

PREFACE

In 1710 Thomas Ballard, bookseller, issued a *Catalogue* of the libraries of Sir Thomas Browne and his son, Dr Edward Browne, to be sold at auction in January of 1711 'at the Black-boy Coffee-house in Ave-Mary-Lane, near Ludgate'. Sir Thomas (1605-82) had left his books and manuscripts to Edward, who died in 1708; and the sale followed the death of Edward's only son, Dr Thomas Browne, the beloved 'Tomey' of the domestic correspondence.

Only four copies of the *Catalogue* are known to exist, now carefully preserved on both sides of the Atlantic: in the British Library, Worcester College, Oxford, the Osler Library at McGill University, and the Yale Medical Library. Quite apart from its rarity, however, the plain octavo volume listing nearly 2,500 titles is of great interest and value. The curious learning of the author of *Religio Medici* and his prominence in the literary and medical world of his day readily invite attention to the books he owned.

Although Edward's talents were less brilliant than his father's, they earned him a reputation as a traveller and standing in the medical profession as President of the College of Physicians, so that his books too have their interest, reflecting as they do the changing tastes and concerns of his age. The additions made by Edward's son seem to have been relatively few, but together the libraries assembled by the father, son, and grandson provide an important record of the learning of the remarkable century their lives spanned.

The need to make the Browne *Catalogue* available has long been recognized—particularly by Sir Geoffrey Keynes in his *Bibliography of Sir Thomas Browne* published in 1924 and revised and augmented in 1968. Like most early records of book auctions the *Catalogue* is not arranged alphabetically and lists many titles without authors, so that a reader has had to thumb through pages in an uncertain quest. Offered here is the *Catalogue* in facsimile, an introduction, notes, and an index.

As Browne wrote in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, 'surely in this work attempts will exceed performances'. An effort has been made to verify each title in the *Catalogue*, but it has not always been possible to find them listed with the same dates and places of publication in library catalogues and bibliographies, while a few tantalizingly scant titles have proved even more elusive; these are indicated in the notes. With such exceptions, however, all the *Catalogue* titles have been verified, and many of them have been examined at first hand.

The index will also be found to have its shortcomings. As is stated in the preface to the index, it had initially been planned to include all the names that might be associated with each title—authors, editors, translators, commentators—but this could not confidently be done with titles where the exact edition was uncertain. Accordingly, when a title carries a name sufficient for identification, only the name will be indexed. When a title appears without a name, however, the title itself is given in the index as well as the associated name or names indicated in the notes. Most of the titles lacking names have been identified, and many hours of fruitless search have gone to the few that defied discovery. The facsimile of the *Catalogue* will enable the user to see each title as it there appears.

In addition to identifying titles, the notes reproduce a good many of Browne's comments on books in his library. Selecting from his many remarks on books and authors proved difficult. Indeed, the original file of all such references became so large that it was decided to include only those where the attribution is unmistakable, and many an interesting observation that could not confidently be attached to a specific title has reluctantly been omitted.

The reader will find that a number of books with which Browne must have been familiar, as well as many of the editions of his writings, are not listed in the *Catalogue*. An appendix of such titles was planned, and a file of 'ghosts' prepared. It soon became apparent, however, that extensive annotation would be required for what would be an uncertain business at best, and it was decided to limit the scope of this edition to the actual contents of the *Catalogue*. Some account of the titles that are noticeably missing is given in the Introduction. As is stated there, the absence of a title might mean only that it had been borrowed by a friend or that it had been one of those withdrawn by members of the family before the sale. Similarly, the presence of a title is not of itself proof of Browne's ownership, for Edward's books were intermingled in the collection along with those of the grandson. Therefore it was early decided not to limit the index and notes to books published before Browne's death and to treat the *Catalogue* as a whole. For the exploration of Browne's reading, the *Catalogue* will serve as a useful starting point, while Sir Geoffrey Keynes's revised *Bibliography* and Mr Robin Robbins's edition of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* will be ample guides to the relevant books and articles. Both index and notes stand 'ready', in Sir Thomas's words, 'to be swallowed in any worthy enlarger'.

Acknowledging the long delay in bringing this work to completion, the editor can only borrow Browne's words to the reader of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, that 'a worke of this nature is not to bee performed upon one

legge' and has been carried on as 'the fruitless importunity' of other duties permitted. Professor Tipton M. Westfall, who collaborated fully in the early stage of the work, prepared many of the notes containing Browne's comments on books and selected specific references from the larger collection originally assembled. He also constructed tables showing the distribution of titles in the *Catalogue* by date, place of publication, heading, and size; these summaries are drawn on in the account of the *Catalogue* in the Introduction.

Of the many persons who have given advice and assistance, Sir Geoffrey Keynes should be named first, for he was early consulted about editing the *Catalogue* and patiently gave encouragement. Dr W. W. Francis, cousin to Sir William Osler and the first Librarian of the Osler Library at McGill University, shared his exact and wide knowledge of Browne in many letters and conversations enlivened by his sharp wit, and he identified a number of titles in the *Catalogue*. Others were identified by Sir Frank C. Francis, with whom the editor became acquainted on finding a manuscript list of a portion of Sir Hans Sloane's printed books in the British Library. Dr John F. Fulton displayed a bookman's ultimate generosity by lending his copy of the *Catalogue*, now in the Yale Medical Library. 'I have deliberately refrained from having it bound', he wrote to the editor, 'in the thought that it may someday be used for a facsimile.' Through the courtesy of the Yale Medical Library and Mr Ferene Gyorgyey, Historical Librarian, it has been possible to reproduce that copy of the *Catalogue* for this edition and thus to carry out Dr Fulton's wishes. Mr Richard A. Sayce permitted the editor to re-examine the copy in the library of Worcester College, which he had first seen through the kindness of Colonel C. R. Wilkinson. Mr John Carter gave advice from his store of bibliographical knowledge. While preparing his edition of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* Mr Robin Robbins identified obscure titles and made helpful suggestions. Professor Fredson T. Bowers of the University of Virginia gave assistance and encouragement. Among helpful colleagues at Princeton were Professors Blanchard W. Bates, who reviewed the French titles, Gerald E. Bentley, who read a preliminary draft of the Introduction, Horton M. Davies, who examined the indexing of the Biblical literature, and John R. Martin, who commented on the classical archeology represented in the *Catalogue*. Portions of the Introduction appeared in an article by the editor, 'Sir Thomas Browne's Library', *English Language Notes*, XIX (1982), and are reprinted here with the permission of the editor of that publication. Finally, the editor gratefully acknowledges the assistance given by Dr Cornelis W. Schoneveld, Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Leiden. His generously given attention resulted in valuable corrections

and additions to the manuscript of this edition, particularly with reference to Dutch and German titles. The references in the notes are entirely owing to him, even though his name is not cited in each instance. Despite the support and help given by many, however, errors, shortcomings, and inconsistencies will be far too numerous, and for these the editor takes full responsibility.

Over the years the editor has been extended courtesies by many libraries. A special word of thanks is owing, however, to the staffs of the Bodleian Library, the British Library, the Library of Congress, the Henry E. Huntington Library, and the Princeton University Library. Grants in aid of research were made by the Princeton University Research Fund, and the Annan Fund of the Department of English at Princeton helped to make publication of the *Catalogue* possible.

Sir Thomas Browne once observed: 'What Libraries of new Volumes aftertimes will behold, and in what a new World of Knowledge the eyes of our Posterity may be happy, a few Ages may joyfully declare.' This new volume looks back to an old world of knowledge, but it may remind us that our understanding of man in his universe flows from the currents of thought that have come down from the old ages into the new.

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