

meaning with them. Christopher Parsons focuses on one of the few Canadian substances to become widely used in European pharmacy: northern maidenhair or *capillaire du Canada*. As he shows, the same plant could be manipulated (materially through its preparation as a drug and in terms of its textual representation) to symbolize either Canada's familiarity or its otherness. Gabriel's discussion of the *American Dispensary* notes that the incorporation of indigenous plants and Native American knowledge about them was crucial to the attempts of elite physicians to create a national medical identity that suited the American context. At the same time, as knowledge became transformed through incorporation into pharmacopoeias, its source was often erased.

Despite historians' recent interest in the circulation of medicinal substances, little attention has been paid to the pharmacopoeia as a textual form. This volume provides a thoughtful and well-integrated discussion of the genre that demonstrates both the interconnectedness and the particularity of pharmacopoeias.

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Pietro Greco. *Galileo Galilei, the Tuscan Artist*. vii + 383 pp., bibl., index. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2018. €47 (cloth); ISBN 9783319720319. Paper and e-book available.

"Galileo's plan for the future is therefore huge and articulate. It is the program of a scientist, who is opening up several new windows on the Universe. It is also the program of an engineer who wants to take profit from his inventions. Finally, it can also be considered the program of a Renaissance artist" (p. 161).

This is the historical interpretation offered by Pietro Greco in commenting on Galileo's research agenda as he communicated it to the First Secretary of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1610. But this quotation can also be used to describe the approach used in this biography of Galileo Galilei.

Galileo's scientific activities, his results, and the corresponding debates are presented emphatically here, following Alexandre Koyré's well-known argument that points to the creation of a singularity in history—a genius. Though Greco does not specifically argue on this basis, Galileo's science is mostly displayed as highly decontextualized. His *Discorsi* (1638) on the two new sciences, for instance, is only briefly discussed. The doctrine on the resistance of materials is mentioned only once, in relation to Galileo's pneumatic experiments in 1633 in the house of Ascanio Piccolomini just after his abjuration—the moment when, according to the author, Galileo began working on this subject.

Galileo's engagement with technology and practical knowledge can therefore be considered only a secondary aspect of this biography, presented as unrelated to his scientific achievements and in the end mentioned primarily as a means for Galileo to make money.

The category of "Renaissance artist" is in fact not discussed at all. The art to which the title of the book—"Tuscan Artist"—refers is art as it is understood nowadays. Many fine pages are devoted to Galileo's literary skill and knowledge, as well as to his interest in the figurative arts. However, while images and illustrations are discussed, they are not shown.

A general tendency of the entire biography is the focus on Galileo's scientific method; it is clearly stated to be experimental, though a discussion of the difficult relation between experience and experiment—so essential to understanding early modern science—is avoided. This focus, however, allows Greco, at the very beginning of the work, to expand on the scientific activity of Vincenzo Galilei, father of the more famous scientist, in the field of music. These chapters do indeed convey the message that Galileo's science is embedded in a wider context, though the context presented is limited to this relation with the elder Galilei. Nevertheless, the accuracy of these chapters makes them the most brilliant and historically informative part of the book.

It should also be noted that *Galileo Galilei, the Tuscan Artist* refers mostly to Italian secondary literature. The reader should therefore not expect to find the author engaging with the most recent related research on an international level, including the most recent biographies of Galileo.

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Margaret Willes. *The Curious World of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn.* xx + 282 pp., illus., app., notes, bibl., index. New Haven, Conn./London: Yale University Press, 2017. £10.99 (paper); ISBN 9780300238686. Cloth available.

John Dixon Hunt. *John Evelyn: A Life of Domesticity.* (Renaissance Lives.) 328 pp., bibl., index. London: Reaktion Books, 2017. £15.95 (cloth); ISBN 9781780238364.

In 1683, Samuel Pepys was nearly an island. These days, Pepys is famous for his diary; but in his own moment he was best known as a talented bureaucrat, the Secretary of the Admiralty memorialized by Arthur Bryant in *Samuel Pepys: Saviour of the Navy* (Cambridge, 1938). So, when William Cowley, on a cruising voyage aboard the *Bachelor's Delight*, spotted a landmass off the Patagonian coast, he duly christened it after the sitting Chief Secretary; he marked out a tableland, bay, and point, all of which were to have borne Pepys's name or his title. Pepys's Island is gorgeously described in Cowley's log entry, with a comfortable harbor, good fishing, safe anchorage, and a pleasant aspect. But attempts to return proved fruitless: James Cook and Joseph Banks, Lapérouse and Vancouver—each sought the island, but in vain. Armed with Cowley's maps and his elaborate descriptions, they found instead a loose, indefinite morass: a Sargasso sea, petrels and albatrosses, signs of land but no landmass. No man is an island; sometimes, it seems, not even an island is.

Studies of Restoration London have been dominated by accounts of looming figures like Pepys. Published around the turn of the current millennium were Lisa Jardine's studies of Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke (both HarperCollins, 2003), James Johnson's life of Rochester (Rochester, 2004), Charles Beauclerk's of Nell Gwyn (Macmillan, 2005), and Janet Todd's of Aphra Behn (Rutgers, 1996). These are biographies that were in many ways groundbreaking for their subjects and comfortable in the iconic status of these figures as landmarks of Restoration culture. Gillian Darley's account of John Evelyn (*Living for Ingenuity* [Yale, 2006]) and Claire Tomalin's of Pepys (*The Unequaled Self* [Viking, 2002]) belong in this group, as monographs that aim at the reconstitution of a "self." These thereby take biography at its etymological word.

Recently, however, and perhaps feeling that biography of the traditional sort can be a bit like a voyage to Pepys Island, two studies have appeared that largely dispense with the pretense of constructing an individual "self" (equaled or otherwise). Each is an entry in the genre of life writing, but each pursues a life as a figure to organize a discussion of contemporary cultural topics, as those topics shaped and affected witnesses of a rapidly transforming London. John Dixon Hunt's *John Evelyn: A Life of Domesticity* announces itself as a new kind of life writing inasmuch as it avoids, from the start, "the 'gridiron of chronology'"; it instead attempts "to cluster some of [Evelyn's] activities around central moments and places of both his family life . . . and his larger concerns involving the Royal Society" (p. 14). Yet more, it approaches life writing as a genre principally for organizing explorations into the thoughts and work of related contemporaries. Margaret Willes's *Curious World of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn* consolidates its inquiry into topics that interested Evelyn or Pepys, separately or mutually. It poses itself as a "cabinet of curiosities,"