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THOMAS BROWNE
AND THE WRITING OF
EARLY MODERN SCIENCE

Claire Preston argues that Thomas Browne's work can be fully understood only within the range of disciplines and practices associated with natural philosophy and early-modern empiricism. Early-modern methods of cataloguing, collecting, experimentation, and observation organised his writing on many subjects from medicine and botany to archaeology and antiquarianism. Browne framed philosophical concerns in the terms of civil behaviour, with collaborative networks of intellectual exchange, investigative selflessness, courtesy, modesty, and ultimately the generosity of the natural world itself all characterising the return to 'innocent' knowledge, which, for Browne, is the proper end of human enquiry. In this major new evaluation of Browne's *oeuvre*, Preston examines how the developing essay-form, the discourse of scientific experiment, and above all Bacon's model of intellectual progress and cooperation determined the unique character of Browne's contributions to early-modern literature, science, and philosophy.

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for
Kevin Jackson
and in memory of
Dick Preston

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'Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves
and vegetable mould myself?'

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854)

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South Bristol, Maine
Christmas Day, 2004

Notes on the text

All quotations from primary works are given in their original spelling and punctuation. In references in the notes, the place of publication is London unless otherwise stated. Subsequent references do not give a title abbreviation unless there is more than one work by that author in the bibliography.

Abbreviations

<i>CM</i>	<i>Christian Morals</i> in Keynes I, 243–95 (references are given in the notes as part and section numbers)
<i>GC</i>	<i>The Garden of Cyrus</i> in Keynes I, 175–227 (references are given in the notes as chapter and page numbers)
<i>GC. Bacon</i>	‘To my worthy and honoured friend Nicholas Bacon of Gillingham, Esquire’ in <i>Garden of Cyrus</i>
<i>Keynes</i>	<i>The Works of Sir Thomas Browne</i> , ed. Geoffrey Keynes, 2nd revised edn, 4 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964). (Keynes I indicates vol. 1.)
<i>Keynes Selected</i>	<i>Sir Thomas Browne: Selected Writings</i> , ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Faber and Faber, 1968)
<i>LF</i>	<i>Letter to a Friend</i> in Keynes I, 101–21
<i>MC</i>	<i>Museum Clausum</i> in <i>Miscellany Tracts</i> in Keynes III, 109–19
<i>MT</i>	<i>Miscellany Tracts</i> in Keynes III, 3–120
<i>NCB</i>	<i>Miscellaneous Notes from Commonplace Books</i> in Keynes III, 272–330
<i>NE</i>	<i>Notes and Experiments in Natural History</i> in Keynes III, 347–60
<i>NHN</i>	<i>Notes on the Natural History of Norfolk</i> in Keynes III, 401–31
<i>OA</i>	<i>Observations in Anatomy</i> in Keynes III, 333–44
<i>ON</i>	<i>Observations and Notes</i> in Keynes III, 239–71
<i>Patrides Approaches</i>	<i>Approaches to Sir Thomas Browne: The Ann Arbor Tercentenary Lectures and Essays</i> , ed. C. A. Patrides (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1982)
<i>Patrides STB</i>	<i>Sir Thomas Browne: The Major Works</i> , ed. C. A. Patrides (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977)
<i>PE</i>	<i>Pseudodoxia Epidemica</i> , ed. Robin Robbins, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) (references are given in the notes as book, section, and page numbers)
<i>PE.Reader</i>	‘To the Reader’ in <i>Pseudodoxia Epidemica</i>

List of Abbreviations

- RM* *Religio Medici* in Keynes I, 3–93 (references are given in the notes as part and section numbers)
- RM.Reader* ‘To the Reader’ in *Religio Medici*
- Robbins PE* Robbins’s Introduction and editorial apparatus, in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, ed. Robbins
- Robbins STB* *Sir Thomas Browne: ‘Religio Medici’, ‘Hydriotaphia’, and ‘The Garden of Cyrus’*, ed. Robin Robbins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972)
- U-B* *Hydriotaphia, or Urne-Buriall* in Keynes I, 131–72 (references are given in the notes as chapter and page numbers)
- U-B.LeGros* ‘To my worthy and honoured friend Thomas Le Gros of Crostwick, Esquire’ in *Urne-Buriall*