On Vessels of the Nose

Before removing the hand from the table, I cannot refrain from attaching as an appendix to the foregoing what appeared to me in the nose itself, while attempting more thoroughly at investigating the lachrymal ducts after the bones of the nose had been broken, since it displays quite the same structure as the envelope of the eyes.

Since the tunic surrounding the nostrils not only is found moist in dead men or animals but also in living animals it is seen to be irrigated by some perpetual moisture. Without a continuous stream of aqueous humour flowing from the nose it is necessary that there are paths which lay down this humour in the nose and others which carry away what has been laid in this place. The structure of the eyes and of the mouth had already drawn me to this opinion not only for the nose but also for the pericardium and other parts. But since anatomical arguments, besides analogy, also require personal inspection, I held that it only had to be reckoned among suspicions because either member of this proposition seemed to be expecting its own adversaries. Those who require nostrils dry, not wet, to perceive odours well would indeed question the former paths and quote the words of the great Hippocrates against those who merely doubt. One reads in the book On fleshb: “and when the cavities of the nose are dry, the brain most accurately smells dry things”, and further: “when the nostrils are wet it is not possible to smell”. If thus smelling required dryness of the organ, no vessels should be admitted there since not only they would be useless but they would even impede the sense. Those who contend that any humour of the nose, if there was such humour, can be either dried by the air passing by or rejected in the throat through open paths, would not admit easily the former paths different from the cavity overarching the throat. And thus although I could have objected to the former that the nose of the dogs, whose smelling power everybody praises, is humid, and the very need of humour to facilitate the passage of vaporous bodies in the pores to the extremities of the nerves; although I should oppose to the latter on the

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a OPH 6 vol. I, 93–97. “De narium vasis” must have been composed in December 1661, being written as an appendix to the preceding one, “De glandulis oculorum”, which bears the date of December 6, 1661, and together with which it appeared in print about New Year 1662, as the last of the four treatises in Nicolai Stenonis observationes anatomicae . . . Lugd. Batav. 1662.
b Liber de Carnibus
one hand this position of the nose in man as well as in animals which does not suf-
fer that humour falls back in the throat, on the other hand the nature of the humour
such that it cannot be dissipated in thin exhalations by the air alone driven inside
the chest or by the air rejected from the lungs together with warm soot. Vulcan him-
self, if called to witness, demonstrates that. Nevertheless I remained dubious until,
besides the *aqueduct* already known previously, and besides the glandular fleshes
of the *tunic* called *pituitary* by *Schneider*, I observed also the *continuation of the
lachrymal point all the way to the nose*, and another *duct peculiar to the nose*, all
the *vessels moistening the nose*, and altogether the *strait*, almost a *channel*, through
which the humour contained in the nose is transmitted to the palate. Then it was
clear indeed that, unless the words of *Hippocrates* meant immoderate humour, war
had to be declared to experience itself.

The first canal irrigating the nose, or *aqueduct*, which carries humour there where
the cavities of the ears are moistened, has been described by various illustrious gen-
tlemen. Therefore I will add nothing here but, satisfied that I have added it to the
others, I pass to the next ones.

As far as the second canal through which humour is derived from the eyes to the
nose is concerned, since it has been described above on page 84, it will not retain
us for a long time either. The famous *Vesling* thinks that this ends inside the tunics
of the eyelids, to which the famous *Schneider* also adds his assent. In *De catarrhis*,
l. 3. c. 9 p. 348, he says: *Before this author (meaning Vesling), we examined these
matters and others of the same kind and taught at many places that these holes
did not go further. An eyelid indeed is made of two membranes. This kind of hole
runs between them to the extremity of the orbit and ends there.* But I have observed
together with the famous Mr *van Home* already twice that [this canal] extends all the
way to the nose not only in animals but also in man. It is plainly amazing that the
very skilled gentleman, *Fabricius d'Acquapendente* who observed a sinewy canal
in the cavity itself of the os lachrymale did not see that this canal continues in the
lachrymal point. He thus tells in *De ocul.* part 1. c. 13: *For this reason, very wise
Nature arranged two paths to evacuate the tears. One is through both corners of
the eyes, another through the nose. At both extremities of the tarsi, i.e. the upper
one and the lower one, two small orifices are apparent in each of the two angles, so
small and narrow that they are hardly visible in the bodies of live animals, but in the
cadavers they escape completely sight. It is through them that tears, when they are
poured out, leave though preferently through the internal angle which nature uses
for the outlet of tears, as it is lower. But the nostrils are also a still wider path. At
their apex, near the internal angle of the eyes, holes are carved in the bone so large
that anybody wonders at them. If you look at them carefully, some considerable
canals will appear to you, carved at that place for this function, to evacuate tears
through the nose. But you will also see a sinewy canal from the eyes enter holes of
the same kind, as if it were a canal fitted to derive tears in the nose. I wonder, I say,
that the illustrious gentleman, together with other defenders of the same opinion,
divide things which Nature wanted to be joined.

In the third place, vessels which originate in the tunic itself of the nostrils must
be examined. They are of two kinds. Some are rather short. They are hardly visible