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*Sir Thomas Browne: A Life* by Reid Barbour (review)

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Reid Barbour. *Sir Thomas Browne: A Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. xiv + 534 pp. Ill. £70.00 (978-0-19-967988-1).

*Sir Thomas Browne: A Life* presents an account of Thomas Browne's life beyond the world of books—immersed in a world of travel, exchange, urban civic and mercantile cultures, medical practice, and domestic life. It draws principally on institutional records, works by Browne's contemporaries, and Browne's own notebooks and correspondence. The book is organized into three parts: Browne's early years (London 1605–16, Winchester and Ireland 1616–23, Oxford 1623–31), his medical training in Europe (Montpellier 1631–32, Padua 1632–33, Leiden 1633–34), and his later life as author and practicing physician (Halifax 1634–37 and Norwich 1637–82). For the first two sections, Barbour seeks to reconstruct Browne's early life through the medical worlds of Oxford, Montpellier, Padua, and Leiden, drawing on university records, selected works of professors of medicine (including Liceti, Imperiale, Riviere, Scharpe, Ranchin, Silvaticus, Sala), contemporary travel accounts, and secondary literature on the regions; for the third section, he seeks to extend the world of Browne's authorial strategies, antiquarianism, and medical practice beyond East Anglia, charting the influence of Browne's published works further afield and Browne's two-way engagement with the wider intellectual sphere through his extensive correspondence and his medical notebooks.

The third section is significantly longer than the others (at 304 pp., 56 pp., and 74 pp., respectively), and is likely to be of greatest interest to historians of medicine, presenting material that is likely to be less familiar. It offers an insight into Browne's medical correspondence, his day-to-day medical practice, medical notebooks, antiquarian studies and his navigation, on behalf of his son Edward, of the institutions of the Royal Society and the Royal College of Physicians. It offers an excellent case study in the relationship between local medical practice and extended intellectual networks, and offers opportunities for reflection on the ways in which antiquarian methodologies and global trade networks sat together in the framework of seventeenth-century natural knowledge. In his presentation of Browne's extension of the medical consultation to correspondence with other physicians Barbour offers a picture of seventeenth-century medical practice as hovering between the closed patient–physician encounter and the network of reports of the distant and unseen more commonly associated with natural philosophical and antiquarian knowledge economies.

The organization of the book is primarily oriented to chronology. Three themes nonetheless seem to recur throughout the work: first, the valorizing of the lowly, local, domestic, and particular—a notion captured in a reported detail of Browne's home furnishing, a picture of Ovid's Baucis and Philemon situating the gods in a humble domestic scene (a late eighteenth-century version of which provides the book's cover image); second, a preoccupation with place and the relationship between locality, travel, and reading, particularly configured in the relationship between Browne's largely unwritten early travels and his static later life made mobile through writing; and third, the question of the relationship between

direct and indirect experience underwriting Barbour's endeavor in the work to present Browne's travels, practice, and life as the source of material for his works.

A great deal of material here will be of interest to historians of medicine. Nonetheless the lack of medico-historical perspective in some of the discussion, and particularly in section 2, can be problematic. The use of evidence in this section can be a little uncritical, and the discussions of early modern medical texts are lacking a broader perspective of commonly held views from which to distinguish distinctive or characteristic ones. In the natural philosophical and medical contextualization more broadly, Barbour's readings tend to be underpinned by an expectation of opposition between religious, medical, antiquarian, and what are characterized as Baconian and empirical orders of knowledge. A shift of focus that took as read the methodological and conceptual continuity between these spheres may perhaps have allowed for many of the subsections to bear more directly on one another.

There are occasional editorial issues: some inconsistency with scholarly conventions (e.g., at pp. 13, 16, 152nn52, 53), works cited in the text not previously mentioned (e.g., Grassby, p. 26; Pauw, p. 196), occasional oversights such as errors with names (e.g., p. 178n105), and unattributed quotes (e.g., p. 196).

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Troels Kardel and Paul Maquet, eds. *Nicolaus Steno: Biography and Original Papers of a 17th Century Scientist*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2013. xxxviii + 739 pp. Ill. \$139.00 (978-3-642-25078-1).

Niels Steensen (Nicolaus Steno) was a major seventeenth-century Danish man of science who deserves continual in-depth historical study. He was the author of fundamental works in anatomy and geology, such as *Elementorum miologiae specimen* and *De solido intra solidum prodomus*. He was connected with prominent European scholars such as Thomas Bartholin, and with important scientific academies, including the Tuscan *Accademia del Cimento*. Reflecting the religious tensions typical of the time, he was educated in a Lutheran family, converted to Catholicism when he established himself in Tuscany, and finished his life as a bishop in northern Germany. The volume edited by Kardel and Maquet is thus a welcome contribution to the knowledge of the life and work of this very interesting figure.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first part is the English translation of a biography of Steno written in German by Gustav Scherz and originally published in 1987. The second part is the English translation of Steno's scientific papers, based on the edition of *Nicolai Stenonis opera philosophica* made by Vilhelm Maar in 1910. The third part includes the transcription of Steno's anatomical