniteness and incompleteness he identifies by rejecting the need for categorical analysis: 'I am content to understand a mystery without a rigid definition in an easie and Platonick description'.<sup>64</sup> The figures of microcosms, palingenesis, and metempsychosis scattered through Browne's argument form an articulation of the cosmos which avoids the rigidity of systematic organisation. The microcosm is used not to delineate and circumscribe the correspondences between man and his world but to emphasise his internal contradictions: 'I am one mee thinkes, but as the world; wherein notwithstanding there are a swarme of distinct essences, and in them another world of contrarities'.<sup>65</sup> Palingenesis allows the form of a plant specimen to exist simultaneously with its 'contracted essence' as a seed and with its consumed ashes: 'the eyes of God, and perhaps also of our glorified selves' behold the world both in its contracted essence and in its dilated substance.<sup>66</sup> Platonic and perfect forms are immanent in all the changing and diverse instances of the universe's objects, but only to the divine comprehension. Metempsychosis operates through continuity and repetition of essential similitudes coursing through the generations, so that 'Every man is not onely himselfe; there have beene many *Diogenes*, and as many *Tymons*, though but few of that name; men are lived over again; there was none then, but there hath been some one since that parallels him, and is, as it were, his revived selfe'; 'the man without a Navell yet lives in me'.<sup>67</sup>

*Urne Buriall* harps upon the same themes of unknowability and the indefiniteness of categories, but adopts figures of transformation, resurrection and cycles for their explication. Browne refuses an absolute division between the two apparently irreconcilable categories of human experience, life and death. Metempsychosis as a form of continuation reappears, since 'if Adam were made out of an extract of the Earth, all parts might challenge a restitution'.<sup>68</sup> The returning of bones to the earth

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<sup>64</sup> RM, I:10, p. 19.

<sup>65</sup> RM, II:7, p. 80.

<sup>66</sup> RM, I:50, p. 62: 'In the seed of a Plant to the eyes of God, and to the understanding of man, there exists, though in an invisible way, the perfect leaves, flowers, and fruit thereof'.

<sup>67</sup> RM, I:6, p. 16; II:10, p. 86.

<sup>68</sup> UB, I, p. 136.

becomes part of the long cycling narrative from Adam's creation to the final reconstitution of all substances. In his fifth chapter, Browne describes the various solutions devised by the ancients to cope with the traumatic prospect of death without afterlife, including metempsychosis, conjunction with 'the publick soul of all things', and — from the Egyptians — the return of the soul to the mummified body.<sup>69</sup> These are, to Browne, no more than 'vanity, feeding the winde, and folly', but his list nonetheless demonstrates an ontological instability in the state of death. He points to Enoch and Elijah as amphibious instances of 'dead', being 'in strict account [...] still on this side death', but in suspended animation, waiting to live again in the events of the Apocalypse.<sup>70</sup> He adds that we begin to die whilst we live, so that life is one long blurring of our individual existence into death and nothingness. Solomon lost his wisdom and David 'grew politickly cruell' as they approached their ends.<sup>71</sup> These minute changes and distinctions are implicit in the series by which *Urne Buriall* is structured. And although nothing is strictly immortal but immortality, and all other things 'have a dependent being', it is Browne's purpose to insist on the immortality of our souls through salvation in spite of the futility of earthly glory.<sup>72</sup> He asserts the conditional nature of death through the resurrections of bodies and organic remains rehearsed in *Urne Buriall*, as instances of disinterment are rehearsed, and the uterine shape of the urn used to suggest a second birth.<sup>73</sup>

The contingency of Browne's argument in *Urne Buriall* and his initiatory rather than magisterial stance in the face of fragmentary knowledge have been much discussed.<sup>74</sup> The essay's initial gambit is a declaration of the potential knowledge lying buried

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<sup>69</sup> UB, V, p. 168.

<sup>70</sup> UB, V, p. 169.

<sup>71</sup> UB, V, p. 165.

<sup>72</sup> UB, V, p. 169.

<sup>73</sup> UB, III, pp. 147-157; p. 148. The metempsychosis of the body via the elements is described throughout the essay, in the corpses of the Ichthyophagi returned to the sea 'restoring the debt of their bodies', and burnt bodies which left in the earth 'will have [...] their primitive masse again'. UB, I, p. 138; III, p. 154.

<sup>74</sup> See, for instance, ch. 4 above; also Preston, *Thomas Browne and the writing of early modern science*, p. 132, p. 139.

beneath our feet or beyond the horizon.<sup>75</sup> But for Browne ignorance is not an unequivocal evil since the Walsingham urns have only survived due to their seclusion. The confusion proceeding from the dissolving action of Time, with its ‘art to make dust of all things’, has a mystical parallel in the final union with God after death. We move towards forgetfulness as the years roll on and move towards nothingness in our decease — a transformation which is for Browne ecstatic, a triumphant progression towards a state of coexistent ignorance and omniscience. Categories collapse as time works upon them, ‘wrapt up in the bundle of time, they fall into indistinction’.<sup>76</sup> For the Christian mystic, union with God is a crescendo of ‘annihilation, extasis, exolution, liquefaction, transformation, the kiss of the Spouse, gustation of God, and ingression into the divine shadow’, a death before death in which the soul sloughs off the individual properties it once had, ‘Ready to be any thing, in the extasie of being ever’.<sup>77</sup> We may at present be overwhelmed by the unknown variety and tracts of potential detail in the sublunary world, but the intrusion of definitive structures for reducing this chaos is gratuitous, since death will lead to both unknowing and enlightenment, the recognition of all differences and their erasure.

Where *Urne Buriall* seeks to overthrow the absolute category of death through metaphors of resurrection and transformation, *The Garden of Cyrus* strives to capture both variety and likeness, transgressing accepted categories in nature whilst finding similarities across them. In the presentation of lists of phenomena, and consideration of analogies and resemblances across three different modes (‘artificially, naturally, mystically’) Browne gives some stability to natural exemplars, whilst through sheer copiousness keeping variety continually in sight.<sup>78</sup> The discourse is dragged forward by resemblances through the plant world towards the quincuncial forms in ‘animal considerations’, including throat-bones, hexagonal cells in honeycomb, other reticulate textures, and finally the ‘decussative diametrals’ of animal feet moving over ground. Further analogies (or ‘emulations’: similitudes separated in space, as

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<sup>75</sup> UB, I, p. 135.

<sup>76</sup> UB, V, p. 164.

<sup>77</sup> UB, V, p. 171.

<sup>78</sup> From the full title of GC.

Foucault would define them) are evident in the symbiotic relationship between each plant and the particular insect it breeds, and in markings on animals and humans like the moles forming the constellation of the Plough upon the body of the Emperor Augustus.<sup>79</sup> By chapter 4, the essay leaps from one similitude to another, moving from the chamber of the eye to ‘the great house of the world’, from sacred architectural spaces to the coloration of seedlings (which ‘though green above ground, maintain their Originall white below it’), from the architectonic masses of the quincuncial grove with its ‘shades and shadowing parts’ back to sown seeds again.<sup>80</sup> In this rapid assembly of various parts, Browne conveys the ordered space of light and shade reduced to an abstraction but simultaneously rooted in specificity.

As partner essay to *Urne Buriall*, *The Garden of Cyrus* also denies the absolute duality of death and life, light and dark, knowing and not knowing. Vegetable growth relies on moderate access to both light and shade, as ‘darknesse and light hold interchangeable dominions, and alternately rule the seminall state of things’.<sup>81</sup> Life and death are the shadows of each other, and light and dark no more than penumbra of God.<sup>82</sup> But *The Garden of Cyrus* goes further in providing the quincunx as an acceptable order which gives form to the integration of these superficially opposed categories, so that incomplete knowledge becomes like the Bridegroom in the Canticles, ‘shewing himselfe through the lattesse; that is, partly seen and unseen, according to the visible and invisible side of his nature’.<sup>83</sup> The decussation describes not only the mechanism by which we sense the world through our eyes but also defines the limits of our comprehension, assuming a divine intention and pattern to those limits rather than a chaotic dissolution. The flaws of the created world as described in *Timaeus*, and man’s inability to perceive them, are interpreted as ordained, rather than accidental. Thus,

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<sup>79</sup> GC, III, pp. 207-208.

<sup>80</sup> GC, IV, pp. 216-218.

<sup>81</sup> GC, IV, p. 218.

<sup>82</sup> GC, IV, p. 218.

<sup>83</sup> GC, II, p. 187. The bridegroom stands partly as a metaphor for the amphibious Christ, both human and divine in nature.

attempts to systematise must always be contingent, and ‘Botanicall Maximes must have fair allowance’.<sup>84</sup>

Browne’s effort to establish a form of capacious order without rigid categories results in his lenient use of the disciplines in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*. *Pseudodoxia* is the only work in which Browne reflects explicitly on the disciplines, their relationships to each other, and their conventions, making an abstract survey of the universe of knowledge. The disciplines he describes in chapter 7 of Book I are conventional (mathematics, philosophy, law, theology, and so on) and his concern is to establish appropriate methods or forms of authority for proceeding in each subject.<sup>85</sup> For instance, he argues that in mathematics each student will prove each axiom rather than taking it on faith: ‘Geometricians notwithstanding would not receive satisfaction without demonstration thereof’. In contrast, the study of rhetoric, law, and history involves ‘a frequent and allowable use of testimony’, with the further example from law ‘both Civil and Divine’ which requires the agreeing testimony of several witnesses. Natural philosophy often includes ‘enumeration of Authors’, but it is reason which ‘do carry the stroake in the perswasion’. Conventions in one sphere cannot transfer to another: the oaths, ‘deepest Sacraments or desperate imprecations’ that settle a point of law cannot persuade in philosophy, where only reason and ‘necessary mediums’ are valid. The disciplines are in part defined by the internal conventions that determine their relationship to unproven testimony. Browne’s interest also lies in the long history of the disciplines manifest in the quarrels between authorities, and the ‘strange relations by Authors’ which are demonstrably false. He lists the corrections of the ages, between Aristotle and Hippocrates, between Avicenna and Galen, between Paracelsus and everyone who wasn’t Paracelsus, to show medicine as an evolving discipline composed of conversation and amendment.<sup>86</sup> But he makes no attempt to reform the disciplines, to tabulate or atomise them, or impose them too forcefully upon the structure of his encyclopaedia.

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<sup>84</sup> GC, epistle, p. 176.

<sup>85</sup> PE, I:7, pp. 40-43. Following quotations in this paragraph are from the same passage.

<sup>86</sup> PE, I:7, p. 43.

Browne's disquisition on *historia literaria* loses its disciplinary structure in the following chapter of Book I, which instead offers a critique of individual authors. Here Browne's efforts to find order as a position between chaotic inclusion and brutal abbreviation take a further twist. He argues in favour of a common-placing method of discrimination over miscellaneous assemblage, saying of Athenaeus's *Deipnosophistae* that 'being miscellaneous in many things, he is to be received with suspition; for such as amass all relations, must erre in some, and may without offence be unbelieved in many.'<sup>87</sup> Browne had argued for the common-placing of phenomena in *Religio Medici*, advising the student to learn wisely 'in a compendium, what others labour at in a divided piece and endlesse volume'.<sup>88</sup> The weeded-out grove of the compendium provides the student with space for the contemplation both of knowledge and its interstices, rather than being overwhelmed by unending and fractured detail. Murphy argues that the process of sifting and discarding information upon which *Pseudodoxia* is premised, to achieve a 'clear and warrantable body of Truth', was a cause for dismay for Browne.<sup>89</sup> And it works against his desire to capture all the minute details of natural phenomena, for fear of omitting the essential aspect. But it is a necessary compromise and a generative one, as Browne struggles towards an order which he believes to be innate if only partially revealed, through the forgetting of error and the rejection of chaos. *Pseudodoxia*'s hybridities and anomalies are not miscellaneous, but an effort to identify the will of the Maker through a synthetic attention to the marks of his Hand.

Browne co-opts the available systems of knowledge organisation by several methods. Fundamentally, he used the language of the systems and methods that had been instrumental to his education, adopting the terms of Aristotelian analysis and of the schools to provide the principles of his argument. That he spoke in the terms of Aristotelian logic whilst playing with them was one of the reasons his essays so provoked stricter Aristotelians like Alexander Ross. Categorical terms feature particularly strongly in Browne's discourse when he deals with the otherwise

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<sup>87</sup> PE, I:8, p. 50.

<sup>88</sup> RM, I:15, p. 24.

<sup>89</sup> PE, epistle, p. 1. Murphy, 'The teeming world', p. 10.

amorphous issues of human belief and morality, where the consequences of miscomprehension can be shattering. Schism and heresy in *Religio Medici*, and virtue in *Christian Morals* are discussed in terms of atoms and subdivisions.<sup>90</sup> Simultaneously, Browne found great delight, both intellectual and aesthetic, in the spaces between analytical divisions, in the identification of contradictions, antipathies and analogies which defied categorisation. The contemplation of the exceptions to and spaces between man-made categories is staring through a dark glass to the divine order beyond. Browne is insistent that the full structure of that order can only be known at the Second Coming, when

our estranged and divided ashes shall unite againe, that our separated dust after so many pilgrimages and transformations into the parts of mineralls, Plants, Animals, Elements, shall at the voyce of God returne into their primitive shapes; and joyne againe to make up their primary and predestinate formes.<sup>91</sup>

He understands this process in logical terms: ‘As at the Creation, there was a separation of that confused masse into its species, so at the destruction thereof there shall bee a separation into its distinct individuals’. Not only will the system of the universe be revealed but also the individual properties of each and every phenomena in all their distinct glory. For Browne, the failure of attentiveness to specific difference manifest in sweeping systems of knowledge organisation is a hubristic rejection of this narrative of restoration.

*Squeezing the eel too tight: library and museum organisation systems in the seventeenth century*

Like the compromises mediated by Browne between observation and organisation, the emanation of knowledge organisation systems in the physical arrangement of books

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<sup>90</sup> See RM, I:8 (‘when they separate from others they knit but loosely among themselves; nor contented with a generall breach or dichotomie with their Church, do subdivide and mince themselves almost into Atomes’), p. 17, and CM, for instance, III:3 (‘for the undiscerned Particles and Atomes of Evil deceive us, and we are undone by the Invisibles of seeming Goodness’), p. 273.

<sup>91</sup> RM, I:48, p. 58.



on shelves is partial and conditional. Ranganathan identified the disjunctures between the universe of books and the universe of knowledge as rooted in the collision of abstract and pragmatic considerations. He listed as distinctive features of library organisation the atomic nature of the material book as a unit for classification which cannot be further divided (unlike the variousness of the universe, which can always be further classified); the material format of the book, which usually affects its placement; the 'quasi-class' of books whose subject is another book; the form or genre of the book's expression of its ideas; the present finity of classes (the universe of knowledge is full of potential branches of knowledge as yet unknown, whilst the universe of the book is limited by the knowledge that has at the current moment been embodied in books); and the existence of composite volumes with more than one subject contained within a single binding.<sup>92</sup> The physical entity of the book is in untidy correlation to its subject or subjects, and the library system needs to cope with this. Systems for organising libraries are intended to enable navigation and retrieval, rather than convey the totalising representation at which knowledge organisation aims. Recognising the library as an organised assembly of discrete units, early modern library theorists used analogies of arranged composite objects like ranked armies and flowered meadows rather than single entities like trees and spheres. Library classification schemes drew on current models for knowledge organisation but tempered them with concessions to practicality, and had more concern for precision than epistemological cohesion.

Some library spaces attempted to embody a systematised knowledge during the period, using decorative schemes to express a chosen programme of the branches of knowledge and, possibly, to assist the reader in navigating the shelves. Baroque library rooms were increasingly decorated with a unifying scheme, which depended on images, mottos, sculptures and disciplinary shelf labels to give the impression of an integrated whole.<sup>93</sup> Such schemes varied in the degree of their ornateness and thoroughness, from simple labels at the ends of shelves or on walls to the elaborate

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<sup>92</sup> Ranganathan, *Prolegomena to library classification*, pp. 343-347.

<sup>93</sup> Mathilde Rovelstad and Michael Camilli, 'Emblems as inspiration and guidance in Baroque libraries', *Libraries and culture*, 29:2 (1994), pp. 147-163 (pp. 147-150).

emblematic programmes proposed by the Jesuit Claude Clément.<sup>94</sup> They originated in classical arrangements where pictures or busts of individual authors were placed near their books: a system adopted in the Upper Reading Room at the Bodleian (1616-1618) and in Bishop Cosin's library at Durham (1668) where the portraits in the friezes relate to the bookcases below.<sup>95</sup> By Clément's time, the library's purposes could be represented by an aggregation of mottos and hieroglyphical emblems which described not only the disciplines but the inspirations for learning, including the Church and ancient cultures.<sup>96</sup> The walls of other libraries bore depictions of other systems of knowledge organisation, including the honey gathering suggested by Gesner and other compilers of encyclopaedias (as at the abbey of Saint Lambrecht in Styria, where the conventional disciplines are each represented by a tree loaded with open books like flowers) and the Porphyrian tree (as at Schussenried Abbey, where the medallions on the tree of knowledge demonstrate Porphyrian method, and show the divisions for 'substantia—corpus—vivens—animale—homo—Socrates').<sup>97</sup> But these schemes required a classical symmetry to be aesthetically effective, whilst there was an imbalance in the proportion of books held by a library for each discipline, and changes in that balance over time. The 'pictorial catalogue', describing the universe of knowledge, can only have had a general relationship with the arrangement of the books in the same room.

The first comprehensive treatise on library organisation in the seventeenth century appeared in Gabriel Naudé's *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* (1627), which in its optimistic faith in the openness and navigability of the library without the imposition

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<sup>94</sup> Claude Clément, *Musei sive bibliothecae* (Paris, 1628).

<sup>95</sup> André Masson, *The pictorial catalogue: mural decoration in libraries: the Lyell lectures, Oxford 1972-1973*, translated by David Gerard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 5. In other libraries, busts might provide the subject classes without having a direct or implied connection, as was the case with the imperial busts topping the cases in Robert Cotton's library.

<sup>96</sup> Rovelstad and Camilli, 'Emblems as inspiration and guidance in Baroque libraries', pp. 153-157. Egypt as a source of inspiration is depicted by two pyramids, a circle bearing a hawk, a scarab, a star, a human heart, a mirror, and a box of incense. A matron stands between the pyramids, her feet on a crocodile, a papyrus in her left hand, a crystal vase in her right. The associated inscription was: [Coming] Out of darkness light is more pleasing. Each of the components of each emblem would be intended to convey a moral and spiritual message as well as classifying the books in the related space.

<sup>97</sup> Masson, *The pictorial catalogue*, p. 10; p. 18.

of artificial order is akin to Browne's processes for understanding the world. Naudé believed that the highest recommendation for a library was that every man found what he was looking for, and he couldn't have found it anywhere else. The library is like Seneca's meadow in which every creature finds what is most needful, 'Bos herbam, canis leporem, ciconia lacertum' — a universe where nature does nothing in vain.<sup>98</sup> He is committed to the inclusion of all possible materials and to capturing the variety of learning even amongst error, but, like Browne, he recognised the value of the abridgements of compendia, encyclopaedias, and anthologies. These save room in the library, save the scholar's labour, and allow extracts to 'appear as an Eagle in the Clouds, and as a Star twinkling and most refulgent in the midst of obscurity'.<sup>99</sup> Naudé was also clear that 'artificial memory' systems cannot be an effective basis for library classification. La Croix du Maine's system for his multivolume *Bibliothèque* and Giulio Camillo's theatre of memory are dismissed as false guides, that 'torture and eternally crucifie the memory, under the Thorns of those frivolous Punctilios and Chymerick subtities'. For Naudé, 'order is that which best guides and illuminates the memory' and if you squeeze the eel of memory too tightly, it escapes.<sup>100</sup>

Naudé saw order as a means of managing variety and navigating through error. It is essential if the library's books are to be of any use, allowing the reader to 'discern the one from the other; draw, and separate them at his fantasie, without labour, without pains, without confusion'. Unarranged books no more deserve the name of library than thirty thousand men deserve to be called an army 'unless they be martial in their several quarters'.<sup>101</sup> Naudé advocated a system for classifying and arranging books

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<sup>98</sup> Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, trans. John Evelyn, pp. 20-21.

<sup>99</sup> Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, trans. John Evelyn, pp. 33-34.

<sup>100</sup> Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, trans. Evelyn, p. 76.

<sup>101</sup> Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, trans. Evelyn, p. 75. Naudé intended the books themselves to be arranged thus on their shelves, not simply catalogued in such an arrangement on paper for reference purposes. He instructs that the end of every section of the library should have some bare shelf for additions, and that every six months the books should be removed from their shelves, dusted, the recent acquisitions integrated into their proper place within their discipline, and the entire stock moved along to make space for the following year's growth, pp. 79-80.

which is ‘facil, the least intricate, most natural, practised’.<sup>102</sup> In other words, it is familiar and universal, as much second nature to the early modern scholar as the arrangement of stock in a supermarket is to the twenty-first century grocery shopper. Naudé recommended the common disciplinary divisions following a sequence very like Gesner’s *Pandectae*. He demonstrated how a librarian might proceed to subdivide using the example of divinity, with subcategories of Bibles; Councils, synods, decrees, canons, and church constitutions; patristics; commentaries and doctrine; ecclesiastical history; and heretics. He suggested that philosophy and the other disciplines be internally arranged chronologically, and from the most general treatises to the most particular following ‘the rank and disposition of their matter and subject’.<sup>103</sup> The chronological treatment indicates Naudé’s engagement with the history of each discipline, and an awareness that each discipline has its own history and conventions: an approach that flies in the face of Aristotelian proprieties and resonates with Browne’s reflections in *Pseudodoxia*. In recommending a chronological arrangement, Naudé enables both the identification of error through the easy comparison of contradictory sources and a non-dogmatic evaluation of dominant schools and traditions.<sup>104</sup> The common ground between Naudé and Browne on the correction of error is expressed in their mutual adoption of Lactantius’s dictum ‘primus sapientiae gradus est falsa intellegere’, which Naudé inserted into his 1623 tract against the Rosicrucians, and which Browne adopted as his epigram for *Pseudodoxia*.<sup>105</sup> The library can, in Naudé’s view, be an instrument in the discrimination and clearing away of error. The flexibility of categories within that unthorny library — as opposed to a rigid and atomised hierarchical system — prevents the disciplines from becoming ossified.

Naudé’s proposal embodied a Brownean compromise between pragmatic order and attention to fluidity and variety. There is no evidence that Browne read his *Advis*, although he had read and excerpted from Naudé’s *Apologie pour tout les grands personages*

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<sup>102</sup> Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, trans. Evelyn, p. 77.

<sup>103</sup> Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, trans. Evelyn, p. 77-78.

<sup>104</sup> Paul Nelles, ‘The library as an instrument of discovery: Gabriel Naudé and the uses of history’ in *History and the disciplines*, ed. Kelley, pp. 41-57 (pp. 48-50).

<sup>105</sup> Nelles, ‘The library as an instrument of discovery’, p. 48.

*faussemment soupçonnez de magie* (1625).<sup>106</sup> The *Advis* reached England thanks to John Evelyn's translation, and Evelyn, as well as being in scholarly correspondence with Browne, was one of the only Englishmen writing on the theory of library classification. But Evelyn's own efforts at library classification systems reveal a tendency towards analytical divisions, radical theorising and confidence in the ability to repair prelapsarian knowledge which is at odds with both Naudé and Browne. His early design for a library classification, sent to the Royal Society in 1661, is relatively conventional, consisting of seven main disciplinary classes, with one (and sometimes two) levels of subdivisions.<sup>107</sup> Twenty years later, he devised another system which began with divisions according to two intellectual faculties, memory and judgement. Evelyn borrowed this division from Johann Heinrich Alsted's *Encyclopaedia* (1630), according to which philology, history and imagination belonged to the first faculty, and mathematics, philosophy and theology to the second.<sup>108</sup> Evelyn's ambition for this system is writ large: he heads one of the two manuscript catalogues in which this scheme features with the title 'the Aedes Sapientia, et Instaurationis Imaginis dei', and proposes his scheme as an explicit attempt to counter the deterioration of knowledge after the Fall: 'the reparing [sic] of that Blessed Image of God, defaced by the fall of the First Man'.<sup>109</sup> He is, in both surviving schemes, wedded to branch and hierarchy as a means of both representing and navigating the universe of books. But, unlike Naudé's scheme which directed the placement of the books on their shelves, Evelyn's was intended to exist purely on paper as a finding aid. The plan of the pressmarks in the same manuscript does not reflect these divisions, and the catalogue also gives a more complete listing of the books in alphabetical order. Evelyn's attempts at classification were too academic to be compelling and his storage arrangements fell short of his ideals.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Thomas Browne, BL, Sloane MS 1843, fol. 25r. See the opening quotation for chapter 2, above.

<sup>107</sup> John Evelyn, 'Designe for a library', 22 May 1661. Royal Society, Cl.P/17/1, reproduced in W.R.B. Prideaux, 'John Evelyn's "Designe for a library"', *The Antiquary*, n.s. 48 (1912), p. 128.

<sup>108</sup> John Evelyn, 'Method for a library according to the intellectual powers', BL, Add MSS 78631 and 78368.

<sup>109</sup> John Evelyn, BL Add MS 78368, fol. 64r.

<sup>110</sup> See G. de la Bédoyère, 'John Evelyn's library catalogue', *The Book Collector*, 43 (1994), pp. 529-548 (pp. 534-537).

Both Naudé and Evelyn describe ideal systems for administering libraries which for the owner of a thousand or so books were both over-complicated and unnecessary.<sup>111</sup> Library catalogues of the period, arranged alphabetically by author name, led the user to the relevant book through fixed location marks, an inflexible practice incompatible with the sort of subject arrangement and rearrangement outlined by Naudé under pressure from acquisitions.<sup>112</sup> As a result, detailed subject arrangements in personal libraries were relatively uncommon and tended to manifest as mixtures of medieval categories with new ones as ‘user bias and literary warrant’ justified them.<sup>113</sup> In small personal collections the extent of classification and its depth was usually driven by necessity. A collection was divided by format initially (for efficient shelving) and often into languages.<sup>114</sup> From there, further classes were added where the quantity of volumes in question justified it. For instance, the Latin books might be further categorised by subject if there were enough titles to make them difficult to find otherwise.<sup>115</sup> A class of theological books might be further subdivided if it was too large to manage, though theology might attract more attention from a library owner because of their personal interest, or because as a discipline theology had a strong tradition of distinct subclasses. Categorisation by format, language, subject and genre could also co-exist within a single level of divisions, as in the gloriously haphazard classes given to Robert Burton’s library by John Rous: ‘Books in folio, libri in quarto, English books 4to, Maskes, comedies, & tragedies, Comedies & tragedies, Books in 8o

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<sup>111</sup> Most book owners would probably be able to find their way around their own library without a regimented classification system. Pepys remarked on Evelyn’s translation of the *Advis* that it was rather ‘above my reach’. Samuel Pepys, *The diary of Samuel Pepys: a new and complete transcription*, ed. by Robert Latham and William Matthews (London: HarperCollins, 2000), vol. 6, p. 252.

<sup>112</sup> Morrish, ‘Baroque librarianship’, p. 219. These usually consisted of a letter for the case, followed by a number for the shelf and a number for the volume’s position on that shelf, eg. A. 1.1 or ED.4.15.

<sup>113</sup> Morrish, ‘Baroque librarianship’, p. 221.

<sup>114</sup> Language divisions may have been more meaningful in the seventeenth century than now, as certain subjects and genres tended only to appear in the vernacular. Besson, *Classification in private library catalogues*, p. 174.

<sup>115</sup> William Drummond of Hawardine took this approach. See Besson, *Classification in private library catalogues*, p. 154.

lattin, Libri anglici in 8o, Sermons in 4to'.<sup>116</sup> Such an amalgam of differences can function within a small library belonging to a single reader or small group of readers, even whilst it leans towards the ludicrous Chinese taxonomy presented by Borges in his essay on John Wilkins' artificial language.<sup>117</sup> The uneven use of classes to arrange libraries substantiates the suggestion that classification tended to be spontaneous rather than the result of deliberate effort.<sup>118</sup>

The reconstruction of classification practice in early modern English libraries relies on problematic evidence. Inventories focus their attention on economic worth (and consequently on categories of size rather than subject) but they can provide vestigial traces of classification. Besson cites the inventory of Benedict Thorowgood (1596) which lists his legal and theological books under separate heads followed by '20 poetry bookes', '20 history bookes' and '7 rhetorike bookes'.<sup>119</sup> A catalogue can be a more or less idealised representation of the library it purports to list, occupying a position between an ordered paradise and an earthly compromise. The relationship of subject headings to the individual books within each section can be tight or loose, and books in each subject section can sometimes be more miscellaneous than the heading implies.<sup>120</sup> The degree to which an arrangement was actively chosen or passively constructed by the owner varied from collection to collection.<sup>121</sup> An order may be recorded in a list but without headings or a logic that can be extrapolated. Conventional arrangements are readily identifiable, but idiosyncratic ones pertinent

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<sup>116</sup> Kiessling, *The library of Robert Burton*, p. viii. See also Besson, *Classification in private library catalogues*, pp. 111-113. A similarly ad hoc categorisation is evident in Henry Power's 1664 inventory of his books, including 'Bookes in Fol:', 'In Folio', 'English Bookes in fol:', etc. BL, Sloane MS 1346.

<sup>117</sup> '(a) belonging to the emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies'. Juan Luis Borges, 'The analytical language of John Wilkins', in *Other inquisitions, 1937-1952*, translated by Ruth L. C. Simms (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), p. 130.

<sup>118</sup> Besson, *Classification in private library catalogues*, p. 86.

<sup>119</sup> Besson, *Classification in private library catalogues*, p. 65.

<sup>120</sup> Besson, *Classification in private library catalogues*, p. 90.

<sup>121</sup> Besson, *Classification in private library catalogues*, p. 182.

only to the owners are more elusive. Finally, using catalogues to construct the arrangement of books in space is fraught because of the lack of certainty that the list in front of us was also a shelf-list and reflected the contiguity of the real volumes. It would be much quicker to list the contents of shelves and rearrange them according to categories on paper, thereby creating a subject index, than to reorder the books themselves.

The heterogeneity of library arrangement is evident in the sale catalogues produced for the auctioneer Thomas Ballard, who was responsible for the auction of the Browne library in 1711. For the most part the Ballard catalogues divide books by language, and then by format. For instance, the library of Richard Ford, sold 1707, is catalogued with Latin books in format divisions, modern languages similarly ('Livres Francois & Hollandois, en Folio'; 'Livres Francois, Italiennes, &c. en Quarto'; 'Livres Francois, Italiennes, &c. en Octavo') and finally the English titles by format.<sup>122</sup> This pattern is not always adhered to, and some catalogues show all the languages listed hugging-mugger, like the catalogue of Joseph Gaylard's library, also sold in 1707, listed with only four headings giving some sense of the languages present ('Libri Graece, Latine, Gallice, Anglice, &c. in Folio'; 'Libri Graece, Latine, Gallice, Anglice, &c. in Quarto'; 'Libri Graece, Latine, Gallice, &c. in Octavo'; 'Libri Graece, Latine, Gallice, &c. Duodecimo').<sup>123</sup> Some catalogues, like that of the Browne library and of John Postlethwait's library, have subject categories only in the sections for Latin and Greek (in the case of the Browne catalogue these are 'theologici', 'historici, philologici, &c', 'medici', and 'mathematici'; for the Postlethwait catalogue there are only two categories, 'theologici, historici, philologici' and 'Libri miscellanei, viz. Historici, medici, mathematici, &c').<sup>124</sup> The catalogue of the library of William Nichols gives yet another permutation of this model, with the Latin and Greek books being divided into theology, law, medicine, mathematics, history, 'Classici, viz philosophi, historici, oratores, poetae, &c. antiqui, Gr. Lat.' and 'Libri miscellanei, viz. Philosophi, oratores,

<sup>122</sup> *Bibliotheca Fordeana: or, a catalogue of the library of Richard Ford, Gent.* (London, 1707).

<sup>123</sup> *Bibliotheca Gaylardiana: or, a catalogue of the library of the late Dr. Joseph Gaylard, M.D. Containing a choice collection of many valuable and rare books... for the most part, curiously bound, filleted, gilt, or letter'd.* (London, 1707).

<sup>124</sup> *Bibliotheca Postlethwaiteana* (London, 1714).



poetae, critici, &c. recentiores Lexicographici, &c. Gr. Lat.’.<sup>125</sup> The most elaborate of the schemes amongst the corpus of Ballard catalogues is that of the sale of Charles Bernard whose massive library was arranged in conventional but capacious headings:

Libri theologici, Gr. Lat., in different formats

Libri Physici, medici, chyrgici, anatomici, botanici, &c. Gr. Lat.

Libri geographici, chronologici, historici, numismatici, &c. Gr. Lat.

Libri Classici: viz. Historiae Graecae vel Romanae scriptores, philosophi, oratores, poetae, &c. veteres, tam Graeci quam Latini.

Libri miscellanei: viz. Juridici, Politici, Critici, Philologici, Lexicographici, Bibliothecarii, &c. Gr. Lat.

Libri mathematici: viz Geometrici, optici, astronomici, astrologici, magici, &c.

Livres Francois.

Libri Italiani.

Libros Espannolos

English Books.

Libri Iconum.

Libri Manuscripti.<sup>126</sup>

Whether these various arrangements record the different habits of library owners, or the unified practice belonging to auction cataloguers, they rely on the same widely accepted disciplinary divisions, allowing book owners — and book buyers — to navigate their way around a list with ease.

The Ballard catalogues indicate a practice reliant on a stable, orthodox system of organisation by language, format and discipline, which was fluid, adaptable, and used

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<sup>125</sup> *Bibliotheca librorum maximum insignium: or, a curious collection of choice and valuable books, ... being the library of ... William Nichols, D.D. Deceased.* (London, 1712). The categorical distinction made between ancient and modern authors is also interesting.

<sup>126</sup> *Bibliotheca Bernardiana: or, a catalogue of the library of the late Charles Bernard.* (London, 1710).

to a greater or lesser degree. Contemporary published catalogues of museums and cabinets presented ideal arrangements which were also not necessarily equivalent to the contents of those museums and their storage as the genre of the catalogue blurred into treatises of natural history. These catalogues show a greater tendency to take on novel categorisations than catalogues of books, whilst still bearing similar marks of provisional disposition. Ole Worm's museum is enumerated systematically, drawing on the great chain of being to arrange familiar material and incorporate exotic substances. The top level consists of four categories: minerals, botanical matter, animals, and artificial things. Some of the subdivisions are also logical: book III, on animals, proceeds from the inferior creatures (insects, shells and crustaceans) to the superior (humans), whilst sections XXI to XXXI of book II, on plants, covers fruits in alphabetical order.<sup>127</sup> The categories of the Tradescants' museum as published in the 1656 catalogue is less systematic and more responsive to the collection's strengths:

1. Birds
2. Fourfooted beasts
3. Fishes
4. Shell-creatures
5. Insects
6. Minerals
7. Outlandish fruits
8. Mechanicks (including carvings, turnings, paintings)
9. Other variety of Rarities
10. Warlike instruments
11. Garments
12. Utensils, and Housholdstufte
13. Numismata
14. Medalls.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Ole Worm, *Musaeum Wormianum* (Leiden, 1655). Elsewhere the arrangement is less logical, with prominence given to exotic substances, and some headings (like *de fructibus* and *de semina*) being shown in the text but not in the paratextual finding aids.

<sup>128</sup> *Musaeum Tradescantianum*, fol. A8r and A8v.

The division of Robert Hubert's museum gives the impression of being yet further removed from a schematic classification, but determined by the contents of the collection: 'Fishes Heads; Of whole Fishes; Parts of Fishes; Other Rarities; Of birds; Of Serpents; Of Fruits, and such things; Of Stones, or things turned into Stone; Corals and Sea-Plants'.<sup>129</sup> These different schemes indicate the extent to which publication of museum specimens and artefacts in the form of classified catalogues was intended to attract visitors to the museums themselves. Worm's catalogue manifests a descriptive thoroughness judiciously balanced with advertising the collection's rarities; the Tradescants emphasise the range of quotidian-yet-exotic material in their ark; whilst Hubert draws attention to objects belonging to the other elements (fishes, birds) and those subject to wondrous transformations. The display and enticement in the ownership of public museums can pull against scientific uniformity of description and cross-referencing.

Library and museum organisation, even in their virtual instantiation in the form of printed or manuscript catalogues, demonstrate a compromise between current systems of knowledge organisation and the pragmatic limitations of housing and navigating through large collections of objects. Coherent models for the description of knowledge and the disciplines — branched trees, medieval and humanist faculties — had a pervasive effect on the arrangement of subjects in catalogues, on shelves and in decorative schemes in libraries, according to personal tastes and degrees of engagement. Library organisation was not essential for many small collections, and demanded considerable investment of time and space. There is evidence of attempts to reform the arrangement of libraries, especially when libraries were founded to support the endeavours of new institutions like the Royal Society. But by and large the need for familiarity and continuity, which allowed scholars to find their way around the networks of libraries available to them, and to communicate their ideas within a shared epistemological schema, discouraged the adoption of radical systems. Flexibility and adaptability within a conventional structure allowed many permutations of the same form of order, and thousands of books could be managed without rigid and inappropriate categories, or senseless chaos and incoherency.

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<sup>129</sup> Hubert, *A catalogue of part of those Rarities*.

*Accidental difference: subject arrangement in the Browne sale catalogue and its meanings*

The 1711 sale catalogue has been treated with caution throughout this dissertation, and the same circumspection is due to the possibility that it acted as a shelf list which describes the physical arrangement of books created by and for Browne. Aside from the interference and misrepresentation of the individual contents of the catalogue dealt with at length in chapter 1, and the library's possession by the Browne family as a group, there is plenty to argue that the catalogue's organisation was not formed on Browne's bookshelves. The physical volumes may never have sat next to each other in the same order as they are listed in the catalogue. The titles might instead have been re-arranged on paper to assist buyers at the auction. The headings of the catalogue are similar to the schemes in other sale catalogues produced by Ballard (as described in the preceding section), and they would have made it much easier for potential bidders to locate titles of interest. The ease and familiarity provided by the headings had a commercial advantage in spite of the lengthy process involved. Indeed, the first formal subject classification for books in the West evolved from the increasingly unified cataloguing practice of auctioneers in Paris in the late seventeenth century. British auctioneers also recognised the need to promote their catalogues as logical and meticulous in order to improve the reputation of their work, which many saw as exploitative and crass.<sup>130</sup> One of the cataloguers working for Ballard, James Hooke, noted in a prefatory letter to a catalogue that it was 'not methodiz'd as I could wish'.<sup>131</sup> The initiation of any arrangement in the 1711 catalogue by the bookseller must remain a possibility.

Nonetheless there are compelling reasons to suggest that the scheme did, at least in part, predate the inheritance of the library by Edward Browne in 1682, and that it can shed a little light on Browne's practice as a book owner. The scheme itself is quite compelling in the depth and granularity of the arrangement. The Latin and Greek

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<sup>130</sup> Giles Mandelbrote, 'The organisation of book auctions' in *Under the hammer*, ed. Myers, Harris, and Mandelbrote, pp. 15-50 (p. 31). See also Suarez, 'English Book sale catalogues as bibliographical evidence', and Raven, *The business of books*, pp. 119-153.

<sup>131</sup> James Hooke, *Bibliotheca Triplex: or, a catalogue of the libraries of three eminent and learned gentlemen deceas'd*. (London: 1707), epistle to the reader, verso of title page.

titles grouped under the heading of theology are further subdivided into a sequence: Bibles, biblical commentaries, works of doctrine, scriptural interpretation, controversy, canon law. This sequence repeats itself across the different formats in classical languages as folios, quartos, octavos, and smaller formats all follow the same pattern. Each format section of the ‘historici, philologici, &c’ category begins with books on geography, moves onto history, then to Roman literature followed by Greek, then philology, sometimes works on education and philosophy, and ending with catalogues and other works relating to collections. There is less consistency amongst the medicine and natural philosophy books, but there is a vague sequence of human anatomy, natural history, botany, mineralogy and other *materia medica* followed by practical medicine in the form of disease studies and observations. The sequence of theology, geography, history, literature, philology, medicine and natural philosophy, and maths also appears in the modern language sections, though much less tidily.<sup>132</sup> These recurring disciplinary rhythms across the formats and languages begin to fragment amongst the titles printed after Browne’s death, notably in the large number of late seventeenth-century French octavos and the later English imprints. That the earlier titles should have been organised so thoroughly, far beyond the needs of a potential purchaser, points to the possibility of Browne’s involvement.

Another persuasive aspect of the catalogue’s arrangement is its slightly ad hoc nature, combining several kinds of similitude to associate groups of books. Titles by a single author are often clustered together even when the works do not fall into one subject category. The works of Athanasius Kircher, Aldrovandi, J.G. Vossius and Thomas Bartholin are grouped together like this.<sup>133</sup> There are some parts of the library in which the titles have been divided according to author groups of ancients and moderns: this can be seen amongst the historians, where Machiavelli, Kirchmann, Reusner and Chifflet always precede Lucan and Tacitus, and sometimes (though less consistently) in medicine. The first sequence of medical folios follows a roughly chronological arrangement, with Hippocrates and Galen and their modern

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<sup>132</sup> See appendix 3 for two visualisations of the subject sequences in the Latin ‘historici, philologici, &c’ section and across the English sections of the sale catalogue.

<sup>133</sup> Kircher’s works are at SC 8/88 to SC 8/93; Aldrovandi’s are at SC 18/23 to SC 18/29; Vossius’s at SC 11/98 to SC 11/102; and Thomas Bartholin at SC 23/5 to SC 23/9.

commentators followed by Aretius, Pliny, Avicenna, Vesalius and Spigelius.<sup>134</sup> Other sections show titles grouped according to form, such as the classical histories grouped according to their being written in verse or prose.<sup>135</sup> Some books are grouped according to their editorial format, including the variorum editions of classical texts in octavo and the illustrated folio anatomies and natural histories.<sup>136</sup> Finally, there are books grouped together which are in dialogue with each other. Descartes's *Meditationes de prima philosophia* (1656) and *Principia philosophiae* (1644) are followed by the responses of his contemporaries, both positive and negative, including Johann Clauberg, Daniel Lipstorp, Wolferd Senguard, and Libert Froidmont.<sup>137</sup> Little clusters of specialist interests (numismatics, signatures, nutrition, demonology) appear in groups of five or six titles that have been gathered together through the kinship of their subject. The manifestation of different methods of distinction within the catalogue's organisation, and its depth beyond the relatively crude headings provided, suggest a provenance in a shelf arrangement which developed over time. A subject catalogue is of little practical use if it incorporates several principles of categorisation at once, whilst a shelf arrangement, depending on memory to navigate the reader through topically positioned associations, copes well with such incongruities. The very inconsistency of the list implies an incremental growth, rather than a single moment of rearrangement according to a logical scheme.

The Ballard catalogues, including that of the Browne sale, exhibit a disorder of their own, which might justify an attribution of any arrangement to Ballard and his cataloguers, if their working practice was sufficiently chaotic to result in the initiation of an arrangement which was partial and incomplete. The system of headings in the Browne library sale catalogue collapses towards the end, with the introduction of four final headings of 'libri omissi' in format categories, the titles mixed in their languages, except for a final short category of 'English Folio's Omitted'.<sup>138</sup> As I argued in chapter

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<sup>134</sup> See SC 17.2/1 to SC 18/16.

<sup>135</sup> This is evident in the ancient histories in octavo at SC 13/29 to SC 13/34.

<sup>136</sup> SC 13/19 to SC 13/31; SC 17.2/15 to SC 18/51.

<sup>137</sup> SC 11/83 to SC 11/88.

<sup>138</sup> SC, pp. 57-58.

2, the presence of these categories of ‘missed’ books is probably an indication of the pressures of hastily compiling such a catalogue, given their appearance in other sale catalogues.<sup>139</sup> The repetition of titles from the main categories in the ‘missed’ sections also indicates a cataloguing system which was far from precise.<sup>140</sup> This in itself reduces the probability that the auctioneers implemented a subject arrangement. I have already described the relative inconsistency of subject arrangement within the corpus of Ballard’s catalogues. And, despite some coincidence in the printed headings of the catalogues, there is little evidence of internal subdivisions such as those identified in the Browne library catalogue. The catalogue of John Ray’s library, for instance, shows traces of an alphabetical arrangement, which is relatively complete at the beginning of each headed section but splinters apart towards the end.<sup>141</sup> The incompleteness of another, completely different system of arrangement within the printed headings of a Ballard catalogue implies the persistence of vestiges of the personal arrangements of library bookshelves through the disruptions of removal and sale. The evidence for these vestiges and for Browne’s involvement is suggestive rather than conclusive, and the following conjectures based upon it are emphatically speculative.

I cautiously suggest that the patterns of similitude traceable in the 1711 catalogue can be associated with Thomas Browne in spite of the dislocations of a series of moves between Browne family homes and finally to Ballard’s premises in Little Britain.<sup>142</sup> That being so, the arrangement of the books collaborates to some extent with Browne’s expressed persuasions in relation to classification, categorisation, and the assertion of difference. Firstly, the subdivisions manifested in the catalogue’s most

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<sup>139</sup> See above, p. 92. The sale catalogue of the Postlethwait library is an example of a Ballard catalogue with such categories. *Bibliotheca Postlethwaiteana* (London, 1714).

<sup>140</sup> For instance, 12 of the 30 quarto ‘libri omissi’ titles appear in the same edition elsewhere in the catalogue, and one title appears twice within the list: Homer’s *Iliad* with scholia by Didymus (Cambridge, 1689), SC 57/74 and SC 57/83.

<sup>141</sup> James Hooke, *Bibliotheca Rayana: or, a catalogue of the library of Mr John Ray* (London, 1707), pp. 1-3. The first 87 lots of the folio ‘Libri philologici, historici, medici, theologici, &c. Græcè, Latinè, Gallicè, &c’ are in two alphabetical sequences, firstly of natural history, history and philology, and then of theology. A further short section of medical titles in folio appear later in strict alphabetical order, p. 4 (lots 165-177).

<sup>142</sup> Swift, *The formation of the library of Charles Spencer*, p. 78.

ordered sections appear to be capacious, and disciplinary differences are not insisted on too gravely. Theology is a particularly expansive section, including works of geography and natural history relating to scripture as adjuncts to Biblical interpretation.<sup>143</sup> This reflects the nature of early modern biblical scholarship, which drew in procedures from many disciplines.<sup>144</sup> But it is also a mark of Browne's openness to the details and conventions of different disciplines in constructing his own work, particularly in deliberating upon the mark of God's hand upon the world. The coexistence of different kinds of associations within the arrangement of the books shows a Brownean reluctance to commit to one single logical system of difference which divides books into simple categories of 'similar' or 'different'. Rather, the placement of books according to numerous categorisations simultaneously demonstrates an ability to vacillate in the determination of essential differences, so that what is accidental in some books (form, genre, author) may be crucial for placing others. Finally, the disposition of books displays chronological juxtapositions and academic interlocutions in such a way as to promote comparison and an awareness of the history of discourses and disciplines. Naudé argued that such arrangements help to clarify error and contradiction: a task central to Browne's intellectual project.

*Consorting and sympathising with all things: Thomas Browne and the order of things*

Questions of classification — of identity, similarity, difference, of order and hierarchy, periphery, imbrication and lacuna — were crucial to Browne. He took both intellectual and aesthetic pleasure in the identification and description of variety, idiosyncrasy, and resemblance wherever he found them. His essays celebrate transformations and correspondencies, unpicking the embroidery of the cosmos and tracing its threads. But his engagement goes much further, since the process of establishing his epistemological relationship to the issues of classifying the world is a contingent working through of Browne's relationship as an intelligent, questioning being with his God. Showing too much confidence in his own ability to know

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<sup>143</sup> For instance, amongst the folios: Christiaan Adrichem's *Theatrum terrae sanctae* (SC 2/23), Samuel Bochart's *Hieroicoicon, sive, bipartium opus animalibus* (SC 2/25), and Francesco Giorgio's *De harmonia mundi* (SC 2/33).

<sup>144</sup> See Deborah Kuller Shuger, *The renaissance Bible: scholarship, sacrifice and subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 4.



substances, recognise essential differences, and categorise, would be to exalt himself too highly. To avoid such questions altogether would demonstrate a lack of faith in the hand that does nothing in vain. Pursuing his reason to an *o altitudo* can be an act of worship. Francis Bacon envisaged the scientific project as navigation into uncharted territories; Browne gazes through the lattice into the divine spaces beyond. In testing the limits of his own knowledge and recognising them, Browne is able to orientate himself in the confusion of the world which must also be an order.

Browne makes judicious use of the philosophical methods he has inherited for the description of the world and its differences, in part because their language has been the foundation of his education. But just as Browne catches sight of revelations of order through the perplexity of things, he also depends on authors to give illumination, being attentive to a communal conversation of mistakes and truths in which difference and singularity need to be maintained.<sup>145</sup> Browne borrows the terms of categorical logic and of encyclopaedic arrangement because they represent a contingent truth, passing into error when clung to too fast. Browne's flexibility in his attempts to organise the world and his own books was shared by many of his contemporaries, who were content to adopt relatively pliable disciplinary categories when faced with the pragmatic difficulties of classification. Browne's engagement with the discomfort arising from the imperfectability of systematic arrangement was whole-hearted. It led him to the adoption of metaphors for its positive expression, including microcosms, antipathies, resurrections, analogies and the quincunx in all its elaborations. The structures that Browne gives for negotiating around *Pseudodoxia*, a cabinet-like chain of being and a series of disciplinary groups, are chosen for their familiarity to his audience and their capacity to resonate as he explicates them. The communal collaboration implicit in Browne's ideas on classification, and the religious faith that supplied the foundation of those ideas, allow him to contemplate the disjunctions and impossibilities of encompassing knowledge without falling prey to the despair of Borges's Library of Babel or Eco's Aedificium. His readers enjoy the delight of being placed in a universe crammed with infinite variety, unending and

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<sup>145</sup> West discusses the importance to Browne of disagreement and individual stances within a community in 'Brownean motion', p. 183.

unpredictable patterns of similitude, almost overwhelming in the possibilities of its meanings. The same vertiginous pleasures are evoked by Borges and Eco, but tip inexorably towards the abyss.

The imaginative recreation of a library space has the same attractions, making conscious and spatial the variety and similitudes of the universe of knowledge and our efforts to control them. In the attempted reconstruction of Browne's library, the chance to recreate the order of books on their shelves and stand in the case-lined rooms that Browne knew and that formed a microcosm of his world is the most tantalising. Browne's intellectual contexts and his perspective on them could, via their classification, be given physical anchorage. The 1711 catalogue gives an account of a library which used liberally defined disciplinary categories as the basis for informal and pragmatic groupings. Differences operated variously, so that several systems of analysis collaborated according to their usefulness. Browne's disposition of generous interpretation and multiple perspectives is manifested in these characteristics. But, as with all evidence gleaned from the catalogue, the shelf map offered is fragmentary and elusive. There is no capturing the fluidity and slow transformations that the library itself may have experienced as its arrangement responded to changing intellectual concerns and new owners. We cannot place ourselves in the midst of Browne's library and run our eyes along the shelves. The catalogue must, instead, act as the latticed window through which we may glimpse the known and unknown life of Browne the reader.

## Conclusion

'Gods hand is in every *translation*; and his hand shall binde up all our scattered leaves againe for that *Librarie* where every *booke* shall lie open to one another'.<sup>1</sup>

The inception of this project proposed an intellectual map that would use the 1711 sale catalogue to trace the relationships between Browne's books and his writing. But plotting maps requires fixed reference points and absolute orientation, and it quickly became clear that Browne's library had to be discussed in terms of likelihood and contingency. Only through the assertion of absent certainties would it be possible to reconstruct a library of Sir Thomas Browne in which his reading could be pulled confidently from the shelves. Having reached for, and failed to find, definiteness in the bibliographical evidence of the catalogue of the library's sale (in chapters 1 and 2), this dissertation has cooperated with the lacunae, and contemplated the spaces left by the obliterations of time. It has described the local contexts of Browne's book ownership (chapter 3), his relationships to sources (chapter 4), his museum collecting (chapter 5), and his position in the world of knowledge, articulated through library classification (chapter 6). These exercises have retrieved a book owner who showed very little interest in the possession of a 'library' as a discrete, permanent collection, despite his profound engagement with books, and the high numbers of volumes that passed through his hands. I have argued that this position was apt for a man committed to an epistemological stance of diffidence and deferral. I also believe that Browne's behaviour as an owner of books was not peculiar, but participates in and is consequent from an early modern print culture characterised by permeability and fluidity.

I have emphasised throughout the dissertation the contingency and incompleteness of the bibliographical evidence, but it must be acknowledged that there were more avenues to explore, had time for such truffle-hunting been infinite. I have not, for

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<sup>1</sup> John Donne, Meditation XVII, in *Devotions upon emergent occasions*, ed. by Anthony Raspa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 86-87.

instance, surveyed the catalogues of auctions from the late seventeenth century which were annotated by auctioneers with the names of each lot's buyer, an exercise which might have shed light on Edward Browne's purchases of secondhand and antiquarian books in London. A systematic search for the names of either Brownes as subscribers to publications would also be illuminating.<sup>2</sup> As more libraries record the provenance histories of their early printed books and become attentive to the personal collections within their holdings, more Browne ownership inscriptions and other markings may come to light. But all these possibilities are to some extent frustrated by the normality of the Brownes' family name, any appearance of which needs corroborating evidence to associate it correctly. As the structures of online union catalogues improve and inter-library searches become more powerful, more titles associated with the Brownes may come to light.

I have drawn attention to the need for testing Browne's library against other, comparable personal libraries, in order to make meaningful assertions about the features of Browne's library. Systematic comparison of the contents of the libraries of Browne's peers (including John Evelyn, John Ray, John Locke, Robert Burton, Robert Hooke, or Isaac Newton) would strengthen any conclusions regarding Browne's tastes and habits as an owner of books. But each of these libraries are recovered through different sets of sources with their own flaws and omissions. Inventories and sale catalogues offer a snapshot of a library at a single moment in a lifetime of reading, and have specific purposes which can warp the record. The evidence of ownership inscriptions, bookplates and personalised bindings is incomplete and nuanced by the specific habits of the individual. Efforts to pull these various sources together tend now to insist, quite rightly, on the particularities of their material, and these convoluted differences must be painstakingly accommodated, or deliberately ignored, in cross-collection analyses.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the logistical difficulties of bringing together complicated source material, comprehensive surveys are essential, correcting the over-

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<sup>2</sup> The capabilities of the search functions in the *JISC Historical Texts* database are not yet sufficiently sophisticated to allow efficient searching of a considerable, if incomplete, corpus of printed books.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, the online database of Robert Hooke's books, in which the different types of ownership evidence are clearly differentiated. William Poole, Felicity Henderson, Yelda Nasifoglu, *Hooke's Books* <<http://www.hookesbooks.com>> Accessed online. 5 August 2016.

interpretation of phenomena found in a single collection that were common to many libraries.

Without pursuing these lines of enquiry to their conclusions, this thesis has still offered a compelling reconstruction of one man's reading and book ownership. It has challenged the relationship between the reader and the books around him, arguing that the connections of material possession and intellectual engagement are not equivalent, uniform, or continuous. To Browne scholars, it offers a corrective to previously laid-down assumptions about the dependability of the 1711 catalogue and its contribution to studies of Browne's sources. I can offer no formulae to replace this former reliance on the catalogue's evidence, but suggest that its use be coupled with deliberations on the likelihood of Browne's ownership or reading in each instance. The material relating to Browne's object collections purchased by Sloane is entirely new, and will contribute to assessments of Browne as a natural historian committed to observation and description. Recreating the bookish milieu of Norfolk within which Browne operated further confronts the image of Browne as reclusive and dreamy-eyed. The examination of Browne's intertextuality — deliberate or otherwise — contributes to an already flourishing debate on his involvement in a culture of commonplacing, digesting, and recontextualising ideas and data from amongst a community of multiple voices without imposing the authoritative voice of the writer. In studying Browne's museum holdings, the libraries of his neighbours, and his literary works, I reinforce an understanding of the library as networked, and show the exchange and processing of information reliant on objects, letters, extracts and bibliographical references in addition to the movement of entire books.

This dissertation has also put its force behind a reconceptualisation of the bibliographical reconstructions of personal libraries. It points to the vanity and hubris of asserting completeness and certainty in the face of piecemeal and uncertain evidence, arguing for a contemplation of fragments as fragments, rather than a botched reconstitution according to our own lights. I argue against the representation of historic collections in fixed and defined terms when the object being described was shifting and nebulous. These qualities of stability and exclusion speak to a useful but

misleading model of the personal library (the country house or gentleman's private library) which eclipses the fluidity and community of seventeenth-century book ownership. Bibliographical studies should not rely solely on inventories and catalogues, but incorporate, wherever possible, the evidence of correspondence, literary productions, annotations, and notebooks which form an interactive system of book ownership and use. Individual reconstructions of early modern libraries are now sensitive to these problems, but the continuing uncomplicated use of bibliographical evidence by literary and intellectual historians suggests that library historians should make these arguments more loudly, more insistently.<sup>4</sup> Library history is rightly co-opted into many other disciplines, and its practitioners must ensure its sources are used with the same methodological diligence and caution as shown to the literary text and the historical document.

John Donne adopted the library as a metaphor in his meditation on the interconnectedness of all men ('No man is an Island, entire of itself') within the soul's narrative of baptism and resurrection. He figures the traumatic events of life as a translation of the soul into a better language, and each man as a chapter which shall be bound up by God into books that see each other fully in the final Apocalyptic transformation, when 'every booke shall lie open to one another'.<sup>5</sup> This schema of universal connection and salvation is one to which Browne was fully committed. Pushing into obscure regions of natural philosophy, he finds some dilemmas he is willing to 'trust [...] unto the sythe of Time', and puts his faith in a prospective, inclusive community to be reached after the resurrection, when all conversations would fall silent in that instant of full communion.<sup>6</sup> In contemplating the remains of Browne's reading, I have been conscious of his own efforts of recuperation and his acceptance of his imperfect vision in striving for God's order amid sublunary fragmentation and oblivion. In Browne's eyes, the imposition of ready answers and absolute structures is hubristic in the face of divinely appointed uncertainty, and only

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<sup>4</sup> See the studies of David Pearson, Giles Mandelbrote, John Harrison, Kate Loveman in the following bibliography, amongst others.

<sup>5</sup> Donne, *Devotions upon emergent occasions*, p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> PE, epistle, p. 3.

resurrection will enable full and untainted sight. For Browne and Donne, the connection of all things and the deferred revelation of all answers are akin — the connection divine and transfiguring, but only fleetingly recognisable to a flawed and withdrawn humanity. The ligaments of textual exchange, social relationships, book gifts, conversations, and printed matter that fastened the library together have been undone by time, and we cannot anticipate a final revelation. But we can recognise Browne's library as a piece of the continent, and part of the main — not cell-like and inward-looking, but, like the quincunx, extended into unknown horizons.

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# Appendices

Appendix 1: Selected entries from the database derived from the 1711 Browne sale catalogue

Sales Catalogue Entry	Format	Illustrated	LG subject division	LG subject division 2	Language section	SC Subject division	SC Page	SC lot	Reference Catalogue used	Author Surname	Author	Full Title	Variant Title	Publication details	Publication place	Publication country	Publication Date
Biblia Magna cum Comment. Jo. Gagnei, Guil. Estii, Emman. Sa. Jo. Menochii & Jac. Firini, Prolegomenis, & Notis a Jo. de la Haye, 5 vol.	Folio		Theology	Bible	Greek and Latin	Theological	1	1	CCFr	Bible	Commentaries by Jean de Gagny, Willem Hesselzoon van Est, Manoel Sa (S.J.), Giovanni Stefano Menochi, & Jacques Tirouart (S.J.); illustrated by Jean de la Haye	Biblia magna commentariorum litterarum Ioannis Gagnei, Doct. Paris., Guilelmi Estii, doct. Duacensis, Emmanuelis Sa, Ioannis Menochii, & Jacobi Firini S.J. Prolegomenis, Notis, & Jo. de la Haye	Paris: sumpibus Michaelis Soly, Matthaei Guillemot, Donyai Bochet, & Antoni Benier, 1643	Paris	France	1644	
Oppian, de Venatione & de Piscatu, gr. lat. cum Comment. C. Rittershusii	Octavo		Literature	Greek	Greek and Latin	Historici, Philologici	14	53		Oppian	Konrad Rittershausen, 1550-1613				Leiden	Netherlands	1597
Ulyss. Aldrovandi Monstr. Historia, cum fig.	Folio	illustrated	Medicine	Natural history	Greek and Latin	Medici, Philosophici, &c.	18	23		Aldrovandi	Ulisse, 1522-1605?				Bologna	Italy	1642
Aristotelis Histor. de Animalib. gr. lat. cum Comment. Scaligeri	Folio		Natural Philosophy	Natural history	Greek and Latin	Medici, Philosophici, &c.	19	91	COPAC	Aristotle	Giulio Cesare Scaligero, 1484-1558; Philippe Jacques de Mauillac, ca. 1590-1650	Aristoteles Peri zōon historias. = Aristotelis Historia de animalibus, Iulio Cesare Scaligero interprete, cum eiusdem commentarijs Philippus Iacobus Mauillacus.	Tolosae: Typis Raymundi Colomerij, typographi regij	Toulouse	France	1619	
Jo. Kepleri Dissertatio, cum Nuncio Sidereo	Octavo		Mathematics		Greek and Latin	Mathematici	30	6		Kepler	Johannes, 1571-1630				Frankfurt	Germany	1611
Letters and Poems in honour of the Dutchess of Newcastle 1676	Folio		Literature	Modern	English		45	70	ESTC	Cavendish	Cavendish, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle	Letters and poems in honour of the incomparable princess, Margaret, Dutchess of Newcastle.	N/A	In the Savoy [London]: Printed by Thomas Newcombe, M.DC.LXX.VI [1676]	London	England	1676
Collection of Narratives, Trials and other Pamphlets, 8 vol.	Folio		Literature	Modern	English		45	71	ESTC	?	?		?	?			?
T. Fuller's Pisgah-sight, with maps 1650	Folio		Theology	Biblical interpretation	English		45	73	ESTC	Fuller	Fuller, Thomas	A Pisgah-sight of Palestine and the confines thereof, with the history of the Old and New Testament acted thereon. By Thomas Fuller B.D.	N/A	London: printed by J.F. for John Williams at the signe of the Crown in Pauls Church-yard, MDCL. [1650]	London	England	1650
St. Augustin of the City of God, with the comment. Of J. Lud. Vives 1620	Folio		Theology	Doctrine	English		45	74	ESTC	Augustine	Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo.	Saint-Augustine, Of the cite of God: with the learned comments of Iacobus Vives. Englished first by Andrew Boorde, and afterwards compared with the Latine original, and in very many places corrected and amended.	N/A	London: Printed by G. Eld and M. Fleisher, 1620.	London	England	1620

## Appendix 2: Transcription of objects associated with the Brownes in Sloane's object catalogues

### 1. Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of insects. NHM, Insects 1 (Murray Jones 13)

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
37	278	Tomentum muscarium reticulatum salviae folijs alysq[ue] annexum. 1654.	Sr. Tho. Brown
38	281	Gryllotalpae[?] utriusq[ue] sexus in hac urbe captae. 1652. In Norwich. Eggs with them.	Sr. Tho. Brown.
	282	Rediculi & branchijs molae piseri[?]. 1689.	Id.
	283	Rediculus marinus. [In another hand: Scolopendra marina vide no. 167]	Id.
	284	Eruca marina?	Id.
	285	A bagg or nest of some insects?	<del>Id.</del>
	286	Flyes produced from meal worms. [In another hand: Scarabaei oblongi, Elytri sulcatui fuscis.]	Id.
	287	A scarab?[In another hand: non alatus]	Dr. Br.
79	790	A nautilus cutt open.	Dr. Br.
80	792	Concha veneris ponderosa aliquibus nobis [or novis?] maeqabis modo alba modo citrina. List. Hist. Conchyl. Tab. 709. Nigritar=um moneta. Simbi puri dicti juxta insulam Lenando expiscati. Cowrie money in the gold country.	Dr. Br.   [and further specimens]
92	866	Nautilitae minoris umbilicae strijs parum eminentibus donatae matriae lapidea. [In another hand: cornu ammonis ... extia matricem in mineram ferrugi-neam conversum. From Germany.]	Dr. Br.
93	872	A piece of a fossil oyster. Lapis ex dono fratris Tatton ex horto Dom. Massenberge in oppido vulgo Tooting. [In another hand: ostrei fossilis majoris fragmentum]	Dr. Browne.
	873	The same wt. 770	
112	992	Concha anatifora from the ship Sweepstakes who went through the streights of Magellan by Sr. John Narborough?	Dr. Brown.

169	1311	Barnacles taken from of the casing of the Sweepstakes a ship sent into Chilj under the command of Capt. Narborough & lying at Deptford after its return. 1671.	Dr. Ed. Brown.
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2. Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of minerals. NHM, Minerals 1 (Murray Jones 15)

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
		<b>Metals</b>	
249	629	Antimony ore Shott into stirae[?] out of Iselande.	Dr Brown.
	632	Antimony ore.   Minera antimonij.	Dr Brown.   The same.
	633	Iron turned into copper by a spring in the mine of Hernngrundt in Hungaria.	From Dr. Brown.
253	653	The copper with which the Emperors house & Gardens called Newgsbau are covered nigh to Vienna in Austria.	Dr. Brown.
	654	Distill'd viride ceris [or aeris?],	from the same.
	655	Copper? Left in the crucible upon the smelting iron turn'd into copper.	Dr Brown.
	656	Quicksilver ore from Idria.	Dr Brown.
254	657	Minera lunae & veneris from Gottenburg in Bohemia.	Dr. Brown.
	658	Belemnites & pyrites sticking tog=/=ether.	Dr. Brown.
	659	Smalts. a blew glasse made of a glasse of cobalt from Saxony.	Dr Br
	660	A piece of an iron retort in which they distill the mercury from its ore in Idria.	Dr. Br.
	661	Vermilion lake.	Dr. Br.
	663	Flos ferri &c.	Dr. Br.
255	664	Copper ore from the Alme near Greiffenberg 2 miles from Spittall in upper Carinthia.	Dr. Browne.
	665	The drosse or slagg of iron?	Dr. Br.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	666	Samples of the first attempt of making brasse in England by Dr Browns direction at Mr. Tods house at the golden ball in Lothbury. Dec. 3. 1678.	
	667	Irone ore or mine from Horsmanden in Kent.	Dr. Brown.
	668	Copper ore from Herngrundt.	Dr. Br.
	669	A sort of pyrites called in High dutch fewrstein firestone to pinnsteir stricke fire in wheel locks to pistolls.	Dr. Br.
256	670	Antimonium diaphore[?]eum.	Dr. Br.
	671	Crocus metallorum sive hepar antimonij.	Dr. Br.
	672	A flatt bone tinged green taken up by Dr. Brown nigh to Hernngrundt in Hungaria coloured by the water wch. cometh out of the copper mine.	
	673	Money coloured by the sediment of Tunbridge waters.	Dr. Brown.
	674	Money coloured at Banka near Freystat in Germany.	Dr. Brown.
	675	Silver ore from Schemnitz in Hungaria.	Dr. Br.
257	676	Antimony of gold from Chremnitz in Hungaria? This substance groweth upon the gold ore.	Dr. Brown.
	677	A litle piece of copper ore wch. I gott from the mint master at Veil?	Dr. Br.
	678	Globular pyrites.	Dr. Br.
	679	Yellow mundick or copper ore?	Dr. Browne.
	680	A yellow or golden marcasite?	Dr. Browne.
	681	Blew bice?	Dr. Browne.
	682	A substance taken out of the mints house at Chremnitz?	Dr. Browne.
258	683	Silver & christall together a ranty? [?]	Dr. Brown.
	684	Four of some preparation of antimony with a quadrangular body in it, all for transmutation?	Dr. Browne.
	685	A gray stone with some yellow marcasite in it or silver ore?	Dr. Browne.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	686	Very heavy lead? Ore with a white sparr?	Dr. Br.
	687	Incrustation of copper?	Dr. Brown.
	688	Copper ore?	Dr. Br.
	689	A bone partly filled wt. Marcasiticall yellow matter?	Dr. Br.
259	690	Yellow pyrite with some lead ore?	Dr Browne.
	691	A flatt heavy silver marcasite?	Dr. Br.
	692	Jubili &c. Turn'd into golden marcasite?	Dr. Br.
	693	Yellow golden marcasite in a gray stone?	Dr. Br.
	694	Yellow golden marcasite in a more fryable stone?	Id.
	695	A very heavy golden marcasite or wt. Tinn ore?	Dr. Br.
260	696	Copper ore.	Dr. Br.
	697	Copper ore & white sparr.	Dr. Br.
	698	Tinn graines.	Dr. Br.
	699	A blewish glasse or slagg?	Dr. Brown.
	670 [sic]	Lead ore \& a piece/ with iron stone sticking to it.	Dr. Brown.
	671	Lead ore holding silver?	Dr. Brown.
	672	Lead or silver ore & sparr?	Dr. Br.
	673	Lead ore holding silver?	Dr. Br.
	674	Tinn ore?	Dr. Browne.
261	675	Tinn ore with Marcasite light & poor?	Dr. Browne.
	676	Tinn ore with marcasite heavier?	Dr. Browne.
	677	Silver ore?	Dr. Browne.
	678	A silve pyrite?	Dr. Brown.
	679	\Yellow/ pyrite chrystall & cole together.	Dr Brown.
	680	Red iron stone? Light.	Dr Brown.
	681	Red light iron stone>	Idem.
	682	Round red iron stone like marcasite?	Idem.



Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
262	683	Red haematite or iron ore?	From Dr. Browne.
	684	Red iron ore in the shape of a globular pyrite?	From the same.
	685	Heavy red iron stone? Native cinnabar?	From Dr. Browne.
	686	Heavy \red/ iron stone? Or native cinnabar?	From the same.
	687	Heavy red iron stone? Or copper ore	from the same.
	688	Light red iron stone?	From the same.
	689	A piece of iron barr?	From the same.
	699 [sic]	Very heavy ironstone of a redish colour? Native cinnabar?	Id.
263	700	Cinnabars antimony?	Dr. Browne.
	701	Minerall slagg, glasse or drosse of metall.	Dr. Brown.
	702	Water silver.	Dr. Br.
	703	Ordinary striated yellow pyrite.	Dr. Br.
	704	Pyrite with sparr? Copper ore?	Dr. Browne.
	705	Yellow or golden shining pyrite.	Dr. Br.
	706	Copper plate or pyrite?	Dr. Brown.
	707	Soft iron ore?	Dr. Brown.
	708	Copper ore?	Dr. Browne.
264	709	Tinn ore? Or Emery?	Dr. Browne.
	710	Iron ore \or Cinnabar?/ 1 Nat.	From Dr. Brown.
	711	Iron ore 2. Nat?	From the same.
	712	Iron ore or Cinnabar 2. Burnt.	Dr. Br.
	713	Iron ore 3. Nat.	From the same.
	714	Iron ore 4. Nat.	From the same.
	715	Iron ore 4. Burnt	from the same.
	716	Lead ore? Silver ore?	Id.
	717	Silver ore.	Id.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	718	Lead ore Dorten ore Romanwork in Cardiganshire. 1668.	Sir Thomas Browne.
265	719	Commysyre legg oare. Cardiganshire 1668. An silver ore?	Sr. Tho. Browne.
	720	Talybont ore in Cardiganshire. 1668. Marcasita argentea.	Id.
	721	Fine water silver not taken from the plate.	Id.
	722	Native Cinnabar?	Id.
	723	Crocus antimony regulati opt.	Id.
	724	A substance wch. did runn through the filter.	Id.
	725	Cinnabar native?	Id.
	726	Spodium Graecorum.	Dr. S. Brown.
266	727	Silver ore? Antimony ore?	Dr. Browne.
	728	Pyrites?	Id.
	729	Two nodulus loadstones.	Id.
	730	A larger round loadstone?	Id.
	731	Iron ore?	Id.
	732	Dark coloured shining lead ore?	Id.
	733	Greenish copper ore?	Id.
	734	Greenish copper ore?	Id.
	735	Greenish copper ore?	Id.   L.
267	736	Yellow mundick? Copper ore?	Id.
	737	Redish ore like talc? Copper ore?	Id.
	738	Yellow ocre?	Id.
	739	Gurr?	Id.
280	811	Two pieces of iron or rather incrustations of iron made in the vitrioline water in Hungary & brought over by Dr Brown.	L

## 3. Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of minerals. NHM, Minerals 3a and 3b (Murray Jones 17)

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
		<b>Ambers, bitumens,</b>	
17	160	Sulphur ore from Freyberg in Misria[?]	Dr. Browne.
	161	Arsenicum from Carinthia or Croatia.	Dr. Browne.
	162	Munjack, a naturall thick bitumen from the West Indies.	Dr. Brown.
	163	\True/ Jett.   Bitumen Judaicum?	Dr. Brown.
	164	Kennell coal, or Jett?	Dr. Br.
	165	A small piece of Kennel coal?	Dr. Br.
	166	Petroleum?	Dr. Brown.
	167	Persian Sulphur	from Mr. Sam. Brown.
		<b>Earths, clays, chalk</b>	
100	182	Terra sigillata. A red sealed earth wt buildings. Terra siglata.	Dr. Brown.
	183	A very large sealed earthe red wt. 3 half moons & crosse scimitars Terra sigil. upon it.	Dr. Brown.
	184	A very red sealed earth wt. an anchor & cable & terra sigillata wrote around it.	Dr. Br.
	185	A light brown sealed earth wt a hill & scutcheon wt. crosse keyes, Terra sigillata de mont. acut. wrote on it.	Dr. Browne.
101	186	Vitriol from Chiemnitz in Hungary baked ready to go used in the making of aqua fortis to separate the silver from the gold a Schmnitz. This is made out of the earth nigh the gold mines & is that which hath been thought able to transmute.	Dr. Brown.
	187	The stone from which the naturall vitriol shooteth in the mines at Schemnitz in Hungaria.	Dr. Brown.
	188	The earth nigh the gold mines in Hungary from whence is made the vitriol?	Dr. Br?
	189	White vitriol?	Dr. Br.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	190	Alumen Romanum.	Dr. Brown.
	191	Green vitriol?	Dr. Brown.
	192	Tincar ex qua fit borax.	Dr. S. Brown.
102	177 [sic]	Alumen vulgare.	B.
	178	Chrystalli tartari.	B.
	179	Vitriolum Hungaricum.	B.
	180	Alumen ustum.	B.
	181	Vitriolum calcinatum.	B.
	182	Sal alkali? An marin?	B.
	183	Sal marin. alb. off.	B.
	185	Roman vitriol.	Dr. Brown.
103	186	The terra Lemnia as it is digged out of the earth brought to Dr Browne from Lemnos by Mr. Neighbour.	Dr Browne
	187	A large ball of Terra Lemnia sealed with Turkish letters.   Terra sigillata Turcica.	Dr. Browne.   Idem.
	188	A lesser ball of terra sigillata sealed with Turkish characters an terra Sigillata? Or terra Lemnia?	From Dr. Browne.
	189	Vertiterre. Perlvuis[?] Likmus?	Dr. Br.
	190	Earth from the acidulae in Lussam common 5 miles from London.	Dr. Br.
	191	Terra Japon. Mr. S. Brown. From the East Indes a reall saltish brick coloured earth.	Mr. S. Brown.
104	192	Terra Acupum. Mr. S. Brown, a gray clay or earth.	Mr. S. Brown,
	193	Terra sigillata, red like bol-Armen.	Mr. S. Brown.
	194	Terra Lemnia. Red like bole wt. an impression.	Mr. S. Brown.
	195	Alumen Sauharinum.	Mr. S. Brown.
	196	Sal gemma. Redish.	Mr. S. Brown.
	197	The salt remaining after the burning of a hayrick by heating of its self?	Mr. S. Brown.
	198	Creta?	Dr. Brown.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	199	Lime?	Id.
		<b>Talcs, micae</b>	
193	87	Talcum vulgare. B. off. terrasso.   Talcum anglicum. al.	B.
	88	A redish yellow golden talk of pretty large scales, wt. the sparry stones wt. wch. it growes.	Dr. Browne.
194	89	Talcum scissile from Virginia. This is in very large flakes or squamae[?] & of a redish golden shining colour. Veins of this are about 20 foot deep in the earth.	Dr. Browne.
	90	Arme earth, an earthy talk in small micae or flakes of a durty earthen colour.	Dr. Brown.
	91	Arm sand. Sand from Arm. The same only all shining & the micae larger.	Dr. Browne.
	92	Talck out of the Herschaft lauffenthal[?] out of the Tecklett. It was given Dr. Brown by the old Chymist at Stavert.	Dr. Brown
	93	Muscovy glasse from the mountain Clissum from Carinthia.	Dr. Brown.
	94	Talcum ex Carinthia.	Sr. Thomas Brown.
		<b>Christalls</b>	
268	552	Fluor rhomboidalis, seu selenites naturalistarum Germaniae Dr. Scheuchzer ex Agribus Tigurinis.	W. Br.
	523	Fluor Chrystallinus novosohliensis Hungar. Quartz. M. Du Mont.	W. Br.
	524	PseudoAdamantes Goslarienses.	Dr. Leopold. Dr. Woodward. Dr. Brown.
	525	A larger piece of the same.	
	526	A piece of transparent flint wt. Round transparent naturall pebbles in it.	Dr. Br.
	527	A very course [sic] stalactite.	Dr. Br.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
270	535	An opake stalactite which hat stuck to the roof of some cave. It consists of several layers of strata of fine earth wch are gray & on the outward convex surface are laid in ridge & furrow transversely.	Br.
	536	Another stalachtite of the same kind but more solid.	Br.
271	541	A gray stalachtite wh. points no unlike corall.	Br.
	542	A yellowish opake stalachtite.	Br.
272	548	Pale amethysts growing out of a whitish rock. An Amethystic tincture taken out of the mines of silver at Schemnitz in Hungary.	Br.
	549	Flat stalachtites of a redish colour S.S.S. wt. some pebbles & sticks. Petrified water out of the Bathe of Eisenbach near Schemnitz in Hungary.	Br.
	550	Semidiaphanous chrystalls or fluors - an fluss stein?	Dr. Brown.
	551	Some of the same more opake?	Dr. Br.
273	552	White almost transparent stalachtite.	Dr. Br.
	553	White incrustations from the sweating Baths at Glastall? in Hungaria.	Dr. Brown.
	554	A yellowish fluor or chrystall. A stone out of a stone quarry by Freystat in Germany.	Dr. Br.
	555	Redish chrystalls.	Dr. Br.
	556	Incrustation like the small white corall, from the sweating bath at Glasshutten.	Dr. Br.
	557	A white opake sort of sparr?	Dr. Br.
	558	A white incrustation. This substance sticketh to the coppers in which they boyle the Bathe waters at Mannensdorffe in Austria.	Dr. Br.
274	560	A yellowish incrustation? White vitriol? From the Bath of Glasshallen in Hungary where the water falling maketh this green colour white & red?	Dr. Br.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	561	White incrustations. Stones coloured in the naturall Bath of Mannersdorff in the confines of Austria & Hungaria.	Dr. Br.
	562	A large gray incrustation stratum super stratum seemingly on a piece of timber \or bone/?   Chenites S Lapis in pect=ine formatus ex Capicidina juxta Moguntium.	Dr. Br.   Dr. Kisner? Dr. W?
	563	A gray incrustation stony in wch. Is the impression of something like a sharks tooth?	Dr. Br.
275	564	A gray solid stalactite, 2 stiriae growing together.	Alexr. Brown.
	565	A white chrystall or English transparent agat wt. severall small chrystalls growing out of it.	Dr. Br.
	566	A semidiaphonous pebble.	Al. Brown.
	567	An hexangular dark coloured yellow=ish chrystall or topaz?	The same.
276	570	An incrustation or chrystall in matter in the fissures of rocks from mons Cetius or Kaltenberg nigh Vienna in Austra.	Dr. Br.
	571	The stalk of an umbelliferous plant petrified?	Dr. Browne.
	572	Stalagmata plura sive Stillici[n?]dia aquarum petrificata nonnulla e Spelunea Okiensi in comitatu Somer=set.	Dr. Br.
	573	Petrified mosse.	Id.
		<b>Flints, fossils &amp;c.</b>	
420	376	Severall gray stones in which are the impressions of plants.	Dr. Brown.
	377	Several black slates with the impressions of forms in them.	Id.
	378	The dendrites from Florence.	Id.
	379	Soft stone in wch. are lodged vegetable substances.	Dr. Br.
	380	Transparent pebbles of severall colours.	Id.
	381	Pebbles of severall colours that are not transparent with veins & without veins.	Id.
	382	Pebbles that are not transparent - polished.	Id.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
421	383	Flints <del>veined</del> common & perforated.	Id.
	384	Common stone white & gray.	Id.
	385	A Flint with red veins.	Id.
	386	A white flint wth. veins, polished.	Id.
	387	A white stone perforated as if eaten by worms.	Id.
	388	Pumex.	Id.
422	397	Gesso.   Alabaster	Dr. Br.
426	419	A small white pebble used in Scotland for the flux being quenched in milk?	Br.

4. Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of fossils, corals and sponges. NHM, Fossils 1 (Murray Jones 21)

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
		<b>Fossils, corals and sponges</b>	
44	475	Madrepora lapidea a Sneeberg Saxonia. M. Schonberg.	Dr. Br. W.
	476	Porus coralloides ex monte juxta messanam Siciliae.	Id.
	478	The sea faun.	Dr. S. Brown.
54	484	The pietra stellaria or lapis stellaris with small starrs.	Dr. Browne.
	485	The same wt. large starrs.	Id.
	486	Lapis astroites unulatus.	Dr. S. Brown.
		<b>Snakes</b>	
123	135	The sceleton of a snake.	Dr. Browne.
	136	Snakes eggs?	Id.
	137	A snakes egg? wt. waved lines on its outside. Taken out of a poplar tree near the root? An cossi chrysalis?	Dr. Brown.



Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	138	The tail of a rattle snake. The rattle.	Id.
124	139	Dentes viperini.	Dr. S. Brown.
	140	Two cecillie or slow worms.	Dr. Brown.
	141	Caput ceciliae or the head of a slow worm.   Caput cecliae quam exenteravi - 1645.	Id.   Sr. Tho. Brown.
	142	Two heads of vipers or adders.   Caput viperae in quo spectantur dentes minores serrati & majores Remoseres venenati.	Dr. Browne.   Sr. Tho. Brown
	143	The gall of the snake Boally given agt. Agues brought from Maniglia in the East Indies given me by Mr. Pierce.	Sr Tho. Brown.
	144	A large brown & white spotted snake, \shin/	from the Indies by Dr. S. Brown.
	146	The cast skin of a slow worm.	Dr. Br.
		<b>Echini</b>	
182	281	An echinus spatagus? Lodged in a red iron stone.	Dr. Browne.
183	282	The shell of a large knobled echinus.	Dr. Brown.
	284	Flatt. small echini no. 2.	Dr. Br.
		Crustacea	
242	168	Crabs eyes from Barbadoes.	Dr. Br.
		Starr fishes	
268	36	A large stella marina wt 5 points prickly.	Dr. Br.
		<b>Humana</b>	
288	95	A large thigh bone.	Dr. Browne.
	96	The upper part of the arm. wh. the sinew's mark'd on it.	Id.
	97	The lower part of the arm.	Id.
	98	Another arm bone?	Id.
	99	The basis of the scull & upper mandible wherein appears a tooth out of its place in the palate. Wt. 5 vertebre of the neck.	Id.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
where's 289?	101	A very large stone of the bladder.	Dr. Br.
	102	Calculus spinosus.	Id.
	103	One rough & smaller.	Id.
	104	A very smooth white hard \ponderous/ human? stone.	Id.
	105	A stone cutt out of the bladder of urine of a man in St. Bartholomews hospitall.	Dr. Browne.
290	106	Small stone of the bladder?	Id.
	108	Pars ossis amici Ambrosij Gilberti qui formidabili combustione mortuus est die 27. Dec. 1662. Circa horam 2am- matutinam.	Dr. Br.
	109	The ossicula auditoria.	Dr. Br.
	110	Kidney stones.	Sr. Tho: Brown.
	111	The ear bones wh. the tympanum in view.	Dr. Br.
	112	A triangular chalk stone? From the intestines?	Id.
291	113	Calculi 120 ex vesica fellea equitis Roberti J[or T?]awdrie [probably Gawdie?] de Claxton desumpti preter 30 aut 40 deperd[etos?]. 1638. // Item calculi fellei duo per sedem ejecti a Domina Holt de Thaxton quae portea a sepuis recurrente iclero[?] convaluit. 1648.	Sr. Thomas Brown.
	114	A preparation of the ear bone.	Dr. Br.
	115	A very long os styloides taken from the cranium of one executed. 1675.	Id.
	116	A preparation of the ear bone.	Id.
	117	Two of the dentes molares & one of the canini.	Id.
	118	Part of the top of the skull.	Id.
	119	Part of the skull.	Id.
292	120	Part of the skull?	Id.
	121	Preparation of the ear bone? Wt another like the backbone of a bird?	Id.
	122	Another preparation of the ear bone.	Id.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	123	Hair of a boy in Rinco growing like wool.	Id.
	124	A very small bone.	Dr. Br.
293	127	The end of a finger with the nail sticking to the skin.	Dr. Br.
	130	A glandule of the mesentery found bony or stony in the public body at Surgeons hall 1676.	Dr. Br.

5. Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of animals. NHM, Fishes, birds, quadrupeds 1 (Murray Jones 25)

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
		<b>Fishes</b>	
48	513	A whales tooth crooked.	Dr Br.
	514	The vesica natatoria or swimm of a large fish?	
	515	The cornea of the eye of a sword fish.	Id.
	516	The same	
49	517	The vertebre of a very large Shark? Fossil?	Dr. Br.
	518	The tooth of a large Shark.	Id.
	519	Part of large fishes bone petrified & brought from Harwich cliffe.	
	520	Part of a large fishes tooth?	Id.
	521	One joint of a sharks back bone.	Id.
	522	Two joints of the same petrified.	Id.
	523	A whales tooth?	Id.
	524	A piece of unicorns horn.	Id.
	525	A large fishes tooth?	Id:
50	526	Piscis quadrangularis cornutus.	Id.
	527	Piscis quadrangularis non cornutus from the East Indies	\given me/ by Dr. [sic]

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	528	The bones in a large cods head or the auditory bones, observe how they ly & how they may conferre to hearing & read Casserius about that organ. As I remember he hath only the figure of a pikes head. You may now examine two cods heads they being common, the like bones are also in whittings & haddocks.	Sr. Tho. Brown.
	529	A cods head?	Dr. Br.
	530	A sturgeons bone?	Id.
	531	The mouth of the aquila piscis?	Id.
51	532	The head of a small fish?	Id.
	533	Two chrystallin humours of a dogg fish one with the tunica & procossus[?] ciliaris, the other without.	Sr. Thomas Brown.
	534	The chrystallin humour of a large fish.	
	535	The chrystallin humour of the eye of a gladius piscis, Xiphias or— Swordfish.	Sr. Tho. Brown.
	536	The chrystallin humour of a Salmon.	Id.
	537	The cornea of a gladius piscis?	Id.
	538	The same.	
52	539	A long tapering fish wt 2 finns prickly all along the back & body?	Dr. Br. Vid. Willughb.
	540	Another of the same make wt. Soft finns?	Id.
	541	A small fish wt a rough skin, prickle hamaled on the back & long snout.	Id.
	542	A scorpion fish.	Id.
	543	Pars ossis caeti capti in Thamesi fluvio prope Greenwich. Jun. 7. 1658.	Id.
	544	Some siliquastra sticking in gravell.	Dr. Br.
	545	Os piscis vulgo vocat. [Blank space] ex dono fratris Tatton.	Dr. Br.
		<b>Birds</b>	

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
159	292	Sorai lom or the nests of Indian Swallows on the rocks by the sea.   /Indian birds nests.   / Borneo birds nests. Borneo nests.	Sr. Tho. Brown.   Dr. Br.   Dr. S. Br.
	293	Owles eyes.	Id.
	295	A bittern spunt[?]	Dr. S. Br.?
	296	An Eagles bill.	Id.
	297	The upper chap of the same.	Id.
160	298	A turkey's bill?	Id.
	299	A Peacocks bill?	Id.
	300	A Cranes bill?	Id.
	301	A storks bill?	Id.
	302	A herns bill?	Id.
	303	A cootes bill?	Id.
	304	A Swans bill?	Id.
	305	The larynx of a swan?	Id.
	306	The vessells abt. a swans heart?	Id.
	307	A ducks bill?	Id.
161	308	The bill of the corvus marinus. Cormorant?	Dr. Brown.
	309	The bill of the Alka [i.e. skua?] Hoieri?	Id.
	310	A Parrats bill.	Id.
	311	A pheasants bill?	Id.
	312	The bill of a himantopus?	Id.
	313	The bill of the gray plover or green plover?	Id.
	314	Another?	Id.
	315	The bill of the pewit?	Id.
	316	A bill & some bones of a bird?	Id.
	317	The larinx of a swan?	Id.
162	318	Anseris vertebra corvicis.	Dr. Br.
		<b>Quadrupeds</b>	

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
277	425	The grinder of a horse, polished?   A horse tooth polished.	Dr. Br.
291	552	A sea tortoise	Dr. Browne
	553	A piece of tortoise shell such as is wrought.	Dr. Sam. Brown.
	554	A land tortoises shell from the East Indies	from the same.
	555	The bones of a polecatt taken out at Norwich in 1670.	By Dr. Ed. Browne—
292	556	Ossa vituli marini.	Sr. Tho. Brown.
	557	Os penis cati putorij.	From the same.
	558	The bone in the penis of an otter.	Dr. Br.
	559	A small cameleon.	From the same.
	560	Part of the hide of a boar? Tann'd.	The same.
	562	A piece of ivory in which appears some lead.	Dr. Brown.
	563	A hair ball from an ox maw of a black colour & large	
293	564	A smaller hair ball from an oxes maw of a redish colour glased.	S. Br.
	565	Another cutt into two.	Dr. Br.
	566	The upper chap & scull of a dogg? With the os ethmoides- bared.	Dr. Br.
	567	The \bone of a bucks legg between the legg & foot./ of a buck.	Dr. Br.
	568	The head of a pole catt.	Dr. Br.
	569	Ossa auditoria porci grandioris.	Dr. Br.
	570	A staggs pizzle.	Id.
	571	Soft teeth of a calfe.	Id.
294	572	The ossa auditoria of a pigg.	
	573	Calculi in vesica urinaria bovis in agro Hertford reporti suspicant ex ijsdem ad bibj[?] mensuram ex dono illustris Dnae. de Arundell.	Dr. Br.
295	579	A long piece of boars skin tann'd,	Dr. Brown.
	580	A water ratt.	

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	581	A Muscovy water ratts tail, a musk rat	
	582	The skull of a fox.	Id.
	583	The skull & lower chap of a fox.	Id.
	584	The skull of a pigg?	Id.
	585	The skull of a catt?	Id.
	586	The skull of a dogg?	Id.
	587	Another?	Id.
296	58 7 [sic]	The skull of a pigg?	Dr. Br.
	588	The skull of a dogg?	Dr. Br.
	589	The skull of a beaver?	Dr. Br.
	590	The skull of an otter?	Dr. Br.
	591	The skull of a catt?	Dr. Br.
	592	The skull of an hedgehogg.	Id.
	593	The skull of a squirrell?	Id.
	594	The skull of a ratt?	Id.
	595	The lower chap of a dogg? Swine?	Id.
	596	The tooth of a horse?	Id.
297	597	The tooth of an horse?	Id.
	598	The tooth of an horse wch hath lain in the earth?	Id.
	599	Part of a morses tooth?	Id.
	600	A large morses tooth? Or whales?	Id.
	601	A gray spotted lizards skin.	Id.
	602	The top of the larynx of an ox?	Id.
	603	The skull & upper chap of a rat?	Id.
	604	A broken horses tooth?	Id.
	605	The other part of it?	Id.
298	606	Snake stones of severall sorts from the East Indies.	Dr. Sam. Brown.
	607	A large false bezoar	from the same.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	608	A smaller false bezoar	from the same.
	609	Talus equi	Sr. Th. Brown.
	610	The same.	
	611	Calcaneus & astragalus porci.	Id.
	612	Talus & astragalus ursi.	Id.
	613	The talus & astragalus of a pigg.	Id.
	614	The shankbone, talus & astragalus of a sheep.	Id.
299	615	The talus & astragalus of an ox?	Id.
	616	Talus & cacaneus cercopithei.	Id.
	617	Talus leporis.	Id.
	618	Sesamoide ex Indicis simiae internovid.	Dr. Br.
	619	Talus echini.	Id.
	620	Decem ossa carpis in cercopitheis.	Id.
	621	Calcaneus & astragalus taxi dextor.	Id.
300	623	The bones of a pigg?	Dr. Brown.
	624	Two bones of a swine?	Id.
	625	A bone of a deer?	Id.
	626	The bones of a tortoise.	Id.
	627	Soft teeth of a horse?	Idem.
	628	Hippomanes. 2 fishbones with it?	Id.
	629	The bone in the penis of a dogg?	Id.
	630	Tortoises egg?	Id.
	631	The end of the tail of a very large cameleon. From the Maniglia?	Sir. Tho. Brown.
	632	Lapis bufonius.	Dr. S. Brown. Vid. Fish.

6. Catalogue of Sir Hans Sloane's collection of miscellanea. British Museum, Anthropology Library, unnumbered (Murray Jones 28)



Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
		<b>Miscellanies</b>	
59	596	An oyle from Florence or Rome for bitings of vipers &c?	Dr. Brown.
	597	Olio contra Veleni, della Spezieria de' padri di St. Spirito di Fiorenza. Wt an account of its vertues.	Dr. Brown.
	598	Olio da ferite, della Spezzieria &c. ut antea.	From the same.
	599	Liquore da dissenterie o altri flussi della Spezieria &c.	Dr. Brown.
	600	Oleum absynthij chymie.	Dr. Brown.
60	601	Ol. e cort. citr express.	Dr. Brown.
	602	Oleum anisi.	Dr. Br.
	603	Oleum Salvia[or ae].	Dr. Brown.
	604	Oleum petrolei?	Dr. Brown.
	605	Unto da nervi, della Spezieria de Padri di S. Spirito di Fiorenza.	Dr. Brown.
	606	Elixir vite.	Dr. Brown.
	607	Olio da stonaco? della Spezieria &c. ut antea.	Dr. Brown.
	608	Unto da fuoco, della Spezieria &c? ut antea.	
61	609	Elixir proprietatis?	Dr Brown.
	610	Gjulebbo o estratto gemmato? \della Spezieria &c./	Dr. Brown.
	611	Gjulebbe perlato della Spezieria &c.? ut antea	
	612	Oil of Bergamot?	Dr. Br.
	613	Lozenges or pastills \perfum'd & /burnt at the K. of Eng. touching for the evill, to prevent infection.	Dr. Brown.
	614	A brasse Juglers bell?	Dr. Brown.
	615	The same.	Dr. Br.
	616	China Inke.	Dr. Br.
	617	St. Andrews crosse worn by those of the Royall Society on that day.	Dr. Br.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
62	618	A small thumb piece of ivory to defend the thumb against being hurt by the bowstring in shooting from Turkey.	Dr. Brown.
	619	Lapis contra[g?]erva.	Dr. Brown.
	621	Pills used by Dr. Brown.	
	622	A white powder used by him? an Mercurius praecyntat. alb?	
69	670	Flanders tiles wt. wch. they floor stables.	Dr. Br.
	671	Tops of syringes?	Dr. Brown.
	672	A piece of red tile?	Dr. Brown.
	674	A black enamell or glasse?	Dr. Br.
	675	Prussia sope?	Dr. Br.
	676	A greenish & redish marbled glasse.	Dr. Br.
	677	An ivory box in form of a barrell?	Dr. Br.
	678	An ivory box in form of a button?	Dr. Br.
70	679	Lake.	Dr. Br.
	680	Masticut a colour.	Dr. Br.
	681	Nodulus e benzoino, tacamahaca & balsamo Peruviano. An to refresh by its Scent?	Dr. Brown.
	682	Nodulus & balsamo de Tolu, Tacamahaca benzoin & bals. peruv. cum ol. absynth. chym. gtt. ij?	Dr. Br.
	683	Species hieræ pieræ.	Dr. Br.
	684	Empl. de varris cum mercurio.	Dr. Br.
	685	Pil. potentiales. Dr. Manuch.	Mr. S. Br.
	686	Three spoons of wood in a leather case to be shoov'd asunder.	Dr. Br.
	687	An armilla of ivory graved.	Id.
71	688	White sope made into an hexang=ular form with figures upon it.	Id.
	689	An abacus.	Id.
	690	Intestines of ——— blown up by — a corn stalk?	Id. Veget. 1238.

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	691	A tobacco pipe of red earth its head.	Id.
	692	An arrow with an iron head.	Id.
	693	A read medicine.	Dr. Browne.
	694	Glasse found at the bottom of a lime kiln.	Dr. Brown.
72	698	A mixture of cantharides &c. An that of Dr. Groenfield?	Dr. Brown.
		<b>Antiquities</b>	
164	109	An urn the first figure in Sr. Tho. Brown's hydriotaphia, found in Norfolk.	Sr. Tho. Brown
	110	The 2d. of the same urns.	Id.
	111	The 3d. of the same. [In a different hand:] in wch: was bones & ashes wt: a ring (rings 115) upon wch a stone had been placed & the socket of which did remain in the [sic]	Id.
	112	The 4 <sup>th</sup> . of the same.	Id.
	113	Part of a gray earthen urn wt. an animals head on its outside perhaps a hunters.  Other pieces of the same. Oldisworth.	
165	114	A gray Simpulum without a handle?	From the same.
	115	Burnt bones belonging to an urn.	Id.
	116	Burnt bones belonging to an urn.	Id.
	117	Burnt bones wt. a piece of a comb?	From the same.
	118	A piece of Roman tile. Leg. 11 Aug. wrote on it.	From the same.
	119	A Roman lamp with letters on its under side.	From the same.
	120	A Roman lachrymatory.	From the same.
166	121	A Roman lachrymatory of glasse wide in the midle & tapering towards the lower end.	From the same.
	122	A glasse ampulla bigger then a lachrymatory.	From the same.
	123	A piece of a tile or vessell of pale red earth wt. Roman letters on it in two lines.	Dr. Brown.
	124	A piece of the same.	
	125	A piece of the same.	

Fol. no.	Cat. no.	Item description	Provenance data
	126	Another piece of the same.	
	127	A piece of the same.	
	128	A piece of the same.	
167	129	A piece of the same.	
	130	A piece of the same.	
	131	A piece of the same.	
	132	A piece of another vessell or Roman tile with one row of letters of a paler coloured gray earth.	Dr. Br.
168	138	The hand of a brasse statue of Jupiter holding a thunderbolt.	Dr. Br.
	139	A piece of an urn of gray earth.	Dr. Br.
	140	An Ancient ivory comb? With some brasse plates.	Dr. Br.
	141	Ancient armillae in pieces of jett? A pin of Jett?	Id.
	142	Ancient pieces of glasse, porphyry, and marble.	Id.
	143	Black enamel ancient?	Id.
	144	An old Roman key found at in Hungaria by my son E.B. 1669. An a fibula? wt. 2 ancient brasse pieces of a fibula? [In a different hand:] wt other pieces of fibula from Reculues chiffe in Kent	[Thomas Browne]
169	145	One of the pieces of ancient Mosaic work?	Dr. Br.
	146	A large piece of white marble blackned for over the same?	Dr. Br.
	147	The story of St. Antony, carv'd in Ivory?	The same.
	148	A piece of a brick out of the old Roman arch at Carnuntum nigh Petronell 3 German miles from Presburg 7 from Vienna.	Dr. Br.
		<b>Pictures &amp; Drawings</b>	
256	219	A piece of dead birds.	Dr. Br.
	220	A piece of dead birds.	Id.
	221	Another of the acus &c fishes.	Id.

Appendix 3: Subject sequences in the 1711 sale catalogue

Latin Theology Folios	Latin Theology Quartos	Latin Theology Octavos	Latin Theology Small Formats
Bible	Bible	Bible	Bible
Biblical commentary	Bible	Bible	Bible
Biblical commentary	Biblical commentary	Bible	Bible
Biblical commentary	Bible	Bible	
Biblical commentary	Biblical commentary	Bible	Doctrine
Biblical commentary	Biblical commentary	Bible	Doctrine
Theology	Biblical commentary	Bible	Doctrine
Biblical commentary	Biblical commentary	Bible	Sermons
Biblical commentary	Doctrine	Bible	Meditations
Biblical commentary	Doctrine	Bible	Meditations
Biblical commentary	Biblical commentary	Bible	Meditations
Biblical commentary	Liturgy	Biblical commentary	Biblical interpretation
Doctrine	Liturgy	Biblical commentary	Controversy
Ancient	Biblical interpretation	Bible	Controversy
Doctrine	Liturgy	Biblical interpretation	Controversy
Mysticism	Liturgy		Doctrine
Mysticism	Biblical interpretation	Church history	Church history
Doctrine	Biblical interpretation	Biblical interpretation	Biblical interpretation
Doctrine	Church history	Biblical interpretation	Bible
Doctrine	Church history	Church history	Bible
Biblical interpretation	Judaism	Church history	Bible
Biblical interpretation	Judaism	Church history	
Biblical interpretation	Judaism	Church history	
Biblical interpretation	Judaism	Church history	
Biblical interpretation	Judaism	Church history	
Church history	Biblical commentary	Meditations	
Biblical interpretation	Judaism	Doctrine	
Doctrine	Controversy	Doctrine	
Controversy	Controversy	Doctrine	
Controversy	Meditations	Doctrine	
Controversy	Doctrine	Doctrine	
Controversy	Doctrine	Doctrine	
Controversy	Biblical interpretation	Doctrine	
Doctrine		Doctrine	
Canon law		Doctrine	
Canon law		Doctrine	
Canon law		Doctrine	
		Canon law	
		Doctrine	
		Doctrine	
		Doctrine	
		Doctrine	
		Controversy	
		Doctrine	
		Doctrine	
		Doctrine	
		Doctrine	
		Biblical interpretation	
		Biblical interpretation	
		Doctrine	
		Doctrine	
		Controversy	
		Doctrine	

‘Libri theologici’ in Latin, by format



Latin Folios (Continued)	Latin Quartos (Continued)	Latin Octavos (Continued)	Latin Small Formats (Cont.)
Natural Philosophy	Theology	Philology	
Natural Philosophy	Education	Philology	
History	Education	Natural Philosophy	
Philology	Education	Natural Philosophy	
Geography	Education	Natural Philosophy	
Geography	History	Natural Philosophy	
Literature	Theology	Philosophy	
Literature	Education	Philosophy	
History	Literature	Philosophy	
History	Literature	Philosophy	
History	Literature	Philology	
Literature	Literature	Philology	
Encyclopedia	Philology	Philology	
Collections	Philology	Philosophy	
Collections	Education	Philosophy	
Collections	History	Natural Philosophy	
Collections	History	Natural Philosophy	
Collections	Philosophy	Philology	
	Philosophy	History	
	Philosophy	Literature	
	Philosophy	Philology	
	Philosophy	Philology	
	Natural Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	
	Philosophy	History	
	Philosophy	History	
	Philosophy	History	
	Natural Philosophy	History	
	Natural Philosophy	Politics	
	Philosophy	Literature	
		Philology	
	Philosophy	History	
	Philology	Philosophy	
	History	History	
	History	Literature	
	Philosophy	History	
	Philosophy		
	Philosophy	Philology	
	Philosophy	Philology	
	Philosophy	History	
	Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	
	Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	
	Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	
	Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	
	Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	
	Politics	Natural Philosophy	
	Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	
	Philosophy	Philology	
	Musicology	Literature	
	Philology	History	
	Philology	History	
	Philology	Literature	
	Philosophy	Literature	
	History	Literature	
	Natural Philosophy	Law	
	Literature	Literature	
	History	Geography	
	History	Philosophy	
	Literature	Philosophy	
	History		
	Archaeology	Literature	
	Natural Philosophy	Philology	
	Philology	Literature	
	History	Literature	
	History	Literature	
	History	Philology	
	History	Literature	
	Natural Philosophy	Philosophy	
	Philosophy	Theology	
	History	Natural Philosophy	
	Philology	Literature	
	Natural Philosophy	Philosophy	
	Theology	History	
	History	Philosophy	
	Philology	Law	
	Philology	Literature	
	Philology	Literature	
	Philology	Philosophy	
	Literature	Literature	
	Literature	Natural Philosophy	
	Literature		
	Collections	Theology	
	Collections	History	
	Collections	History	
	Collections	Literature	
	Collections	Literature	
	Collections	Literature	
		Literature	
		Literature	
		Philology	
		Philology	
		Philology	

'Libri historici, philologici, &c' in Latin, by format (2)







English Folios (Continued)	English Quartos (Continued)	English Octavos (Continued)	English Small Formats (Cont.)
Medicine	Mathematics	Natural Philosophy	Philology
Natural Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	Linguistics	Philology
Art	Natural Philosophy	Natural Philosophy	Theology
Law	Musicology	Natural Philosophy	Theology
History	Literature	Natural Philosophy	Geography
Literature	Literature	Natural Philosophy	Theology
Literature	Literature	Medicine	Theology
Literature	Philosophy	Medicine	Theology
Philology	Politics	Medicine	Theology
Philology	Natural Philosophy	Medicine	Theology
Literature	Mathematics	Medicine	Politics
Literature	Theology	Medicine	Natural Philosophy
Geography	Geography	Medicine	Mathematics
Literature	Natural Philosophy	Medicine	Literature
Literature		Medicine	Geography
Literature		Medicine	Literature
Literature		Medicine	Theology
Literature		Medicine	Politics
Geography		Medicine	History
Geography		Medicine	Theology
Philosophy		Medicine	Theology
Geography		Medicine	Theology
Literature		Medicine	Theology
Literature		Medicine	Theology
History		Medicine	Theology
Literature		Medicine	Theology
Literature		Medicine	Theology
History		Medicine	Theology
		Medicine	Geography
		Medicine	Natural Philosophy
		Medicine	History
		Medicine	Politics
		Medicine	Natural Philosophy
		Medicine	Politics
		Medicine	Theology
		Medicine	Theology
		Medicine	Medicine
		Medicine	Conduct
		Medicine	History
		Natural Philosophy	Theology
		Natural Philosophy	Theology
		Natural Philosophy	History
		Natural Philosophy	Natural Philosophy
		Natural Philosophy	Theology
		Medicine	Geography
		History	Theology
		Literature	Geography
		History	Theology
		Practical	Theology
		Mathematics	Geography
		Politics	Theology
		Natural Philosophy	Theology
		Mathematics	
		Mathematics	
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		Natural Philosophy	
		Literature	
		Literature	
		Law	
		Natural Philosophy	
		Natural Philosophy	
		Natural Philosophy	
		Medicine	
		History	
		Medicine	
		Conduct	
		Conduct	
		Politics	
		Natural Philosophy	
		Education	
		Politics	
		Natural Philosophy	
		Politics	
		Conduct	
		History	
		Conduct	
		Politics	
		Literature	

Books in English, by format (2)

