

## Sir Thomas Browne as Poet-Signator of *Hydriotaphia* and *The Garden of Cyrus*

Gregory Blume

### Notable Quotations:

“Neither let it be deemed too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man’s wit with the efficacy of nature, but rather give right honour to the heavenly Maker of that maker, who, having made man to His own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature; which in nothing he showeth so much as in poetry, when, with the force of a divine breath, he bringeth things forth....” (Sidney 9)

“There is nothing strictly immortal, but immortality; whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end. All others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction....But the sufficiency of Christian Immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death, makes a folly of posthumous memory.” (Browne 312 [*Hydriotaphia*])

“Like the visible letters forming the outer sign that we recognize as a word, the external form of a thing [in nature] is a sign—or signature—of an invisible, hidden spiritual essence/meaning.” (Bono 148)

“That we conjoyn these parts of different Subjects, or that this should succeed the other; Your judgement will admit without impute of incongruity; Since the delightfull World comes after death, and Paradise succeeds the Grave. Since the verdant state of things is the Symbole of the Resurrection, and to flourish in the state of Glory, we must first be sown in corruption.” (Browne 321 [dedicatory epistle to Nicholas Bacon])

“...but the cemiteriall Cels of ancient Christians and Martyrs, were filled with draughts of Scripture Stories....affecting the pourtraits of *Enoch*, *Lazarus*, *Jonas*, and the Vision of *Ezechie*, as hopefull draughts, and hinting imagery of the Resurrection; which is the life of the grave, and sweetens our habitations in the Land of Moles and Pismires.” (Browne 290 [*Hydriotaphia*])

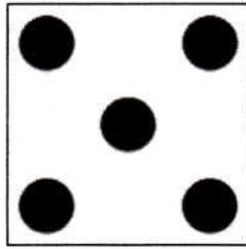
---

Bono, James J. *The Word of God and the Languages of Man: Interpreting Nature in Early Modern Science and Medicine. Volume 1: Ficino to Descartes*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

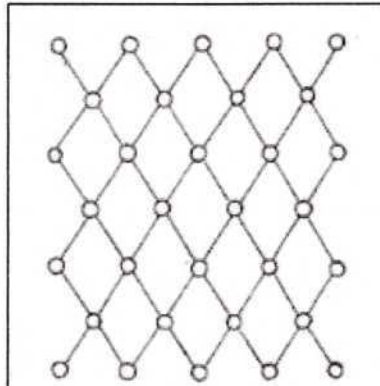
Browne, Sir Thomas. *Hydriotaphia, Urne-Buriall, or, A Discourse of the Sepulchrall Urnes lately found in Norfolk and The Garden of Cyrus*. Printed in *The Major Works*. C. A. Patrides, ed. New York and London: Penguin, 1977.

Preston, Claire. *Thomas Browne and the Writing of Early Modern Science*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 2005.

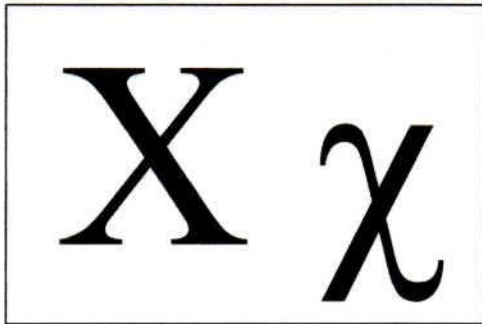
Sidney, Philip. “The Defence of Poesy.” Printed in *Sidney’s ‘The Defence of Poesy’ and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*. Gavin Alexander, ed. Penguin, 2004.



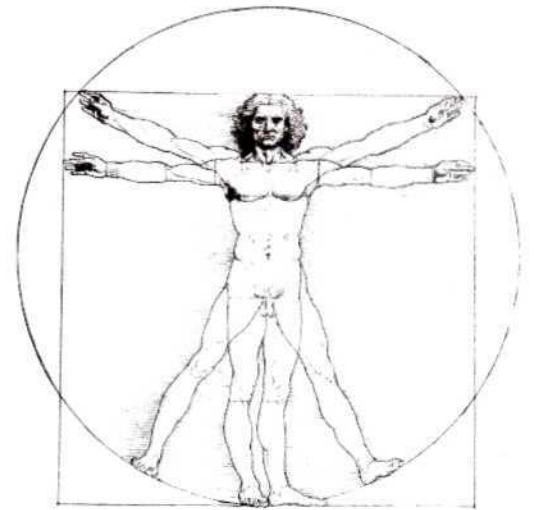
*Figs. 1 and 2:  
the quincunx*



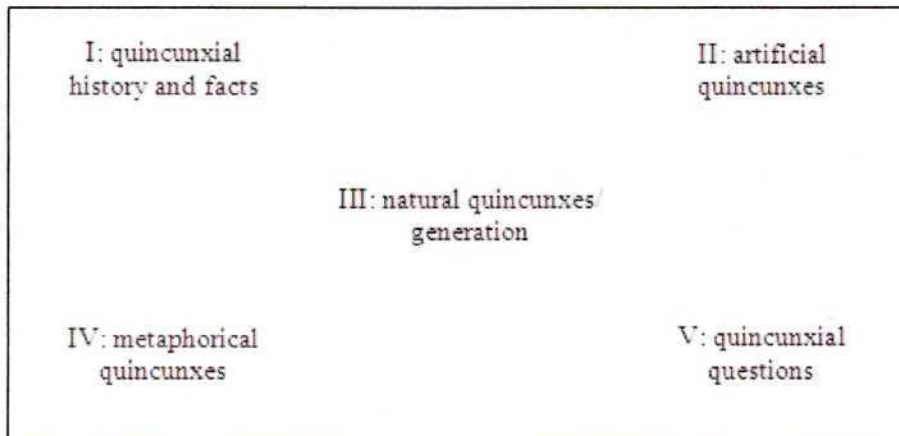
*Quid Quincunx speciosus, qui, in  
quam cunq; partem spectaueris,  
rectus est. Quintilian. 8*



*Fig. 3: the Greek chi*



*Fig. 4: Vitruvian man*



*Fig. 5: the quincunxial structure of The Garden of Cyrus  
(Preston, pg. 207)*