

John Aubrey's
Antiquarian Scholarship

*A Study in the Seventeenth-Century
Republic of Letters*

Kelsey Jackson Williams
Balliol College, Oxford

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
D.Phil. in English Literature
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Abstract

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The writings of John Aubrey (1626-1697) cover a variety of subjects, including natural philosophy, mathematics, educational theory, biography, and magic, among others. His principal scholarly interest, however, was antiquarianism, the early modern discipline which embraced subjects such as archaeology, anthropology, and palaeography. This thesis is a study of Aubrey's antiquarian writings within the context of the European Republic of Letters.

It begins with a revisionary survey of antiquarianism in England, 1660-1720, and proceeds to map his personal contacts and library before studying each of his major antiquarian works in detail. Aubrey emerges from this as a product of his time, but somewhat unusual in his eclectic use of the antiquarian tradition and his blending of antiquarian and natural philosophical methodologies. He was receptive to the latest scholarship, regardless of its origin, and his antiquarian writings were never mere antiquarianism, but moved beyond technical scholarship to address wider issues concerning the origins of English culture, the evolution of religion, the antiquity of the earth, and the nature of human invention.

Aubrey is now best known for his so-called *Brief Lives*, a series of biographies of contemporaries, and this thesis also includes a chapter studying the *Lives* as a form of antiquarianism. It argues that their keen observation and unconventional form are due to a mixture of antiquarian minuteness with traditions of Theophrastan character-writing and Tacitean historiography and that previous readings of them rely too heavily upon an outdated view of Aubrey as eccentric and peripheral to the larger intellectual movements of the century.

This thesis concludes with a reassessment of Aubrey's scholarship and an argument that the patterns revealed highlight the insufficiency of current theories of antiquarian development in the early modern period. It also argues for the "literary" quality of Aubrey's work and emphasises the importance of reading his antiquarian texts within the context of early modern definitions of literature.

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No scholarly work, a thesis least of all, stands alone, the product of its author's isolated genius (such as that may be). In consequence, I have the happy duty of acknowledging a great many debts accrued over the past three and a half years, both personal, professional, and that mixture of the two so central to the life of a graduate student. My M.St. was generously supported by the Clarendon Fund and during the course of my D.Phil. I had the good fortune to be funded by the Mellon Foundation via the Cultures of Knowledge Project in the Oxford History Faculty. Such benevolent and lenient taskmasters are hard to find.

This work, more than most, relies upon a single manuscript archive, the series of Aubrey shelfmarks in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, which constitute its subject's bequest to posterity. As such, I am deeply indebted to Colin Harris, Russell Edwards, and all the staff of Duke Humfrey's Library and – after its grim demise – the Special Collections Reading Room in the Radcliffe Science Library for their heroic efforts in the face of times that try men's souls. The vast majority of my reading and research was undertaken within the confines of the Bodleian, but I am also indebted to the ever-reliable librarians and assistants at the British Library, the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Library in Devizes, the libraries of All Souls and Worcester Colleges, Oxford, and, particularly, to Jeremy Hinchliff, College Librarian of Balliol College, Oxford, for alerting me to a late and important bibliographical discovery.

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of setting up an academic career beyond the thesis. This thesis, and my knowledge of the early modern world, would be very much the worse without his counsel. William Poole has always been ready to discuss a thorny issue or point the way to an obscure source or archive, as well as generously sharing the multifarious fruits of his research on Aubrey for the 2010 Bodleian exhibition, “John Aubrey and the Development of Experimental Science”. I hope that the following pages reflect, to some extent, his enviable polymathy. Finally, Paulina Kewes greatly improved my final year, not only with the offer of a job, but with excellent advice, invaluable help, and good conversation at high table. That the end of this thesis did not see me beached in the shoals of unemployment is due entirely to her.

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Kelsey Jackson Williams

Cambridge

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¹ Arthur Johnston, "De reginae choreis", in *Musa Latina Aberdonensis*, 3 vols., ed. W. D. Geddes (Aberdeen, 1892-1910), ii. 159.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Republic of Letters and the Antiquarian Context	6
Methodology and the History of Scholarship	9
Conclusion	12
1. Antiquarianism in England, 1660-1720: Mapping the Discipline	14
The Materials of Antiquarian Research	15
Coins and Medals	17
Inscriptions	21
Sculpture	24
Architecture	27
Other Branches of Study	28
Diplomatic and Palaeography	29
The English Discipline: Chorography and County History	31
Towards a Classification of Antiquarian Projects in England, 1660-1720	33
University Antiquaries: Classical and Oriental	34
University Antiquaries: Medieval	39
Ecclesiastical Antiquaries	41
Virtuosi	44
Chorographical Antiquaries	47
Aubrey and Contemporary Antiquarianism	51
2. Aubrey in the Republic of Letters	53
Aubrey's World	54
Friendship in the Republic of Letters	61
Sir Thomas Browne	62
Thomas Hobbes	65
Robert Hooke	67
Anthony Wood	71
Thomas Gale	73
Edward Lhuyd	76
Aubrey's Library, Aubrey's Books	79
Understanding Aubrey in Context	85
3. <i>Monumenta Britannica</i>: I. Stonehenge and the Druids	88
The Origin of the <i>Monumenta Britannica</i>	89
Predecessors: Scandinavian Antiquarianism	97

Predecessors: Chorography and Natural Philosophy	108
<i>Templa Druidum</i>	114
<i>Templa Druidum</i> in Context: the Myth of the Druids and Cultural Loyalties	117
Conclusion	124
4. Monumenta Britannica: II. Mapping Roman Britain	126
From <i>Templa Druidum</i> to <i>Monumenta Britannica</i>	127
Camps, Castles, and the Interpretation of Archaeological Sites	130
Funeral Monuments and the Postdiluvian Origins of Prehistoric Britain	137
Theories of Burial Practices	143
Urns, Excavations, and Eternal Lamps	145
The Ancient Landscape	152
Attempted Publication and Manuscript Circulation	160
5. The Remaines of Gentilisme: Religion, Folklore, and the Search for Romano-British Culture	168
The Structure of the Text	169
Hobbesian Discourses of Religion	173
‘Priest-cheate’: Anti-Catholicism vs. Anti-Clericalism	180
Aubrey’s Theology and the Philosophical Underpinnings of the <i>Remaines</i>	184
Cultural Continuity between Rome and England	190
Conclusion	194
6. Recovering Medieval England: Chorography, Chronology, and Philology	197
The <i>Description of the North Division of Wiltshire</i>	198
The <i>Perambulation of Surrey</i>	203
Chronologies: Placing Artefacts in Time	209
Recovering the Roman: <i>Chronologia Architectonica</i>	211
Dating Manuscripts: <i>Chronologia Graphica</i>	218
Greeks and Turks: <i>Chronologia Aspidologica</i>	222
The History of Dress: <i>Chronologia Vestiaria</i>	225
Economies of Invention: the <i>Nouvelles</i>	228
The Economic Tracts	230
Origins of English: <i>The Proportion of Languages</i>	234
Toponyms and the Primordial Language: <i>Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum</i>	236
Aubrey and the Middle Ages	244
7. The Biographical Writings	246
Writing the <i>Life of Hobbes</i>	247

Towards Antiquarian Biography: the <i>Minutes of Lives</i>	258
<i>An Apparatus for the Lives of our English Mathematical Writers</i>	263
Aubrey, the Theophrastan Character, and Tacitism: Placing the <i>Lives</i> in Context	265
The Fate of the <i>Lives</i>	271
The Place of the <i>Lives</i> in Aubrey's Works	273
Conclusion: Aubrey and the Shape of Seventeenth-Century Antiquarianism	276
Aubrey's Antiquarian Career	277
Aubrey's Contributions to the Antiquarian Project	280
The Shape of Antiquarianism in the Seventeenth Century	283
Aubrey and Literature	286
Bibliography	289

Introduction

John Aubrey (1626-1697) is chiefly known for the *Lives*, rich, luminous biographies of his contemporaries which have provided so many of the anecdotes found in modern histories of the seventeenth century.¹ These were never printed in his lifetime, but were preserved in manuscript among a rich archive of unpublished writings and personal papers which he donated to the Ashmolean Museum in the 1690s.² The *Lives*, however, account for only three manuscripts among dozens; Aubrey also wrote on mathematics, natural philosophy, educational theory, and astrology, to name just a few. In so doing, he followed the same pattern as his more famous friends and colleagues, Restoration luminaries such as Robert Hooke, Sir Christopher Wren, John Locke, and Thomas Hobbes, all of whom possessed a broad variety of knowledge and a polymathic engagement with the world of learning in all its forms. Aubrey's chief interest, though – whether measured in volume of writing or in originality of thought – was in antiquarianism, the study of the material past. Over the course of his adult life he wrote six full-scale works on antiquarian topics ranging from prehistoric monuments to the origins of folk custom and filled thousands of closely-written folio pages with notes from books, manuscripts, interviews, and field work across Great Britain.

¹ The standard edition is Andrew Clark, ed., *Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries, Set Down By John Aubrey, Between the Years 1669 & 1696*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1898), but this is shortly to be superseded by a new critical edition edited by Kate Bennett.

² This collection was subsequently transferred to the Bodleian Library, where it now resides under the shelfmarks Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1-31. The only notable outlier is the manuscript of his *Remaines of Gentilisme* (discussed in chapter five) which is now British Library MS Lansdowne 231. Some items, of which the most important was probably the second volume of his *Wiltshire*, were either not donated or subsequently disappeared and are now presumed to be irrecoverably lost (see Michael Hunter, *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* [London, 1975], 239-242).

Despite the centrality of antiquarian study to Aubrey's life and thought, this aspect of his intellectual career has not been well served by modern scholarship. Aubrey himself was only rehabilitated as a worthwhile object of study by Anthony Powell in his 1948 biography, while the first survey of his scholarly works, by Michael Hunter, only appeared in 1975.³ Since then, most scholarship has focused on his biographical and scientific pursuits. Kate Bennett has published extensively on various aspects of the *Lives*, as well as on bibliographical issues surrounding Aubrey's work, while John James Purdon has investigated the theoretical issues surrounding the composition and presentation of the *Lives*.⁴ Likewise, Rhodri Lewis has published pioneering studies of Aubrey's role in language planning within the early Royal Society.⁵ Where Aubrey's antiquarian output has been investigated, the approach has often been regrettably internalist and teleological, as in Gillian Fellows-Jensen's study of the *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum*.⁶ Graham Parry's chapter on Aubrey in *The Trophies of Time* is important as the first modern work to explicitly place Aubrey within the larger antiquarian context, but Parry is too quick to accept the early twentieth-century caricature of Aubrey as "haphazard" or "unmethodical", and his interpretation suffers as a result.⁷ There is, however, reason to believe that this state of affairs is changing. William Poole's Bodleian Library exhibition "My wit was always working?: John Aubrey and the Development of Experimental Science" together with its accompanying publication, *John*

³ Anthony Powell, *John Aubrey and His Friends* (London, 1948; rev. ed. London, 1963); Hunter, *Aubrey*, based upon Hunter, *The Place of John Aubrey in Intellectual History* (University of Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1975).

⁴ John James Purdon, "Aubrey's Discourse in Paper", *Essays in Criticism* 55 (2005): 226-247. Bennett's major works on Aubrey are *Materials Towards a Critical Edition of John Aubrey's Brief Lives* (University of Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1993), "Editing Aubrey", in *Ma(r)king the Text: The Presentation of Meaning on the Literary Page*, ed. Joe Bray, Miriam Handley, and Anne Henry (Aldershot, 2000), 271-290, "John Aubrey's Collections and the Early-Modern Museum", *Bodleian Library Record* 17 (2001): 213-245, and "John Aubrey, Hint-Keeper: Life-Writing and the Encouragement of Natural Philosophy in the pre-Newtonian Seventeenth Century", *The Seventeenth Century* 22 (2007): 358-380.

⁵ Rhodri Lewis, "The Efforts of the Aubrey Correspondence Group to Revise John Wilkins's *Essay* (1668) and their Context", *Historiographia Linguistica* 28 (2001): 333-366, and *Language, Mind and Nature: Artificial Languages in England from Bacon to Locke* (Cambridge, 2007), 188-221.

⁶ Gillian Fellows-Jensen, "John Aubrey, Pioneer Onomast?", *Nomina* 23 (2000): 89-106.

⁷ Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1995), 275-307.

Aubrey and the Advancement of Learning, have both gone some ways towards restoring antiquarianism to the central place it occupied in Aubrey's own thought.⁸ These, together with the forthcoming edition of the *Lives* edited by Kate Bennett and that of the *Correspondence*, edited by Rhodri Lewis and William Poole, will significantly advance the study of Aubrey overall and provide both the raw materials and the criticism necessary to finally begin the process of fully evaluating his work and thought.

Despite the progress made by these recent contributions, however, Aubrey's antiquarianism in and of itself has remained largely unstudied. This thesis is the first comprehensive analysis of this aspect of his work, closely reading Aubrey's manuscript archive and placing it within the larger context of the learned world in which he moved, the early modern Republic of Letters. It moves beyond the earlier literature by revealing a series of broader themes running through Aubrey's works – his focus on the study of pre-Roman and Roman Britain, his gradual shift from archaeological to philological methods, and his emphasis on historical “otherness” and change – and relating them to larger movements within contemporary scholarly culture. In doing so, it refocuses our understanding of Aubrey, arguing that he was less original than has previously been suggested, but also more scholarly, more methodical, and more in harmony with the intellectual movements of his period. More generally, it complicates the existing narrative of antiquarian development by arguing that the Momiglian paradigm of a shift from textual to artefactual study fails to explicate Aubrey's work and, indeed, the work of his generation. Instead, it proposes that the shifts in emphasis within antiquarian scholarship were subtler and more contingent than this narrative allows for and that Aubrey's work can be seen as representative of the antiquarian mood in the later seventeenth century. In reconstructing Aubrey's antiquarian

⁸ William Poole, *John Aubrey and the Advancement of Learning* (Oxford, 2010), published in connection with the Bodleian Library exhibition “My wit was always working”: John Aubrey and the Development of Experimental Science”, 29 May – 31 October 2010.

scholarship this thesis not only substantially revises existing interpretations of Aubrey's work, but also offers a more nuanced view of early modern antiquarianism and lays the groundwork for a larger re-evaluation of traditional narratives of the discipline.

It begins with a survey of English antiquarianism in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, setting Aubrey within his disciplinary contexts and providing the necessary background to understand his works' relationship to the larger antiquarian tradition. Early modern scholars were, however, fundamentally sociable creatures, and Aubrey was no exception. Chapter two places him within his social context, the English province of the Republic of Letters, examining how his friendships, his correspondence, and his reading placed him at the centre of a network of scholars engaged in different aspects of the larger early modern project of recovering the ancient past. The subsequent chapters examine his major antiquarian works in turn, beginning with the *Monumenta Britannica*, a vast survey of prehistoric sites across Britain, continuing through his anthropological, geographical and chorographical works, his antiquarian handbooks for the dating of architecture, clothes, and other artefacts, and concluding with a discussion of the *Lives* in relation to his antiquarian projects. Each text had its own purpose and its own set of concerns, but several recurrent themes appear throughout the corpus of his writings.

Aubrey was, first and foremost, dedicated to recovering Britain's Roman and pre-Roman past, searching for it in archaeological sites, in folklore, and in the landscape itself. Although a native of Wiltshire, and deeply attached to the Downs across which he had ridden as a young man, he prided himself on his aristocratic Welsh ancestry and firmly believed that Welsh culture, more than any other in Britain, represented a tangible link to pre-Roman and Roman Britain. For him, the Saxons were unredeemable savages, whose "very Kings were but a sort of Farmers", and one of the tasks of scholarship was to push beyond the darkness

of Saxon England back to the lost era of Romano-British civilisation.⁹ This was not merely an academic interest. Aubrey believed Roman Britain was the fountainhead of modern British civilisation, and that folklore, language, architecture, and other facets of everyday life could ultimately be traced back to that cultural focal point.

A fascination with England's Roman past was common amongst early modern antiquarians. William Camden had codified it at the end of Elizabeth's reign and it remained a central object of study well into the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Aubrey, however, made a series of significant advances, both methodologically and in field work. His earlier work in the style of English chorography and county history rapidly evolved into a more systematic study of archaeological sites, rather than isolated artefacts, and produced the *Monumenta Britannica*, the first systematic survey of prehistoric and Roman sites across Britain. At the same time, he read widely in the latest geographical and antiquarian scholarship from across Europe, absorbing the stratigraphic theories of Nicolaus Steno and Olof Rudbeck and, in so doing, preparing the tools which subsequent scholars would use to conceptualise a prehistory unfettered by the chronological limits of Biblical narrative. Subsequently, he turned away from archaeological antiquarianism towards an anthropological and philological approach to the Romano-British past, attempting to find remnants of Roman religion in English folklore, and preparing surveys of English words and toponyms in an attempt to understand late antique and medieval linguistic evolution. Although his works are fragmentary, often incomplete, and hardly correct by the standards of modern scholarship, Aubrey's investigations into the history of prehistoric and Roman Britain stand out for their methodological novelty, their engagement with contemporary continental scholarship, and

⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 10v.

¹⁰ The only survey of this rich vein of scholarship is Francis Haverfield, *The Roman Occupation of Britain* (Oxford, 1924), 59-88.

their slow movement towards understandings of the time period and language that are now defined as prehistory and Proto-Indo-European.

Finally, Aubrey's work is dominated by a recognition of the otherness of the past. A corollary of his careful study of physical artefacts was an understanding of the processes of historical change. Even the stories of Queen Elizabeth's reign told him by his grandfather are suffused with an acute awareness of cultural difference. This preoccupation, which has sometimes been dismissed as an obsession with "change almost for its own sake", was in fact one of the cornerstones of Aubrey's historical method.¹¹ Many of his most original works stem, ultimately, from an imaginative attempt to recreate the past. More than once he admiringly quoted the philosopher Meric Casaubon's description of an antiquary as one for whom "visible supervening evidences of Antiquities represent unto their mind former times, with as strong an impression, as if they were actually present, and in sight", and it is this act of recreation that gives his work a level of vividness and minuteness lacking in those of many of his contemporaries.¹²

The Republic of Letters and the Antiquarian Context

The subtitle of this thesis, "A Study in the Seventeenth-Century Republic of Letters", was chosen to highlight the importance of understanding Aubrey's work within a much larger, pan-European context. A study of past scholarship can only have value in so far as it sets that scholarship, not against its modern, "correct", equivalent, but against the backdrop of contemporary learning. In Aubrey's case, that was the complex and vibrant antiquarian

¹¹ Hunter, *Aubrey*, 164.

¹² John Aubrey, *Monumenta Britannica*, 2 vols., ed. Rodney Legg and John Fowles (Sherborne, Dorset, 1980), i. 259, quoting Meric Casaubon, *A Treatise of Use and Custome* (London, 1638), 97-98.

tradition which had developed alongside the philological tradition of Renaissance humanism and which was practised within the social and intellectual space defined by its inhabitants as the “Republic of Letters”.¹³

This emphasis on an international context goes against the grain of most earlier Aubrey scholarship – which has tended to see him as exclusively insular – and, indeed, against the prevailing winds of early modern English literary scholarship for most of the twentieth century.¹⁴ It could reasonably be objected that a figure such as Aubrey, whose correspondents were almost all English and whose international travels were limited to a planned, but abortive, trip to Italy and a brief journey through France, is hardly likely to have existed within a pan-European context. This, however, would be to miss the crucial fact, too often glossed over in social histories of scholarship, that the Republic of Letters was based not only on personal communication, but upon the existence of a shared Latinate literary culture whose products could be disseminated and read across the continent, regardless of national or linguistic boundaries. In a Europe where a majority of books published were in Latin and publishing centres such as the Frankfurt book fair saw the spread of texts far beyond their places of origin, it did not require travel or a wide network of correspondents to take part in the international scholarly culture of the time.¹⁵ Aubrey read and engaged with works by an archaeologically-minded doctor from Uppsala, a

¹³ For the concept of the Republic of Letters see Hans Bots and Françoise Waquet, *La République des Lettres* (Paris, 1997), together with the cautionary observations of Herbert Jaumann, “*Respublica litteraria / Republic of Letters: Concept and Perspectives of Research*”, in *Die europäische Gelehrtenrepublik im Zeitalter des Konfessionalismus*, ed. Herbert Jaumann (Wiesbaden, 2001), 11-19, and the commentary by Richard Maber, “Texts, Travel, and Flying Machines: The Lost World of Seventeenth-Century Scholarship”, in *Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity in the Republic of Letters: Essays in Honour of Richard G. Maber*, ed. Paul Scott (Manchester, 2010), 229-248.

¹⁴ This is, however, changing, as evidenced by prominent new works fighting against insular tendencies such as John Kerrigan’s *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics, 1603-1707* (Oxford, 2008).

¹⁵ Sixty-seven per cent of the books offered for sale at the Frankfurt fair in 1650 were in Latin. The remaining thirty-three per cent represented all European vernaculars present combined. As late as 1700 Latin was still the single largest language for Frankfurt publications, though it had by that time declined to only thirty-eight per cent of the total stock (see Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* [Cambridge, 2004], 54-55, supplemented and corrected by Ian Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion: the Learned Book in the Ages of Confessions, 1560-1630* [Cambridge, Mass., 2012]).

mathematician and astronomer from Kiel, a Jesuit scientist from Rome, and a host of others; to ignore these intellectual debts is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of his achievement.¹⁶

This is not to say that there are not more circumscribed intellectual contexts within which Aubrey can be situated; the Republic of Letters had both its national and its disciplinary provinces. One other important intellectual context in which Aubrey should be considered is that of wider changes in antiquarianism. Regrettably, the study of antiquarianism, both in England and continent-wide, remains a comparatively neglected topic. Arnaldo Momigliano lamented in his 1950 article, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian”, that no “History of Antiquarian Studies” existed.¹⁷ This remains true, although some progress has been made in recent years, especially in the work of Ingo Herklotz and Peter Miller, both of whom have revisited the pioneering studies of Momigliano while making significant additions to knowledge of the antiquarian tradition in Italy and France.¹⁸ In England, the picture is less rosy. Despite four surveys of British antiquarianism in recent decades from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century, scholarship on Aubrey’s antiquarian contemporaries in England remains perversely parochial, and obsessed with the sub-discipline of chorography and its descendant, county history, to the exclusion of most other branches of antiquarian study.¹⁹ For that reason, this work begins with a systematic

¹⁶ Olof Rudbeck, Samuel Reyher, and Athanasius Kircher. See chapters three and four for further discussion of their influence on Aubrey’s work.

¹⁷ Arnaldo Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 286.

¹⁸ See particularly Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano Dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (München, 1999), Peter Miller, *Peiresc’s Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven and London, 2000), Peter Miller, *Peiresc’s Orient: Antiquarianism as Cultural History in the Seventeenth Century* (Farnham, 2012), and the essays by both scholars in *Momigliano and Antiquarianism: Foundations of the Modern Cultural Sciences*, ed. Peter Miller (Toronto, 2007). The new series of edited volumes, *Cultural Histories of the Material World* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2010—), promises to go some way towards fulfilling Momigliano’s remit.

¹⁹ Stanley G. Mendyk, *‘Speculum Britanniae’: Regional Study, Antiquarianism, and Science in Britain to 1700* (Toronto and London, 1989); Parry, *Trophies of Time*; Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 2004); Angus Vine, *In Defiance of Time: Antiquarian Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2010).

study of English antiquarianism, swiftly sketching its extent and the major activity within it during Aubrey's era. This, combined with the second chapter, discussing Aubrey's immediate friendships and intellectual networks, provides a picture of the scholarly and social contexts within which he moved and allows for a more accurate assessment of his role, both within the larger Republic of Letters and the larger antiquarian tradition.

Methodology and the History of Scholarship

Establishing the contexts relevant to Aubrey's work inevitably raises the question of methodology. How is one to approach texts which are chaotic and unfinished in their form, and esoteric and obscure in their content? Early on in this project it became clear that a set of tools other than the standard literary-critical ones were necessary to unpack Aubrey's work fully and to properly understand both it and its context. For that reason, this thesis is an example of the discipline generally known as "history of scholarship". That discipline's guiding principle, which has defined this work too, has been that the intellectual content of a text must be fully understood within the confines of the culture which created it; that it is not enough for one to be a student of the early modern period explicating the semantic content of a text on archaeology – one must, in addition, be able to understand and comment on the actual archaeological content with as much or more authority as the author of the text. Thus, the question of method is central to any such project: how did the author or text in question approach the problems with which they engaged; what method(s) did they use and how was that similar or dissimilar to the approaches of their contemporaries?

History of scholarship has its own theoretical wars. In its current state, the great divide is between internalists and externalists. The internalists, who often originally come from a discipline (especially Classics) whose history they subsequently study, tend to focus

on the precise intellectual content of the text, as described above.²⁰ The risk, however, of internalism is that it can all too easily devolve into a reductive “conviction that the history of scholarship can be profitably understood as a series of strategies which have been developed to deal with what have been perceived as problems demanding solution”.²¹ In opposition to this are the externalists, those concerned with the social, economic, political, and other contexts in which scholarship was created.²² Their chief danger, as has been amply noted by adherents of internalist approaches, is that of remaining ignorant of the intellectual core of their subjects’ work, of, as Jean-Louis Quantin has warned, “neglect[ing] . . . the actual contents and modes of production of scholarly works”.²³ Such neglect is a real concern. The intricacies of early modern scholarship are not easy to reconstruct and, as Arnaldo Momigliano observed long ago:

Housman’s homosexuality or Wilamowitz’s erratic behavior with his father-in-law Mommsen are easier to describe than Housman’s achievements as an editor of Manilius or Wilamowitz’s understanding of Aeschylus.²⁴

Nonetheless, a history of scholarship which ignored the social and other circumstances under which a work was produced would be reduced to the most limited form of analysis. It is necessary to say what a text *is*, but this must be paired with an explanation of *why* it is. This study attempts to chart a *via media* between internalism and externalism, paying close

²⁰ Classic examples of this are the several histories of classical philology: J. E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1903-1908), Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie* (Leipzig, 1921), and Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1968-1976).

²¹ Glenn W. Most, “preface”, in *Aporemata, Band 1: Collecting Fragments / Fragmente sammeln*, ed. Glenn W. Most (Göttingen, 1997), v, who unequivocally states that such a conviction is a good thing.

²² The externalists have been the majority in the Anglophone world. Examples include Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* (New Haven and London, 1995) and Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven and London, 2010).

²³ C. R. Ligota and J.-L. Quantin, eds., *History of Scholarship: A Selection of Papers from the Seminar on the History of Scholarship Held Annually at the Warburg Institute* (Oxford, 2006), 12.

²⁴ Arnaldo Momigliano, “New Paths of Classicism in the Nineteenth Century”, in *Studies on Modern Scholarship*, ed. G. W. Bowersock and T. J. Cornell (Berkeley, 1994), 223.

attention to Aubrey's methodologies and techniques, but balancing these with a solid understanding of the specific social and cultural contexts within which those methodologies and techniques were applied.

These theoretical allegiances can be translated into a short-list of existing scholarship upon which this thesis has been modelled. One could not hope for better paradigms of the single-author intellectual history than Anthony Grafton's *Joseph Scaliger* and G. J. Toomer's *John Selden*, both of which stand out as monuments of profound learning.²⁵ Equally, however, the present work owes a great debt to studies of particular disciplines across time and space, such as Mordechai Feingold's *Mathematicians' Apprenticeship* and Toomer's *Eastern Wisdom and Learning*, as well as to that classic of literary intellectual history, Joseph Levine's *Battle of the Books*.²⁶ Insofar as this thesis succeeds in making sense of the works of one scholar in one branch of scholarship, it owes its methodology and its conceptual framework to these earlier works and scholars, particularly to that brand of minute textual and historical criticism which can be traced through Grafton and Toomer back to the intellectual giants of the post-war Brown History of Mathematics Department: Otto Neugebauer, Abraham Sachs, Noel Swerdlow, David Pingree, and other doyens of the history of ancient mathematics whose students and students' students have exerted such a surprising, and defining, influence in the sphere of early modern intellectual history.²⁷

²⁵ Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1983-1993); G. J. Toomer, *John Selden: A Life in Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009). See also Anthony Grafton, review of *John Selden* by Toomer, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 74 (2011): 505-513.

²⁶ Mordechai Feingold, *The Mathematicians' Apprenticeship: Science, Universities and Society in England, 1560-1640* (Cambridge, 1984); G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1996); Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca and London, 1991).

²⁷ For these scholars, whose influence is only gradually being recognised, see, first of all, their works, and subsequently the obituaries of Neugebauer by David Pingree, "Otto Neugebauer, 26 May 1899 – 19 February 1990", *Isis* 82 (1991): 87-88, and Noel M. Swerdlow, "Otto E. Neugebauer (26 May 1899 – 19 February 1990)", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 137 (1993): 138-165.

Conclusion

Regardless of how one goes about it, history of scholarship is not an easy thing to write. All too often it can feel, as Otto Neugebauer once wrote, like “the study of wretched subjects”.²⁸ Nonetheless, as Neugebauer went on to observe, it is this painstaking, unjudgmental study of wrong theories, peculiar beliefs, and received misinformation that offers the best insight into earlier habits of scholarship, thought, and life. The present work is, ultimately, an attempt to understand Aubrey on his own terms and to recreate an entire pattern of thought and belief from the evidence of his surviving writings, to, in short, not state whether or not he *was* right, but to provide convincing explanations for *why* he thought he was right.

This thesis is also a plea for greater disciplinary inclusiveness in the study of literary and intellectual history in the long seventeenth century. The student of literature will hopefully see in the history of scholarship, as practised here, more similarities than differences. There is the same minute, painstaking study of a single text, followed by the conceptual leap required to establish its place within a larger intellectual and cultural sphere. There is the same willingness to go beyond the canonical and to recognise that sometimes even the most seemingly insignificant or ordinary texts hold the keys to far greater problems. Ultimately, history of scholarship is simply a subtly different way of looking at texts; one designed for those that personify the desire for knowledge of ourselves and the world around us, regardless of period or genre. For that reason, it has happily been deployed in this present study and it is to be hoped that our understanding of Aubrey and his work will be the better because of it.

More to the point, however, while the methodologies used in this thesis have been drawn from outside what has become the traditional literary-critical milieu, the texts they

²⁸ Otto Neugebauer, “The Study of Wretched Subjects”, *Isis* 42 (1951): 111,

have been brought to bear upon fall well within the pre-modern definition of “literature” as “knowledge acquired from reading or studying books, esp. the principal classical texts associated with humane learning”.²⁹ Aubrey’s antiquarianism was just as productive of “literature” as any poem or play and, most importantly, fell within the same broad category of learned writing. When Aubrey’s contemporary, Sir Thomas Pope Blount, published his notes towards a history of European literature in 1690 he made no distinction between antiquarian and poet, scientist and theologian: all fell within the sphere of the *orbis literarius* which he sought to map.³⁰ Aubrey, too, was part of that world and one of the purposes of this work is to restore him to it, not to read the *Lives* as part of the modern literary canon or to read the antiquarian works as part of some other canon of historiographical texts, but to take them both as examples of the rich, interdisciplinary learned culture of the early modern Republic of Letters.

²⁹ OED, s.v. 1.

³⁰ Sir Thomas Pope Blount, *Censura celebriorum authorum: sive tractatus in quo varia virorum doctorum de clarissimis cujusque seculi scriptoribus judicia traduntur . . .* (London, 1690).

Chapter One

Antiquarianism in England, 1660 – 1720:

Mapping the Discipline

A text can only be fully assessed when seen against the background of the literary tradition from which it derives. Only then can its originality, derivativeness, eccentricity, or conformity be revealed, and only then can it be read as a product of its own time and conventions. Siting Aubrey's antiquarian works within their disciplinary context requires a more complete picture of antiquarianism as practised in England in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century than is currently available. While this chapter makes no claims of fulfilling Momigliano's desideratum of a "History of Antiquarian Studies", it does attempt to sketch the contours of the discipline as it existed in Restoration England alongside contemporary advances on the continent. Together with the following chapter, which investigates Aubrey's more immediate personal networks, it provides a basis for reconstructing both the scholarship and the scholarly world within which he moved.

The word "antiquarianism" did not exist in the seventeenth century. It first appeared in English in the mid-eighteenth century and possessed opprobrious overtones from the outset. Among the earliest usages is one by William Warburton in a letter to Richard Hurd dated March 1761:

You say true, I have a tenderness in my temper which will make me miss poor Stukeley; for, not to say that he was one of my oldest acquaintance, there was in him such a mixture of simplicity, drollery, absurdity, ingenuity, superstition, and

antiquarianism . . . [a]ntiquarianism is, indeed, to true letters what specious funguses are to the oak; which never shoot out and flourish, till all the vigour and virtue of that monarch of the grove be effete and near exhausted.¹

Before this point there was no single English word to describe the body of literature produced by antiquaries.² Therefore, this chapter sketches the intellectual history of those habits and occupations - pursued by scholars described as antiquaries - before they were defined as antiquarianism. This distinction highlights the amorphous nature of the antiquarian project, which encompassed a continually changing sphere of learning and cultural expectation from the beginnings of the Italian renaissance until it was subsumed by the modern academic disciplines in the nineteenth century. This survey begins by investigating the materials proper to antiquarian research; what, that is, one had to engage with to be described as an antiquary. It then classifies and describes a series of antiquarian projects which existed in English scholarship during Aubrey's time. Finally, it assesses the place of Aubrey within this landscape.

The Materials of Antiquarian Research

The English antiquary of this period was defined by his engagement with a series of material artefacts that existed in a constant dialogue with texts. Contemporary catalogues of the antiquary's purview are consistent in identifying these artefacts. Sometimes they are vaguely described, as when Elisha Coles glossed "Antiquary" as one "skil'd in Antiquity" or when the *Glossographia Anglicana nova* delineated the antiquary as "one that is well vers'd in Antiquities, or the Customs and Learning of the Ancients", but a narrower definition was

¹ William Warburton, *Letters From a Late Eminent Prelate to One of His Friends* (Kidderminster, [1793?]), 264-265.

² Sir Thomas Browne coined the neologism "Antiquarism" in his *Hydriotaphia* (London, 1658), 72, but the word does not seem to have caught on.

more common.³ This definition generally included coins or medals, inscriptions, statuary, old customs, and “old words” within the antiquary’s purview.⁴ These are, however, perceptions of the antiquary from non-antiquarian sources.

There is no English work of this period which schematises antiquarianism from an internalist standpoint, but the sphere of knowledge outlined above can be usefully compared with that delineated by the French antiquary Jacques Spon in his 1685 *Miscellanea eruditae antiquitatis*.⁵ Spon used the terms “archaeographia” or “archaeologia” to describe the occupations of the antiquary and divided these into eight distinct activities.⁶ *Numismatographia*, the study of coins and medals, *epigrammatographia*, the study of inscriptions, and *iconographia*, the study of statues and pictures, have already been seen. *Glyptographia*, the study of carved gems (intaglios, and similar objects), does not seem to have existed as a separate discipline in England, usually being elided into either numismatics or sculpture. Likewise, *toreumatographia*, the study of reliefs, tended to be included within the remit of sculpture, in part due to the lack of available examples in England. *Architectonographia*, the description of buildings (Spon is thinking here exclusively of classical buildings), is a necessary addition to the existing English list and was central to many of Aubrey’s projects. *Bibliographia*, as Spon uses it, is quite close to modern bibliography, encompassing technical manuscript studies, diplomatic, and palaeography. Finally, *angeiographia* is for Spon

³ Elisha Coles, *An English dictionary* (London, 1677), *s. v.* “Antiquary”; *Glossographia Anglicana nova* (London, 1707), *s. v.* “Antiquary”.

⁴ Based upon descriptions found in Thomas Jordan, *Pictures of Passions, Fancies, and Affections Poetically Deciphered* (London, 1641), sig. Ev; Robert Baron, *Pocula castalia* (London, 1650), sig. ar; Sir William Davenant, *Gondibert* (London, 1651), 62; Charles Sorel, *The Extravagant Shepherd* (London, 1653), 2; Thomas Blount, *Glossographia* (London, 1661), sig. D2v; Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman* (London, 1661), chap. 12; Samuel Parker, *A Reproof of the Rehearsal Transposed* (London, 1673), 27; Louis Jobert, *The Knowledge of Medals, or, Instructions For Those Who Apply Themselves to the Study of Medals Both Ancient and Modern From the French* (London, 1697), 206-207; *A New Dictionary of the Canting Crew . . .* (London, 1699), sig. b2v; *The English Expositor Improv’d* (London, 1719), *sub verbum*; *A Catalogue of Choice and Valuable Books . . . the Collection Made by Thomas Rawlinson* (London, 1722), unpag., *sub* ‘Antiquarii quos vocant’; Conyers Middleton, *Bibliothecæ Cantabrigiæ ordinandæ methodus quedam* (Cambridge?, 1723?), 29; Abel Boyer, *The Royal Dictionary* (London, 1728), *sub* ‘medailliste’; *Bibliotheca Groenewegiana* (London, 1729), 59ff.; *Catalogus . . . Nicolai Prevost* (London, 1729), 84.

⁵ Jacques Spon, *Miscellanea eruditae antiquitatis* (Lyons, 1685), sig. ã3r-v.

⁶ Spon, *Miscellanea*, sig. ã3r.

something of a miscellaneous catch-all, embracing “*instrumenta*”, domestic, military, and naval, as well as vases, weights, and measures. It approaches a history of technology in its comprehensive remit. The only item regularly found in English sources but conspicuously missing from Spon's is the obscure “old customs”, presumably a reference to folklore.

Spon's division of antiquarian studies, while it differs slightly in weight and emphasis from the picture given in English sources, essentially maps on to the non-antiquarian perceptions of antiquarian scholarship cited above. A comparison of the two allows for a confident division of antiquarian subjects into six categories: coins and medals, inscriptions, sculpture, architecture, miscellaneous material objects (Spon's *angeiographia*), including inventions and technology, and manuscripts studied through diplomatic and palaeography. The succeeding sections will examine these categories in greater depth and establish the genealogies and contexts of their study.

Coins and Medals

There was no sphere of activity more ubiquitously identified with antiquaries than the collecting of ancient coins and medals. This had been common practice since the fifteenth century, if not before, and during the course of the following two centuries the learned world published a remarkable number of works related to the study of numismatics.⁷ Likewise, the gentlemanly occupation of collecting ancient coins was very common, encouraging the publication of an incredible number of books designed to aid the discerning collector in

⁷ See M. H. Crawford, C. R. Ligota, and J. B. Trapp, eds., *Medals and Coins from Budé to Mommsen* (London, 1990), *Numismatische Literatur 1500-1864: die Entwicklung der Methoden einer Wissenschaft*, ed. Peter Berghaus (Wiesbaden, 1995), and John Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious: The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1999).

determining the gaps in his collection, identifying rare pieces, and rationalising or systematising his acquisitions.

The extent to which numismatics had permeated the general learned consciousness can be gauged by the description of its study in the 1661 edition of Henry Peacham's *Compleat Gentleman*, a popular conduct manual which had begun its life in 1622 as a guide for William Howard, son of the earl of Arundel (discussed below).⁸ Peacham is clear why the collecting of coins enjoys such universal currency, for:

They are much easier to come by, than either Statues or Inscriptions: first, in regard of their numerous quantity: and secondly, by reason of their small bulke, which make the purchase cheaper, and the carriage lighter.⁹

Peacham then lists the chief writers on numismatics, beginning with Guillaume Budé and ending with the Jacobean Gresham professor of astronomy, Edward Brerewood.¹⁰ To this he adds catalogues and the other paraphernalia of the buyer:

Goltzius for Greek pieces; *Fulvius Orsinius* for Consulars; (with *Gorlaeus* his supplement;) *Occo* for Imperials. And for the rates at which they are now bought and sold in Germany, *Hulsius*. To these I add *Savot* his Discourse *des Medailles*.¹¹

⁸ ODNB, *sub* Henry Peacham.

⁹ Peacham, *Compleat Gentleman*, 113.

¹⁰ Edward Brerewood, *De ponderibus et pretiis veterum nummorum* . . . (London, 1614).

¹¹ Peacham, *Compleat Gentleman*, 114. Hubert Goltzius (1526-1583) published several numismatic works, but Peacham probably refers to his history of the Greek colonies in Italy, *Sicilia et Magna Graecia sive historiae urbium et populorum Graeciae ex antiquis numismatibus liber primus* (Antwerp, 1618), which contains plates of relevant coins. Fulvio Orsini, *Familiae Romanae quae reperiuntur in antiquis numismatibus ab urbe condita ad tempora divi Augusti* (Rome, 1577). Orsini (1529-1600) was an antiquarian in the circle of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese and used numismatic evidence to compile the *Familiae Romanae*, a dictionary of Roman patrician families (see Giuseppina Alessandra Cellini, *Il contributo di Fulvio Orsini alla ricerca antiquaria* [Rome, 2004]). Abraham Gorlaeus, *Thesaurus numismatum Romanorum aureorum argenteorum aereorum ad familias eius urbis spectantium usque ad obitem Augusti* (Paris, 1605). Adolph Occo III, *Impp. Romanorum numismata a Pompeio Magno ad Heraclium* (Antwerp, 1579), for whom see Camille Picqué, “Adolphe Occo III. Le médecin numismate d’Augsbourg et sa médaille au squelette Vesalien”, *Revue belge de numismatique et de sigillographie* 55 (1899): 44-77. Levinus Hulsius, *Impp. Romanorum numismatum series à C. Iulio Caesare ad Rudolphum II*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt, 1605). Louis Savot, *Discours sur les medalles antiques* (Paris, 1627), discussed medals, rather than coins, and represented the latest scholarship on the subject, correcting errors by de Gorris, Scaliger, and others.

The addition of a work listing current prices is telling. Numismatics seems to have held particular interest for Englishmen as coins were amongst the few forms of Roman antiquities which existed in Great Britain in any considerable number. This suggests that as early as the 1660s, English collectors were looking to the continent to swell their collections, a trade that increased as the century drew to a close.

In fact, the collection of coins and medals in England seems to have enjoyed a considerable upsurge towards the end of the seventeenth century, judging from the publication in quick succession of Obadiah Walker's *Greek and Roman history illustrated by coins & medals*, an English translation of Louis Jobert's *Science des medailles*, and John Evelyn's *Numismata: a discourse of medals, ancient and modern*, in 1692 and 1697.¹² Of these, Evelyn's is especially revealing in its concern to guide the would-be collector in the practicalities of the pursuit. The best sources for new acquisitions in his eyes are the "Countrey People", though the easiest way to establish a substantial collection is to buy an already existing one.¹³ Evelyn also warns his readers against forgeries. Despite this, much of the *Numismata* is padded out with classical quotations and suggests that technical knowledge of numismatics was not always what the gentlemanly connoisseur desired; apposite lines from the ancients combined with lavish plates of rare pieces would do equally well. On the continent, the proliferation of numismatic studies was such that at least two bibliographies of numismatic works existed by 1720: Philippe Labbe's *Bibliotheca bibliothecarum*, and Anselmo Maria Banduri's *Numismata imperatorum Romanorum*.¹⁴

¹² Obadiah Walker, *Greek and Roman History Illustrated by Coins & Medals* (London, 1692); Jobert, *Knowledge of Medals*; John Evelyn, *Numismata: a Discourse of Medals, Ancient and Modern* (London, 1697).

¹³ Evelyn, *Numismata*, 198-199.

¹⁴ Philippe Labbe, *Bibliotheca bibliothecarum curis secundis auctior; Accedit Bibliotheca nummaria in duas partes tributa*, 2nd ed. (Rouen, 1672); Anselmo Maria Banduri, *Numismata imperatorum Romanorum a Trajano Decio ad Palæologos Augustos: Accessit Bibliotheca nummaria, sive auctorum qui de re nummariâ scripserunt*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1718). These works tended also to be bound with numismatic treatises and sold as a select library for the aspiring collector, one example being Adam Rechenberg's *Historiae rei nummariae veteris scriptores aliquot insigniores ad lectionem sacrorum et*

Some of the largest new English collections were memorialised by Nicola Francesco Haym in his *Del tesoro Britannico*, the first two volumes of which were published in 1719-1720.¹⁵ Haym's ambitious plan was to produce a multi-volume work -- akin to that of Montfaucon in France -- that would contain descriptions and engravings of the coins, gems, statues, "Weights, Rings, Utensils for Sacrifices, Lamps, Urns, Inscriptions, &c." in private English collections that had never before been published.¹⁶ He published only two of the projected volumes, both devoted to coins, but what he did achieve provides some insight into the collection of coins for scholarly and virtuosic purposes in early eighteenth-century England. The first volume contained items from twelve collections, only one of which, the University of Oxford's in the Ashmolean Museum, was public.¹⁷ The remainder included the private collections of wealthy men such as the Duke of Devonshire, the Earl of Pembroke, and Sir Andrew Fountaine, as well as other prominent cabinets, including those of Sir Hans Sloane and the antiquary John Kemp. The second volume was devoted entirely to the collection of the Duke of Devonshire and contained a vast number of previously unknown coins from the eastern Mediterranean states of the Hellenistic period. Many of these undoubtedly derived from the collection of William Sherard, formerly British Consul at Smyrna, which the duke had purchased not long before.¹⁸

The immense literature and early specialisation in numismatics -- more so than in other antiquarian fields -- was not without its critics. Joseph Addison, in particular, in his *Dialogues upon the usefulness of ancient medals*, harshly criticised the minutiae of numismatic

profanorum utiles, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1692), which contains, besides Labbe's *Bibliotheca*, Matthaeus Host's *Historia antiquitas*, Alessandro Sardi's *Liber de nummis*, and Guillaume Budé's *De asse et partibus eius*.

¹⁵ Nicola Francesco Haym, *Del tesoro Britannico* . . . , 2 vols. (London, 1719-1720). For Haym see Lowell Lindgren, "The Accomplishments of the Learned and Ingenious Nicola Francesco Haym (1678-1729)", *Studi musicali* 16 (1987): 247-380.

¹⁶ Haym, *Del tesoro Britannico*, i. iv.

¹⁷ Haym, *Del tesoro Britannico*, i. xi.

¹⁸ H. E. Pagan, "Andreas Fountaine eques auratus A.A.A.F. III Vir", *British Numismatics Journal* 63 (1993), 119. Portions of Sherard's collection were also published by Edmund Chishull in his *Antiquitates Asiaticae* (London, 1728).

scholarship and argued for a reorientation of numismatics towards the aesthetic, valuing coins and medals as works of beauty and as means of illustrating and illuminating the ancient poets.¹⁹ In doing so, Addison was striking a blow for the Ancients in the “Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns” and inaugurating an era of English scholarship that validated the study of material antiquities by the light they could throw upon literary texts: a reversal of trends extant in the previous century.²⁰

Inscriptions

After coins and medals, classical inscriptions held the most enduring fascination for antiquaries. The techniques and methodologies for interpreting and representing epigraphic material had been laid down in the sixteenth century.²¹ The seventeenth century was a time, not of innovation, but of compilation and systematisation. The first work that attempted a systematic collection of Latin and Greek inscriptions from across the ancient world -- Martin Smet's *Inscriptionum antiquarum* -- was posthumously published under the guidance of Justus Lipsius in 1588.²² At the same time, William Camden was bringing out the first editions of the *Britannia*, inaugurating the study of epigraphy in England, and a few years later Camden's friend the Dutch scholar Jan Gruter published an expanded version of Smet's collection

¹⁹ Joseph Addison, *Dialogues Upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals Especially in Relation to the Latin and Greek Poets* (London, 1726).

²⁰ Similar comparisons of poetry and the visual arts appear in Joseph Spence, *Polymetis: Or an Enquiry Into the Agreement Between the Works of the Roman Poets and the Remains of the Ancient Artists* (London, 1747) and *Aedes Pembrochianae: a New Account of the Statues, Bustos, Relievos, Paintings, Medals, and Other Antiquities and Curiosities in Wilton-House . . .*, 13th ed. (Salisbury, 1798).

²¹ William Stenhouse, *Reading Inscriptions and Writing Ancient History: Historical Scholarship in the Late Renaissance* (London, 2005).

²² Martin Smet, *Inscriptionum antiquarum quae passim per Europam*, ed. Justus Lipsius (Leiden, 1588).

which would become the basic reference work for epigraphic studies during the following hundred years.²³

After this era of compilation, the focus in epigraphy shifted and England, previously a backwater lacking sufficient materials to compete with the important discoveries being made around the Mediterranean, was thrust briefly into the limelight.²⁴ Most earlier epigraphists had concentrated on Latin inscriptions, largely due to their greater availability in those parts of the post-Latin world where humanist scholarship was practised.²⁵ This began to change in the late sixteenth century with an increase in European communication with the Levant -- as evidenced by George Dousa's collections of inscriptions brought back from a visit to Constantinople and published in 1599 -- but the first great collection of Greek inscriptions came somewhat later and was collected by an Englishman, Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel.²⁶ These were the famous Arundel Marbles. Containing sculptures as well as inscriptions, the collection had been assembled by the earl's contacts in the Levant, Sir Thomas Roe, English ambassador at Constantinople, and the Reverend William Petty, the latter of whom served as the earl's principal agent in acquiring antiquities. A substantial proportion of the marbles had been delivered to Arundel House in London by January 1627 when John Selden, Sir Robert Cotton, Patrick Young, and Richard James famously met in the house's gardens to examine the inscriptions thereon.²⁷ The result was the publication of the *Marmora Arundelliana*, in which Selden transcribed, translated, and commented upon the

²³ Jan Gruter, Joseph Justus Scaliger, and Markus Welsler, *Inscriptiones antiquae totius orbis Romani* (Heidelberg, 1603). For early epigraphy in England, see also Leslie W. Hepple, "John Dee, Harleian MS. 473, and the Early Recording of Roman Inscriptions in Britain", *Britannia* 33 (2002): 177-181.

²⁴ See Gerald Toomer, *John Selden: A Life in Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009), i. 34-35.

²⁵ One important exception is Cyriac of Ancona; see Edward W. Bodnar, *Cyriacus of Ancona and Athens* (Bruxelles-Berchem, 1960) and Jean Colin, *Cyriaque d'Ancone : le voyageur, le marchand, l'humaniste* (Paris, 1981).

²⁶ George Dousa, *De itinere suo Constantinopolitano, epistola. Accesserunt veteres inscriptiones Byzantio & ex reliqua Graecia, cum quibusdam epistolis* (Leiden, 1599). For Arundel, see Elizabeth Angelicoussis, "The Collection of Classical Sculptures of the Earl of Arundel, 'Father of Vertu in England'", *Journal of the History of Collections* 16 (2004): 143-159; Mary F. S. Hervey, *The Life, Correspondence & Collections of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel* (Cambridge, 1921); David Howarth, *Lord Arundel and his Circle* (New Haven and London, 1985).

²⁷ Selden's account of the first scholarly examination of the marbles appears at John Selden, *Marmora Arundelliana* (London, 1628), sig. ¶r.

inscriptions. The chief epigraphic treasure was the Parian Marble, a unique Greek chronological table that was to play a central role in the reconstruction of ancient chronology, but the more minor inscriptions were of importance as well in opening up a previously lesser-known field of epigraphy and providing England with its first corpus of non-native epigraphic material.

The English responses to this and subsequent developments in epigraphy were underwhelming. Individual English antiquaries, Aubrey amongst them, collected more native inscriptions, but the systematisations of epigraphic knowledge that were being performed by Gruter's continental successors -- especially Thomas Reinesius, Jacques Spon, Johann Georg Graevius, Marquard Gude, and Scipione Maffei -- were not matched in English scholarship.²⁸ The two major epigraphic studies produced in this period, Prideaux's *Marmora Oxoniensia* and Fleetwood's *Inscriptionum antiquarum sylloge* are of quite another character.

Humphrey Prideaux's 1676 *Marmora Oxoniensia* was intended to be a virtuosic discussion of the classical inscriptions then at Oxford, largely deriving from the earlier Arundel collection, padded out with an essay by the early seventeenth-century chronologer, Thomas Lydiat, on the Parian Marble.²⁹ The texts of the inscriptions, however, are bedevilled with errors and according to Thomas Hearne the more mature Prideaux was "highly sensible of this neglect, and for that reason does not care to discourse with any one about the

²⁸ Reineius, Graevius, and Gude edited updated editions of Gruter's *Corpus*, cf. Thomas Reinesius, *Syntagma inscriptionum antiquarum cum primis Romæ veteris: quarum omissa est recensio in vasto Jani Gruteri opere cuius isthoc dici possit Supplementum* (Leipzig, 1682), and Jan Gruter, *Inscriptiones antiquae totius orbis Romani*, 2 vols. in 4, ed. Johann Georg Graevius, Marquard Gude, et al. (Amsterdam, 1707). Spon published material supplementary to Gruter's *Corpus* in his *Miscellanea eruditæ antiquitatis*. Maffei wrote a field-changing study of epigraphy, the "Ars critica lapidaria", which was published in the first volume of Sebastiano Donato's *Ad novum thesaurum veterum inscriptionum Cl. V. Ludovici Antonii Muratorii supplementum*, 2 vols. (Lucca, 1765), but his views on the subject were already known to the English scholarly community through his "Letter from Count Scipio Maffei of Verona, to the Right Honourable, the Countess Adalais Felix Canossa Tering of Seefeld. Being a Comparison of the Use of Inscriptions and Medals", published in England in Richard Rawlinson's translation of Nicolas Lenglet Dufresnoy's *New Method of Studying History . . .*, 2 vols. (London, 1728), i. 323ff.

²⁹ Humphrey Prideaux, *Marmora Oxoniensia, ex Arundellianis, Seldenianis, aliisque conflata* (Oxford, 1676).

edition”.³⁰ The *Marmora* is characteristic of much English philological scholarship of the period in its focus on chronology, but has little to recommend it as an edition except for the well-executed engravings of a selection of the marbles.³¹

In contrast, William Fleetwood's 1691 *Inscriptionum antiquarum sylloge* was a textbook, intended for students at Cambridge.³² It reproduced significant inscriptions from the earlier collections of Gruter, Reinesius, and Spon, together with brief notes, but contained no original contributions to the field. The fact that a collection of epigraphic material was thought necessary for the university market, however, suggests its importance in English scholarship during this period, even if the English province of the Republic of Letters was largely a consumer rather than a producer of epigraphic literature. Shortly after the publication of Fleetwood's textbook, however, the discovery of inscriptions in the ruins of Palmyra by a group of English scholars and merchants brought epigraphy back into the centre of English scholarly debate, an episode discussed in more detail below.

Sculpture

Sculpture's place within antiquarian studies has largely been obscured in recent literature focusing on antiquarianism (as opposed to collecting), perhaps in part because the acquisition of classical statuary and reliefs by early modern Britons rarely resulted in the publication of texts.³³ Nonetheless, the collection, study, and display of sculpture was a central antiquarian

³⁰ *Letters Written by Eminent Persons in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 2 vols., ed. John Walker (London, 1813), i. 204 (Thomas Hearne to Henry Dodwell, 14 May 1710).

³¹ For Prideaux's later career (and an unflattering assessment of the *Marmora*) see Gerald Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: the Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1996), 290-292.

³² William Fleetwood, *Inscriptionum antiquarum sylloge in duas partes distributa* (London, 1691).

³³ The classic study of English sculpture collections is Michaelis, *Ancient Marbles in Great Britain*. This can now be supplemented with Edward Chaney, ed., *The Evolution of English Collecting: the Reception of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods* (New Haven and London, 2003); Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and*

pursuit in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Henry Peacham, in his *Compleat Gentleman* (which, it should be remembered, was originally written for the use of William Howard, son of the collector earl of Arundel), grouped the collecting of statues with the other aristocratic antiquarian pursuits of coins and inscriptions, writing that “[i]t is not enough for an ingenious Gentleman to behold these with a vulgar eye: but he must be able to distinguish them, and tell who and what they be”.³⁴ This was to be accomplished by general historical and poetical learning, close acquaintance with existing collections (both by autopsy and through books), and the company of the learned.³⁵

Compared to the widespread interest in both coins and inscriptions, there was comparatively little collecting of sculpture in England during the earlier seventeenth century.³⁶ Peacham was undoubtedly accurate in identifying two reasons for this: its “dead costlinesse” and England's distance from the centre of the Roman world, where “the means to come by them [are] easier”.³⁷ As with inscriptions, but to a much greater extent, sculpture had to be imported to England from the Mediterranean countries and this meant that whilst Italian princes and prelates had been assembling collections of statues since the beginning of the Renaissance, English participation in this tradition came late.³⁸

There were further difficulties, as evidenced by the attempts of the Earl of Arundel to import sculptures from Italy and the Ottoman Empire. The Italian market was limited by export restrictions and the eastern Mediterranean, though theoretically more open, had its

Collections From the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century (New Haven and London, 2007); Jonathan Scott, *The Pleasure of Antiquity: British Collectors of Greece and Rome* (New Haven, 2003).

³⁴ Peacham, *Compleat Gentleman*, 109.

³⁵ Peacham, *Compleat Gentleman*, 109-110. Peacham's preferred scholarly reference for the collector of statues was the oft-reprinted *Antiquarum statuarum urbis Romae . . . icones* (Rome, 1583).

³⁶ See, however, Donna Kurtz, “The Concept of the Classical Past in Tudor and early Stuart England”, *Journal of the History of Collections* 20 (2008): 189-204, for some early examples.

³⁷ Peacham, *Compleat Gentleman*, 105, 109.

³⁸ For this Italian prehistory see Kathleen Wren Christian, *Empire Without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c.1350-1527* (New Haven and London, 2010).

own complications. Sir Thomas Roe, writing from Constantinople to Arundel in 1623 complained that though:

On Asia side, about Troy, Zizicum, and all the way to Aleppo, are innumerable pillars, statues, and tombstones of marble, with inscriptions in Greeke: these may be fetcht at charge and secrettly: but yff we ask leaue, it cannot be obteyned.³⁹

Nonetheless, large collections from both Italy and the eastern Mediterranean were sent by Arundel's agents, chiefly William Petty, back to England during the 1620s and displayed in the gardens of Arundel House.⁴⁰ Petty is of importance to the antiquarian side of these collections. In his old age he attempted to enlist the Oxford antiquary, John Greaves, in an expedition to Italy and Athens.⁴¹ He also appears to be the author of an anonymous guide to the acquisition of antiquities in the Ottoman domains, now in the Bodleian Library, and was something of a celebrity after his return from the east.⁴² It is notable in his manuscript that the continuous exportation of antiquities from Greece by other Europeans had already necessitated extensive excavation on his part in the first decades of the seventeenth century.⁴³

Besides the Earl of Arundel's, the other substantial collection of ancient statues in England during the first half of the seventeenth century was that formed by Charles I.⁴⁴ The royal collection had a greater admixture of modern sculpture in it than Arundel's and, though

³⁹ Michaelis, *Ancient marbles*, 187.

⁴⁰ Angelicoussis, "Collection of Classical Sculptures", observes that the material brought back was often of poor quality, but that the presence of *any* classical sculpture in England was sufficiently novel to assure the lasting fame of the collection. It is, however, necessary to question the largely aesthetic judgments made by art historians about the relative importance of classical sculptures in the early modern period (a tradition dating back to Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: the Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* [New Haven and London, 1981]) when considering collections from an antiquarian point of view.

⁴¹ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1637-8*, ed. John Bruce (London, 1869), *sub* 10 February 1638.

⁴² The attribution to Petty is made on internal evidence in the edition by Rachael Poole, "A Seventeenth-Century Archaeological Explorer and His Methods", *Classical Review* 26 (1912): 109-114.

⁴³ Some parts of the Greek archipelago, especially the Venetian dominions had already been so often searched as to no longer be worthy of notice (Poole, "A Seventeenth-Century Archaeological Explorer", 113).

⁴⁴ For the royal collection see Arthur MacGregor, ed., *The Late King's Goods: Collections, Possessions and Patronage of Charles I in the Light of the Commonwealth Sale Inventories* (London and Oxford, 1989); Jerry Brotton, *The Sale of the Late King's Goods: Charles I and His Art Collection* (London, 2006).

partially sold off during the Commonwealth, was largely recovered at the Restoration.⁴⁵ As it was never put to any antiquarian uses, it is beyond the scope of the present study. Other than these two great pushes forward, the collecting of sculptures in seventeenth-century England remained marginal, and decidedly unantiquarian in its outlook, a state of affairs that only began to change towards the very end of Aubrey's life. Antiquaries with an interest in sculpture were thus confined to the material present in these two collections or those reproduced in the numerous continental sets of engravings, the most famous probably being the works of the French artist, François Perrier.⁴⁶

Architecture

English scholars faced the same difficulty in the study of architecture as they did in the study of sculpture: a lack of available materials. There was a rich tradition of architectural studies of Rome, beginning with works such as Flavio Biondo's *Roma ristaurata* in the fifteenth century and Georg Fabricius's *Roma illustrata* in the sixteenth, and culminating in the architectural draughts of Antoine Desgodets in the late seventeenth.⁴⁷ The continental literature could draw upon a vast array of surviving buildings, while the English were faced with only a handful of ancient, or supposedly ancient, structures, mostly too ruined or too rebuilt to offer the same potential for scholarly investigation.

As a result, most English antiquarian works on architecture, or those containing architectural themes, were written by travellers. John Greaves's 1646 *Pyramidographia* – a

⁴⁵ David Howarth, "Charles I, Sculpture and Sculptors", in *The Late King's Goods*, ed. MacGregor, 108.

⁴⁶ These were Perrier's *Segmenta nobilium signorum et statuarum* (Rome, 1638) and its companion volume, *Icones et segmenta illustrium e marmore tabularum* (Rome, 1645). See Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, 21, where the case is made for Perrier's works doing much to establish a continent-wide canon of classical statuary.

⁴⁷ For a survey of this literature, see Johann Albrecht Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 2nd ed. (Hamburg and Leipzig, 1716), 147-164.

description of the Great Pyramids with detailed measurements – was one important example, while Sir George Wheler's 1682 *Journey into Greece* was another.⁴⁸ Wheler also published a study of the architecture of early Christian churches, apparently at the suggestion of the Anglo-Saxonist and ecclesiastical antiquarian George Hickes.⁴⁹ It would not be until the mid-eighteenth century, inspired by the architectural drawings of Desgodets, that Robert Wood, John Bouverie, and James Dawkins would begin the great project of systematic architectural and archaeological study of the ancient world which became associated with the Society of Dilettanti and English scholarship in general.

England was not without its practical architects during this period. Perhaps the greatest of these, Inigo Jones, initiated the central architectural-antiquarian debate in seventeenth-century English scholarship with the posthumous publication in 1655 of his theories on the origins of Stonehenge.⁵⁰ While prehistoric sites, particularly the massive henges at Stonehenge and Avebury, began to attract considerable attention from English scholars after the middle of the century, mediaeval architecture remained neglected until Aubrey's *Chronologia Architectonica*.

Other Branches of Study

The foregoing were by far the most common material artefacts to awake the interest of the antiquary, but in practice most customs, practices, or material relics of the ancient world could fall within their remit. Some of the more popular topics included ancient military practices, such as Marcus Meibom's essay on the design of triremes, *De fabrica triremium liber*

⁴⁸ John Greaves, *Pyramidographia* (London 1646); Sir George Wheler, *A Journey Into Greece* (London, 1682).

⁴⁹ Sir George Wheler, *An Account of the Churches, or Places of Assembly, of the Primitive Christians . . .* (London, 1689). Wheler dedicated the work to Hickes and in the dedication mentions the latter's suggestion (sig. A2r).

⁵⁰ See chapter three.

or Johann Heinrich Boecler's study of the Roman Legions, or clothing, such as Ottavio Ferrari's comprehensive *De re vestiaria*, and the physical practicalities of classical dining.⁵¹ Small artefacts, especially rings and lamps, had a growing literature surrounding them, as did ancient weights and measures.⁵² Robert Plot delivered a paper "concerning the Sepulchral Lamps of the Ancients, Shewing the Possibility of Their being Made Divers Waies" to the Oxford Philosophical Society in 1684.⁵³ The study of weights and measures was a particularly English occupation, with John Greaves's *Discourse of the Romane foot, and denarius* of 1647 followed later in the century by Richard Cumberland's *Essay towards the recovery of the Jewish measures and weights* and Edward Bernard's *De mensuris et ponderibus antiquis*.⁵⁴ Likewise, Aubrey's own gestures towards the study of weights and measures are considered in a later chapter.

Diplomatic and Palaeography

Of the various antiquarian arts discussed here, diplomatic was the youngest. Earlier scholars had made claims about the age or authenticity of documents on the bases of script, ink, paper, or other physical characteristics, but the first complete study of manuscripts as

⁵¹ Marcus Meibom, *De fabrica triremium liber* (Amsterdam, 1671); Johann Heinrich Boecler, *Dissertatio de legione Romana* (Strasbourg, 1670); Ottavio Ferrari, *De re vestiaria libri septem* (Padua, 1654). See also Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 548-590, for a contemporary bibliography of these subjects, and Peter Burke, "Images as Evidence in Seventeenth-Century Europe", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003): 277-278 for a further, partial, bibliography.

⁵² See Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 569-571, for rings.

⁵³ Robert Plot, "A Discourse concerning the Sepulchral Lamps of the Ancients, Shewing the Possibility of Their being Made Divers Waies, Read before the Philosophical Society of Oxford, May the 7. 1684", *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 14 (1684): 806-811.

⁵⁴ John Greaves, *A Discourse of the Romane Foot, and Denarius* (London, 1647); Richard Cumberland, *Essay Towards the Recovery of the Jewish Measures and Weights* (London, 1686; 2nd ed., 1699); Edward Bernard, *De mensuris et ponderibus antiquis libri tres*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1688) -- it had first been published as an appendix to Edward Pococke's *Commentary on the Prophecy of Hosea* (Oxford, 1685).

artefacts was Jean Mabillon's *De re diplomatica* of 1681.⁵⁵ Mabillon's project had grown out of a response to Daniel Papenbroeck's 1675 accusation that the Merovingian charters in the archives of the Abbey of Saint-Denis were forged and, as such, *De re diplomatica* was concerned first and foremost with establishing rules and procedures by which documents could be either verified or condemned as fakes.⁵⁶ *De re diplomatica* was divided into six books, covering questions of script, ink, writing material, styles of address, forms of seals (this harking back to earlier numismatic studies), the locations of archives within France, and, in the final two books, engravings of representative ancient documents.

Mabillon's relative caution in dismissing documents as forgeries -- he had stressed that even forged documents could contain genuine traditions -- did not sit well with the Anglo-Saxonist George Hickes, who in his 1705 *Linguarum veterum septentrionalium thesaurus* condemned the French scholar's methods.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the new discipline of diplomatic rapidly became central to the antiquarian endeavour and saw additional contributions from scholars across Europe. Notable early examples were Leibniz's *Codex juris gentium diplomaticus* and Bernard de Montfaucon's extension of the principles laid down by Mabillon to the study of Greek, as well as Latin, manuscripts.⁵⁸ The reception of Mabillon's work was particularly fertile in England, where, despite Hickes's doubts, the new science of palaeography was developed by Edward Bernard and applied to specifically insular problems by Humfrey Wanley.

⁵⁵ Jean Mabillon, *De re diplomatica* (Paris, 1681). For Mabillon see P. MacDonald, "Mabillon and the Birth of Diplomatics", *Sciences religieuses: Studies in Religion* 8 (1979): 441-448; Blandine Barret-Kriegel, *Jean Mabillon* (Paris, 1988); Carlrichard Brühl, "Die Entwicklung der diplomatischen Methode im Zusammenhang mit dem Erkennen von Fälschungen" in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter: Internationaler Kongress der Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, ed. Horst Fuhrmann, 6 vols. (Hanover, 1988-1990), iii. 11-27.

⁵⁶ See Jean Mabillon, *De re diplomatica*, rev. ed. (Paris, 1709), 1-3, 11; Alfred Hiatt, "Diplomatic Arts: Hickes Against Mabillon in the Republic of Letters", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70 (2009): 351-373.

⁵⁷ Hiatt, "Diplomatic Arts", esp. 363-368.

⁵⁸ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Codex juris gentium diplomaticus*, 2 vols. (Hanover, 1693-1700); Bernard de Montfaucon, *Palaeographia Graeca* (Paris, 1708).

Bernard had published his *Orbis eruditi literatura à Characteres Samaritico deducta* in 1689.⁵⁹ This was a large engraved sheet consisting of a comparative table of twenty-nine ancient alphabets, attempting to show their ultimate origin in the Samaritan script. For Bernard the latter was the script “of Abraham, the Phoenicians, and the Samaritans, 5,509 years before Christ”, and could be recovered from ancient Jewish and African coins as well as the celebrated Samaritan Pentateuch.⁶⁰ Bernard's Samaritan, though not the ancestor of all the scripts he described, was, however, a close approximation to what is now recognised as Palaeo-Hebrew and his distinctions between the various oriental alphabets which he listed represented an important contribution to English oriental scholarship.

Wanley, however, found fault with Bernard's table, for reasons that are not entirely clear, but which are probably related to its relative emphasis on Semitic and Greek scripts at the expense of Latin. In the summer of 1697 he began what was initially meant to be an improvement on Bernard's table, but which ultimately became an ambitious plan for a British *De re diplomatica*. This would contain engravings of all Runic, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and Norman scripts used in the British Isles, discussions of “Points, Accents, [N]otes or Figures for Numbers, Weights, Measures, Music, &c.” and a theory for distinguishing genuine manuscripts from false.⁶¹ This plan, like Aubrey's similar attempt in the *Chronologia Graphica* (see chapter six), never came to fruition, and the manuscript which Wanley assembled is now lost, but a substantial portion of the matter he had prepared was printed by Hickes in his *Thesaurus*.⁶²

⁵⁹ Edward Bernard, *Orbis eruditi literatura à Characteres Samaritico deducta* (Oxford, 1689).

⁶⁰ Bernard, *Orbis*.

⁶¹ British Library MS Sloane 4061, fol. 268; printed at *Letters of Humfrey Wanley: Palaeographer, Anglo-Saxonist, Librarian, 1672-1726*, ed. P. L. Heyworth (Oxford, 1989), 469-472.

⁶² For the history of Wanley's "Book of Hands" see his *Letters*, 67-68.

The English Discipline: Chorography and County History

The branches of antiquarianism outlined above were common to European learned cultures and were practised from Madrid to Bratislava throughout the early modern period. Unique to England, however, was the highly developed sub-discipline known as “county history”. Evolving out of chorography, the branch of geography which consisted of the “description of some particular place, as Region, Ile, citie” rather than “the description of the whole world, that is to say, of heaven and earth”, it came to be a specifically antiquarian genre which was most concerned with the political, cultural, and economic impingements of humanity upon the landscape, manifested in a focus upon buildings, monuments, the ownership of land, and the genealogies of landholders.⁶³

County history as it existed in Aubrey’s time was largely imitative of Camden’s *Britannia*, arguably the single most influential product of English antiquarianism. Within this tradition, a series of innovative texts written early in the seventeenth century, notably William Burton’s *Description of Leicestershire* (1622) and William Somner’s *Antiquities of Canterbury* (1640), culminated in a second epoch-making work, William Dugdale’s *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656).⁶⁴ Dugdale turned away from the itinerarial methods and focus upon material remains (often funeral monuments) of earlier county historians, instead “diligently searching into the vast Treasuries of publique Records, besides a multitude of Manuscripts, originall Charters and Evidences in private hands”.⁶⁵ Dugdale is often cited as the model for many of his successors, but in Aubrey’s case, at least, no more than lip-service was paid to the former’s emphasis on the importance of medieval governmental records; Aubrey’s two county

⁶³ Thomas Blundeville, *His Exercises...* (London, 1594), 134. Aubrey was recommended a later edition of the *Exercises* by his friend John Lydall (Bodleian MS. Aubrey 12, fol. 304r).

⁶⁴ William Burton, *The Description of Leicester Shire; Containing Matters of Antiquitye, History, Armorye, and Genealogy* (London, 1622); William Somner, *The Antiquities of Canterbury* (London, 1640); William Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (London, 1656).

⁶⁵ Dugdale, *Warwickshire*, sig. br.

histories fall squarely within the older, artefact-focused, itinerarial tradition which stretched back to Camden and even further to Biondo Flavio's *Italia illustrata* of 1474.⁶⁶

Chorographical antiquarianism was a flourishing sub-discipline within English antiquarian studies, but it is important not to overrate its importance or see it as the defining aspect of antiquarianism in England.⁶⁷ As outlined above, most antiquaries focused on the recovery and study of physical artefacts from the classical past. While many also engaged in the study of England's medieval past, this remained a branch of knowledge largely confined to heralds and country gentlemen until well into the seventeenth century; humanist antiquarians, such as Camden, who bridged the gap between traditional antiquarianism and chorography were comparatively rare. Of these, Aubrey was, perhaps, the most significant after Camden himself.

Towards a Classification of Antiquarian Projects in England, 1660-1720

The previous sections have outlined what antiquaries studied. This section will identify a series of antiquarian projects contemporary or near-contemporary with Aubrey's own work and use them as a series of lenses through which to identify broader trends and interests in the antiquarianism of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England. To attempt a comprehensive survey of antiquarian projects during the period would be impossible and subject to constant revision as new manuscripts or other records of antiquarian activity came

⁶⁶ Biondo Flavio, *Italy Illuminated*, mult. vols., ed. and trans. Jeffrey A. White (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2005-). William Rockett recognises in Biondo's *Italia* the methodological and structural predecessor of Camden's *Britannia* ("Historical Topography and British History in Camden's *Britannia*", *Renaissance and Reformation*, N.S. 14 [1990]: 71-80).

⁶⁷ Earlier studies of English antiquarianism tend to do exactly this: see e.g., Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1995), and Angus Vine, *In Defiance of Time: Antiquarian Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2010).

to light. The goal here is far more modest: simply to identify a handful of projects that were notable for their methodological or cultural impact and which exemplify larger trends in contemporary antiquarian studies.

By the 1660s, antiquarianism was beginning to fragment as greater knowledge and data provoked greater specialisation. Throughout the period a considerable degree of overlap and interpenetration still occurred, but antiquarian studies were already beginning to fall into several broad categories, which were largely, but not entirely, dependent upon the origins of their practitioners. These may be denominated "the university antiquaries", "the ecclesiastical antiquaries", "the antiquarian virtuosi", and "the chorographical antiquaries", all of whom pursued different antiquarian projects. The university antiquaries may in turn be sub-divided by the topics of their study into the classical, the oriental, and the medieval. Representative examples of each will be considered in turn.

University Antiquaries: Classical and Oriental

If any single group would have been recognised as defining English scholarship in the latter part of the seventeenth century, it would have been the Oxford Hellenists and orientalist, amongst whom were the prominent figures Edward Bernard, Henry Dodwell, John Hudson, Thomas Smith, and others.⁶⁸ This loose grouping encompassed a number of scholars active between the mid-seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, who were united by a shared interest in Greek, Arabic, and Persian texts. Combined, they produced a remarkable scholarly output, chiefly published by the university press and serving as a monument to John Fell's

⁶⁸ For a survey of this scholarship see Mordechai Feingold, "Oriental Studies", in *The History of the University of Oxford, Volume IV: Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford, 1997), 449-503.

programme of scholarly publishing for the university.⁶⁹ None of them were antiquaries in the narrow sense, although several produced antiquarian monographs (one notable example being Edward Bernard's 1685 *De mensuris et ponderibus antiquis*, discussed above). They did, however, use antiquarian techniques and studies as tools with which to solve philological and historical problems. In this, they were progressing towards the synthesis between antiquarianism and narrative history that Momigliano has seen as occurring later in the eighteenth century, but for the most part they shied clear of writing narrative history themselves, preferring to edit and comment upon classical texts.

The two most substantial achievements of this group were Henry Dodwell's *De cyclis* and John Hudson's edition of the minor Greek geographers. Dodwell had already published a refutation of the authenticity of the supposed Phoenician historian "Sanchoniathon" in 1691.⁷⁰ This had implications for biblical chronology, as Sanchoniathon's outline of ancient history was conveniently reconcilable to that in the Old Testament, and, indeed, was being used to prop up biblical authenticity by Dodwell's contemporary, Richard Cumberland.⁷¹ Dodwell's chief interest, however, was in the sources of Greek history, which led him to prepare *De cyclis*, published in 1701.⁷² *De cyclis* examined the principal methods of calendrical computation in the Greek and Roman worlds, reconciled them as much as possible, and presented newly adjusted annals of classical history reflecting Dodwell's calculations.

⁶⁹ The Arabic and Levantine studies of this group have been meticulously discussed by Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom, passim*, but their Greek work remains largely unexamined (cf., however, Kristine Haugen's discussion of the Cambridge Hellenists of this period in *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2011), chap. 1, for useful comparative material).

⁷⁰ Henry Dodwell, *A Discourse Concerning Sanchoniathon's Phoenician history . . .* (London, 1681). He had also edited John Pearson's *Opera posthuma* (London, 1688), devoted to early Christian chronology, to which he had added his own substantial "Dissertation on the Early Succession of the Bishops of Rome" (Pearson, *Opera posthuma*, sep. pag., 1-226). For Pearson, largely in his role as editor of Greek texts, see Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, 29-38.

⁷¹ Cumberland's work, though composed in the late 1680s, was not published until after death, cf. Richard Cumberland, *Sanchoniatho's Phoenician History . . .*, ed. S. Payne (London, 1720).

⁷² Henry Dodwell, *De veteribus Graecorum Romanorumque cyclis . . .*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1701-1702). An English summary was published by Edmond Halley, *An Account of Mr Dodwell's book De cyclis*, (London, 1715).

Dodwell was by no means the only seventeenth-century scholar to attempt such a reconstruction -- Edward Bernard, notably, had also made extensive collections towards a work similar to the annalistic portions of *De cyclis* -- but Dodwell's work seems to have achieved a canonical status in later scholarship that the others did not.⁷³ In 1762, the young Edward Gibbon, after reading de la Nauze on the Roman calendar and feeling “very ignorant” of its Greek equivalent, worked through Halley's abstract of *De cyclis*, then attempted a calculation based on what he had learned, and was delighted to find it successful.⁷⁴ Although Dodwell had not, in actual fact, succeeded in correctly reconciling the Attic and the Julian calendars, Gibbon's use of his work was a testament to the place it, and through it the efforts of this scholarly tradition, had achieved in the tool-box of the Enlightenment scholar.⁷⁵

The *magnum opus* of English geographical scholarship, however, was the edition of the minor Greek geographers edited by John Hudson and Dodwell and published at Oxford between 1698 and 1712.⁷⁶ Although it included few texts that had not been published before, it provided variant readings from Bodleian manuscripts as well as a series of “dissertationes” by Dodwell on the age and composition of a number of Hellenistic geographical works.⁷⁷ Dionysius Periegetes and his commentators and paraphrasers occupied the entirety of the fourth volume, while much of the third was a reissue of editions and translations of Arabic

⁷³ Bernard's chronology survives in draft form in Bodleian MSS Lat. misc. b. 1 and Lat. misc. d. 1, with supplementary material to be found in MSS Lat. misc. d. 3, e. 5, e. 9, and f. 1. His chief interest seems to have been in the political chronology of the ancient world from the first Olympiad to about A.D. 400 (cf., for example, Lat. misc. b. 1, fols. 16v-64r), but he also had evidently planned to extend his chronology to include modern Islamic states.

⁷⁴ *Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon, esq.*, 5 vols., ed. John, Lord Sheffield (London, 1814), v. 213, 270-273 (Gibbon had read de la Nauze, twice, on 25 and 26 August 1761, but only came to Halley's abstract on 21 October 1762). The work he had read was Louis Jouard de La Nauze, “Mémoire sur l'ancien système de la grand année”, *Mémoires de l'académie Royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 23 (1756): 82-100.

⁷⁵ For the history of attempts to understand the Greek calendar see William Kendrick Pritchett, *The Choiseul Marble* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970), 39-51, and Friedrich Karl Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1906-1914).

⁷⁶ *Geographiae veteris scriptores Graeci minores . . .*, 4 vols., ed. John Hudson and Henry Dodwell (Oxford, 1698-1712).

⁷⁷ See esp. *Geographiae veteris scriptores*, i. sig. 2rff.

geographers by the orientalist John Greaves that had first been published in the mid seventeenth century.⁷⁸ It was the first comprehensive collection of the later ancient geographers, and the geographical equivalent to Dodwell's and Bernard's attempts to establish a more reliable chronology for the Hellenistic period.

Other major productions include Bernard's mammoth, but unfinished, edition of Flavius Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*, published with extensive antiquarian notes by the university press in 1700, the two volume edition of Dionysius of Halicarnassus edited by Hudson in 1704, and Hudson's subsequent reworking and publishing of Josephus's *Opera omnia* in 1720.⁷⁹ Josephus and Dionysius complemented each other and were obvious choices for scholars with an interest in Hellenistic texts. The principal contribution to antiquarian studies made by this group, however, came not in the process of editing or elucidating texts, but in coming to grips with something for which there was very little parallel in the history of humanist scholarship.

This was the 1678 European rediscovery of the ancient city-state of Palmyra. Robert Huntington, an Oxford graduate posted to the chaplaincy of the British Factory at Aleppo and a noted orientalist, had been part of an expedition that reached Palmyra in July of that year, only to be turned back by hostile locals.⁸⁰ A second, more successful, attempt was made in 1691 by another group of Englishmen from Aleppo, including the new chaplain, another

⁷⁸ The works edited by Greaves were *Binae tabulae geographicae, una Nassir Eddini Persae, altera Vlug Beigi Tatarum* (London, 1652) at *Geographiae veteris scriptores*, iii. K3rff., and *Chorasmiae et Mawaralnabrae: hoc est regionum extra fluvium Oxum descriptio ex tabulis Abulfedae Ismaelis* (London, 1650), at sig. ar.

⁷⁹ Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitatum Judaicarum libri quatuor priores*, ed. Edward Bernard (Oxford, 1700); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitatum Romanarum*, 2 vols., ed. John Hudson (Oxford, 1704); Flavius Josephus, *Opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia*, 2 vols., ed. John Hudson (Oxford, 1720).

⁸⁰ For Huntington see Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 281-286; Thomas Smith, *Admodum reverendi & doctissimi viri, D. Roberti Huntingtoni, Episcopi Ropotensis, Epistola* (London, 1704). The 1678 expedition report was printed as "An Extract of the Journals of Two Several Voyages of the English Merchants of the Factory of Aleppo, to Tadmor, Anciently Call'd Palmyra", *Philosophical Transactions* 19 (1695-1697): 129-160. Evidence for Huntington's role as the scholar of the expedition is in William Hallifax, "Relation of a Voyage to Tadmor in 1691", *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 22 (1890): 273.

Oxonian, named William Hallifax.⁸¹ The 1691 expedition brought back drawings of the city and its buildings -- all of which were unusually intact and undefaced -- as well as copies of numerous inscriptions, both in Greek and in another, then unknown, language.⁸² The deserted city had a profound effect on the explorers and Hallifax wrote in his account of the expedition that:

if it be lawful to frame a conjecture of y^e original beauty of y^e place by what is still remaining I question whether any city in y^e world could have chalenege precedence of this in its glory.⁸³

This influx of new antiquarian data was leapt upon by English scholars. Edmond Halley wrote an account of the history of Palmyra and remarked on the inscriptions for the *Philosophical Transactions* in 1695, followed by an account of another inscription in the unknown Palmyrene language, found at Rome by Octavian Pulleyn in 1696.⁸⁴ The non-juror and erstwhile friend of Thomas Smith, Abednego Seller, published his *Antiquities of Palmyra* in 1696, quoting the new inscriptions at length and offering detailed exegeses upon them.⁸⁵ Smith was highly critical of Seller's interpretation of the inscriptions, angrily marking up his copy of the *Antiquities* and preparing a set of adversarial notes critiquing Seller's readings.⁸⁶

⁸¹ For Hallifax see Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 288, and the *ODNB*, *s.n.* The manuscript account he wrote of the expedition has been published in two slightly variant forms at Hallifax, "Relation of a Voyage to Tadmor in 1691", 273-303, and Hallifax, "A Relation of a Voyage From Aleppo to Palmyra in Syria; Sent by the Reverend Mr. William Halifax to Dr. Edw. Bernard (late) Professor of Astronomy in Oxford, and by Him Communicated to Dr. Thomas Smith, Reg. Soc. S.", *Philosophical Transactions* 19 (1695-1697): 83-110.

⁸² A copy of the expedition's draught of the city as a whole is prefixed to Hallifax's "Relation of a Voyage", *Philosophical Transactions*.

⁸³ Hallifax, "Relation of a Voyage to Tadmor in 1691", 282.

⁸⁴ Edmond Halley, "Some Account of the Ancient State of the City of Palmyra, With Short Remarks Upon the Inscriptions Found There", *Philosophical Transactions* 19 (1695-1697): 160-175; Octavian Pulleyn, "Part of a Letter From Mr. Octavian Pulleyn, Dated, Rome March 16 1696, Giving an Account of an Inscription There Found in the Language of the Palmereni; and Another in the Etruscan Language Found on an Old Urne", *Philosophical Transactions* 19 (1695-1697): 537-539.

⁸⁵ Abednego Seller, *The Antiquities of Palmyra* (London, 1696).

⁸⁶ Smith's copy of Seller's *Antiquities* is now Bodleian Smith 143 and his notes are at Bodleian MS Smith 102, fol 209rff.

These grew into a small book, the *Inscriptiones Graecae Palmyrenorum*, which contained a new edition of the inscriptions with commentary by both Smith and the recently deceased Bernard.⁸⁷

The initial interest in the discoveries at Palmyra was largely in the Greek inscriptions and what they could add to the extant knowledge of the Hellenistic Near East, a characteristic response from English scholars of the period. The inscriptions in Palmyrene and the physical ruins at the site were largely sidelined. The lack of interest in the inscriptions was probably due largely to Halifax's intelligent conjecture that, whatever language they were in, they were merely translations of the Greek inscriptions with which they were paired.⁸⁸ It was only in the 1750s that they were independently deciphered by Jean-Jacques Barthélemy and John Swinton and recognised to be a dialect of Aramaic.⁸⁹ Likewise, it was only in March of 1751 that Robert Wood, James Dawkins, and Torquilino Borra revisited the site of Palmyra and took the first set of systematic drawings and plans, published in 1753 as the *Ruins of Palmyra, otherwise Tedmor, in the desert*.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, before these developments, the inquisitiveness and shrewd guesses of several Oxford Hellenists and orientalists laid the necessary foundations for the work of Wood and his companions, whose study of near eastern sites represented a great leap forward towards the systematic excavation and recording of ancient sites in the nineteenth century.

University Antiquaries: Medieval

⁸⁷ Edward Bernard and Thomas Smith, *Inscriptiones Graecae Palmyrenorum cum scholiis & annotationibus* (Utrecht, 1698).

⁸⁸ Halifax, "Relation of a Voyage to Tadmor in 1691", 280-281, 285-286.

⁸⁹ See Peter T. Daniels, "'Shewing of hard sentences and dissolving of doubts': The First Decipherment", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108 (1988): 419-436.

⁹⁰ Robert Wood, *The Ruins of Palmyra, Otherwise Tedmor, in the Desert* (London, 1753). See also C. A. Hutton, "The Travels of 'Palmyra' Wood in 1750-51", *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 47 (1927): 102-128.

Medieval scholarship in England during this period was chiefly Anglo-Saxon in focus, or “Septentrional” in the broader sense as a means by which to more clearly illuminate aspects of Anglo-Saxon history and literature.⁹¹ This work was centred on George Hickes, a prominent non-juror with ties to John Fell as well as to Dodwell, Francis Cherry, and some of the other non-juring Oxford scholars.⁹² Also central was Edward Thwaites, since 1698 preceptor in Anglo-Saxon at Queen's College, Oxford, who was largely responsible for giving the linguistic education necessary to the group known as the “Queen's Saxonists”.⁹³ This group published a number of works, both editions of texts such as the *Historia* of the Venerable Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, as well as grammars, dictionaries, and commentaries on Anglo-Saxon language and culture.⁹⁴ By far their greatest achievement, however, was the publication of the *Linguarum vett. Septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archaeologicus*, a massive philological and antiquarian effort led by Hickes, but carried through with the assistance of Thwaites, Humfrey Wanley, Sir Andrew Fountaine, and others.⁹⁵

The preparation of the *Thesaurus* extended from 1697 to 1705 and grew from a planned second edition of Hickes's Anglo-Saxon grammar to a much larger compendium of

⁹¹ The classic study remains J. A. W. Bennett, *The History of Old English and Old Norse Studies in England From the Time of Francis Junius Till the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1938), but see also Ethel Seaton, *Literary Relations of England and Scandinavia in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1935); *Anglo-Saxon Scholarship, the First Three Centuries*, ed. Carl T. Berkhout and Milton McC. Gatch (Boston, 1982).

⁹² For Hickes see Bennett, *History of Old English and Old Norse Studies*, chaps. 3, 6; D. C. Douglas, *English Scholars* (London, 1939); *A Chorus of Grammars: the Correspondence of George Hickes and His Collaborators on the "Thesaurus linguarum septentrionalium"*, ed. Richard L. Harris (Toronto, 1992); Richard L. Harris, "George Hickes (1642-1715)", in *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, 3 vols., ed. Helen Damico, et al. (New York and London, 1995-2000), ii, 19-32.

⁹³ For Thwaites see Bennett, *History of Old English and Old Norse Studies*, chap. 3; Michael Murphy, "Edward Thwaites: Pioneer Teacher of Old English", *Durham University Journal* 73 (1980-81): 153-159.

⁹⁴ Bennett, *History of Old English and Old Norse Studies*, chaps. 3-6.

⁹⁵ George Hickes, et al., *Linguarum vett. Septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archaeologicus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1705).

grammars, texts, and commentaries.⁹⁶ In its final form it included grammars of Anglo-Saxon, Gothic, Old High German, and Icelandic, essays on ancient poetry and dialects, an Icelandic dictionary, a dissertation on Anglo-Saxon legal customs, Andrew Fountaine's study of Anglo-Saxon and Danish coins, a chronological table of Anglo-Saxon history, a catalogue, prepared by Humfrey Wanley, of all known Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, a series of indexes, and transcriptions of numerous documents, mostly unpublished. From the antiquarian point of view, the most notable sections were the discussion of coins by Fountaine (for which, see below) and Hicke's *Dissertatio Epistolaris* on Anglo-Saxon legal customs.⁹⁷ The *Dissertatio* drew upon the tradition of antiquarianising legal studies current in early and mid-seventeenth century scholarship -- Selden's work on medieval English law being one example -- to discuss the usage and importance of charters, manumissions, wills, and law codes in Anglo-Saxon studies. These expanded to consider the geography of northern Europe in the early medieval period, ultimately arguing that a comparative knowledge of the ancient northern languages was necessary to understand the history of England and the rest of post-Roman northern Europe.

The importance of the *Thesaurus* lay not only in its massive philological achievements but also in the ways in which it used philology and antiquarianism to mutually illustrate one another. In this, Hicke and his assistants anticipated many of the developments in philology and antiquarianism during the later eighteenth century and aimed towards a grand synthesis of available knowledge rather than the monographic style of subsequent scholars such as William Stukeley and John Swinton.

⁹⁶ Bennett, *History of Old English and Old Norse Studies*, Appendix D; J. A. W. Bennett, "Hicke's Thesaurus: A Study in Oxford Book Production", *English Studies*, N.S. 1 (1948): 28–45; Richard L. Harris, "George Hicke, White Kennett, and the Inception of the *Thesaurus linguarum septentrionalium*", *Bodleian Library Record* 11 (1983): 169–186.

⁹⁷ The latter is at Hicke, *Thesaurus*, i. sig. +ar - sig. Rr2r.

Ecclesiastical Antiquaries

The history of ecclesiastical antiquarianism in England after Isaac Casaubon wrote his *Exercitationes* against Cardinal Baronio remains a largely unploughed field, but, nonetheless, there were a number of scholars, some with purely theological interests, some acting also in other disciplines, who engaged in the continent-wide debate on the origins and nature of the early church.⁹⁸ Patristics, though it at times impinged upon antiquarianism, belongs more properly to theology and philology. With this in mind, the chief antiquarian works of ecclesiastical history are Spelman's massive collection of church councils and the several histories of the early British church written in the latter half of the seventeenth century.⁹⁹

In 1639, Sir Henry Spelman published the first part of his *Concilia*, a project to find and print the records of all church councils held in Britain or at which British representatives had taken part.¹⁰⁰ Before he could continue the work he died, and it was only in 1664 that a second volume, covering councils held between the Conquest and the Reformation, was published, ostensibly by Charles Spelman but more likely through the efforts of William Dugdale.¹⁰¹ These collections of ecclesiastical documents were comparable to the publication of the *Foedera* and similar works of diplomatic studies at the end of the century and inaugurated an era of documentary church history.

In the decades following the Restoration, two major traditions of ecclesiastical history emerged, divided along confessional lines. In 1663, the works of the English Jesuit,

⁹⁸ Isaac Casaubon, *De rebus sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes XVI* (London, 1614).

⁹⁹ This best guide for this literature remains William Nicolson, *The English, Scotch and Irish Historical Libraries . . .*, 3rd ed. (London, 1736), Part II.

¹⁰⁰ Sir Henry Spelman, *Concilia decreta, leges, constitutiones in re ecclesiarum orbis Britannici . . . ab initio Christianae ibidem religionis, ad nostram usque aetatem* (London, 1639).

¹⁰¹ Sir Henry Spelman, *Concilia decreta, leges, constitutiones in re ecclesiarum orbis Britannici . . . ab introitu Normannorum An. Dom. MLXVI, ad exutum Papam, sive ad An. Dom. MDXXXI . . .* (London, 1664). Nicolson, *Historical libraries*, 109, quotes Anthony Wood and White Kennett to the effect that Dugdale oversaw the vast majority of the second volume's production.

Michael Alford, were published in four volumes as the *Fides regia Britannica, sive, Annales ecclesiae Britannicae*, with the avowed pursuit of using the history of early Christianity in Britain to prove the validity of Catholicism, much as Baronio had attempted in his *Annales*.¹⁰² Alford recognised the importance of publishing transcriptions of primary documents to bolster his arguments and appears to have conducted considerable archival work in England. He also drew on already published material, including the first volume of Spelman's *Concilia* as well as Nicholas Harpsfield's *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica*, Henry Savile's edition of *Rerum Anglicarum scriptores post Bedam*, Reyner's *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglicana*, and others.¹⁰³ The first three volumes of the *Fides* were subsequently translated, revised, and published by the Benedictine Serenus Cressy in 1668.¹⁰⁴ Cressy's revisions included material drawn from Dugdale's *Monasticon* as well as the recently-published *Florum historiae ecclesiasticae gentis Anglorum* of Richard Smith, Catholic Bishop of Chalcedon.¹⁰⁵

The meticulous archival scholarship and reliance upon original documents (editing them where no good editions existed), characteristic of these two Catholic scholars, was matched by their Anglican counterparts. The first of these was Edward Stillingfleet, whose *Origines Britannicae* intentionally covers the same ground as Alford and Cressy.¹⁰⁶ Alford and Cressy had attempted to prove that the introduction of Christianity into England had been by Joseph of Arimathea, a legend current in England since the Middle Ages, whilst Stillingfleet's first revision of their history was to replace Joseph of Arimathea with St. Paul

¹⁰² Michael Alford, *Fides regia Britannica, sive, Annales ecclesiae Britannicae* (Liège, 1663). See P. G. Caraman, "Father Michael Alford, S.J., 1587-1652", *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 31 (1942): 361-368; Simon Keynes, "Anglo-Saxon Charters: Lost and Found", in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks*, ed. Julia Barrow and Andrew Wareham (Aldershot, 2008), 45-66, esp. 63ff.

¹⁰³ Keynes, "Anglo-Saxon Charters", 63-64; Nicholas Harpsfield, *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica* (Douai, 1622); Henry Savile, *Rerum Anglicarum scriptores post Bedam* . . . (London, 1596); Clement Reyner, *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglia* . . . (Douai, 1626).

¹⁰⁴ Serenus Cressy, *The Church History of Brittany, From the Beginning of Christianity to the Norman Conquest* . . . (n.p., 1668).

¹⁰⁵ Cressy credits both authors at *Church History of Brittany*, sig. iijr. See Richard Smith, *Florum historiae ecclesiasticae gentis Anglorum, libri septem* (Paris, 1654).

¹⁰⁶ Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines Britannicae, or, the Antiquities of the British Churches* . . . (London, 1685).

as the first teacher of Christianity in Britain, thus giving the British church an apostolical origin independent of Rome.¹⁰⁷

Stillingfleet took his history down to the arrival of St. Augustine in Britain, where, he emphasised, he met a flourishing, independent, British church.¹⁰⁸ This was continued by John Inett, a protege of John Fell, who wrote his *Origines Anglicanae* as a supplement to Stillingfleet's work, extending from the fifth century CE to the disputes between King John and the Papacy.¹⁰⁹ Inett was less original in his scholarship than Stillingfleet, and certainly less so than Alford and Cressy, limiting himself largely to Spelman's *Concilia* and standard printed historians as sources, but his work was nonetheless an early and important synthesis of what was known of the development of the British church during the early middle ages. Together these four authors played a significant role in collecting, publishing, and synthesising many of the primary texts necessary for understanding the early ecclesiastical history of Britain.

Virtuosi

As has been seen, the antiquarian virtuoso, the gentlemanly collector of antiquities, had already become a type, or at least the ideal of one, by the time Peacham's *Compleat Gentleman* was republished in 1661.¹¹⁰ From the first, the idea of the virtuoso was associated with the collection of coins and sculptures, as evidenced by Evelyn's reference to "the collections of the *Virtuosi*" in 1662.¹¹¹ The great era of the gentleman collector in England, however, came

¹⁰⁷ Stillingfleet, *Origines Britannicae*, 35-49.

¹⁰⁸ Stillingfleet, *Origines Britannicae*, 356-364.

¹⁰⁹ John Inett, *Origines Anglicanae: or, a History of the English Church . . .*, 2 vols. (London, 1704-1710).

¹¹⁰ For the concept of the virtuoso see Walter E. Houghton, Jr., "The English Virtuoso in the Seventeenth Century", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 3 (1942): 51-73, 190-219, and Randall Lee-Wilson Caudill, *Some Literary Evidence of the Development of English Virtuoso Interests in the Seventeenth Century, With Particular Reference to the Literature of Travel* (Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1975).

¹¹¹ John Evelyn, *Sculptura, or, the History, and Art of Chalcography and Engraving in Copper . . .* (London, 1662), 34.

only in the first part of the eighteenth century and, in its more explicitly antiquarian aspect, revolved around two scholarly aristocrats: Thomas Herbert, Eighth Earl of Pembroke, and Sir Andrew Fountaine.

Herbert's collecting began at the dispersal of the Arundel collection towards the end of the seventeenth century.¹¹² One large portion of the sculptures in the collection went to William Fermor, Lord Leominster, and after many vicissitudes was donated to the University of Oxford in 1753 (where the inscriptions had been sent some decades previously).¹¹³ The other was acquired by Pembroke, seemingly as his first major antiquarian purchase.¹¹⁴ This formed the nucleus of what became one of the largest collections of ancient sculpture, coins, and medals in England.¹¹⁵ Pembroke's collection was not, however, one based on solely aesthetic principles, but had a distinctly antiquarian and interpretative bias. James Kennedy, describing the rules by which he collected, emphasised that “[h]e resolved not to run into all sorts of curiosities, but to buy such [sculptures] as were illustrative of antient history and antient literature”.¹¹⁶ He likewise rejected entirely all Egyptian and Etruscan sculpture as things indecipherable, “or, if they were known, [that] could communicate nothing worthy of attention” and limited his collecting of inscriptions to those that “answer[ed] some historical or chronological use”.¹¹⁷ Pembroke's collection, though arranged for purposes of

¹¹² Michaelis, *Ancient Marbles*, 35-41; Charles Howard, *Historical Anecdotes of Some of the Howard Family* (London, 1769), 91-110.

¹¹³ Michaelis, *Ancient Marbles*, 39-41. Richard Chandler's *Marmora Oxoniensia* (Oxford, 1763) was commissioned on the occasion of their acquisition.

¹¹⁴ James Kennedy, *A Description of the Antiquities and Curiosities in Wilton-House* (Salisbury, 1769), xv-xvi. For Pembroke and his collection see Malcolm Baker, "For Pembroke Statues, Dirty Gods and Coins: the Collecting, Display, and Uses of Sculpture at Wilton House", in *Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Penny and Eike D. Schmidt (New Haven and London, 2008): 379-395; Jens-Arne Dickmann, "Lord Pembroke's Design to Form a School of Sculpture: Erwerb, Aufstellung und Funktion in Wilton House während des 17. Und 18. Jhs.", in *Antikensammlungen des europäischen Adels im 18. Jahrhundert als Ausdruck einer europäischen Identität*, ed. Dietrich Boschung and Henner von Hesberg (Mainz, 2000): 115-129; Ruth Guilding, *Marble Mania: Sculpture Galleries in England, 1640-1840* (London, 2001).

¹¹⁵ A record of his coins was published in the *Numismata antiqua in tres partes divisa collegit olim et aeri incidi vivens curavit Thomas Pembrochia et Montis Gomeriae Comes* (n.p., 1746), a collection of plates without accompanying text.

¹¹⁶ Kennedy, *Description of the Antiquities . . . in Wilton-House*, iv.

¹¹⁷ Kennedy, *Description of the Antiquities . . . in Wilton-House*, vii, xii.

ostentatious display as well as study, was explicitly collected as a “School of Sculpture, beginning at its most early period, and proceeding downward”.¹¹⁸ This interest in material objects as the building blocks of a narrative about the ancient past is readily apparent in the many guides to the collection produced from the 1720s onwards, both in print and in manuscript, achieving their most elaborate form in the *Aedes Pembrochiana* of 1798, which used the sculptures and quotations from classical poetry to mutually illustrate and explain each other, very much in the manner of the new German *Altertumswissenschaft*.¹¹⁹

Like many noble collectors, Pembroke, though evidently a learned connoisseur himself, was heavily reliant upon a series of advisors, both friends and dependents. Foremost amongst these were the Italian musician and antiquary, Nicola Francesco Haym, and the English antiquaries William Stukeley, Martin Folkes, and Sir Andrew Fountaine.¹²⁰ Of these, Fountaine is also important as a collector of coins in his own right and a virtuoso whose combination of erudition and taste gave him a central role in English collecting culture during the first half of the eighteenth century.¹²¹ A product of Eton and Christ Church, Fountaine was a superb Latinist and as early as 1702 was described as possessing “so rich a stock of knowledge & experience in medals, statues, carvings & designing” that it was fortunate he possessed in “the sweetness of his conversation so strong a remedy against those prejudices that might arise from his great Erudition”, a nod to the separation of erudition and politeness brought about by the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns.¹²² By the autumn of 1703 he

¹¹⁸ Kennedy, *Description of the Antiquities . . . in Wilton-House*, xix; cf. Dickmann, "Erwerb, Aufstellung und Funktion in Wilton House", *passim*.

¹¹⁹ *Aedes Pembrochiana*. The first printed description of the collection was the series of etchings by Cary Creed published as *The Marble antiquities of the Right Honble. the Earl of Pembrokes at Wilton . . .* (London, 1731?), but manuscript catalogues had already been prepared in the decade before by William Stukeley and Sir Andrew Fountaine (Baker, "For Pembroke Statues", 389-390).

¹²⁰ See Baker, "For Pembroke Statues", 387.

¹²¹ For Fountaine, see Andrew W. Moore, *Norfolk & the Grand Tour: Eighteenth-Century Travelers Abroad and Their Souvenirs* (Fakenham, 1985), 26-31, 93-113; Brinsley Ford, "Sir Andrew Fountaine: One of the Keenest Virtuosi of His Age", *Apollo* 122 (1985): 352-358; Pagan, "Andreas Fountaine eques auratus"; Jeffrey Spier and Jonathan Kagan, "Sir Charles Frederick and the Forgery of Coins in Eighteenth-Century Rome", *Journal of the History of Collections* 12 (2000): 35-90.

¹²² Ford, "Sir Andrew Fountaine", 353-354.

had been engaged by George Hickee to write a treatise on Saxon coins for his *Thesaurus*, a project which culminated in his *Numismata Anglo-Saxonica & Anglo-Danica breviter illustrata*, couched in the form of a letter to Pembroke.¹²³ This was his only published work, though he had also contemplated writing a Latin treatise on the coinage of the British emperors Carausius and Allectus.¹²⁴ His career as a collector of ancient coins continued for several more decades, however, until the sale of his collection in the 1720s.¹²⁵

Pembroke and Fountaine are characteristic examples of the gentleman virtuoso, whose knowledge, though often profound, was concealed beneath a veneer of politeness, and whose tastes in collecting were driven by a mixture of scholarly interest and aesthetic ideals. Collectors such as these remained a distinctive class throughout the eighteenth century, ultimately banding together into organisations such as the Society of Dilettanti, the Divan Club, and the Egyptian Society, and funding the great mid-eighteenth-century archaeological expeditions to the eastern Mediterranean.¹²⁶

Chorographical Antiquaries

The phrase “chorographical antiquaries” is used here as a convenient denotation for that large and miscellaneous group of scholars, including urbanites but with a preponderance of country squires, who published works on the ancient and modern chorography of Britain,

¹²³ Sir Andrew Fountaine, "Numismata Anglo-Saxonica & Anglo-Danica breviter illustrata", in Hickee, *Thesaurus*, i. 161-188. He was composing the work by 30 October 1703, when Hickee wrote to Ralph Thoresby requesting that Fountaine have access to Thoresby's Northumbrian coins (*Letters of Eminent Men Addressed to Ralph Thoresby, F.R.S.*, 2 vols. [London, 1832], ii. 36-37).

¹²⁴ Thomas Hearne, *Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne*, 11 vols., ed. C. E. Doble (Oxford, 1885-1921), i. 139.

¹²⁵ Pagan, "Andreas Fountaine", 119.

¹²⁶ See Sir Lionel Henry Cust, *History of the Society of Dilettanti* (London, 1898); Jason M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti: Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment* (New Haven and London, 2009); Rachel J. Finagan, "The Divan Club, 1744-46", *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 10 (2007): 1-87; Warren R. Dawson, "The First Egyptian Society", *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 23 (1937): 259-260.

usually in the tradition of Camden's *Britannia* and subsequent chorographical landmarks such as Dugdale's *Warwickshire*.¹²⁷ The popularity of county histories and chorographies as a separate antiquarian genre is indicated by the seventeen page bibliography, including both printed works and manuscript collections, that appeared in the 1736 edition of William Nicolson's *Historical Library*.¹²⁸ Representative examples, whose works exercised considerable influence over later generations of scholars, can be found in the figures of Ralph Thoresby, William Stukeley, and John Horsley.

Ralph Thoresby's *Ducatus Leodiensis*, though published in 1715, was an example of a genre -- the mainstream of chorographical antiquarianism, divided by county or other local subdivision -- that had changed little since the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹²⁹ It was organised chorographically, with emphasis on the political and ecclesiastical history of the later middle ages and a profusion of pedigrees and arms, indicating the extent to which the duties of the herald and the occupation of the chorographer had merged by the end of the seventeenth century.

Ducatus Leodiensis is a comprehensive and conscientious work of its kind, but Thoresby stands out from a host of other chorographers less for it and its considerable influence than for his other occupations. His surviving diaries and letters allow his working days to be charted with an exactness impossible for most contemporary scholars and give a much clearer idea of the relations between his quotidian scholarly pursuits and his published work than is generally possible. Likewise, the texts and fragments associated with his "Musaeum" allow for a detailed reconstruction of an important provincial collection.¹³⁰ This includes the expected collection of ancient coins and medals, Saxon and medieval English as well as

¹²⁷ For the later eighteenth century, the standard work on this type of antiquary is Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: the Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 2004).

¹²⁸ Nicolson, *Historical Libraries*, 10-27.

¹²⁹ Ralph Thoresby, *Ducatus Leodiensis: or, the Topography of the Ancient and Populous Town and Parish of Leedes . . .* (London, 1715).

¹³⁰ For Thoresby's own catalogue see *Ducatus Leodiensis*, 275ff.

Roman and Greek, a large group of natural and man-made objects from around the world, a couple of small sculptures, and many books and medieval manuscripts. Thoresby is a classic example of the locally-minded antiquary with a strong medieval focus, which was to become the standard definition of the term by the end of the eighteenth century.¹³¹

The majority of William Stukeley's works belong to a later epoch than considered here, one dominated by the foundation of the Society of Antiquaries in London in 1717 (Stukeley was its first secretary).¹³² His interests, like Horsley's, lay in Roman Britain, and in 1722 he established an antiquarian club named the Society of Roman Knights with the avowed intention of preserving and studying the remnants of the Roman occupation.¹³³ Though the society failed to prosper, despite the encouragement and involvement of Stukeley's patron, the Earl of Pembroke, and other antiquarian-minded aristocrats, Stukeley continued his own investigations and in 1724 published his first major work, the *Itinerarium curiosum*.¹³⁴

The *Itinerarium* is highly polemical in both topic and tone. In form it is a series of seven itineraries, literally seven journeys undertaken by Stukeley across England, following what he supposed to be the routes described by the *Antonine Itinerary*, with notes of the antiquities observed. This form harks back to the chorographical itineraries of the Elizabethan era, especially Leland and Camden, and the work's title probably echoes Gerald of Wales's *Itinerarium Cambriae*, known to English scholars in a 1585 London edition.¹³⁵ Its intention, however, was to combat the popularity of the Grand Tour and the consequent interest in continental antiquities -- he decries the "import[ation of] ship-loads of books

¹³¹ Sweet, *Antiquaries*, *passim*.

¹³² For Stukeley see Stuart Piggott, *William Stukeley: an Eighteenth-Century Antiquary*, rev. ed. (London, 1985); David Boyd Hancock, *William Stukeley: Science, Religion and Archaeology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, 2002). For the Society of Antiquaries see Joan Evans, *A History of the Society of Antiquaries* (Oxford, 1956) and Sweet, *Antiquaries*, chap. 3.

¹³³ Sweet, *Antiquaries*, 164; Iain Gordon Brown, "Chyndonax to Galgacus: New Letters of William Stukeley to Alexander Gordon", *Antiquaries Journal* 67 (1987): 111-128.

¹³⁴ William Stukeley, *Itinerarium curiosum* (London, 1724).

¹³⁵ Haycock, *William Stukeley*, 110.

relating to their antiquities and history" -- by encouraging the study of the Roman past, not in Italy, but in Britain.¹³⁶

This somewhat romanticised and haphazard view of Roman Britain persisted in his later works, eventually leading to his *magna opera* on the origins of Stonehenge and Avebury, both of which drew heavily on Aubrey's *Monumenta Britannica* (see chapter three).¹³⁷ Throughout his works, Stukeley's interpretations of the Roman past are constructed around a series of theological and nationalist presuppositions that were part and parcel of the Romanising ideologies of his circle.¹³⁸

By contrast with the partial, fanciful, and ideologically motivated publications of Stukeley, John Horsley's *Britannia Romana* represents the application of the collected antiquarian knowledge of previous centuries to a monumental study of the Roman occupation of Britain, centred on a new and comprehensive edition of Roman inscriptions in Britain.¹³⁹ The first of three principal divisions of the work is a narrative history of Roman Britain from its first occupation to the recall of the legions with supplementary chapters on the disposition of Roman forces along the several northern walls.¹⁴⁰ This history stands out as an important pre-Gibbonian synthesis of antiquarianism and the ancient historians to create a more detailed and accurate narrative than was available in any classical source. The second division is a catalogue of inscriptions and sculptures found in Britain, while the third builds upon the earlier studies of the *Antonine Itinerary* and similar ancient geographical works discussed above, to give a comprehensive account of the geography of Roman Britain.¹⁴¹ Horsley's *Britannia*, particularly in its focus on collecting evidence of physical remains, echoes

¹³⁶ Stukeley, *Itinerarium curiosum*, i. 3.

¹³⁷ William Stukeley, *Stonehenge a Temple Restor'd to the British Druids* (London, 1740); *Abury, a Temple of the British Druids, With Some Others, Described: Wherein is a More Particular Account of the First and Patriarchal Religion; and of the Peopling the British Islands* (London, 1743).

¹³⁸ For which see Philip Ayres, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1997).

¹³⁹ John Horsley, *Britannia Romana: or the Roman Antiquities of Britain* (London, 1732).

¹⁴⁰ Horsley, *Britannia Romana*, 1-175.

¹⁴¹ Horsley, *Britannia Romana*, 177-342 and 353-520.

Aubrey's *Monumenta* in its structure and focus, but participates more fully in the older continental tradition of epigraphic collecting and philological explication of geographical texts in a way that is foreign to Aubrey's work.

Aubrey and Contemporary Antiquarianism

Through the foregoing we have arrived at a context for Aubrey's activities within the larger trends and morphologies of antiquarian study. Aubrey, though born in 1626, wrote or revised most of his antiquarian manuscripts from the late 1660s until his death in 1697, placing him squarely within the late-seventeenth century antiquarian context, and he must necessarily be seen in the light of contemporaries such as Bernard, Dodwell, Pembroke, Thoresby, and others.¹⁴² Wide-ranging in his interests, his antiquarian works do not fall neatly into any one of the categories of antiquarianism described above, but spread across the boundaries of classical, medieval, and chorographical learning.

Nonetheless, Aubrey's works are representative outgrowths of this world of antiquarian scholarship. His interest in Roman Britain had a lengthy precedent in the work of Camden, Selden, and their successors, while his collection of coins, inscriptions, and archaeological sites within the *Monumenta Britannica* echoes the predominant fascinations of antiquarians across Europe. Likewise, his study of Roman religion and folklore, his

¹⁴² Indeed, Aubrey corresponded with Bernard (Bodleian MS Ashmole 1136, fol. 106), including his table of all scripts in his *Chronologia Graphica* and dedicated the final draft of the *Templa Druidum* to the Earl of Pembroke. He would, at the very least, have known of Dodwell and Thoresby through friends such as Bernard and Thomas Gale.

fascination with dating material artefacts, and his attempts to trace the origins of languages in the ancient world, all found parallels within the works of his contemporaries.

Aubrey's interest derives not from any great originality on his part in choice of subject – as can be seen, he studied much the same material as many of his contemporaries – so much as in his approaches and methodologies. Subsequent chapters will trace his eclectic approach to major problems in seventeenth-century antiquarianism and show how his works differed from those of his contemporaries in their polymathic debt to a variety of disciplines – literature, science, and mathematics, among others – for ways of thinking about artefacts and about the past. The intellectual foundations for Aubrey's unusual approaches can be found in the social and scholarly circles within which he moved and the next chapter will consider these more closely, identifying his immediate influences and sketching a map of the people and places which most influenced his scholarly career. It was this social landscape which provided Aubrey with the tools to engage with the antiquarian tradition outlined above.

Chapter Two

Aubrey in the Republic of Letters

Insofar as the vagaries of personality can ever be recovered, we know that Aubrey was a sociable man. He moved with ease through many different social circles, ranging from court to university to the London scientific world. It was in the course of this sociable life that he forged the friendships and accumulated the debts upon which he drew in his scholarship: asking fellow scholars for advice, using libraries, debating ideas, and pursuing his research agendas in the public spheres of Oxford and the Royal Society. Any study of Aubrey's thought must take notice of this aspect of his life and assess its influence on his development as a scholar. In particular, previous studies of Aubrey's work have often failed to identify the most proximate influences – the most heavily thumbed books, the closest friends – out of this array and have consequently failed to identify the congruities which exist between Aubrey and his contemporaries. This chapter lays the groundwork for the remainder of the thesis by identifying those influences. It begins with a brief recapitulation of Aubrey's life and his role in the various intellectual circles of Restoration England before proceeding to focus on his relationships with six other leading scholars – Sir Thomas Browne, Thomas Gale, Thomas Hobbes, Robert Hooke, Edward Lhuyd, and Anthony Wood – all of whom exerted a decisive influence on the development of his work and thought. It then analyses Aubrey's library and his habits of reading, using statistical data drawn from his manuscript archive to recover his core library and the ways in which he used printed material. Finally, it

outlines how these influences and contexts dictated his choice of research and led to the works discussed in subsequent chapters.

Aubrey's World

Although now superseded at many points, Anthony Powell's biography of Aubrey remains an impressively accurate reconstruction of his life through the lens of his manuscript archive.¹ As such, it is needless to recall Aubrey's life in any detail, but certain key points demand re-examination.

John Aubrey was born into a minor gentry family in northern Wiltshire on 12 March 1626.² After education at home and at Blandford School in Dorset, he matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford, on 4 June 1641, living a moderately scholarly life divided between Oxford, Wiltshire, and the Middle Temple for the remainder of the decade. The civil wars interrupted his formal education, but he corresponded on scientific subjects, read widely, made friends among the scientific circles forming in London, and was elected to the newly-formed Royal Society on 7 January 1663.³ His fortune was at its highest ebb in the 1660s, during which time he visited France, travelled widely in Britain, and began collecting material for some of his earliest scholarly projects.⁴ His father's estates, which he had inherited in 1652, were encumbered with debts, however, and these, combined with a disastrous lawsuit brought against him by his sometime fiancée, Joan Sumner, led to his bankruptcy and the sale of his

¹ Anthony Powell, *John Aubrey and His Friends* (London, 1948).

² For his life until election into the Royal Society, see Kelsey Jackson Williams, "Training the Virtuoso: John Aubrey's Education and Early Life", *The Seventeenth Century* 27 (2012): 157-182.

³ Thomas Birch, *The History of the Royal Society of London for Improving of Natural Knowledge . . .*, 4 vols. (London, 1756-1757), i. 172.

⁴ Powell, *Aubrey*, chap. 4.

two principal Wiltshire estates of Easton Pierse and Broad Chalke in 1670-1671.⁵ Thereafter he lived chiefly in London lodgings or with various friends, including Nicholas Tufton, Earl of Thanet (Aubrey's cousin), Edmund Wyld, Robert Hooke, Thomas Gale, and others, dying in 1697 while on a journey to Oxford. Paradoxically, most of his research and writing took place after his financial disasters. Recalling them some years afterward, he noted that he had "never quiett, nor anything of happinesse till divested of all, 1670, 1671: at what time providence raised me (unexpectedly) good friends."⁶ Despite regular attempts by these friends to provide him with some level of solvency, often in the form of either religious orders or an estate in the New World, Aubrey happily maintained a peripatetic life for the final twenty-six years of his existence, leaving caches of books and manuscripts in various places to be recovered and consulted as needed.

Aubrey's scholarly life can be divided into a series of clearly delineated stages. His early career, extending up to his first involvement in the Royal Society in the 1660s, was dominated by an interest in science, rather than antiquities. The decade did see the composition of an early draft of the *Templa Druidum*, and his *Description of the North Division of Wiltshire* was begun in 1660, but most of the research for it took place in 1670-1671. This brief period as a wealthy, comparatively young encourager of learning during the 1660s is one of the most obscure passages in his life. It probably saw the vast improvements to his estates in Wiltshire recorded in the *Designatio de Easton Piers* as well as his first acquaintance with Anthony Wood and initial surveying of Stonehenge and Avebury.⁷ His mature work, however, was largely written between 1670 and about 1687. These years saw the expansion of the *Templa Druidum* into the *Monumenta Britannica*, the composition of both his county histories, the *Stromata*, the *Life of Hobbes*, and the *Lives*. In a final period, beginning in the

⁵ John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries . . .*, 2 vols., ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1898), i. 40-42.

⁶ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 41.

⁷ See Bodleian MS Aubrey 17 for the building works made to Easton Pierse, below for his friendship with Wood, and chapter three for the surveys of Stonehenge and Avebury.

later 1680s, he compiled the *Remaines of Gentilisme* and made notes towards other philologically-focused works whilst consolidating and donating his manuscript collections and what remained of his library. During this period he returned to many of his earlier works, expanding them with new data and unsuccessfully attempting to publish the *Monumenta Britannica*. These last years also saw the publication of his *Miscellanies*, the only one of his works to be printed during his lifetime.⁸

Geographically, Aubrey's world revolved around London, Wiltshire, and Oxford. With the exception of a few scholarly fellow landholders and his younger brother, William, Wiltshire offered little in the way of intellectual stimulation, but in London and Oxford he regularly met and engaged with other intellectuals in a wide variety of disciplines, playing a leading role in the Royal Society and maintaining strong contacts with two generations of Oxford dons.⁹

At the genesis of the Royal Society in 1660, Aubrey was absent from the list of likely members compiled, due in all probability to his comparative obscurity.¹⁰ Close friends, such as the lawyer John Hoskins, wondered at his silence concerning an institution which seemed so close to his interests, but it was not until 24 December 1662 that he was proposed as a candidate by the physician Walter Charleton.¹¹ He was elected on 7 and admitted on 21 January 1663.¹² His first engagement with the Society, however, proved contentious, when he unsuccessfully attempted to bring to its notice the experiments in blood transfusion of

⁸ John Aubrey, *Miscellanies* (London, 1696).

⁹ Aubrey's fraught relationship with his much younger brother is discussed by Powell (*Aubrey, passim*), but see also the letter from William to John at Bodleian MS Aubrey 21, fol. 55.

¹⁰ See Jackson Williams, "Training the Virtuoso", 171.

¹¹ Birch, *History*, i. 166. Hoskins, in a letter written from Venice on 12 July 1661 wondered that "you tell mee nothing of the famous Academy of *our* philosophical scepticks *that* believe nothing not tried" (Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 199r).

¹² Birch, *History*, i. 172, 179.

his university friend Francis Potter; he was roundly reprimanded for it being “absurd, and impossible, wherfore it would be a blemish to the honour of the Society to experiment it.”¹³

Nonetheless, Aubrey remained active in the Society, regularly providing information and reports which were duly entered into its records. His early contributions reflect his situation in the 1660s as a landholder who spent a considerable part of each year looking after his estates in the country; observations on wheat, holly berries, and similar subjects are in evidence and on 30 March 1664 he was made a member of the Society’s short-lived “Georgical” (*i.e.*, agricultural) committee.¹⁴ Aubrey’s crucial intersection with the Society during this period was not, however, georgical, but was a by-product of his sponsor Charleton’s interest in Stonehenge.¹⁵ Charleton had recently published an attack on Inigo Jones’s theories of a Roman Stonehenge, arguing instead for a Danish origin, and his proposal of 8 July 1663, that investigations be made at Avebury, was undoubtedly a move in that larger intellectual dispute.¹⁶ Aubrey’s election to carry out those inquiries formed however, the beginning of his systematic work on prehistoric megaliths, which would eventually bear fruit in the *Monumenta Britannica* (see chapters three and four). In subsequent years, his continued agricultural and scientific contributions were supplemented with increased notices of ancient books and artefacts, such as when on 15 December 1670 he donated a Roman pot uncovered in Wiltshire sometime previously, together with notes concerning its situation and potential relationship to the site of a Roman colony.¹⁷

Kate Bennett has written at length on Aubrey’s role in the Royal Society as a facilitator of neglected projects and a preserver, or “hint-keeper”, of ideas and personal

¹³ Kate Bennett, “John Aubrey, Hint-Keeper: Life-Writing and the Encouragement of Natural Philosophy in the pre-Newtonian Seventeenth Century”, *The Seventeenth Century* 22 (2007): 369, citing Royal Society MS Cl. P./12i/17.

¹⁴ Birch, *History*, i. 407.

¹⁵ Birch, *History*, i. 272.

¹⁶ See chapter three for this debate.

¹⁷ Birch, *History*, ii. 462.

papers which might otherwise have been lost.¹⁸ This latter characteristic was particularly evident in the 1680s, when Aubrey worked tirelessly to obtain manuscripts for the Society, by the traveller Francis Vernon, the mathematician Thomas Merry, Wenceslaus Hollar, and Sir Jonas Moore.¹⁹ His most significant work in this direction, however, was not the recovery of manuscripts, but rather his central role in the unofficial committee which attempted to revise John Wilkins's *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* between 1676 and about 1682.²⁰ This, however, is all part and parcel of only one side of his scholarly interests; his antiquarian studies, with the exceptions noted above, did not enter into the official records of the Society, but were limited to private conversations with its members (for which see below). Nonetheless, although the early Royal Society did not actively investigate or promote antiquarian inquiry, it remained a crucial social nexus for Aubrey in which he could propose ideas, discuss problems, and liaise with other scholars from across England and beyond.²¹

As they lack a clear archival presence, Aubrey's long-term associations with several groups of scholars in Oxford are harder to trace. After leaving Trinity College in December 1648, he maintained a regular correspondence with John Lydall, one of its fellows, and through him with a circle of experimental scientists based in Oxford including Ralph Bathurst and William Hawes, both future presidents of Trinity. This correspondence continued into the mid-1650s, being cut short by Lydall's death in 1657.²² Thereafter, there

¹⁸ Bennett, "Hint-Keeper", 358-380.

¹⁹ Birch, *History*, iv. 245 (Vernon), 296 (Merry), 468 (Hollar), 469 (Moore). For Vernon, Hollar, and Moore see the *ODNB*, *s.mn.* Thomas Merry (c.1605-1682) was an Oxonian and Middle Templar, like Aubrey, whose algebra he highly valued (Aubrey, *Lives*, ii. 59-60; Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses . . . 1500-1714*, 4 vols. [Oxford, 1891-1892], iii. 1003).

²⁰ At one point Aubrey even attempted to catalogue the Royal Society's manuscript and natural historical collection according to Wilkins's scheme. For this and his engagements with language planning see Rhodri Lewis, *Language, Mind and Nature: Artificial Languages in England from Bacon to Locke* (Cambridge, 2007), chap. 6.

²¹ It was, for example, through the Royal Society that Aubrey first made contact with Johan Heysig, the middleman who led to Aubrey's reception and use of Swedish antiquarian scholarship (see chapter three and William Poole and Kelsey Jackson Williams, "A Swede in Restoration Oxford: Gothic Patriots, Swedish Books, English Scholars", *Lias* 39 [2012]: 1-66).

²² See Jackson Williams, "Training the Virtuoso", 161-168.

appears to be a decade-long lull in Aubrey's association with Oxford until late summer 1667. On 31 August he was in Oxford buying books, heard a false report that William Fulman's *Notitia Academiae Oxoniensis* had been written by Anthony Wood, and so made the latter's acquaintance.²³ This inaugurated a voluminous correspondence and collaboration which would last until Wood's death in 1695 (see below), but while it meant that Aubrey regularly visited Oxford to see Wood, the latter's eremitical temperament and poor relations with the rest of the university meant that it did not lead to any further Oxford acquaintance on Aubrey's part.

Through his Royal Society connections, Aubrey entered into correspondence with the young Thomas Pigot, fellow of Wadham College, in the 1670s and 1680s, but it was not until he began to write and visit Edward Lhuyd, at the time assistant keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, that his circle of Oxford contacts began to approach the level it had reached in the 1650s.²⁴ Aubrey had probably met Lhuyd through his friend and sometime benefactor, Edmund Wylde, and early on took an interest in the Ashmolean (he was also on good terms with the keeper, Robert Plot, despite his low opinion of Plot's archaeological abilities) as well as recognising the use of having a correspondent who was a native Welsh speaker and could check Aubrey's etymological conjectures.²⁵ By early 1693, Lhuyd was passing along the "respects" of various young fellows of his college, Jesus, and it seems that through him Aubrey made a wide acquaintance amongst the Oxford Welsh population, including the principal of Jesus, Jonathan Edwards.²⁶ At the same time, and perhaps through Lhuyd's agency, Aubrey began corresponding with Edmund Gibson and Thomas Tanner, two Oxford churchmen associated with the group of Anglo-Saxonists centred on the non-juring

²³ Anthony Wood, *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695, Described by Himself*, 5 vols., ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1891-1900), ii. 116-117.

²⁴ Aubrey's correspondence with Pigot is now at Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fols. 105-133. For Lhuyd, see below.

²⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 240.

²⁶ See chapter three for further details of this circle.

bishop George Hicke.²⁷ Aubrey made no attempt to become known to the more serious Anglo-Saxonists – Hicke, Edmund Thwaite, Humphrey Wanley, and the Elstob siblings – but followed Gibson’s project for a new *Britannia* with interest, and subsequently anger when it became clear that its publication had scuppered plans for the publication of his own *Monumenta Britannica*.²⁸ An intimation of the easy relations of this loose circle of Oxford dons is given in a letter from Robert Salusbury to Lhuyd (dated “Saturday morning”, apparently in January 1697), who reported that

I was over yesterday with Will: Wynn to see M^r. Gibson at Lambeth, and we had but just sat down [when] who comes in but old Hermetic Aubrey. We drank 3 or 4 bottles of very good liquor, viewed y^e library and so returned.²⁹

This was perhaps the single most important intellectual circle for Aubrey in his old age (see chapter three for its effect on some of his theories) and his death, when it came in 1697, took place during a journey between Oxford and his friend James Long’s estate in Wiltshire. He was buried on 7 June 1697 in the parish church of St. Mary Magdalen in Oxford, in the aisle reserved for members of his old college, Trinity.³⁰

²⁷ Both sides of the Aubrey-Tanner correspondence are preserved, with Aubrey’s letters at Bodleian MSS Ashmole 1814, fols. 93, 108, Tanner 24, fols. 108-109, 159-160, 196-197, and Tanner 25, fols. 30, 39, 49-50, 66, 82-83, 94, 118, 126-127, 240, and 276, and Tanner’s at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 13, fols. 194-204, Eng. C. 6579, fol. 42, Tanner 25, fol. 94, and Top. Gen. C. 24, fols. 18-19. Three letters from Gibson to Aubrey are at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 8, fols. 48-49, and Aubrey 12, fols. 137-138f.

²⁸ See chapter four for the attempted publication of the *Monumenta Britannica*, and J. A. W. Bennett, *The History of Old English and Old Norse Studies in England from the Time of Francis Junius Till the End of the Eighteenth Century* (University of Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1938) for the Oxford Saxonists.

²⁹ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1817a, fol. 422r. William Wynn was one of Aubrey’s Jesus friends, see chapter three. Salusbury was another Jesuit, having matriculated there on 12 April 1690; he was made a Bachelor of Civil Law in 1696 and eventually became a canon of Bangor Cathedral (Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500-1714*, iv. 1305).

³⁰ Powell, *Aubrey*, 244.

Friendship in the Republic of Letters

Knowing that Aubrey was a Fellow of the Royal Society or a well-known face in Jesus College, Oxford, goes some distance towards understanding the social background behind his work, but, inevitably, the greatest influences were exerted not by institutions, but by individuals. When Aubrey came to write the life of his long-time friend Thomas Hobbes in 1679-1680 (see chapter seven), one of his biographical innovations was to include an appendix of friends -- “amici” -- which placed Hobbes within the intellectual milieu of his day. Aubrey included anecdotes describing Hobbes’s friendship with Galileo, Gassendi, Sir William Petty, and other leading lights of the mid-seventeenth century.³¹ It is unsurprising, then, to find him taking the same approach to schematising friendship in his own autobiography. There, following a description of his character as a boy, is another list of “amici”, which has been extensively discussed by Anthony Powell.³² Fourteen men are named, but not all of these friendships are germane to an understanding of Aubrey’s antiquarian studies, nor, indeed, are all the most direct personal influences on his antiquarian work included in this list.³³ Still, Robert Hooke, Thomas Hobbes, and Anthony Wood, all central figures in Aubrey’s development as an antiquarian, are named and, if more data were available, two more names amongst the “amici”, those of the obscure experimental scientist and suburban gentleman, Edmund Wylde, and Aubrey’s Wiltshire neighbour, Sir James Long, might be added to that category.³⁴

³¹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fols. 51r-54r.

³² Powell, *Aubrey*, 248-269.

³³ In part because it dates on internal evidence from the early 1680s at latest, before his closer friendship with Gale and Lhuyd.

³⁴ Wylde is an enigmatic figure, a member of the Royal Society with horticultural interests who also had a choice library upon which Aubrey sometimes relied (Powell, *Aubrey*, 253-258). The contents of his library are, however, unknown and the extent to which Aubrey depended upon them unclear. Long was involved in Aubrey’s early surveys of prehistoric sites and offered theories as to their use as well as details of his collection of Roman coins (see chapter four), but his role in informing Aubrey’s own theories is uncertain.

Hooke, Hobbes, and Wood were all central figures in Aubrey's scholarly life, Hooke and Hobbes not only in his antiquarianism, but in his natural philosophical and mathematical studies as well. Just as important at different times in his life, however, were Sir Thomas Browne, Thomas Gale, and Edward Lhuyd. These six, as well as being heavily cited by Aubrey throughout the manuscript corpus, all – with the exception of Browne and Hobbes – directly engaged with Aubrey's work during its composition and provided a decisive proportion of the theories, methodologies, and scholarly background which Aubrey absorbed into his own writing. In the subsequent section, each of these friendships and its ramifications for Aubrey's scholarship is considered in turn, progressing from his youthful interaction with the preceding scholarly generation, represented by Browne and Hobbes, through the friends of his middle-age, Hooke and Wood, to the encouragers and benefactors of his old age, Gale and Lhuyd.

Sir Thomas Browne

Looking back on his first months in Oxford during the spring and summer of 1642, Aubrey recalled that it was reading Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* and the response by Sir Kenelm Digby which "first opened my understanding".³⁵ This was the beginning of a lifelong engagement with Browne's works and eventual contact with the author himself. Thirty years after his encounter with *Religio Medici*, Aubrey wrote two letters to Browne, evidently as a favour to Anthony Wood, for whom he was actively collecting the biographical material which eventually found its way into the *Athenae Oxonienses*. Browne's responses survive, though Aubrey's original letters do not.³⁶ On 24 August 1672, he wrote in response

³⁵ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 37.

³⁶ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fols. 52-54.

to a request from Aubrey for information on the Tudor antiquary Robert Talbot, who had been a prebend of Norwich.³⁷ Browne apologetically explained that Talbot's tenure there predated the surviving registers of prebends and that he had found no monumental inscription commemorating him while compiling his collection of inscriptions in Norwich Cathedral.³⁸ He lightened this discouraging reply with notices of several Roman camps in East Anglia and a promise that his son Edward would give Aubrey an account of a stone circle similar to the Roll-Right Stones in Oxfordshire.³⁹ His second letter, dated 14 March 1673, was largely devoted to details of his own life, as well as those of Dr. Thomas Lushington's, also for Wood.⁴⁰

Of themselves, these are slight evidence of the debt Aubrey owed to Browne, which can, however, be seen in his use of the latter's publications. Besides the *Religio Medici*, Aubrey had owned or read all of his other major works. At various points he cites the 1658 edition of *Hydriotaphia* and the *Garden of Cyrus*, the 1684 edition of *Certain Miscellany Tracts*, and the 1686 edition of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*.⁴¹ Not only did he quote Browne extensively as an authority on everything from burial customs to the Great Wall of China, he transcribed two of the tracts from *Certain Miscellany Tracts* – “Of Artificial Hills, Mounts or Boroughs” and

³⁷ Wood's biography of Talbot is at Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses . . .*, 2 vols. (London, 1691-1692), i. cols. 87-89. The only Norwich source quoted in the printed version, however, was the philologist Humphrey Prideaux (1648-1724), at one point prebendary of Norwich, who was more successful in his search of the cathedral records than Browne (Wood, *Athenae*, i. col. 88).

³⁸ This collection of inscriptions was posthumously published as Sir Thomas Browne, *Repertorium: or, Some Account of the Tombs and Monuments in the Cathedral Church of Norwich* (London, 1712). See Jonathan F. S. Post, “Miscellaneous Browne Among the Tombs of Norwich Cathedral”, in *Sir Thomas Browne: The World Proposed*, ed. Reid Barbour and Claire Preston (Oxford, 2008), 258-275; Kevin Killeen, “‘In the Time of the Late Civil Wars’: Post-Restoration Browne and the Political Memory of *Repertorium*”, in *‘A man very well studied’: New Contexts for Thomas Browne*, ed. Kathryn Murphy and Richard Todd (Leiden, 2008), 173-189.

³⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fols. 52-54. Edward's account probably related back to the passages concerning stone circles in his *Brief Account of Some Travels in Divers Parts of Europe* (London, 1677). Aubrey cites these and related sections of the *Travels* (in the 1687 edition) at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 114av, Aubrey 26, fol. 26r, Top. Gen. C. 24, fols. 72r, 134v, and Top. Gen. C. 25, fol. 23r.

⁴⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 51.

⁴¹ Sir Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia, Urne-Buriall . . . Together With The Garden of Cyrus . . .* (London, 1658); *Certain Miscellany Tracts* (London, 1684); “Pseudodoxia Epidemica”, in *The Works of the Learned Sir Thomas Brown [sic]* (London, 1686). Aubrey's copy of *Certain Miscellany Tracts*, with a presentation inscription to the Ashmolean Museum, is now Bodleian Ashmole C. 23.

“Of Hawks and Falconry” – into the *Monumenta Britannica* and the *Natural History of Wiltshire* respectively, as well as copying out most of the *Hydriotaphia* into the *Monumenta* and prefacing it with the engraving of the urns themselves facing page one of the 1658 edition, presumably cut from Aubrey’s own copy.⁴²

As with so many of his citations of contemporary authors, Aubrey was chiefly concerned to mine Browne’s work for information rather than to derive from it any larger theoretical conclusions. Nonetheless, the deference he showed Browne throughout his life, particularly in the systematic incorporation of Browne’s work into his own, suggests a considerable intellectual debt, albeit one that was never explicitly acknowledged. Instead it appears in Aubrey’s interests, which closely match Browne’s. In several manuscripts he took up subjects which appear in Browne’s work – falconry, garlands, artificial hills, urns, and others – echoing Browne in the balance between his interests with natural historical and antiquarian subjects. Browne is perhaps the most difficult of Aubrey’s immediate influences to pin down, but the surviving evidence suggests a general indebtedness on the younger man’s part, both in subject and approach. In his discursive style, his polymathic interests, and his fascination with the Romano-British past, Browne more closely resembles Aubrey than any of the other antiquarians of the previous generation, just as Aubrey is more recognisably akin to Browne, both in his choice of and approaches to material, than he is to any of his contemporaries in the 1670s and 1680s.

⁴² “Of Artificial Hills” is at Bodleian MS Top. Gen. C. 25, fols. 12r-14r, “Of Hawks and Falconry” is at Bodleian MS Aubrey 2, fols. 155r-159r, and *Hydriotaphia* is at Bodleian MS Top. Gen. C. 25, fols. 25br-43ar (the plate taken from the printed edition is fol. 25br).

Thomas Hobbes

In his biography of the older man, Aubrey dated his friendship with Hobbes to the summer of 1634 when Hobbes came to visit his old school master, Robert Latimer, in Wiltshire and “took notice” of the eight year old Aubrey.⁴³ However, in his list of “amici” Aubrey dates their friendship to the 1650s; the first extant letter between them, by which point Aubrey was clearly already well-known to Hobbes, is dated 30 August 1661.⁴⁴ There were several possible lines through which their acquaintance could have been renewed, but the likeliest avenue lay through Aubrey’s good friends Ralph Bathurst and Seth Ward who had been actively involved in the publication of the first part of Hobbes’s *Elements of Law* in 1650.⁴⁵ Aubrey’s friendship with his idol was probably never as close, nor of such long-standing, as he presents it in the *Life of Hobbes* (for which see chapter seven), but he was indisputably a good friend of the philosopher and an avid reader of his works.

Given Aubrey’s known scientific and mathematical interests, and his supposed political indifference (a canard which has proven slow to die), it might be expected that his engagement with Hobbes would be largely through the medium of his works on the former subjects.⁴⁶ This is not, however, the case. Leaving aside the bibliography attached to the *Life of Hobbes*, he cites only *Behemoth*, *De corpore*, *Dialogue . . . of the Common Laws*, *Historia ecclesiastica*, *Elements of Law*, *Leviathan*, and the translation of the *Odyssey* in his works.⁴⁷ It is in light of

⁴³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 36r.

⁴⁴ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 43; Thomas Hobbes, *Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, 2 vols., ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford, 1994), ii. 520-521.

⁴⁵ Noel Malcolm, “Hobbes and the Royal Society”, in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), 324-325. Bathurst was a friend of Aubrey’s Trinity days and Seth Ward was amongst his “chiefest friends” by 1676 at the latest (Powell, *Aubrey*, 167). Malcolm, however, suggests with equal plausibility that William Harvey could be the missing link, given Hobbes’s close association with him in the early 1650s, at the same time that Aubrey made his acquaintance (Malcolm, “Hobbes and the Royal Society”, 329).

⁴⁶ For a reassessment of Aubrey’s politics see Jackson Williams, “Training the Virtuoso”, 169-170.

⁴⁷ The citations are as follows: *Behemoth* (London, 1679) is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 8, fol. 63v, and Top. Gen. C. 24, fol. 106r, *De corpore* (London, 1655) at Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 25r, *Dialogue . . . of the Common*

this list that Aubrey's otherwise surprisingly frequent citation of the legal theorist Samuel Pufendorf's *De jure naturae et gentium* comes into focus: it engaged in a dialogue with many of Hobbes's theories put forward in *Leviathan*.⁴⁸ Aubrey's interest was thus confined chiefly to Hobbes's legal and philosophical works and appears most clearly in his own work in the *Remaines of Gentilisme*, in which he uses a Hobbesian archaeology of religion as a means of reading the development of folk custom (see chapter five). The *Remaines* are particularly indebted to *Leviathan*, and Aubrey was careful with his copy, emphasising to Anthony Wood with whom he had deposited it that "I much value" it and eventually proposing to donate it, with other books, to the library of New Inn Hall, Oxford.⁴⁹ Insofar as Aubrey had a developed philosophy of human nature and the development of human institutions in antiquity, it was fundamentally indebted to *Leviathan* and Hobbes's other works of political philosophy.

Aubrey's adoption of Hobbesian political philosophy went hand-in-hand with his attempts to co-opt the philosopher into the Royal Society. These attempts probably centred around his donation of a portrait of Hobbes to the Society in 1670 and an invitation in 1675 from Robert Hooke, declined by Hobbes, to publish his new mathematical or scientific papers in the *Philosophical Transactions*.⁵⁰ Hobbes famously failed to become part of the Society, and Noel Malcolm has convincingly argued that this was due to a complex mixture

Laws (called by Aubrey "*De legibus*") at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 7, fol. 5, and Aubrey 10, fol. 107r-v, *Historia ecclesiastica* ([London], 1688) at British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 176r, *Elements of Law* (London, 1650) at Bodleian MS Aubrey 10, fols. 45r, 46r, *Leviathan* (London, 1651) at Bodleian MS Aubrey 10, fols. 70r, 108r, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 101r, 128r, and the translation of the *Odyssey* (London, 1674) at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 4, fol. 140ar, and Top. Gen. C. 24, fol. 52r.

⁴⁸ Aubrey cites Pufendorf's *De jure* (apparently always in the 1688 Amsterdam edition) at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 9, fol. 6v, Aubrey 10, fols. 68r, 70r, and 107r-v, Top. Gen. C. 24, fol. 270r, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 120r.

⁴⁹ Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fols. 368v, 414. Aubrey's copy is now lost. His *Behemoth* was apparently given to Wood and is now Bodleian Wood 1587. Among his donations to the Ashmolean Museum are copies of *De corpore* (Bodleian Ashmole C. 27), *Examinatio et emendatio mathematicae hodiernae* with an inscription from Hobbes for "my noble friend M^r Aubrey" (Worcester College Library 452), and *Historia ecclesiastica* (Bodleian Ashmole 1637).

⁵⁰ For the letter concerning Hooke's request see Hobbes, *Correspondence*, ii. 751-753.

of personal animus and institutional concern to avoid associating with a known radical whose opinions were all too close to their own.⁵¹ Nonetheless, Aubrey's insistence on a Hobbesian presence in the Society was one manifestation of a larger intellectual and amicable debt which was central to his life and work.

Robert Hooke

Aubrey shared Robert Hooke's lodgings in Gresham College from early 1675 through early 1690.⁵² If the influence of Browne and Hobbes had dominated Aubrey's earlier life, his mature years were dominated by his friendship and residence with Hooke. It was during this period that most of Aubrey's major works were written and without exception these carry the stamp of Hooke's suggestions and conjectures.

Aubrey must have met Hooke through the Royal Society at a comparatively early date, but the first evidence of any close association between them comes from around the time of the *Perambulation of Surrey*'s composition (see chapter six), when Hooke was one of the committee which drew up the queries Aubrey was to use in his researches.⁵³ This was in the spring of 1673 and Hooke's diary, which begins at about this time, indicates that they were already meeting regularly at coffee houses and taverns around London, frequently in the company of Christopher Wren and Edmund Wylde.⁵⁴ This group evidently overlapped with the better-known circle of Royal Society savants who met at Jonathan's Coffee House

⁵¹ Malcolm, "Hobbes and the Royal Society", 317-335.

⁵² Based upon the superscription of letters addressed to Aubrey. The earliest to site him at Hooke's lodgings is dated 6 March 1674/75 (Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fols. 105-106) and the latest, 31 March 1690 (Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 400).

⁵³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 244r.

⁵⁴ *Diary of Robert Hooke, M.A., M.D., F.R.S., 1672-1680*, ed. Henry W. Robinson and Walter Adams (London, 1935), *passim*.

towards the end of the decade and which included Aubrey, Hooke, Wylde, and Edmond Halley, among others.⁵⁵

Good conversation was, however, the least of Hooke's favours to Aubrey. On 20 November 1673, after the collapse of the Surrey project and with Aubrey still in desperate financial straits, Hooke recorded in his diary,

Drank bottle of Wine with Mr. Aubrey and Mr. Shortgrave . . . Bought of Mr. Aubrey, Euclides Works Greek and Latin 10sh., *Plumia Purpur* 1s., *Censorinus de mensura Anni* 8d., Duret *Histoire des Langues*, and Scaliger *Contra Caldanum* 6s. 4d., Baytins [*sic*]⁵⁶ *de re Navali* 2sh., acquitted the former 20sh. lent.⁵⁷

The dispersal of Aubrey's library is discussed in more detail below, but it is significant that long before the full-scale sale of the collections he had made during his years of affluence, Aubrey was paying Hooke back in books (the twenty shillings lent refers to a loan not recorded in Hooke's diary and probably made before it was begun). It is also significant that these books were by no means purely scientific, but included antiquarian classics like Censorinus and Lazare de Baïf's rare *Annotationes in legem II de captiuis & postliminio reuersis, in quibus tractatur de re nauali*.⁵⁸ Nor did Hooke simply take these books for their cash value: at least three of them reappear in the 1703 sale catalogue of his library.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ See Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fols. 147-148, Halley to Aubrey, "Pray present my service to Mr. Hook, Mr. Wild, Mr. Fison and the rest of our friends that used to meet at Jonathans".

⁵⁶ *Recte* probably "Baysius" or "Baysii". The Robinson and Adams edition of Hooke's diary is plagued with misreadings of proper names and non-English words. It has, unfortunately, not proven practical to examine the original.

⁵⁷ Hooke, *Diary*, 70. "Mr. Shortgrave" was probably William Shortgrave, who had been a fellow of Wadham College, 1673-1681, and was then rector of Harleston, Northamptonshire (Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500-1714*, iv. 1353).

⁵⁸ Lazare de Baïf, *Annotationes in legem II de captiuis & postliminio reuersis, in quibus tractatur de re nauali* (Basel, 1537).

⁵⁹ *Bibliotheca Hookiana* (London, 1703). The items are Claude Duret, *Thresor de l'histoire des langues de cest uniuers* (Yverdon, 1619) at 8, no. 25, Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Exotericarum exercitationum liber XV* (Frankfurt, 1582) at 24, no. 112, and Baïf, as above, at 10, no. 92. Hooke's library contained too many copies of Euclid to identify the expensive (and thus presumably rare) copy which Aubrey valued at ten shillings.

Hooke lent Aubrey another twenty shillings on 25 November 1673, a mere five days after Aubrey's book sale, and it is tempting to see this as somehow related to Aubrey's subsequent "donation" of a cache of rare printed works to the Royal Society Library – via Hooke – on 6 July 1674.⁶⁰ Regardless of the precise economic give and take, Hooke was already one of Aubrey's most important patrons, albeit in an unconventional sense, by the time they began to room together in the spring of the following year.

Hooke's name and opinions reappear throughout Aubrey's works, but several specific points of intervention may be singled out as both representative and decisive in their effect on Aubrey's scholarship. In the autumn of 1677 Hooke engaged in a protracted debate with Christopher Wren about the form of the tomb of Lars Porsenna, a semi-mythical Etruscan king whose magnificent sepulchre was described by Pliny and had attracted the attention of many early modern scholars.⁶¹ This was one aspect of a larger shared interest in the history of architecture in the pre-classical ancient world, which had occupied both Wren and Hooke for some time.⁶² These discussions, in turn, deeply affected Aubrey's attempt to reconstruct a history of ancient burial practices in the chapter on barrows in the *Monumenta Britannica* (see chapter four). Drawing upon the theories of Hooke, and through him of Wren, Aubrey articulated a genealogy of architectural and cultural inheritance which accommodated pre-Roman Britain within a larger, post-Noachid world civilisation.

Aubrey's greatest debt to Hooke, however, was in the grey area between geology and archaeology. Aubrey, who engaged with the stratigraphic theories of both Nicolaus Steno and Olof Rudbeck (see chapter three), believed that those of the former had been stolen from Hooke and subsequently communicated to Steno by the secretary of the Royal Society,

⁶⁰ Hooke, *Diary*, 71, 111. That these books were destined for the Royal Society was first noted by John Buchanan-Brown, "The Books Presented to the Royal Society by John Aubrey, F.R.S.", *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 28 (1974): 167-193.

⁶¹ Hooke, *Diary*, 317, 320-322, and see chapter three.

⁶² See Lydia M. Soo, *Reconstructing Antiquity: Wren and his Circle and the Study of Natural History, Antiquarianism, and Architecture at the Royal Society* (Princeton University Ph.D. Thesis, 1988), chaps. 4 and 5.

Henry Oldenburg.⁶³ That he discussed stratigraphy as it applied to archaeological excavation with Hooke is also evident from his decision to include in the *Monumenta* Hooke's observation that the London ground level in 1690 was over twenty feet higher than that of the Roman city (an observation no doubt derived from Hooke and Wren's investigations into the remains of Roman London after the Great Fire).⁶⁴ This shared interest in stratigraphy led back to a shared interest in the prehistoric origins of the earth. In a digression in his *Natural History of Wiltshire*, Aubrey gave an "Hypothesis of the Terraqueous Globe", heavily indebted to Hooke's lectures on earthquakes, in which he used passages from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to reconstruct the prehistoric origins of the earth.⁶⁵ Aubrey's understanding of the primitive world, as informed by Ovid via Hooke, allowed for significant geological change over a period of time longer than that stated in the Bible, the world being, he wrote, "much older, than is commonly supposed".⁶⁶ Aware of the conflict with the biblical text, he noted in the same chapter that he ought to "[s]ee Pere Symond, where he saies that the Scripture in some places may be erroneous, as to Philosophie: but the Doctrine of the Church is true" and fiercely, albeit privately, he rebutted John Ray's rejection of Hooke's hypothesis as likely to give offence, noting that "'tis the best thing in the Book it (indeed) does interfere with the 1 chap. of Genesis".⁶⁷ It was Hooke's geological investigations, most immediately

⁶³ Aubrey recorded his suspicions on the front pastedown of Nicolaus Steno, *The Prodromus to a Dissertation Concerning Solids Naturally Contained Within Solids*, trans. H[enry] O[ldenburg] (London, 1671). His copy is now Bodleian Ashmole C. 10. He was, presumably, thus taking Hooke's side in the latter's long-standing quarrel with Oldenburg, for which see Margaret 'Espinasse, *Robert Hooke* (London, 1956), 8-9.

⁶⁴ John Aubrey, *Monumenta Britannica or A Miscellany of British Antiquities*, 2 vols., ed. John Fowles and Rodney Legg (Sherborne, Dorset, 1980-1982), 505.

⁶⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 1, fols. 87r-102r. Aubrey's "Hypothesis" drew on Hooke's "Lectures and Discourses of Earthquakes", subsequently published in Robert Hooke, *Posthumous Works* (London, 1705), 279-450.

⁶⁶ Bodleian MS Aubrey 1, fol. 100r.

⁶⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 1, fol. 102r; William Poole, *The World Makers: Scientists of the Restoration and the Search for the Origins of the Earth* (Oxford, 2010), 112. For the context of Ray's objections and the relationship between Aubrey, Hooke, and Ray, see Ellen Tan Drake, *Restless Genius: Robert Hooke and his Earthly Thoughts* (Oxford, 1996), 106-111, and Elizabeth Yale, "Marginalia, Commonplaces, and Correspondence: Scribal Exchange in Early Modern Science", *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 42 (2011): 193-202. Aubrey's "Pere Symond" is Richard Simon, the Biblical critic, whose *Histoire critique du vieux testament* (Paris, 1678) retails a more complex version of the position articulated by Aubrey.

his lectures to the Royal Society on earthquakes, and particularly the eleventh lecture, given on 4 January 1688, which had led Aubrey to these heterodox conclusions.⁶⁸ Throughout the 1670s and 1680s, Hooke's scientific and mythical studies exerted a profound influence, not just on Aubrey's treatment of minutiae such as the depth of Roman London, but on his understanding of the origin and development of the world and human civilisation.

Anthony Wood

Aubrey's lodging with Hooke resulted in a paucity of letters, which has led subsequent commentators to underestimate the closeness of their friendship. In Wood's case, the opposite has occurred. Except for rare holidays to country houses, Wood spent the entirety of his life in Oxford and, as a result, his relationship with Aubrey took place largely through the medium of correspondence. Almost three hundred letters between the two men (ranging in date from 1667 to 1695) are known, amounting to nearly a third of all of Aubrey's surviving correspondence.⁶⁹ It would be easy, then, to imagine that Wood exerted an overwhelming influence in Aubrey's life, and Wood's successful publication of the *Athenae Oxonienses* – a publication which contained much rare data collected by Aubrey – could be taken as evidence that he was the senior partner in the relationship. This is not, however, correct. Wood was one of Aubrey's closest friends and their collaboration on the biographical material which eventually led to the *Athenae Oxonienses* and Aubrey's *Lives* was an important aspect of both men's careers, but Wood's influence should not be overestimated. Unlike Aubrey, he chiefly focused on biographical and bibliographical antiquarianism, rather than visual culture,

⁶⁸ See Drake, *Restless genius*, 285-293 and *passim*.

⁶⁹ See the forthcoming Oxford University Press edition of Aubrey's correspondence by Rhodri Lewis and William Poole.

folklore, or any of Aubrey's other diverse interests. As such, their work only overlapped in the biographical sphere.

Aubrey's own biographical writings (discussed in chapter seven), began with the *Life of Mr Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury* in 1679-1680, continued with the *Minutes of Lives* in the 1680s, and concluded with the *Apparatus for the Lives of our English Mathematical Writers* in 1690.⁷⁰ In the years before this, however, he had collaborated closely with Wood on the latter's biographical project. From the beginning of their friendship in 1667, Aubrey supplied Wood with everything from titbits of information to full-scale draft biographies of figures intended for inclusion in the *Athenae*. This should not, however, be interpreted as Aubrey fulfilling the role of research assistant or runner for Wood. Instead, it would seem that Aubrey – who had first made Wood's acquaintance because of a mutual interest in Oxford antiquities – realised that he could materially further Wood's work in a more certain and concrete way than his other pet projects, such as the invention and discoveries of Francis Potter, and chose to help as much possible. Wood, although a fine scholar, decisively lacked Aubrey's cultural capital and network of informants. As such, Aubrey could seek out oral recollections of a sort far outside Wood's sphere of knowledge, which could be combined with Wood's researches in printed material and in the university archives. Aubrey also introduced Wood to scholars who could provide additional assistance, as in a letter of 19 July 1668, when he encouraged him to “pray make bold with my neighbour Mr. Gore in matters of heraldry”.⁷¹ Wood's influence on Aubrey lay not in the development of new theories or in the provision of information on the ancient world, but rather in his involvement of Aubrey in biographical studies, an involvement that ultimately bore fruit in the *Lives*.

⁷⁰ Now Bodleian MSS Aubrey 6-9.

⁷¹ Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fol. 81. “Mr. Gore” was the country gentleman and minor antiquary Thomas Gore of Aldrington, Wiltshire with whom Aubrey was later on rather bad terms (Powell, *Aubrey*, 137, 141-142; Nicolas K. Kiessling, “Anthony Wood, Thomas Gore and the Use of Manuscript Material”, *The Library*, series 6, 21 [1999]: 108-123).

Thomas Gale

Towards the end of his life, as old friends died or drifted apart, Aubrey increasingly came into contact with a younger generation of scholars, often engaged in work which was more philological than antiquarian. Chief amongst these was the philologist and bibliophile, Thomas Gale. More than most of Aubrey's friends, Gale requires some introduction. Former Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, he was elected to the Royal Society in December 1677, subsequently serving as its secretary, and by the time Aubrey knew him was head master of St. Paul's School in London.⁷² Although sometimes described as an antiquary, he was, first and foremost, a textbook example of a late seventeenth-century English philologist.⁷³ In the 1670s he had edited a series of Hellenistic Greek texts, including an important edition of the Syrian Neoplatonist Iamblichus's *De mysteriis*, but by the time Aubrey became close to him, he had turned towards the editing of medieval English texts, producing two ground-breaking collections of *editiones principes* in 1687 and 1691.⁷⁴ His final work, a new edition of the Antonine Itinerary, was posthumously published by his son in 1709.⁷⁵

Letters to Aubrey began to be directed to Gale's house at St. Paul's in December 1692 and this continued at least as late as July 1695, the date of the last surviving epistolary

⁷² ODNB, *s.n.*; *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 2 pts. in 10 vols., ed. John and J. A. Venn (Cambridge, 1922-1954), Pt. 1, ii. 188.

⁷³ See for example Francis Drake's description of him as "that great antiquary dean Gale" (Francis Drake, *Eboracum, or, the History and Antiquities of the City of York* [London, 1736], 25).

⁷⁴ A full bibliography of Gale's published works is in the *Biographia Britannica*, 6 vols. in 8 (London, 1747-1766), iii. 2075-2076. This should, however, be supplemented with the list in his own hand dating from between 1687 and 1691 which is at Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fols. 3-4 (printed in Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 259-260). This latter is the best indication of Gale's late interests and sheds considerable light on the rationale behind his extensive collection of English medieval manuscripts (for which see M. R. James, *Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge: A Descriptive Catalogue*, 4 vols. [Cambridge, 1900-1904], volume three). Among the projects – never completed – which he listed as in preparation were editions of Bede, Matthew Paris, and the corpus of English law from Æthelbert to Edward I.

⁷⁵ Thomas Gale, *Antonini iter Britanniarum . . .*, ed. Roger Gale (London, 1709).

superscription to Aubrey.⁷⁶ Whether this indicated residence on Aubrey's part, or whether Gale had simply agreed to forward his post is unclear (though the latter is more likely), but there is no doubt that the two men saw each other regularly during this final period of Aubrey's life. They had probably met through the Royal Society and it is likely that they were already fairly well acquainted when Gale proposed Aubrey's friend the visiting Swedish scholar Johan Heysig to the Royal Society on 23 November 1681.⁷⁷

Unlike his manuscript collection, now in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, Gale's printed books were dispersed after the death of his sons. Among the handful that have been identified, however, there is some evidence that Aubrey made use of Gale's extensive library. The volume in question is Gale's copy of the 1607 edition of Camden's *Britannia*.⁷⁸ Besides extensive annotation by Gale, largely concerning ancient British toponyms, there is a note on the recto of the flyleaf, unmistakably in Aubrey's hand, reading "A ms history of England in y^e poss. of James E. of Abingdon. Anno Henrici III. a very great dearth of corn sold for q^d John Aubery". This is evidently related to Aubrey's plans for an economic history of England (see chapter six), but its presence here is unclear. Presumably Aubrey must have been using Gale's copy of the *Britannia* for his own research and added a relevant note. Evidence of cross-pollination in the other direction comes from a pamphlet, *The Miraculous Recovery of a Dumb Man at Lambeth*, tipped into Aubrey's *Perambulation of Surrey* and containing extensive manuscript notes by Gale.⁷⁹ It was probably a gift from the latter to Aubrey.

Besides this exchange of texts, Gale contributed extensive annotations to Aubrey's *Monumenta Britannica*, his *Perambulation of Surrey*, and his *Natural History of Wiltshire* as well as

⁷⁶ Bodleian MSS Aubrey 12, fols. 136-137, Wood F 45, fol. 208.

⁷⁷ Birch, *History*, iv. 104.

⁷⁸ William Camden, *Britannia* . . . (London, 1607), subsequently purchased by Richard Gough at the Gale sale and now Bodleian Gough Gen. Top. 51.

⁷⁹ *The Miraculous Recovery of a Dumb Man at Lambeth* (London, 1676), now at Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fols. 33ar-dv.

making a transcription, now lost, of the *Monumenta*.⁸⁰ Gale's transcription is of interest as the manuscript forebear of William Stukeley's copy of the *Templa Druidum*, but more important for Aubrey's own career are the notes added by Gale to his manuscripts. Gale's annotations are particularly heavy in the *Monumenta*, where he drew upon his already extensive studies of the Antonine Itinerary and Romano-British toponyms to correct and amplify Aubrey's manuscript. A characteristic example is his marginal gloss of Aubrey's equation of the Roman Avone with Bristol, "In Antoninus Avone is Bristow, Trajectus is y^e passe over Severn. Here hath happened a misplacing of these two names as it doeth often happen in Antonine."⁸¹ Elsewhere he was concerned with more fully contextualising Aubrey's records of archaeological discoveries, noting against a passage on mosaic floors that "[t]hese pavements often found in Cityes. These pavements were often found in Bathes. These Pavements served for bounds, called termini tessellati"⁸²

Such annotations are representative of Gale's contributions. Throughout he was chiefly concerned to update, expand upon, and correct Aubrey's understanding of Roman Britain, bringing it into line with the latest British and continental scholarship. It is perhaps significant that the three works Gale annotated – *Surrey*, the *Natural History*, and the *Monumenta* – were those which Aubrey made fair copies of between 1689 and 1692.⁸³ These copies – the versions of the manuscripts now extant – may have subsequently been passed to Gale for review and correction. In the instance of the *Monumenta*, Gale's notes may also have been added in the context of its proposed publication in an attempt to update scholarship which had first been written ten or twenty years before.⁸⁴ In either case, they are

⁸⁰ For Gale's transcription of the *Monumenta*, see chapter four; for the several annotators of Aubrey's manuscripts see Hunter, *Aubrey*, 88.

⁸¹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 465.

⁸² Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 935.

⁸³ See Hunter, *Aubrey*, 87.

⁸⁴ In this context it may be noted that the title page of the *Monumenta* (which Aubrey envisaged, optimistically, as compositor-ready copy) states that it is "Illustrated with Notes of ~~D^r~~ Thomas Gale, \D.D/ and John Evelyn Esquier" (Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 3).

significant for the indication they gave that even at the very end of his life, Aubrey's archaeological scholarship was still considered sufficiently important by one of the leading scholars of Roman and medieval Britain to justify extensive consideration, annotation, and correction.

Edward Lhuyd

Aubrey's friendship with Lhuyd in its capacity as a conduit through which Aubrey could engage with Oxford scholars and scholarship has been discussed above. The two scholars' working relationship during the 1690s was, however, even more central to the final stage of Aubrey's career than their mutual Oxford connections and can be broken down into three discrete aspects: Aubrey's reception of Lhuyd's scholarship, Lhuyd's reception of Aubrey's scholarship, and Lhuyd's preservation of Aubrey's manuscripts.

Aubrey and Lhuyd were brought together in 1690-1691 by their mutual friend the virtuoso Edmund Wylde, who appears to have put them in touch in their capacity as two scholars with an interest in the theories of Boxhorn and other continental writers concerning the origins of the Celtic languages.⁸⁵ Aubrey immediately deferred to Lhuyd's greater linguistic ability and entreated him to complete his aborted *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum*, an etymological dictionary of English toponyms (see chapter four).⁸⁶ Despite Lhuyd's polite deferral regarding the *Interpretation*, they continued to correspond regarding toponyms and the high level of their exchange can be seen in letters such as that of 24 May 1691 in which

⁸⁵ See the postscript in Lhuyd's letter to Aubrey at Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 240, where Lhuyd notes that "I hav perused Boxhornius upon his [Wylde's] recommendation, & to me his arguments . . . were very plausible". This, it should be noted, appears to be Lhuyd's first contact with an author he would later engage with very closely (see chapter six).

⁸⁶ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 2.

Lhuyd systematically goes through a long series of etymologies proposed by Aubrey, bringing to bear his superior knowledge of Welsh, and, *inter alia*, giving evidence that Aubrey's own Welsh was not entirely non-existent.⁸⁷

Philological exchanges such as these formed the basis of many of the etymologies in the *Monumenta Britannica, Interpretation*, and elsewhere, and demonstrate Aubrey's increasing linguistic turn during the course of the 1690s, as he moved away from fieldwork towards folklore and toponyms as means of interpreting the ancient past. That this was no mere pipedream on Aubrey's part (despite the scanty beginnings of his two linguistic manuscripts; see chapter six) can be seen in his correspondence with Lhuyd, where he describes meeting with a Cornish gentleman who had noted concordances between Catalonian and Celtic and who had put him in touch with John Keigwin of Mousehole, the Cornish philologist and subsequent colleague of Lhuyd.⁸⁸ These contacts were made for the purpose of creating an English etymological dictionary, to which the *Proportion of the several Languages Ingredients of our English* prepared by Aubrey in 1692/93 is a preparatory study. Lhuyd was a crucial go-between and correspondent in these projects, playing a decisive role in furthering Aubrey's late investigations into Celtic philology.

The intellectual interchange between the two men did not, however, run only one way. Lhuyd was one of the principal encouragers of the publication of the *Monumenta Britannica* (see chapter four) and when that project failed he turned his attention to preparing the Welsh sections of Edmund Gibson's 1695 *Britannia*.⁸⁹ In his substantial additions to Camden's text, Lhuyd touched upon the origins of megaliths in Wales and, in doing so, engaged with the theories set forth in the *Monumenta*, suggesting (as Thomas Tanner did elsewhere in the volume) that they could, conceivably, have been "Druid-Temples".⁹⁰ He

⁸⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 247.

⁸⁸ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fols. 96-97.

⁸⁹ See Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1995), 345-355.

⁹⁰ William Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Edmund Gibson (London, 1695), col. 629.

remained sceptical, however, adding that “[f]or my part I leave every man to his conjecture”, but used Aubrey’s arguments against Walter Charleton’s theory of a Danish origin as well as Aubrey’s correspondence with James Garden, the Aberdonian professor of Divinity, in his additions.⁹¹ Lhuyd’s use of material from the *Monumenta* ensured that Aubrey’s unpublished *magnum opus* would exert a considerable influence on subsequent study of British prehistory in the eighteenth century.

Lhuyd also ensured that Aubrey’s manuscripts and printed books – or at least those which had escaped the mass sales of the 1670s – eventually found a resting place in the Ashmolean Museum. Aubrey had proposed depositing his unpublished works there as early as 21 April 1691, but the process took several years, as he gradually collected and delivered his collections from their various resting places.⁹² Books apparently long stored at Aubrey’s former farm in Broad Chalke, Wiltshire, were being sent by care of George Kent of Wadham according to a letter of 27 February 1693/94 while his *Description* of Wiltshire was still in Thomas Tanner’s hands in March of that year and Aubrey’s treasured Holland translation of Pliny only arrived at Oxford in May.⁹³ Lhuyd’s determination to secure Aubrey’s collection for the Ashmolean is the principal reason for its survival and, as such, ensured Aubrey’s subsequent reputation (though it should be remembered that the *Monumenta*, still in the hands of Awnsham Churchill at Aubrey’s death, did not figure in these bequests). Also, like Gale’s annotations, Lhuyd’s acquisition is evidence of the continuing value placed upon Aubrey’s scholarship by the younger generation. Some earlier critics tended to view Aubrey’s career

⁹¹ Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gibson, cols. 629-630, 636-637. Lhuyd, somewhat unfairly, credits Garden with being “the first that suspected these Circles for *Temples of the Druids*” (col. 637).

⁹² Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 2. Lhuyd actively worked to organise and preserve the materials Aubrey sent, seeing to the binding of an unspecified number of “Pamphlets” (Aubrey’s manuscripts) already in the Museum by 2 March 1692/93 (Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 241) and ensuring that Aubrey included a catalogue of his works (at Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 132v).

⁹³ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 94r. A list of the books – which included several very rare volumes, most notably a copy of Albrecht Dürer’s *De urbibus* (Paris, 1535), now Bodleian Ashmole F. 8 – is at fol. 94v. See Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fols. 252-253 for Tanner’s possession of the *Description* and Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 112, for the Pliny.

in the 1690s as one of isolation and increasing irrelevance, but as his engagements with these two scholars demonstrates, his scholarship was still at, or close to, the cutting edge up to the time of his death and was being materially added to by communications, publications, and discoveries from across the Republic of Letters.

Aubrey's Library, Aubrey's Books

The six scholars discussed above were the prime coordinates on the map of Aubrey's intellectual world. Like most early modern scholars, however, Aubrey's day to day study revolved, not around other people, but around the books in his private library. The study of Aubrey's library is complicated by a number of factors, the most central of which is his bankruptcy in 1670-1671.⁹⁴ In his autobiography, Aubrey mentioned the loss of "goods" during the sale of his estate at Easton Pierse, but there is no indication that these included books and the presence of a small cache of books at his farm in Broad Chalke as late as 1694 suggests that his country library did not immediately feel the effects of his newfound poverty.⁹⁵ Instead, the hatchet appears to have fallen later in the decade. In a disconnected note, Aubrey recorded that on 31 July 1677, "I sold my bokes to Mr. Littlebury", a statement whose totality suggests that if there was a major tipping point in the dissolution of Aubrey's library, this was it.⁹⁶ Equally, however, there may have been no single tipping point. Aubrey was donating small groups of books and manuscripts to the Royal Society as early as 1670 and as late as 1697, while his sale of several rare editions to Hooke in 1673 has already been

⁹⁴ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 40-41.

⁹⁵ See Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 94, and above, *sub* Edward Lhuyd, for this cache.

⁹⁶ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 45 (= Bodleian MS Aubrey 23, fol. 103v). Robert Littlebury, a well-known London second-hand bookseller with ties to Hooke and a specialty in scientific books, was an unsurprising choice of buyer on Aubrey's part (see Matthew Yeo, *The Acquisition of Books by Chetham's Library, 1655-1700* [Leiden, 2011], 81-122).

discussed.⁹⁷ Soon afterwards, in 1675, he made two separate donations to the Bodleian Library, one of *Mercurius Pragmaticus* and the rarefied *Li Tre Trattati di Messer Mattia Giegher Bavaro di Mosburc* (Padua, 1639), the other of his fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Flores Historiarum* of the pseudo-Matthew of Westminster.⁹⁸

Leaving aside the unrecoverable collection which went to Mr. Littlebury, however, these were all rare, exceptional volumes, and were clearly donated as such; they do not represent the wholesale dispersal of a scholar's working library. During the 1690s, however, he made three far larger bequests to Oxford institutions which represent the dispersal of what had probably been the rump of his working library, preserved (often at the houses of friends) during his post-bankruptcy years and well-represented in the citations present in his own works. The first, and largest, of these donations was to the Ashmolean Museum, and was mediated by Lhuyd, as discussed above. It was catalogued by R. T. Gunther early in the twentieth century and is a well-known quantity, containing several hundred volumes.⁹⁹ A second donation, probably also made in the mid-1690s, was of Aubrey's collection of mathematical books and manuscripts. These he gave to Gloucester Hall (now Worcester College) in Oxford.¹⁰⁰ Michael Hunter has plausibly argued that the immediate impetus for this donation was Aubrey's desire to help his friend Benjamin Woodroffe then Principal of Gloucester Hall.¹⁰¹ Finally, Aubrey gave several books – how many is uncertain – to the newly-established library of New Inn Hall, Oxford, apparently including his prized copy of Hobbes's *Leviathan*.¹⁰² With the dissolution of New Inn Hall in the early twentieth century,

⁹⁷ Buchanan-Brown, "Aubrey's Books", 167-193.

⁹⁸ For the first donation, see George Ent's letter to Aubrey, 6 March 1675 (Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 105). The *Mercurius* is now Bodleian 4° U 1 Art. and *Li tre tratti* (bound with Francesco Fernando Alfieri, *La Scherma* [Padua, 1640]) is now Bodleian 4° U 2 Art., strongly suggesting that they were, as Ent states, donated as a discrete unit. The manuscript of *Flores Historiarum* is now Bodleian MS e Mus. 149.

⁹⁹ R. T. Gunther, "Aubrey's Library", in Powell, *Aubrey*, 295-303.

¹⁰⁰ For a handlist, see Anthony Powell, "John Aubrey's Books", *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 January 1950: 32, and 20 January 1950: 48.

¹⁰¹ Hunter, *Aubrey*, 244-245.

¹⁰² See Bodleian MSS Aubrey 12, fol. 31, and Wood F 39, fol. 414. The *Leviathan* may have never reached its destination, as Aubrey only declares his intention of donating it.

its books were scattered. Aubrey's copy of Plot's *Natural History of Oxfordshire* ultimately found a resting place in the Museum of the History of Science at Oxford, while the copy of the Vulgate donated by Aubrey is now with other remnants of the New Inn Hall collection in the Balliol College Library.¹⁰³

In sum, Aubrey's library is now scattered, partial, and difficult to use; a far cry from the fate of, say, the libraries of contemporaries such as John Selden, Isaac Vossius, or Edward Bernard. This led Michael Hunter to conclude that "Aubrey's interests . . . are almost always better illustrated by evidence from his writings and letters" than from his surviving books.¹⁰⁴ This is not quite true. While Aubrey's physical library is dispersed beyond recovery and no complete catalogue is known to exist, his working library can be reconstructed with some degree of certainty from the approximately four thousand identifiable citations in his works to approximately twelve hundred printed texts.¹⁰⁵

In many ways, the statistics recoverable from Aubrey's citation practices are more revealing than any library list. While they do not make a clear distinction between books owned and books used – there is ample evidence that many of the books Aubrey used existed in other public and private collections, as well as various new and used book-sellers' shops – they do allow clear identification of those books which Aubrey returned to again and again – an intellectual "library" if not his own physical collection.¹⁰⁶ Most of the books Aubrey cited he used only two to three times in one or two different works, that is to say, his habitual pattern of use was extensive rather than intensive. Only forty-one texts appear in five or

¹⁰³ Hunter, *Aubrey*, 244, who errs in saying that none of Aubrey's books reached Balliol. Aubrey's Vulgate, *Biblia cum concordantiis veteris et nova testamenti* (Lyons, 1527), is now Balliol College Library 595 b. 9, and contains an inscription to Aubrey from James Godwyn, "Willensis Generosi". I am indebted to Jeremy Hinchliff and Paris O'Donnell of the Balliol library for bringing this volume to my attention.

¹⁰⁴ Hunter, *Aubrey*, 245.

¹⁰⁵ These numbers, and subsequent statistics, were derived from a comprehensive study of the citations and quotations in Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1-11, 17, 21, 23-24, and 26, Top. Gen. C. 24-25, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231.

¹⁰⁶ What can be recovered about Aubrey's own library is that only 20% of his citations can be traced back to any of the 216 extant books known to have been owned by him. Whether this means that his pre-1670 library was substantially larger than that which survived is not entirely clear.

more of his works and only nine books or authors (the Bible, Sir Thomas Browne, William Camden, Homer, Horace, Ovid, Pliny, Virgil, and Anthony Wood) are cited thirty or more times throughout the corpus of his works. Unsurprisingly, there is a heavy preponderance of the classical texts expected in a gentleman's library: Caesar, Cicero, Homer, Horace, Livy, Ovid, Pliny, Virgil, and so forth; Aubrey was no classical philologist and stuck to the (largely Latin) ancient authors he would have known at school and university.

The most surprising characteristic of this study is the absence of stereotypically "antiquarian" texts. Buchanan-Brown suggested that Aubrey sold his antiquarian library to George Ent the Younger, while Hunter, in keeping with his generally dim view of Aubrey's motivations, assumed that "he tended to discard the heaviest books first", i.e., the archetypal antiquarian folios.¹⁰⁷ The more surprising – and more interesting – answer would appear to be that Aubrey never owned them in the first place. Only twenty-four "antiquarian" texts are cited in more than two of his works (i.e., enough to reasonably be considered "core" texts within his working collection) and this is giving "antiquarian" a sufficiently broad remit to include works of history and geography which Aubrey used for antiquarian purposes.

This sub-category may be further divided by type. One discrete collection consists of the texts which Aubrey used to describe and understand British history. For everything from Roman Britain to his own time he referred to the Venerable Bede, in Abraham Wheelocke's translation, to Edmund Gibson's edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (published, however, towards the end of his career), to William of Malmesbury, to Milton's *History*, and to the ever-green *Chronicles* of Sir Richard Baker.¹⁰⁸ For the technicalities of English

¹⁰⁷ Buchanan-Brown, "Aubrey's Books", 191; Hunter, *Aubrey*, 246.

¹⁰⁸ Bede, *Historiae ecclesiasticae gentis Anglorum libri V*, ed. Abraham Wheelocke (Cambridge, 1644) is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 2, fol. 61r, Aubrey 3, fols. 9av, 98r, Top. Gen. C. 24, fols. 152v, 227r, Top. Gen. C. 25, fols. 91ar, 93r, 99v, 146r, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 125r. *Chronicon Saxonicum*, ed. Edmund Gibson (Oxford, 1692) is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 4, fol. 7br, Top. Gen. C. 24, fols. 176r, 189v, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 145r, 181v. William of Malmesbury, probably in the edition of Sir Henry Savile, *Rerum Anglicarum scriptores post Bedam* (London, 1596), is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 2, fol. 161r, Aubrey 3, fols. 9av, 36r-v, Aubrey 10, fol. 99ar, Top. Gen. C. 24, fols. 51v, 199r, 213v, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 127r, 141r. John Milton's *History of Britain*, which Aubrey variously records using in a

chronology and geography he turned to Peter Heylyn and John Speed.¹⁰⁹ For world history generally, he referred to Walter Raleigh.¹¹⁰

Aubrey used these texts as tools to understand the British past, but they are not antiquarian in a narrow sense. For the antiquarian landscape, seen through the lenses of chorography and county history, he turned, first of all, to William Camden's *Britannia*, both in Latin and in Philemon Holland's English translation, throughout his works.¹¹¹ He also referred to Camden's *Remaines*, Drayton's *Polyolbion*, Humphrey Lloyd's *Breviarie of Britaine*, and Spelman's *Villare Anglicanum* for similar purposes. But, again, these are all basic reference works, hardly the collection of "Weever's *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, Guillim's *Display of Heraldry* and Dugdale's *Warwickshire*", which Hunter imagined Aubrey must have once possessed.¹¹² The antiquarian texts in Aubrey's core library which remain once these are accounted for make up a mere eleven. Of these, five directly concern Aubrey's megalithic project: Sir Thomas Browne's *Hydriotaphia*, the controversial works on Stonehenge by Inigo Jones and Walter Charleton, Olof Rudbeck's *Atlantica*, and Ole Worm's *Monumenta Danica* (see chapter three).¹¹³ The six not accounted for either by their characters as basic reference

quarto or an octavo edition of uncertain date, is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 2v, Aubrey 3, fols. 39v, 93v, 95v, 96r, Top. Gen. C. 24, fols. 55v, 171v, 173r, 213v, 266r, and Top. Gen. C. 25, fols. 55r, 59r, 86r, 87r, 90v, 111ar. Sir Richard Baker's *Chronicle of the Kings of England* (which Aubrey states he used both in the first and in the 1665 editions) is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 115v, Aubrey 2, fols. 2v, 65r, Aubrey 4, fols. 9v, 151v, Aubrey 6, fols. 6r, 78r, Aubrey 8, fol. 90r, Top. Gen. C. 24, fols. 240v, 260v, and Top. Gen. C. 25, fols. 98ar, 171r, 208r.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Heylyn, *An Help to English History* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 3, fols. 9av, 12r, Aubrey 6, fol. 120r, and Top. Gen. C. 25, fol. 160r. Citation variously to "Chronicles" or "Maps" associated with the name of John Speed are at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 128r, Aubrey 2, fol. 74v, Aubrey 3, fol. 161r, Aubrey 4, fols. 220r, 223r-225r, Aubrey 10, fols. 99ar, 104ar, Aubrey 26, fol. 11r, Top. Gen. C. 24, fols. 65v, 152v, 191r, 228r, and Top. Gen. C. 25, fol. 73ar.

¹¹⁰ Walter Raleigh, *History of the World* (Aubrey used both the first and the 1614 editions) is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 3, fols. 9ar-9bv, Aubrey 6, fol. 77r, Top. Gen. C. 25, fols. 43av, 90v, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 126r, 145v.

¹¹¹ The *Britannia* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fols. 48r, 134v, Aubrey 2, fol. 4r, Aubrey 3, fols. 10v, 160v, 175v, Aubrey 4, fols. 7ar, 144v, 202r, Aubrey 11, fols. 2r, 3r, 9v, Aubrey 23, fol. 8r, Aubrey 26, fol. 6, Top. Gen. C. 24, fols. 25r, 56r, 66r, 74r, 76r-77v, 91r, 152v, 157r, 159r, 162r-163r, 164r, 192r, 203r, 213v-214r, 217r-219r, 220r, 221r, 240r, and Top. Gen. C. 25, fols. 32r, 64v, 74r-v, 88r, 89r, 168r, 224r, 238v.

¹¹² Hunter, *Aubrey*, 246.

¹¹³ Browne's *Hydriotaphia* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 30r, and Top. gen. c. 25, fols. 3v, 15r, 25br-43ar, 55r, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 211r-212r. Inigo Jones's *Most Notable Antiquity of Great*

works or their relevance to Aubrey's main antiquarian project are Sir Thomas Browne's *Certain Miscellany Tracts*, Robert Plot's *Natural History of Oxfordshire*, John Selden's *Titles of Honour*, John Stow's *Survey of London*, Richard Verstegan's *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, and Anthony Wood's *Historia et antiquitates Oxonienses*.¹¹⁴

What this tells us is that Aubrey was a typical antiquarian only up to a point. He made regular use of texts necessary to understand the materials he worked with – histories, chronologies, and chorographies that could site an artefact or a place in both space and time – but he was not another Anthony Wood, to be “ravished” by the sight of Dugdale's *History of Warwickshire*. With a very few exceptions, his use of antiquarian texts was contingent, not habitual, and any depiction of him as a Jonathan Oldbuckesque antiquarian, a stock character poring over a stock set of laughably esoteric books is accordingly inaccurate. Instead, the reflexive lenses through which Aubrey saw the world and his scholarship were more basic and more fundamental to the early modern world view: Ovid, Pliny, the Bible, Virgil, Homer, and Horace in descending order of use. Ultimately, what Aubrey's citations (and, through them, what we can reconstruct of his library) tell us is what we should expect: that he was a profoundly literate, but essentially conventional early modern, who used books only as he

Britain is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 18v, Top. gen. c. 24, fols. 23v, 39r, 57r, 61v-62r, 88v, and Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 21r. Walter Charleton's *Stonebenge Restored* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 18v, Aubrey 11, *passim*, Top. gen. c. 35, fol. 92v, and Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 77v. Olof Rudbeck's *Atlantica* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 66r, Aubrey 4, fol. 21ar, Top. gen. c. 24, fols. 40v, 63r, 132v-134r, Top. gen. c. 25, fols. 9av, 24r, 64v, 77v-80r, 152r, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 185v-186r, 190r. Ole Worm's *Monumenta Danica* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 3, fol. 85r, Aubrey 4, fol. 21ar, Aubrey 11, fol. 13v, Top. gen. c. 24, fols. 132v, 271v, 276r, and Top. gen. c. 25, fols. 74r-77v.

¹¹⁴ Browne's *Certain Miscellany Tracts* are cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 120v, Aubrey 2, fols. 155r-159r, 161r, Aubrey 3, fol. 1av, Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 97v, and Top. gen. c. 25, fols. 12r-14r, 91ar, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 189r, 190r, 212r, 215r. Robert Plot's *Oxfordshire* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 1, fol. 74r, Aubrey 26, fol. 6v, and Top. gen. c. 24, fols. 57r, 91r, 158r, 175r. Selden's *Titles of Honour* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 3, fol. 11av, Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 271r, and Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 84v. Stow's *Survey of London* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 2, fol. 81r, Aubrey 4, fols. 9v, 15r, 20r, 21ar, Aubrey 6, fol. 77v, and Aubrey 7, fol. 17r. Verstegan's *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 5, fol. 17r, Aubrey 11, fol. 14v, Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 230r, and Top. gen. c. 25, fols. 133v, 147r-148r, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 140r. Wood's *Historia et antiquitates* is cited at Bodleian MSS Aubrey 2, fols. 23r, 29r, 61r, 62r, 63r, Aubrey 4, fols. 15v, 16v, Aubrey 6, fols. 11v, 33v, 46r, 47v, 60r, 79v, 85r, 88v, 91v-92v, 96v, 99ar, 102r, 105r-106r, 108r, 120r, 121v, Aubrey 8, fols. 7v, 15v, 33r, 50v, 71v, 94v, and Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 153r, and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 107v, 114v.

needed them, except for a small collection of classics -- the remnants of his formal education -- which formed the textual building blocks of his intellectual world.

Understanding Aubrey in Context

One of the principal problems with earlier scholarship on Aubrey has been a failure to recognise the context, or contexts, in which he should be placed. This chapter is an argument for the relevance of a very specific context, the English province of the Republic of Letters during the last part of the seventeenth century, to Aubrey's work. Aubrey's friends, his books, and his world view derived from the learned English world of the Restoration, particularly those parts of it associated with the Royal Society and with the University of Oxford; it is in this setting that he can be understood and his works can be successfully interpreted.

This goes hand in hand with an argument which is alluded to above and has been made more fully elsewhere: Aubrey was a scholarly late-bloomer.¹¹⁵ His earliest antiquarian project was the series of archaeological surveys which eventually became the *Monumenta*. These, which are treated in full in chapters three and four, had their genesis in Aubrey's meeting with King Charles in 1663, but were not begun until 1666, when Aubrey was in his fortieth year. His work on the two county histories of Wiltshire and Surrey (discussed in chapter six) did not commence until 1670-1672, when he was in his mid-forties, although plans for the Wiltshire volume had been made as early as 1660. These works – together with the *Chronologia Architectonica* (1671) and the *Chronologia Graphica* (1672, but greatly expanded in 1689) – represent the first stage of his antiquarian scholarship, undertaken in middle age.

¹¹⁵ See Jackson Williams, "Training the Virtuoso", *passim*.

If it was ever appropriate to place Aubrey within a traditionally “antiquarian” context – alongside scholars such as Camden, Burton, Dugdale, and the like – it would be in this early period, when his focus was still on monumental inscriptions, ancient buildings, and medieval charters.

The deeply original, unconventional Aubrey, however, is the scholar of the 1680s and 1690s who associated with Hooke, Wood, Gale, and Lhuyd. Although dates on title-pages can be misleading – he regularly prepared notes which clearly predate these markers and worked on manuscripts long after their initial composition – they suggest two separate periods of intensive composition during this period. First, in 1680, at the same time as he read Olof Rudbeck’s *Atlantica* and began developing the more sophisticated layer of his archaeological theories, he composed the *Life of Hobbes* and the first *Minutes of Lives*. Then in a period of sustained creativity from 1687 to 1692 he wrote the *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum* (1687), the *Remaines of Gentilisme* (1687-1689), the *Apparatus for the Lives of our English Mathematical Writers* (1690), and the *Proportion of Languages* (1692/93). The undateable sections of the *Stromata* probably also date from this period, and certainly no earlier than the early 1680s.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the majority of Aubrey’s works exist in the intellectual context of the 1680s and 1690s: the Glorious Revolution, the great advances in archaeological technique across Europe, the final heyday of polymathic Humanism in England, and the widespread dissemination of Cartesian, Hobbesian, and Newtonian philosophies. In understanding Aubrey’s work, then, it is crucial to recognise that it was contemporaneous with Thomas Gale’s investigations into the medieval past, the British discovery of the ruins of Palmyra, Lhuyd’s archaeologico-linguistic expeditions through the Celtic fringe, and Hooke’s rejection of biblical chronology as a viable explanation of the geologic record. Seen in this light, Aubrey becomes, not an isolated, eccentric figure who sometimes stumbled upon an illuminating idea, but rather a scholar of his time, engaging

with the latest scholarship from across Europe and feeding new ideas into his own works, which are, as is argued throughout this thesis, both more scholarly and less original than has traditionally been supposed.

Chapter Three

Monumenta Britannica:

I. Stonehenge and the Druids

The *Monumenta Britannica* is the central text of Aubrey's antiquarian scholarship. Constructed around the 'Templa Druidum', a survey of the prehistoric sites at Stonehenge and Avebury which identified their builders as druids, it grew into the first systematic study of ancient material remains in Britain.¹ During the course of its composition, Aubrey's understanding of the British past changed considerably. Beginning with a conviction that previous works concerning the building of Stonehenge were incorrect and that visible traces of the Roman invasion could still be found in the British landscape, he developed theories concerning the origins and relative ages of the sites he surveyed, compared his material with other antiquarian scholarship from across Europe, and laid the foundations of what would become British prehistoric archaeology.

In its final form, the *Monumenta* was divided into three parts. The first was the 'Templa Druidum', Aubrey's study of the origins of British megalithic monuments. The

¹ The principal studies of the *Monumenta* are those by Michael Hunter in "The Royal Society and the Origins of British Archaeology", *Antiquity* 65 (1971): 113-121, 187-192, and *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* (London, 1975), 148-208 *passim*, and William Poole, *John Aubrey and the Advancement of Learning* (Oxford, 2010), chap. 6, though see also Stuart Piggott *Ancient Britons and the Antiquarian Imagination: Ideas From the Renaissance to the Regency* (London, 1989), *passim*, Stanley Mendyk, '*Speculum Britanniae*': Regional Study, Antiquarianism, and Science in Britain to 1700 (Toronto, 1989), 170-184, and Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1995), 275-307. A facsimile edition of the *Monumenta* manuscript has been edited by John Fowles and Rodney Legg: *Monumenta Britannica or A Miscellany of British Antiquities*, 2 vols. (Sherborne, Dorset, 1980-1982).

second surveyed hill forts, Roman camps, and other sites, while the third focused on burial practices and small artefacts.² In this chapter, I consider the intellectual origins and content of the ‘Templa Druidum’, the first part of the *Monumenta* both in organisation and in date of composition. In particular, I examine its development in relation to Scandinavian antiquarianism, upon which Aubrey drew heavily, and analyse Aubrey’s methodologies, whether or not successful by modern archaeological and historical standards.³ Chapter four will then assess the neglected second and third parts of the text and will conclude with an account of the *Monumenta's* reception and its role in the development of eighteenth-century British archaeology and antiquarianism.

The Origin of the *Monumenta Britannica*

The initial impetus for the composition of the *Monumenta* came from Charles II. Aubrey, recalling its genesis thirty years later, wrote that in 1663:

~~His Majesty~~ King Charles II^d: discoursing \one morning/ with the my Lord Brouncker, & D^r Charleton concerning Stoneheng, they told his Majestie, what they had heard me say, concerning Aubury . . . His Ma^{tie} admired that none of our Chorog Chorographers had taken notice of it: and comm^{manded} D^r Charlton to bring me to him . . .⁴

² Later Aubrey appended seven separate chapters on the development of architecture, heraldry, writing, garments, weights and measures, the price of corn, and the value of moneys (cf. Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 659). These, which had previously existed as an independent work, are discussed in chapter six.

³ I echo Anthony Grafton: "A historian of scholarship must distinguish between arguments that were convincing when they were advanced and those that were not. He may legitimately point out that once-convincing arguments have since been invalidated by the discovery of new evidence. But he should never take advantage of the progress of scholarship to impute ignorance or folly to those who built the methods we still use . . . for so long as we content ourselves with condemning the past, we must also be content not to understand it" (Anthony Grafton, "From Politian to Pasquali", *Journal of Roman Studies* 67 [1977]: 176).

⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 21. William Brouncker, 2nd Viscount Brouncker (1620-1684) was president of the Royal Society at the time of this meeting and a well-known mathematician (*ODNB*, *s.n.*). For Charleton, see below.

Aubrey showed Avebury to the king during his progress to Bath and was commanded by him “to write a Description of it, and present to him”, the Duke of York making a similar request that Aubrey should “give an account of the old Camps and Barrows on the Plaines”.⁵ The Royal Society seconded the royal command at a meeting on 8 July 1663 when Walter Charleton presented the Society with a plan of Avebury -- it seems to have been the same “draught of it donne by memorie only” which Aubrey had shown the King -- and recommended “that it was worth the while to dig there under a certain triangular stone, where he conceived would be found a monument of some Danish king”. Aubrey and, Colonel James Long, were “desired to make further inquiry into it”.⁶ Aubrey surveyed both Avebury and Stonehenge with a plane table in September of the same year and shortly afterwards composed the first draft of ‘Templa Druidum’, which he then presented to the King.⁷

Aubrey disregarded Charleton’s recommendation to excavate under the “certain triangular stone”, instead surveying the site as a whole. These surveys were his contribution to a debate concerning the origin of Stonehenge, and, by extension, megaliths in general, which had sprung up in the previous decade. Elizabethan antiquaries had paid little attention to prehistoric sites, preferring to concentrate on Roman and post-Roman antiquities which could be more easily understood within the context of surviving classical texts, so that when William Camden discussed Stonehenge in his *Britannia*, he could only repeat medieval legends linking it to the Saxon invasions and throw up his hands at the impossibility of explaining the origins of such an “insana substructio”.⁸

⁵ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 21.

⁶ Thomas Birch, *The History of the Royal Society of London for improving of natural knowledge*, 4 vols. (London, 1756-1757), i. 272. Sir James Long of Draycot Cerne, Wiltshire (1617-1692), elected to the Royal Society in 1663, was a numismatist and wrote a short account of his family’s history, but did not contribute further to the Stonehenge debate (cf. *ODNB*, *s.n.*, and his letters to Aubrey on numismatics at Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 963-970).

⁷ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 22.

⁸ William Camden, *Britannia* (London, 1607), 182-184. The *locus classicus* for the best-known medieval origin legend for Stonehenge -- that it was the burial site of Constantine, King of the Britons (historically, probably a post-Roman king of Dumnonia) -- is that which appears in all early manuscripts of Geoffrey of Monmouth, quoted here from the First Variant Version: “Cum autem duobus annis regnasset Constantinus, tertio anno interfectus est a Conano et infra structuram lapidum, que Saxonica lingua Stanheng nuncupatur, iuxta cenobium

In 1624 the historian of Nero, Edmund Bolton, had proposed on tenuous grounds that Stonehenge was the tomb of Boudicca, but the controversy over its origin only began in earnest with the posthumous publication of Inigo Jones's *Stone-Heng Restored* in 1655.⁹ Despite Jones's name appearing prominently on the title page, the work's preface claimed that it consisted of "some few indigested notes of the late judicious . . . *Inigo Jones*" which had been polished and set in order by his former assistant, John Webb.¹⁰ In fact, it seems to have been a collaboration between Jones and his assistant, with Jones providing the ideas and Webb rounding out his master's text by adding appropriate citations.¹¹

Regardless of authorship, *Stone-Heng Restored* partakes fully in the Humanist tradition. It systematically rehearses classical sources relating to Britain and the Druids, and concludes that "the *Britains* were then a savage and barbarous people, knowing no use at all of garments . . . if destitute of the knowledge, even to clothe themselves, much lesse any knowledge had they to erect stately structures, or such remarkable works as *Stoneheng*".¹² It then refutes the medieval historians, "who, when they could not search out the truth in deed, laboured to

Ambrii sepelitur" (Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae: The First Variant Version: a critical edition*, ed. Neil Wright [Woodbridge, 1988], 175, §179/180). See also Laura Hibbard Loomis, "Geoffrey of Monmouth and Stonehenge", *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 45 (1930): 400-415. Camden's tag for Stonehenge is derived ultimately from the "substructionum insanis" of Cicero's *Pro Milone* (31.85), however there is also an echo of the description of the Egyptian pyramids ("vastae fuerunt & insanae substructionum moles") given by Hadrianus Junius in his *Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1565), 90.

⁹ Edmund Bolton, *Nero Caesar, or Monarchie Depraved* (London, 1624), 181-184; Inigo Jones, *The Most Notable Antiquity of Great Britain, Vulgarly Called Stone-Heng on Salisbury Plain Restored* (London, 1655). Bolton's theory was entirely conjectural, but he anticipated later antiquarians in his comparative archaeology: "[t]he dumbnesse of it (unlesse the letters bee worne quite away) speakes; that it was not any worke of the Romans. For they were want to make stones vocall by inscriptions . . . [t]hat Stonage was a worke of the Britanns, the rudenesse it selfe perswades" (Bolton, 181-182).

¹⁰ Jones, *Stone-Heng Restored*, sig. A4r. The preface states that Jones, like Aubrey, first undertook his study of Stonehenge upon a Royal request, in his case that of James I in 1620 (*ibid.*, 1-2).

¹¹ Rumiko Handa, "Authorship of *The Most Notable Antiquity* (1655): Inigo Jones and Early Printed Books", *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 100 (2006): 357-377; John Bold, *John Webb: Architectural Theory and Practice in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1989); A. A. Tait, "Inigo Jones's 'Stone-Heng'", *Burlington Magazine* 120 (1978): 155-159.

¹² Jones, *Stone-Heng Restored*, 7.

bring forth narrations invented by themselves, without or reason, or authority”, as well as criticising both Camden and Bolton.¹³

For a work written by an architect and claiming to found its hypothesis on a survey of the site, *Stone-Heng Restored* relies overwhelmingly on textual evidence. The core of its architectural argument rests on readings of Vitruvius and Palladio rather than a survey of the site itself.¹⁴ Having established the inferiority of the Britons and their architecture, it concludes that Stonehenge was a temple dedicated to the Roman sky god Coelus. The Britons lived, Jones wrote, a life “without *Art*, without *Order*, without any whatever means tending to perpetuity” and their buildings “were not stately, nor sumptuous; neither had they any thing of *Order*, or *Symmetry*, much lesse, of gracefulness, and *Decorum* in them”.¹⁵ It then becomes syllogistically clear that an attribution to the Britons is impossible, for, if they were rude and barbaric and Stonehenge is an “admired and magnificent” monument, then they could not possibly have been the builders of Stonehenge. “[W]ho more magnificent than the *Romans*”, however?¹⁶ At this point, the open-roofed temple to Coelus which the text attempts to find in Vitruvius is almost superfluous to the main thrust of Jones’s argument; whether it existed or not, the Romans must still have been the authors of Stonehenge. It is not, however, superfluous to the intent of the work as a whole. Rumiko Handa has noted Jones’s use of Coelus as a symbol for James I in his *Coelum Britannicum* and elsewhere, suggesting that the reconstruction of Stonehenge served a political as well as an antiquarian purpose, linking the Stuart monarchs to the primitive British past.¹⁷

¹³ Jones, *Stone-Heng Restored*, 16 (medieval historians), 32-40 (Camden), 44-55 (Bolton).

¹⁴ Jones, *Stone-Heng Restored*, 31.

¹⁵ Jones, *Stone-Heng Restored*, 4, 11.

¹⁶ Jones, *Stone-Heng Restored*, 66.

¹⁷ Handa, “Authorship of *The Most Notable Antiquity*”, 377. Cf. Thomas Carew and Inigo Jones, *Coelum Britannicum: a Masque at White-Hall in the Banqueting-House, on Shrove-Tuesday-night, the 18. of February, 1633* (London, 1634); Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theater of the Stuart Court* (Berkeley, 1973), *passim*, and Rumiko Handa, “Coelum Britannicum: Inigo Jones and Symbolic Geometry”, in *Nexus IV* (Turin, 2002), 109-126.

Jones's reliance upon textual evidence to the exclusion of any first-hand observation did not sit well with some antiquaries, Aubrey among them. In his preface to the *Monumenta*, Aubrey recalled that "having compared [Jones's] Scheme with the Monument it self":

I found he had not dealt fairly: but had made a Lesbians rule, which is conformed to the stone: that is, he framed the measurement to his own Hypothesis, which is much differing from the Thing itself. This gave me an edge to make more researches . . .¹⁸

Aubrey had taken an amateur interest in megalithic sites since "discovering" Avebury in 1649 and was an active onlooker at the debate over their origins, but it was not Aubrey himself who launched the counter-attack on *Stone-Heng Restored's* proposals.¹⁹ Instead, Walter Charleton, the physician who had proposed Aubrey to the Royal Society only months before and who had introduced Aubrey to the king, was the first to question Jones's hypothesis.²⁰ His *Chorea Gigantum* claimed a comparative antiquarian approach, advertising that it "diligently compared *STONE-HENG* with other Antiquities of the same Kind, at this day, standing in *Denmark*", but in reality it was not so very different from *Stone-Heng Restored*.²¹

Charleton demonstrated the falseness of the reading of Vitruvius that was the crux of Jones's argument and observed that Roman sites nearby bore no architectural similarity to Stonehenge.²² Having demolished the existing theory, he proceeded to erect his own. His argument for a Danish origin rested on a perceived architectural resemblance between Stonehenge and similar sites in Denmark, though he admitted that the similarities were by

¹⁸ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 19-20. The Lesbian rule, which could be bent to fit any angle, is derived from Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, v.x.7.

¹⁹ Aubrey had come across Avebury on 7 January 1649 while hunting with a party of royalist gentlemen led by his friend Charles Seymour, later 2nd Baron Seymour of Trowbridge (Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 17-19).

²⁰ Aubrey had been proposed by Charleton on 24 December 1662 and admitted 21 January 1662/63 (Birch, *History*, i. 166, 179). He would have been a Fellow of less than six months standing when the Society, at Charleton's instigation, requested him to study Avebury.

²¹ Walter Charleton, *Chorea Gigantum, or, The Most Famous Antiquity of Great-Britain, Vulgarly Called Stone-Heng, Standing on Salisbury Plain, Restored to the Danes* (London, 1663), sig. ar.

²² Charleton, *Chorea Gigantum*, 18-28. Charleton engages in a classic scholarly offensive measure when he impugns the accuracy of the Vitruvian quotation as given in *Stone-Heng Restored* at 23-25.

no means exact.²³ The material for these comparisons was derived from Ole Worm's *Danicorum monumentorum libri sex*, a study of Danish prehistoric monuments and runestones.²⁴ As supplementary arguments he adduced the Danes' skill in mechanics, the possibility of transportation of massive stones in other cultures, the lack of any mention of Stonehenge amongst historians pre-dating Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the celebrated discovery of a tablet written in an unknown language near the site, which he took to have been a Runic inscription.²⁵ Aubrey came to have serious reservations about Charleton's theories. Bodleian MS Aubrey 11 consists of a series of extracts and notes by him on the *Chorea Gigantum* which suggest that he found it no more convincing than the hypothesis presented in *Stone-Heng Restored*.²⁶

Charleton claimed to have corresponded with Worm, but the only surviving evidence for their acquaintance is his mention in several letters between Worm and Erasmus Bartholin in 1650.²⁷ Regardless, the Danes themselves, especially Worm's circle in Copenhagen, took an active interest in Charleton's theories. Ole Borch (Olaus Borrichius), professor of philology at Copenhagen, wrote to Thomas Bartholin during the course of his travels in England, discussing the Stonehenge controversy.²⁸ In this letter, dated 10 August 1663, he noted with evident approval that Charleton had published a work – the *Chorea Gigantum* – in

²³ Charleton, *Chorea Gigantum*, 36ff., esp. 53-54 (for variation between Stonehenge and Danish sites).

²⁴ Charleton, *Chorea Gigantum*, 28-30 and *passim*; Ole Worm, *Danicorum monumentorum libri sex* (Copenhagen, 1643).

²⁵ Charleton, *Chorea Gigantum*, 28-30 (inscribed tablet), 56 (lack of notice by ancient historians), 59-61 (mechanical skill of the Danes and ease of transportation compared to the building of the Pyramids).

²⁶ MS Aubrey 11's date of composition is uncertain, but it must have been written by 11 August 1690 as it is listed among the parts of the *Monumenta* deposited with Robert Hooke at Gresham College on that date (Bodleian MS Top. Gen. C. 24, fol. 13r). In its present form it is bound separately from the *Monumenta*. His evident concern to check Charleton against Worm's *Monumenta Danica* may indicate that Aubrey 11 is contemporaneous with the second recension of the *Monumenta*, reflecting, as it does, an interest in Scandinavian archaeological literature and comparative archaeology in general. It was certainly written *after* 1685, as Aubrey refers on fol. 9v to a paper in the *Philosophical Transactions* of that year.

²⁷ *Olavi Wormii et ad eum doctorum virorum epistolae*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 1751), ii. 985-990 (=Breve fra og til Ole Worm, 3 vols., ed. H. D. Schepelern [Copenhagen, 1965-1968], iii. 424-428, 434-436).

²⁸ Thomas Bartolin, *Epistolarum medicinalium à Doctis vel ad Doctos scriptarum*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen, 1663-1667), iii. 516-540. Cf. also Ethel Seaton, *Literary Relations of England and Scandinavia in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1935), 238.

accord with the arguments of Worm and went on to summarise the gist of Charleton's theory. This Danish vision of Stonehenge through the combined lenses of Worm and Charleton was continued by Bartholin's son, also Thomas, in his *Antiquitatum Danicarum* of 1689, long after Charleton's work had lapsed into comparative obscurity in English antiquarian circles.²⁹

The penultimate contribution to this debate was John Webb's *Vindication of Stone-Heng Restored*. It was not published until 1665 but has a 6 June 1664 imprimatur and appears to have been composed while *Chorea Gigantum* was still circulating in manuscript.³⁰ It added no new information, but only rehearsed Jones's arguments in greater detail.³¹ If Aubrey did consult it, he does not mention having done so, and it appears to have had no influence on his own thought.

Aubrey, after considering the existing literature (which he later described dismissively as "several Bookes . . . much differing from one another, some affirming one thing, some another") surveyed Avebury and Stonehenge and proposed yet another theory: that the two monuments were temples of the druids.³² In the bare conclusion, his theory differs little from that of the other controversialists, but in his methodology, he broke from them entirely and began to articulate a new theory of antiquarian practice not seen in England before.

²⁹ Thomas Bartholin, *Antiquitatum Danicarum de causis contemptae a Danis adhuc gentilibus mortis libri tres ex vetustis codicibus & monumentis hactenus ineditis congesti* (Copenhagen, 1689), 139-140.

³⁰ John Webb, *A Vindication of Stone-Heng Restored* (London, 1665), 1 ("when *Chorea Gigantum* first came to my sight in manuscript").

³¹ There seems to have been no cross-fertilisation between the *Vindication* and Webb's other project during this period, *An Historical Essay Endeavoring a Probability That the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language* (London, 1669).

³² Aubrey, *Monumenta* 24-26 (for comments on the debate and its publications and a summary of his own hypothesis). *Stone-Heng Restored* had previously discounted the possibility of a druidic origin based on the lack of evidence in classical sources for any form of monumental architecture amongst them and concluded that "[t]he truth is, those ancient times had no knowledge of publique works, either Sacred or Secular . . . The *Druid's* led a solitary contemplative life, contenting themselves with such habitations, as either meer necessity invented, to shelter them from contrariety of seasons, without *Art*, without *Order*, without any whatever means tending to perpetuity . . ." (Jones, *Stone-Heng Restored*, 4).

The most striking aspect of the Jones-Charleton-Webb debate was its conventionality. All parties stuck to the traditional bounds of textual exegesis and their engagement with the site itself was minimal. Nor was the textual criticism of the highest quality. Jones, Charleton, and Webb were competent classical scholars, but none of them had the resources of a Selden, or even of a Camden, and they largely confined themselves to citing and discussing the obvious classical references to Britain, particularly those which were anthologised in Camden's *Britannia*. The debate when Aubrey joined it was based on the tired rehashing of well-known sources leavened with a dash of conjecture. As he developed his own ideas, Aubrey would eschew both the theories and the methods of his predecessors for a radically different antiquarian toolbox taken, less from the philological tradition, and more from the new methodologies of Scandinavian antiquaries and experimental scientists. Before considering Aubrey's own theories in greater detail, these traditions and Aubrey's reception of them will be examined. As discussed in chapter two, Aubrey's eclectic reading and correspondence led him to draw upon a non-standard set of resources in solving antiquarian problems, and the case of his identification of Stonehenge is no different. Rather than following his contemporaries and trying to find it in Vitruvius or Worm, he turned to the antiquarian scholarship then being published in Uppsala, a scholarly tradition which spoke with unexpected relevance and directness to his own.

Predecessors: Scandinavian Antiquarianism

Seventeenth-century Denmark and Sweden experienced a remarkable flowering of antiquarian study under active state patronage.³³ This tradition was only imperfectly known to most British scholars, however, particularly before the advent of the circle of Anglo-Saxon scholars around George Hickes. Ethel Seaton's hand-list of Scandinavian texts appearing in seventeenth-century English library catalogues indicates that even the most prominent Scandinavian scholarship was only patchily accessible to the learned audience in England.³⁴ Aubrey was more fortunate than most in his access to the Scandinavian antiquarian tradition, as will be shown below, but even his knowledge of it was fragmentary and the present discussion is limited to those portions of the tradition which influenced his own thought.

The Scandinavian authority whose works were by far the most influential in English antiquarian circles was the Danish Royal physician, Ole Worm (Olaus Wormius), Charleton's source for much of the archaeological background to *Chorea Gigantum*.³⁵ Worm himself had

³³ Scandinavian antiquarianism remains a largely unknown country, even on its home ground. Useful preliminary maps of its extent and significance can be found in Margareta Benner and Emin Tengström, *On the Interpretation of Learned Neo-Latin: an Explorative Study Based on Some Texts From Sweden (1611-1716)* (Göteborg, 1977), Jozef IJsewijn, *Companion to Neo-Latin Studies*, 2nd Ed., 2 vols. (Louvain, 1990-1998), Emin Tengström, *Latinet i Sverige: Om bruket av latin bland klerker och scholares, diplomater och poeter, lärdomsfolk och vältalare* (Stockholm, 1973), and, for state-directed antiquarian study, Johanna Widenberg, *Fäderneslandets antikviteter: Etnoterritoriella historiebruk och integrationssträvanden i den svenska statsmaktens antikvariska verksamhet ca 1600-1720* (Uppsala, 2006).

³⁴ There exists no single comprehensive study of seventeenth-century Scandinavian historical scholarship in English, though Seaton's *Literary Relations of England and Scandinavia*, 202-274, offers a valuable overview of the field as it pertained to England. For the Septentrional studies of the Queens' Saxonists at the end of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth, J. A. W. Bennett's *History of Old English and Old Norse Studies in England From the Time of Francis Junius Till the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1938) remains an indispensable source, to be supplemented by Judy Quinn and Margaret Clunies Ross, "The Image of Norse Poetry and Myth in Seventeenth-Century England", in *Northern Antiquity: The Post-Medieval Reception of Edda and Saga*, ed. Andrew Wawn (Enfield Lock, 1994), 189-210. For the reception evidence from library catalogues see Seaton, 258-266, who also notes (265) that even where works did become available on the English market, there was generally a three to five year lag between publication and English reception.

³⁵ For Worm, see H. D. Schepelern, *Museum Wormianum: dets forudsætninger og tilblivelse* (Copenhagen University Doctoral Thesis, 1971), the Latin and Danish editions of his letters, Worm, *Epistolae*, and Worm, *Breve*, and Klavs Randsborg, "Ole Worm: An Essay on the Modernization of Antiquity", *Acta Archaeologica* 65 (1994): 135-169. Ole Peter Grell, "In Search of True Knowledge: Ole Worm (1588-1654) and the New Philosophy", in *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400-1800*, ed. Pamela H. Smith and Benjamin Schmidt (Chicago and London, 2007), 214-232, offers a useful survey of Worm's methodological allegiances within the context of his medical research while Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, "Bodies of Knowledge: Ole Worm & Collecting in Late Renaissance Scandinavia", *Ethnologia Europaea* 33 (2003): 5-19, suffers from over-theorisation (Schepelern, *Museum Wormianum*, remains the essential study of Worm's collecting activities).

English connections. He had visited England in his youth and would later correspond with Henry Spelman.³⁶ The Spelman correspondence is of note as a probable avenue for the dissemination of Worm's work in England, where it seems to have been relatively well-known by Aubrey's time, and also for evidence of similar scholarly conundrums being picked at half a century earlier. On 18 April 1629 Spelman wrote to Worm, giving a transcription of the inscription found on the Bewcastle Cross in Cumberland and querying Worm as to whether it was in the Gothic alphabet and language found in Vulcanius's edition of the Codex Argenteus, a sixth-century Gothic manuscript of portions of the New Testament.³⁷ Worm responded rather magisterially on 18 July that, "Runic is nothing other than Gothic" and was the proper name for the alphabet known as Gothic by foreigners, before going on to provide a conjectural emendation and interpretation of the inscription.³⁸ Spelman, in his following letter, proposed that "rune" derived from Old English "ryne", a secret or hidden thing, a conclusion supported by modern scholarship.³⁹ Both sides seem to have valued the scholarly friendship thus formed and the correspondence resulting from it. Later, Spelman was to print his letter to Worm on the etymological origin of "rune" in his *Glossarium Archaologicum*.⁴⁰ For his part, Worm eagerly awaited the second part of Spelman's *Glossarium* and sent him a copy of his *De aureo cornu* under cover of a letter to his son John in the spring of 1641.⁴¹

³⁶ Seaton, 154-155 (for Worm's visit to England).

³⁷ Worm, *Epistolae*, i. 426 (= Worm, *Breve*, i. 170-171). Spelman's transcription is of more than usual interest given the probability that the inscription had been tampered with at some point in the nineteenth century, for which see R. I. Page, "William Nicolson, F.R.S., and the Runes of the Bewcastle Cross", *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 14 (1960): 184-190. The somewhat squat and blocky runes at Bewcastle reminded Spelman of the specimen of Gothic script, printed with type cut in imitation of the Codex Argenteus, in Bonaventura Vulcanius's *De literis et lingua Getarum, sive Gothorum* (Leiden, 1597).

³⁸ "Gothicae enim nil aliud sunt quam Runicae, & illa qua exteris dicta est Gothica, ab iis, qui eam primum in peregrinas advexerunt regiones, nobis Runica est literatura vero & genuino nomine" (Worm, *Epistolae*, i. 431 [= Worm, *Breve*, i. 179]). Worm was only paraphrasing Vulcanius himself, who had also equated Runes with the Gothic script in his *De literis et lingua Getarum sive Gothorum* . . . (Leiden, 1597), 43-48. For Vulcanius's Runes see Kees Dekker, "The Runes in Bonaventura Vulcanius *De literis & lingua getarum sive Gothorum* (1597): Provenance and Origins", in *Bonaventura Vulcanius, Works and Networks*, ed. Hélène Cazes (Leiden, 2010), 411-453.

³⁹ Worm, *Epistolae*, i. 434-435 (= Worm, *Breve*, i. 208-210); cf. *OED*, *s.v.*

⁴⁰ Sir Henry Spelman, *Glossarium Archaologicum* (London, 1664), 493-494; Seaton, 226-227. Spelman's letter is included under the rubric of "Runicae literae" within the *Glossarium*.

⁴¹ Worm, *Epistolae*, i. 440-443 (= Worm, *Breve*, i. 329-331); ii. 783-784 (= ii. 246-247).

This correspondence highlights Worm's concern with runic epigraphy, the subject that dominated his most significant antiquarian work, *Danicorum monumentorum libri sex*. The majority of the work is a region by region survey of surviving runestones throughout Denmark.⁴² What set Worm apart was his methodology. The systematic list of runestones was not compiled through Worm's own travels, but through the results of a survey sent by him to parish priests in 1622, prefiguring correspondence networks such as that of the editors of the 1695 edition of Camden's *Britannia*.⁴³ More importantly, however, the first book of the *Monumenta Danica* was a short essay on the history and material culture of the ancient Danes, whose theoretical and critical assumptions would become central to the work of later archaeologically-minded antiquarians.

Worm categorised the sites known to him on pre-existing models, but allowed for the unique nature of his material. His broad divisions were *delubra* and *arae* (shrines and altars), *sepulcra* (graves), *epitaphia* and *monumenta* (epitaphs and runestones), *fora* (thing-sites), *circi* (circles for duels and other purposes), and *limites* (demarcated places, usually for various religious purposes).⁴⁴ Within these he was particularly interested in graves and burial traditions, a fascination growing out of his epigraphic researches, and he proposed a theory of development in burial practices which would significantly influence Aubrey's thinking (though, by contrast, not that of his contemporary, Sir Thomas Browne).⁴⁵ Danish burial practices, he suggested, could be divided into three eras: a fire era, in which bodies were cremated and their ashes then buried together with grave goods, a mound-burial era, in which

⁴² Worm, *Danicorum Monumentorum*, 100-526.

⁴³ Randsborg, "Ole Worm", 136 and *passim*. See Parry, *Trophies of Time*, 331-357, for the 1695 *Britannia*.

⁴⁴ Worm, *Danicorum Monumentorum*, 1-99 *passim*, esp. 3-4 (for a survey of the divisions); cf. also Randsborg, "Ole Worm",

⁴⁵ Browne inverted Worm's eras, proposing that "carnall interment of burying" preceded immolation world-wide and citing numerous biblical and classical evidences in favour of this (Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica . . . and A Discourse of the Sepulchral-Urnes Lately Found in Norfolk . . .* [London, 1659], 35). There is no evidence that Browne had read Worm before writing *Hydriotaphia*.

bodies were inhumed in barrows with grave goods, and finally the Christian era, in which current burial customs first began to be practised.⁴⁶

As well as constructing a methodological framework, Worm also provided an unusually large corpus of data with which to compare later finds. Klavs Randsborg has made the important point that “fresh rich data” had at least as much impact on changing archaeological and historical theories as developments in methodology and the paradigm-shifting possibilities of publishing a wide-ranging selection of material such as Worm's should not be underrated.⁴⁷ Charleton's *Chorea* is completely indebted, in its basic premises, to Worm's chapter “de locis Regum electioni deputatis” and the early donation of Selden's copy of the *Monumenta Danica* to the Bodleian meant that it was easily mineable for raw material by Oxford-based scholars.⁴⁸

By contrast, the Swedish historical tradition was much less well-known in England, though portions of it profoundly influenced Aubrey. An early example of this tradition was Johan Bure (Johannes Bureus), another student of runes, who published a series of Rosicrucian pamphlets in the second decade of the seventeenth century claiming that a distinct ancient Hyperborean cultural tradition was encoded in the “Gothic” language and its runic alphabet.⁴⁹ This combination of the mystical and the overtly nationalist with

⁴⁶ Randsborg, "Ole Worm", 145-146; Worm, *Danicorum Monumentorum*, 30-40.

⁴⁷ Randsborg, "Ole Worm", 159. Camden's *Britannia* offers a parallel English example of the ways in which the publication of a large corpus of new data could profoundly affect subsequent antiquarian studies.

⁴⁸ Worm, *Danicorum monumentorum*, 87-91 ("De locis Regum electioni deputatis"). Selden's copy, with its characteristic Greek inscription, *peri pantos ten eleutherian*, on the title-page (for which see Gerald J. Toomer, *John Selden: a Life in Scholarship*, 2 vols. [Oxford, 2009], ii. 796), is now Bodleian T 1.11 Jur.Seld. The 1674 Bodleian Library catalogue records the same volume at its earlier shelfmark of P.1.13 Art.Seld. as well as adjacent copies of Worm's *Antiquitates Danicae* at P.1.12 and his *Fasti Danici* at P.1.14 (Thomas Hyde, *Catalogus impressorum librorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae in Academia Oxoniensi* [Oxford, 1674], 260).

⁴⁹ Susanna Åkerman, *Rose Cross Over the Baltic: the Spread of Rosicrucianism in Northern Europe* (Leiden, 1998), 29-67; Sten Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige till 1600-talets mitt* (Uppsala, 1943). Bureus would have been known to at least some English scholars, including Aubrey, through the exhibition to the Royal Society by Johan Heysig of Bureus's *Verae veterum Gothorum literae* (Uppsala, 1599), a comparative table of runic and other scripts, on 7 December 1681. Heysig's purpose in showing Bureus's table is evident from its description in the Royal Society's minutes: "a full explication of the Runic language, published in Sweden by Johannes Burreus long before Wormius had published his book on that subject" (Birch, iv. 111).

advanced textual and antiquarian scholarship proved to be a hallmark of Swedish scholarship throughout the remainder of the century, culminating in the work of Olof Rudbeck. Although arguments of political insecurity and necessity have been deployed, often without sufficient justification, to explain many theories of ancient history and pre-history in the Early Modern period, there can be no doubt that these trends in Sweden, what has been termed its “Gothic Renaissance”, stemmed from a desire to give the country a past concomitant with its present status as a great power.⁵⁰

The two preeminent Swedish antiquaries later in the century were Johannes Schefferus (1621-1679) and Olaus Verelius (1618-1682), both professors at the university of Uppsala.⁵¹ Schefferus’s *De orbibus tribus aureis* (1675) was a methodical description of the discovery, appearance, and significance of three golden bracteates unearthed in rural Sweden that anticipated Aubrey’s methods at their best in the *Monumenta*, and Verelius’s *Manuductio compendiosa* of the same year was for its time the most accurate and systematic discussion of the nature and function of the runic alphabet and the first to comprehensively compare it to the Gothic alphabet used in the Codex Argenteus.⁵² Schefferus and Verelius, however, were also on opposite sides of a scholarly controversy which strikingly paralleled the Stonehenge debate in England.⁵³

In 1666 Schefferus had published his *Upsalia*, an urban antiquarian study in the tradition of Flavio Biondo and the architectural and topographical antiquarians of the

⁵⁰ Two useful surveys of this trend in Swedish historiography are Ernst Ekman, "Gothic Patriotism and Olof Rudbeck", *Journal of Modern History* 34 (1962): 52-63, and Stina Hansson, "The Lament of the Swedish Language: Sweden's Gothic Renaissance", *Renaissance Studies* 23 (2009): 151-160.

⁵¹ Allan Ellenius, "Johannes Schefferus and Swedish Antiquity", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20 (1957): 59-74.

⁵² Johannes Schefferus, *De orbibus tribus aureis nuper in Scania erutis e terra disquisitio antiquaria* (Stockholm, 1675); Olaus Verelius, *Manuductio compendiosa ad runographiam Scandicam antiquam, recte intelligendam* (Uppsala, 1675). Verelius’s recognition of the linguistic importance of the Codex Argenteus and its relation to other northern languages anticipates that of George Hickes and the English Septentrionalists a generation later (cf. Bennett, *Old English and Old Norse Studies*, 82-122). In this context it should be noted that Johan Heysig gave a copy of the *Manuductio* to Elias Ashmole which was later read by Aubrey and, perhaps, other English scholars (British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 119r).

⁵³ For the debate over the age of the temple at Uppsala see generally Ellenius, 62-65.

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁵⁴ In it he argued that pagan Uppsala was built on the site of the present town, not at Gamla Uppsala, a few miles away, and that the pagan temple described by Adam of Bremen was not to be confused with the church at Gamla Uppsala, which was, Schefferus argued, only a few hundred years old.⁵⁵ This argument went against Swedish historical orthodoxy as set forth in Erik Olofsson's fifteenth-century *Historia Suecorum Gothorumque* and elsewhere.⁵⁶ In 1672 Verelius published his *editio princeps* of *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* and went out of his way, in a note discussing the burial of Ingibjörg and Hjalmar in a barrow at Uppsala, to contest the age of the church at Gamla Uppsala.⁵⁷ Verelius, in a move strikingly reminiscent of the English antiquarians, measured and illustrated the remains of the church and found its structure reminiscent, not only of the building described by Adam of Bremen, but of the arch of Janus Quadrifrons in Rome.⁵⁸ The similarity in argument to *Stone-Heng Restored* is evident. In the following years both sides published additional squibs until forbidden by the chancellor of Uppsala, but their main lines of argument changed little.⁵⁹ Schefferus appears as a more conservative textual critic and a more reticent interpreter of archaeological evidence while Verelius, acting on the assumptions of Gothic antiquity common amongst the Swedish nationalist historians, was quick to find similarities between medieval Scandinavian and classical culture, both in texts and in archaeology. Arguments by architectural analogy were common to both sides, but given the lack of any real evidence to analyze (the church at Gamla Uppsala was, as

⁵⁴ Johannes Schefferus, *Upsalia cujus occasione plurima in religione, sacris, festis . . . illustrantur* (Uppsala, 1666). See Flavio Biondo, *Italia illustrata*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey A. White (Cambridge, Mass., 2005) as well as Arnaldo Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 289ff.

⁵⁵ For the famous temple and its golden chain see Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. Francis J. Tschan (Columbia, 1959), 207-208.

⁵⁶ Erik Olofsson, *Historia Suecorum Gothorumque*, ed. Johannes Loccenius (Stockholm, 1654).

⁵⁷ Olaus Verelius, ed., *Hervarar Saga på Gammal Gotska med Olai Vereli uttolkning och notis* (Uppsala, 1672), 62-66.

⁵⁸ Verelius, *Hervarar Saga*, 64 and figures I-V facing 64-65.

⁵⁹ See Ellenius, 63-66, for a summary of the remainder of the debate see Claes Annerstedt, "Schefferus och Verelius. En litterär fejd i det sjuttonde seklet", in *Ur några antecknares samlingar* (Stockholm, 1891).

Schefferus had supposed, only built in the eleventh century), no broader conclusions could be drawn.⁶⁰

Both methodologically and ideologically, the Uppsala temple debate bears a resemblance not only to the Stonehenge controversies of previous decades, but also to the greatest and most problematic product of the Swedish antiquarian tradition: Olof Rudbeck's *Atlantica sive Manheim*.⁶¹ Published between 1679 and 1702 in four volumes and an accompanying elephant folio of plates, the *Atlantica* brought every resource of textual criticism and antiquarianism to bear on Sweden's ancient past, resulting in the inescapable conclusion that it was none other than the Platonic Atlantis. Rudbeck's conclusions and the already uneasy place of Atlantis within a series of ill-judged attempts to reconcile Judaic and Greco-Roman mythologies have contributed to a dismissal of his *magnum opus* as an intellectual dead end, a perverse excrescence of nationalism out of touch with scholarly reality.⁶² This is only true to a certain extent. Leaving aside the baroque beauty of the hypothesis, Rudbeck's methodologies represent the culmination of the more geographically- and artefactually-focused Swedish school and point toward a synthesis of philology and antiquarianism with natural philosophical experimentation.

⁶⁰ The archaeology of the Christian and pre-Christian ritual complexes at Uppsala, together with the other, in some cases still unidentified, remains surrounding them has yet to be fully explored. The best current work is that of Magnus Alkarp of the University of Uppsala, much of it still unpublished, for which see <http://www.gamlauppsala.se/main/>. See also Henrik Ågren, Elisabeth Michelsson, and Olof Sundqvist, *Royalties and Sanctuaries: Religious and Historical Symbols in the Context of Cultural Change in Sweden and England c. 1000-1600* (Gävle, 2009). I am indebted to Dr. Ågren of the University of Gävle for his conversation on this topic.

⁶¹ Olof Rudbeck, *Atland Eller Manhem . . . Atlantica sive Manheim*, 4 vols. (Uppsala, 1679-1702). For Rudbeck's life and work the basic sources remain the *Atlantica* and his letters as edited by Claes Annerstedt, *Bref af Olof Rudbeck d.ä. rörande Uppsalas universitet*, 4 vols. (Uppsala, 1893-1905). The best modern studies are those of Gunnar Eriksson, *The Atlantic Vision: Olaus Rudbeck and Baroque Science* (Canton, Mass., 1994) and *Rudbeck 1630-1702: Liv, lärdom och dröm i barockens Sverige* (Stockholm, 2002). Also useful for its detailed explication of Rudbeck's line of argument is the popular history by David King, *Finding Atlantis: A True Story of Genius, Madness, and an Extraordinary Quest for a Lost World* (New York, 2005).

⁶² For the wider context of Atlantis and Atlantean theories in the Early Modern period see Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "Hérodote et l'Atlantide: Entre les Grecs et les Juifs: Réflexions sur l'historiographie du siècle des lumières", *Quaderni di Storia* 16 (1982): 3-76, and Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Janet Lloyd, "Atlantis and the Nations", *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 300-326.

Rudbeck's first volume (apparently the only one known to Aubrey) opens with a chapter of “necessary preparations for a valid knowledge of antiquarian matters”.⁶³ In it he distinguishes six possible sources: *traditio* (oral history), *historia* (or “saga”, in the Swedish parallel text), *geographia* (geography), *suffragia naturae* (the authority of nature), *aedificia* (monuments), and *cippi* (standing stones) and outlines the ways in which they can profitably be used together. His summary of the importance of the study of ancient monuments anticipated the lines of argument Aubrey would take in the *Monumenta*, arguing that the “great simplicity” of the prehistoric sites he had examined, was “the most certain index of [a] great antiquity”, certainly much greater than that of Rome.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, had Rudbeck stopped there his archaeological methodology would have been little different from that of Schefferus or Verelius. His great innovation was the development of a theory of stratigraphy, outlined in chapter six (“in which the ancient Swedish race is deduced out of ancient tumuli and burial mounds”) and experimentally tested.⁶⁵

Rudbeck had observed that the undisturbed surface of the earth was covered with a layer of humus, made up of vegetation and air-borne debris. To prove the nature of its accretion he left a pot exposed to the elements over the course of a winter and noted the presence of a fine layer of this humus at its bottom the following spring. Continuing these tests on sites known to have been untouched since significant disturbance ten and fifty years before, respectively, Rudbeck observed what seemed to be a constant rate of sediment accretion. He then extrapolated from this data to reach a general equation of deposition rates which could be used to date the age of an object found at any given level within a layer

⁶³ Rudbeck, *Atlantica*, i. 1-15.

⁶⁴ Rudbeck, *Atlantica*, i. 14-15 (“Rudera & parietinae praesertim arcium antiquarum, in his locis multò quam apud gentes alias frequentius occurrunt. Et haec monumenta e rudi tantum materia congesta praecipuè commendat operis maxima simplicitas, quae ultimae vetustatis certissimus index est. Romanos quidem arcus triumphales & alia magnifica aedificia post se reliquisse, e ruderibus, quae passim adhuc conspiciuntur manifestum evadit: atqui temporibus antiquissimis ea operis elegantia minimè responderet”).

⁶⁵ Rudbeck, *Atlantica*, i. 125-144 (“in quo gentis Sveonicae vetustas ex antiquorum tumulis seu collibus sepulcralibus colligitur”).

of undisturbed topsoil. Using this technique he dated numerous sites around Sweden, including the barrows outside Gamla Uppsala, which he correctly concluded were built *circa* 600-1000 C.E.⁶⁶ Rudbeck's stratigraphic theories parallel those of Nicolaus Steno, discussed below, but they seem to have been arrived at independently and, in any case, are the first example of abstract theories of stratigraphy being applied in an archaeological context.

Rudbeck's work was remarkable not only for its novel methodology, but also for its reliance on that methodology, and on physical remains in general, as the ultimate basis for his arguments. He described the *Atlantica* as a house with foundations, walls, roof, ornaments, and decorations. The last of these were philological and etymological arguments, the walls and roof were “the writings of the ancients” and

The foundation is what I call the country of Sweden, its lakes, mountains and streams and other such things, all of which features remain undisturbed until the stone, mentioned by Daniel, who himself planted it, falls from heaven crushing everything.⁶⁷

This reliance on physical evidence rather than texts as the foundation for an antiquarian study was adopted by Aubrey and can be seen in his intention expressed in the introduction to the *Monumenta* to “make the Stones give Evidence for themselves”.⁶⁸

Aubrey's access to this tradition of Scandinavian scholarship seems to have been largely fortuitous. He was probably introduced to Worm's work by Charleton, if he had not known of it before, but the Swedish scholarship whose methods were to prove so influential to the *Monumenta* was communicated to him by the traveling Swedish scholar Johan Heysig. Heysig, a graduate of Uppsala, had been friendly with both sides during the Schefferus-

⁶⁶ Rudbeck, *Atlantica*, i. 125-144 and plates, tab. 31, fig. 104 (a cross-section of several layers of topsoil measured by relative age). See also Eriksson, *Atlantic Vision*, 15-16.

⁶⁷ Rudbeck, *Atlantica*, i. 560; English translation from Eriksson, *Atlantic Vision*, 45. Rudbeck refers to the vision of the stone at Daniel 2.34-35 (“the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth”).

⁶⁸ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 32.

Verelius controversy, pronounced the funeral oration at Schefferus's funeral in 1679, was a friend of Rudbeck and early champion of the *Atlantica*, and in October 1681 arrived in London as tutor to the young Swedish aristocrat, Baron Erik Axelsson Sparre.⁶⁹ How Aubrey first came to know him is uncertain, but Heysig was friendly with the Royal Society group centred around Hooke, having been proposed as a Fellow by Hooke and Aubrey's friend the classicist and antiquarian Thomas Gale on 23 November 1681, and it was probably in these circles that they first met.⁷⁰

Heysig provided Aubrey with books and discussed archaeological and philological issues with him, probably in or around 1681, before his departure, with Sparre, from London to Oxford.⁷¹ Heysig must have brought a not inconsiderable traveling library with him to England for a number of donations, loans, and other contacts with Scandinavian scholarship hover about him in the first years of the 1680s. Notably, he seems to have been the carrier to England of three copies of volume one of the *Atlantica*, which he delivered to Theodore Haak and which were displayed to the Royal Society at the meeting of 19 October 1681.⁷² He also gave the Society Bure's *Verae veterum Gotorum literae*, as discussed above, and gave Aubrey's friend the antiquarian and alchemist Elias Ashmole a copy of Verelius's

⁶⁹ Eugène Lewenhaupt, "Johan Heysig-Ridderstjerna", *Samlaren* 10 (1889): 70-85. Heysig, after the publication of the first volume of the *Atlantica* in 1679, had acted as Rudbeck's publicist and organised a collection of laudatory reviews and remarks by scholars across Europe, *De viri clarissimi Dn. Olavi Rudbeckii diversorum testimonia* (Uppsala, 1681). For his time in England and its significance, see Kelsey Jackson Williams and William Poole, "A Swede in Restoration Oxford: Gothic Patriots, Swedish Books, and English Scholars", *Lias* 39 (2012): 1-66.

⁷⁰ "Mr. Hessack, a Swedish gentleman, was proposed candidate by Dr. Gale and Mr. Hooke" (Birch, iv. 104).

⁷¹ 1681 or shortly thereafter would accord with the donation of Rudbeck's *Atlantica* to the Royal Society Library by Heysig at that time and by Aubrey's marginal note "Mr Jo: Heysig suecus. 1681" by information in the *Monumenta* obtained from Heysig (Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 57).

⁷² Birch, iv. 98. Rudbeck himself had sent a copy to the Society under cover of a letter dated September 1679 and by care of Sir James Barkman Leyenberg, envoy extraordinary from the Swedish King (R.S. MS LBC.8, fol. 273-274) but it was not received until 23 November 1681, having been narrowly anticipated by Heysig (Birch, iv. 105). Francis Aston, secretary to the Society, was commissioned to return their thanks to Rudbeck at the meeting of 30 November (Birch, 4.109), but did not do so until January of the following year, at which time copies of the *Atlantica* were still "multum in his Regionibus desiderato" (R.S. MS LBC.8, fol. 275). The copy of volume one and its accompanying elephant folio of plates now in the Royal Society Library (shelfmarks 145.a.1 and 85.1.9 respectively) have been rebound in twentieth-century brown library cloth and bear no manuscript notes or inscriptions but are probably the set conveyed by Leyenberg on behalf of Rudbeck.

Manuductio.⁷³ This liberality was continued in Oxford, where, in 1683, he donated runic objects to the recently-founded Ashmolean Museum and a major collection of Swedish scholarly books to the Bodleian Library.⁷⁴ In the latter year he returned to Sweden, joined the army soon after and temporarily forsook scholarly society.⁷⁵ There is no evidence that Aubrey remained in contact with him after his departure from England or that he made contact with any other Scandinavian scholars. However, he incorporated their theories and conjectures into his evolving hypotheses concerning prehistoric Britain.

The importance of this Scandinavian tradition of antiquarianism for the development of Aubrey's thought was considerable. From Worm and Rudbeck he derived a large corpus of prehistoric monuments against which he could compare English sites and from the evidence of the *Monumenta* it is clear that the presence of this corpus in Denmark and Sweden, together with other examples in France and elsewhere, was one of the factors that led him to discount Inigo Jones's theories. The Scandinavian antiquarians provided more than data, however. Aubrey's great debt to them lies in the realm of methodology. Although he did not use Rudbeck's stratigraphic methods in any new excavations (for which see chapter four), he was aware of their importance. Likewise, he followed Rudbeck and the Uppsalans in their emphasis on material rather than textual evidence. It was this emphasis, together with their willingness to create a space outside of textually-based history in which prehistoric monuments could exist, that led Aubrey to his own theories of a pre-Roman, prehistoric British Stonehenge. In that respect, it was the theories of Rudbeck which led Aubrey to create the concept of British prehistory.

⁷³ Birch, iv. 111 (Buraeus); Seaton, 230-231 (Verelius).

⁷⁴ Arthur MacGregor, et al., *Manuscript Catalogues of the Early Museum Collections*, 2 vols. [Oxford, 2000], i. 4-5. For the Bodleian donation see Jackson Williams and Poole, *passim*.

⁷⁵ Lewenhaupt, 103.

Predecessors: Chorography and Natural Philosophy

Two other scholarly traditions which might be expected to underpin the *Monumenta* in general and the ‘Templa Druidum’ in particular are chorography and natural philosophy. Aubrey was indebted in his methodology to the Scandinavian inheritance. He was, however, also working within the English historiographical tradition that reached back to Tudor antiquarians and chorographers such as John Leland and William Camden. The influence of this tradition on ‘Templa Druidum’ is less obvious than it is elsewhere in the *Monumenta*, but the overall structure of the work and Aubrey's attempts to produce a systematic survey of sites organised by county or region owes something to the British chorographical tradition. Likewise, although the natural philosophy of the Royal Society and its contemporaries did not, by and large, find its way into the *Monumenta*, Aubrey's reading of the geological works of Robert Hooke and Nicolaus Steno conditioned his interpretations of the ancient world.

Within the chorographical tradition, William Camden's *Britannia* (1587, subsequent editions to 1607), John Selden's notes to Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (1612), and William Dugdale's heraldic visitations are all frequently referenced within the *Monumenta*, providing potential models by which to organise a national antiquarian project.⁷⁶ Chief amongst these was the *Britannia*, which began with a history of the several peoples who had conquered or settled in Britain, from the ancient past to the Norman conquest, and was thereafter divided by classical tribal divisions and by county.⁷⁷ Camden divided his work, “either *Naturally*,

⁷⁶ Another obvious model would have been Worm's division of the *Monumenta Danica* by province and parish, a model which itself may be derived from Camden (for evidence of Worm's use of Camden see *Danicorum monumentorum*, sig. b4r and *passim*).

⁷⁷ William Camden, *Britain*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1610). The translation by Holland has been cited here as it was the text used by Aubrey in the compilation of the *Monumenta* (for evidence of this, compare Aubrey's text with Holland's text, e.g., *Monumenta Britannica*, 451, with Camden, *Britain*, 636). For Camden in general and the *Britannia* in particular see Leslie W. Hepple, “William Camden and Early Collections of Roman Antiquities in Britain”, *Journal of the History of Collections* 15 (2003): 159-173; Wyman H. Herendeen, *William Camden: A Life in Context* (Woodbridge, 2007); F. J. Levy, “The Making of Camden's *Britannia*”, *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 26 (1964): 70-97; Stanley Mendyk, “Early British Chorography”, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 17 (1986): 459-481; Mendyk, ‘*Speculum Britanniae*’; Parry, *Trophies of Time*, chap. 1; Stuart Piggott, “William

according to the course of rivers, and interpose of mountaines: or *Nationally*, according as the people inhabite them”, both of which divisions inform the shape of the county chapters.⁷⁸ Within the chapters a chorographical progress proceeds by local roads and rivers throughout each county, taking note of towns, country seats, historical events, Roman remains (one of the principal aspects of the work), inscriptions, and, occasionally, monuments such as Stonehenge. Aubrey appears to have regarded the *Monumenta* as both supplementary and complementary to the *Britannia* and though the *Monumenta* does not imitate the chorographical progress of the *Britannia*, a similar intention towards comprehensive survey is present.

John Selden's annotations to Michael Drayton's chorographical poem *Poly-Olbion* partake of the same tradition and are also cited by Aubrey.⁷⁹ *Poly-Olbion* follows the same structure as the *Britannia*, though divided into “songs” roughly equivalent to a county or counties and containing Drayton's poetry followed by Selden's prose commentary. It is a slighter work of scholarship than the *Britannia*, hindered, as Gerald Toomer has suggested, both by the poetic structure of the work on which Selden commented and by the speed with which it was written (the notes seem to have been composed as the poem was going to press). Nonetheless, it was used by Aubrey, both in his interpretation of druidic custom and in his commentary on legends associated with specific megalithic sites.⁸⁰ Works such as the *Britannia* and *Poly-Olbion* provided him with reference points, tools, and bodies of knowledge

Camden and the *Britannia*”, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 37 (1951): 199-217; William Rickett, “Historical Topography and British History in Camden's *Britannia*”, *Renaissance and Reformation* 26 (1990): 71-80; William Rickett, “The Structural Plan of Camden's *Britannia*”, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995): 829-841.

⁷⁸ Camden, *Britain*, 154.

⁷⁹ Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* (London, 1612). Cf. Toomer, *Selden*, i. 108-124. For evidence of Selden's debt to Camden see his preface in which he states that “for most of what I use of *Chorographie*, joyne with me in thanks to that most Learned Nourice of Antiquitie . . . my intrusting friend M^r. *Camden Clarenceux*” (Drayton, sig. A3v).

⁸⁰ See, for example, Drayton, 49-50 (Stonehenge) and 224-226 (the Roll-Right Stones), used by Aubrey in the *Monumenta*, 87, 481, 821, 886, 1051, and elsewhere.

within which he could place his new discoveries and which he could refer back to when discussing already well-known sites.

Another aspect of the chorographical tradition were the heralds' visitations. Designed as administrative devices to monitor and regulate the use of arms by the English gentry, the visitations had had an antiquarian cast ever since Tudor times. Though the bulk of each finished visitation, deposited in manuscript form in the College of Arms or in the papers of the herald responsible, would consist of pedigrees and proofs of arms, heralds would also frequently record notable antiquities, particularly records of arms in churches or elsewhere which could be used as evidence during the process of visitation itself.⁸¹ This was taken a step further by Aubrey's friend William Dugdale, the most scholarly of the seventeenth-century heralds.⁸² Dugdale regularly noted details of ancient monuments in his manuscript visitation papers and Aubrey used these extensively in the *Monumenta*, citing Dugdale's visitations of Cumberland (King Arthur's roundtable, carved stones at Penrith), Shropshire (Caer Caradoc), and possibly others, as well as conversations with Dugdale himself drawing on his memories of the visitations.⁸³ Dugdale sited his notes and drawings in the chorographic tradition when he told Aubrey that:

when he went his Northern Visitation [as Norroy K. at Armes] he did view antiquities carefully, but as for the Picts wall it being 12, or more miles from the Towne where he was, thought it needles to survey that which M^r Camden had laboured in so much

⁸¹ See Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England: a History of the Office and College of Arms* (London, 1967), Anthony Wagner, *The Records and Collections of the College of Arms* (London, 1952) and Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, *Catalogue of the Herald's Visitations; With References to Many Other Valuable Genealogical and Topographical Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 2nd Ed. (London, 1825). The Harleian Society of London has published the genealogical contents of numerous visitations but has traditionally been less concerned with antiquarian material of the sort discussed here.

⁸² For Dugdale see the ODNB; William Dugdale, *The Life, Diary, and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale, Knight* . . . , ed. William Hamper (London, 1827); Mendyk, 'Speculum Britanniae', 102-113; Parry, *Trophies of Time*, 217-248; Christopher Dyer and Catherine Richardson, eds., *William Dugdale, Historian, 1605-1686* (Woodbridge, 2009).

⁸³ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 113-114 (King Arthur's roundtable), 312-315 (Caer Caradoc), ii. 818-819 (Penrith stones).

already: but he had an Impulse upon his Spirit, that he must needs see it before he returned . . .⁸⁴

This tendency to think of one's own work as a supplement or correction to Camden was one which Aubrey shared in the *Monumenta*.

Aubrey placed himself in both the Baconian tradition and this peripatetic chorographical lineage when he wrote that:

The Lord Chancellor Bacon* [*in margin*: * his *Instauratio magna*] saies, that “the Writings of Speculative men upon Active matter, seemes to men of Experience to be but Dreames & Dotage: and that it were to be wished, that active men would, or could become writers . . . My frequent journeys between south and north Wiltshire have given me more opportunities than most men, to make Remarques on this Country & particularly on Salisbury plaines. Passing therefore so often by those Monuments of Ancient time, I could not but make some what a deeper Inspection into them than one of y^e Vulgar.”⁸⁵

Despite this claim, the structure of the *Monumenta* and what is known of Aubrey's movements place him in a different class from the great peripatetic antiquarians. Outside his native Wiltshire and its vicinities, Aubrey rarely examined a site in person and the organisation of the *Monumenta* by type of object or site owes more to Robert Plot's *Natural History of Oxfordshire* than it does to Camden's or Selden's comital divisions.⁸⁶ Plot, in his chapter “Of Antiquities”, dealt in order with money, ways, barrows, pavements, urns, “ancient Monuments of stone”, and fortifications.⁸⁷ Although the order is different, the divisions of artefacts are reminiscent of the *Monumenta* and, given that Aubrey knew Plot and had

⁸⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 901.

⁸⁵ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 237. Aubrey has misremembered his source, which is not the *Instauratio magna* but rather the *Advancement of Learning*: “the writing of speculatiue men of Actiue Matter, for the most part doth seeme to men of Experience as Phormioes Arguments of the warrs seemed to Hannibal, to be but dreames and dotage” (Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan [Oxford, 2000], 143).

⁸⁶ Robert Plot, *The Natural History of Oxford-shire: Being an Essay Toward the Natural History of England* (Oxford, 1677).

⁸⁷ Plot, *Natural History of Oxford-shire*, 308.

prepared collections towards a second edition of his *Oxfordshire* as well as hoping at one point that he might complete and publish Aubrey's county histories of Wiltshire and Surrey, it is likely that he was indebted to *Oxfordshire* for some of the *Monumenta's* structure.⁸⁸

Aubrey's use of contemporary geologic theories is also less than straightforward. The most novel and influential geological work of the seventeenth century, and the one most immediately relevant to Aubrey's antiquarian concerns, was Nicolaus Steno's 1669 *De solido intra solidum naturaliter contento dissertationis prodromus*.⁸⁹ In 1671 an English translation by Henry Oldenburg was published in London and was reprinted together with several tracts by Robert Boyle two years later.⁹⁰ In their most basic form, Steno's theories established several propositions concerning the behaviour of solids, deriving from these a theory of stratification and sedimentation which allowed for an explanation of fossils and for a reading of layers of earth as successive stages of geological history.⁹¹ Aubrey obtained a copy of the 1671 translation and his marginalia on the theories of Steno and Hooke make it clear that he read and agreed with Steno's theories, for among his notes are a series on the flyleaf pointing towards a theory of archaeological stratigraphy including:

p. 37. 38. Origin of y^e Strata.

p. 39. Some strata remaining since the Creation.

p. 40. The Beds wherin Bones of Animals are most certainly since y^e Creation.⁹²

⁸⁸ See Kate Bennett, "John Aubrey's Oxfordshire Collections: An Edition of Aubrey's Annotations to his Presentation Copy of Robert Plot's *Natural History of Oxford-shire*, Bodleian Library Ashmole 1722", *Oxoniensia* 64 (1999): 59-86.

⁸⁹ Nicolaus Steno, *De solido intra solidum naturaliter contento dissertationis prodromus* (Florence, 1669).

⁹⁰ Nicolaus Steno, *The Prodromus to a Dissertation Concerning Solids Naturally Contained Within Solids*, trans. H[enry] O[ldenburg] (London, 1671); Robert Boyle, *Essays . . . To Which is Added The Prodromus to a Dissertation . . . By Nicholas Steno* (London, 1673).

⁹¹ Steno, *De solido, passim*. See also the summary in William Poole, *The World Makers: Scientists of the Restoration and the Search for the Origins of the Earth* (Oxford, 2010), 102-103.

⁹² Aubrey's copy of the *Prodromus* is Bodleian Ashmole C. 10. For these notes see the back flyleaf.

Aubrey's reception of Steno's theories was complicated, however, by his belief that they had been stolen from Hooke by Henry Oldenburg, the secretary of the Royal Society.⁹³ Regardless of their ultimate origin, however, he actively endorsed the similar ideas of Hooke, who had developed his own geologic hypotheses partially based on Steno's work, and in his "Hypothesis of the Terraqueous Globe" he handily disposed of the straitjacket of biblical chronology which had so indisposed Steno, writing that "this World is much older, than is commonly supposed".⁹⁴ An ancient earth did not, however, destabilise Aubrey's belief in a postdiluvian repopulation of the world (see chapter four).

Despite having both Rudbeck's and Steno's theories of stratification at his fingertips, there is no evidence that Aubrey applied them to his archaeological investigations.⁹⁵ This could hardly be for lack of a model. Hooke himself had recourse to a number of surprisingly antiquarian, even Rudbeckian, lines of argument in his theories of geologic change, among them being the assertion that Atlantis had existed, was sited beyond the pillars of Hercules, that its remnants had been seen by Hanno the Carthaginian about 500 B.C., and that the Peak of Tenerife might approximately represent its present location.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, the only places in the "Templa Druidum" or the larger *Monumenta* where Aubrey unequivocally recognised the importance of stratigraphy were in passages relating to the excavations of Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke after the fire of London. There he observed that the

⁹³ On the front pastedown of his copy of the *Prodromus* he wrote, "Mdm, Mr \H./ Oldenburgh \by stealth/ sent a copie of Mr Hookes Lectures of Solids in Solids read about 1664, to Mr Steno; & he \to be/ printed Mr Hookes excellent Notions in Italie & Mr H. Oldenburg translated them [*i.e.*, Steno's *Prodromus*, which Aubrey took to be Hooke's lectures] into English" (Bodleian Ashmole C. 10).

⁹⁴ See Poole, *World Makers*, 111-112, for the context of this statement.

⁹⁵ He did, however, at least retail the substance of the theories in his own work, as when he noted, "In Rudbeckii Monumenta Suecica are excellent Remarques concerning the growing of Earth, w^{ch} is worth the reading; and there is also a Scale of it's growth, for every 1000, or 500 yeares. '—annis 100 – quam nunc humus atra et herbis obsita segit crassitie partis quinta digita unius. Annis 500 digitum circiter unum. stratam super stratum haec autem omnia ab oxiunte versus occidentem jactata fuisse apparet.' cap. VI." (MS Aubrey 1, fol. 66r).

⁹⁶ Kirsten Birkett and David Oldroyd, "Robert Hooke, "Physico-Mythology, Knowledge of the World of the Ancients and Knowledge of the Ancient World", in *The Uses of Antiquity: The Scientific Revolution and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Stephen Gaukroger (Dordrecht, 1991), 145-170.

London ground level in 1689 was twenty or more feet higher than that of the Roman city.⁹⁷

Nor, for that matter, is there evidence that he conducted even the most basic excavations himself. Despite his reliance upon the evidence of sites and material artefacts, he limited himself to observation, rather than actively attempting to disinter the past.

Templa Druidum

Aubrey was aware of these historical and scientific traditions, but the extent to which he fully internalised the theories and methods of any one scholar, or any one tradition, is debatable. Nonetheless, the basic framework of his methodology, in so far as it can be recovered from his practice in the ‘Templa Druidum’ and elsewhere in the *Monumenta* reveals their broader influence.

Aubrey followed Rudbeck in relegating textual evidence to a secondary position in relation to visual evidence. This is apparent in the structure of his discussion of Stonehenge, including textual evidence as an appendix to the survey and field report, as well as in his initial statement of intent:

I doe here endeavour (for want of written Record) to work-out and restore a kind of Algebraical method, by comparing [those monuments] that I have seen one with another; and reducing them to a kind of Æquation: so (being but an ill Orator my selfe) to make the Stones give Evidence for themselves.⁹⁸

Aubrey thus placed textual sources in a supporting role, concentrating instead on the physical remains themselves. In so doing, he recognised the necessity of taking as wide a sample as possible and comparing surviving monuments to each other. His intent, he wrote, was to

⁹⁷ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 505. It is significant that Hooke is the man who suggests this.

⁹⁸ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 32.

“proceed gradually à notioribus ad minus nota that is to say, from y^e Remaines of Antiquity less imperfect, to those more imperfect”.⁹⁹ This necessity, it would seem, provided the first impetus for attempting to record as complete a survey of British monuments as possible and, perhaps, for the idea of a *Monumenta Britannica* at all. Aubrey provided an important caveat to his own methodology, however, in the crucial phrase “for want of written Record”. Like Rudbeck, he turned to artefacts and archaeological sites out of a lack of written evidence, not because he believed in the absolute superiority of physical over textual evidence. Aubrey was no Jean Hardouin to use physical evidence to undermine the textual tradition, or even to doubt the relative value of textual vs. artefactual sources as bases upon which to reconstruct history.¹⁰⁰ Instead, he came to the study of non-textual sources through necessity and gradually, “à notioribus ad minus nota” as he put it, slowly drifting apart from earlier antiquarian methods as his sources forced him to adopt new approaches towards their explication.

Working within these sources and methodologies, Aubrey developed a novel theory. It was clear, he thought, “that all the Monuments, which I have here recorded, were Temples”, an idea derived from Worm and Rudbeck.¹⁰¹ It was also clear that monuments like Stonehenge and Avebury were extant not only in England, but throughout the British Isles, Scandinavia, Germany, and France.¹⁰² This being so, they could hardly have been built

⁹⁹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 32.

¹⁰⁰ Hardouin (1646-1729), on the basis of numismatic studies, had argued that the vast majority of classical texts known in the seventeenth century were medieval forgeries. See his *Ad censuram scriptorum veterum prolegomena* (London, 1766) as well as Anthony Grafton, “Jean Hardouin: The Antiquary as Pariah”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 62 (1999): 241-267, Chantal Grell, “Le vertige du pyrrhonisme: Hardouin face à l’histoire”, in *The Return of Scepticism: From Hobbes and Descartes to Bayle*, ed. Gianni Paganini (Dordrecht, 2003), 363-374, and Arnaldo Momigliano’s classic placement of Hardouin within the larger narrative of antiquarian studies at the turn of the eighteenth century in “Ancient History and the Antiquarian”, 302-303.

¹⁰¹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 24.

¹⁰² Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 85. Evidence for Scandinavian circles came from Worm and Rudbeck. For German parallels Aubrey cites Edward Browne (*Monumenta*, 224), “In this road through *lower Saxony*, I could not but take notice of many *Barrows* or *Mounds of Earth*, the burial *Monuments* of great and famous *Men*, to be often observed also in open Countries in *England*, and sometimes rows of great *Stones*, like those in *Wormius* his *Danish Antiquities*. And in one place I took more particular notice of them, where three massy *Stones* in the middle,

by either Jones's Romans or Charleton's Danes, neither of whose spheres of influence had reached all the countries in which these monuments were to be found. Furthermore, there was no doubt that "[t]hese Antiquities are so exceeding old, that no Books doe reach them" and that they savoured of an "antique rudenesse".¹⁰³ Leaving aside the thorny question of the Scandinavian monuments, which Aubrey elsewhere argued for as an instance of prehistoric architectural imitation, the inescapable conclusion was that the megaliths were works of the ancient Britons and:

That the Druids being the most eminent Priests [or Order of Priests] among the Brittaines: 'tis odds, but that these ancient monuments [sc. Aubury, Stonehenge, Kerrig y Druidd &c.] were Temples of the Priests of the most eminent Order, viz, Druids, and it is strongly to be presumed that Aubury, Stoneheng, &c: are as ancient as those times.¹⁰⁴

It was one thing to argue that megaliths and henges were products of ancient British culture, but quite another to associate them with the druids. In making this final conceptual leap, Aubrey was indebted to two earlier scholars: William Camden and John Selden. In his *Britannia* Camden gave a brief account of the druids from classical sources but did not elaborate on his texts.¹⁰⁵ He did, however, provide a crucial clue to Aubrey by noting that among the hills of Denbighshire:

there is a place commonly called *Cerig y Drudion*, that is, *The stones of the Druidae*, and certaine little columnes or pillers are seen at *Yvoellas*, with inscriptions in them of strange characters, which some imagine to have beene erected by the *Druides*.¹⁰⁶

were encompassed in a large square by other large *Stones* set up on end" (Edward Browne, *An Account of Several Travels Through a Great Part of Germany* [London, 1677], 146).

¹⁰³ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 25, 129. Aubrey's "antique rudenesse" echoes Rudbeck's description of the "great simplicity" of the Swedish monuments, but contrasts notably with Jones's appreciation of Stonehenge as a monument so "magnificent" it could only have been built by the Romans (see above).

¹⁰⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 25.

¹⁰⁵ Camden, *Britain*, 12-14.

¹⁰⁶ Camden, *Britain*, 675.

Selden repeats Camden's glossing of Cerrig-y-Drudion as "lapides Druidarum" in the discussion of the druids in his *Janus Anglorum*, although he draws no larger conclusion about other megalithic monuments, lamenting instead that the pillars at Yvoellas were no longer readable.¹⁰⁷ Aubrey was convinced that "the Hinge of this Discourse depends upon M^r Camden's Kerrig y Druidd", a conviction that evidently stemmed from the etymology given by Camden and repeated by Selden.¹⁰⁸ For Aubrey, the traditional name of a stone circle in Wales was the last link in the chain needed to conclusively identify stone circles in England as the holy sites of druids before the Roman invasion of Britain.

***Templa Druidum* in Context: the Myth of the Druids and Cultural Loyalties**

Having established to his satisfaction that the druids were the architects of Stonehenge, Aubrey added to the *Templa Druidum* an appendix "De Religione et Moribus Druidum".¹⁰⁹ The appendix is, in effect, a literature review containing extracts from relevant classical and modern sources discussing the druids. The classical texts singled out by Aubrey include the standard passages on the subject known to the Early Moderns: Caesar's *Commentaries*, Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Tacitus's *Histories*, Cicero's *De Divinatione*, Pliny's *Natural History*, Ammianus Marcellinus, Diodorus Siculus, Diogenes Laertius, and Ovid's *Amores*.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ John Selden, *Jani Anglorum facies altera* (London, 1610), 20.

¹⁰⁸ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 22. That his knowledge of this derived from the *Janus* as well as the *Britannia* is made likely by his early ownership of a copy (now Bodleian Ashmole 1555) as well as a reference to Selden's account of the druids in the appendix of the 'Templa' (Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 133).

¹⁰⁹ Aubrey's unusual choice of name for this appendix ("mantissa") may be partly in imitation of Ralph Cudworth's *Discourse Concerning the True Notion of the Lords Supper* (London, 1642) in which Cudworth states that he will "adde as a *Mantissa* to that discourse [of Jewish ritual feasting] something of the custome of the Heathens also" (9), cited in the *OED* as one of the earliest uses of the word in English.

¹¹⁰ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 131-150. See Ronald Hutton, *Blood and Mistletoe: The History of the Druids in Britain* (New Haven and London, 2009) chap. 1, for commentary on these and other classical texts concerning druidic practices.

More revealing of Aubrey's notions of druidism are his citations of modern authors. By the time he began to compile the *Templa Druidum* there was already an established tradition of scholarly interest in the Druids, many products of which seem to have been consulted by, or at least known to, him.¹¹¹ Of these, it is the works of John Selden and Thomas Smith which reappear most in his writings and which seem to have exerted the greatest influence.

John Selden, who, as discussed above, was one of Aubrey's sources for his conclusion that the druids were the builders of Stonehenge, discussed them in his *Analecta Anglobritannica* (written by 1605 but not published until 1615), his *Janus Anglorum* (1610), and later in his notes to Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (1612), which have already been discussed in the context of chorography.¹¹² Selden cited the relevant classical texts, particularly Caesar, Pliny, and Lucan, but in the *Analecta* fell afoul of the fifteenth-century forgeries of Annius of Viterbo.¹¹³ The *Janus Anglorum*, however, began with a denunciation of Annius.¹¹⁴ It is in the *Janus* that Selden first developed his theories concerning the druids which would be popularised in *Poly-Olbion*. By the time of *Poly-Olbion*'s publication Selden was prepared to lash out against not only "that Dominican Frier [who] hath cozened vulgar credulity withall" (*i.e.*, Annius), but also Hector Boece, whose work was filled, he wrote, with "infinet Fables and grosse absurdities".¹¹⁵ Instead, Selden set out to establish a solid foundation of etymological, textual, and epigraphic

¹¹¹ A survey of many of the principal texts on the subject can be found in Hutton, 49-85.

¹¹² See Toomer, *Selden*, i. 71-88, 108-124.

¹¹³ John Selden, *Analecton Anglobritannicon libri duo* (Frankfurt, 1615), 1-6 (Annian pseudo-history), 20-36 (druids). Annius of Viterbo's series of forged ancient historians included a genealogy of Noachid British kings which identified these mythical monarchs as the founders of the druidic order, cf. C. R. Ligota, "Annius of Viterbo and Historical Method", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 44-56; Walter Stephens, *Giants in Those Days: Folklore, Ancient History, and Nationalism* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1989); Walter Stephens, "When Pope Noah Ruled the Etruscans: Annius of Viterbo and his Forged *Antiquities*", *Modern Language Notes* 119 (2004): S201-S223; Toomer, *John Selden*, i. 59-60.

¹¹⁴ Selden, *Janus Anglorum*, 1-8.

¹¹⁵ Drayton, 151. The druids also appear in passing in Hector Boece's *Chronicles of Scotland*, another influential pseudo-historical narrative current among scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Hector Boece, *The Chronicles of Scotland*, ed. R. W. Chambers and Edith C. Batho, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1938-1941), i. 73-74.

evidence. He reiterated the classic textual evidence and added his own conjectures as to the origins of the name.¹¹⁶

Selden anticipated the arguments of later antiquarians in his discussion of druidical religion. “[A]lthough I thinke you may truely say with *Origen*”, he wrote:

that, before our Saviours time, *Britain* acknowledged not one true God, yet it came as neere to what they should have done, or rather neerer, then most of other, eyther *Greeke* or *Roman*. . . [f]or although *Apollo*, *Mars*, and *Mercury* were worshipt among the vulgar *Gaules*, yet it appeares that the *Druids* invocation was to one *All-healing* or *All-saving* power.¹¹⁷

He identified this “*All-healing* Deity” with Apollo, worshipped under the name Belin, and pointed to an inscription in Gaul, "DEO | ABELLIONI", quoted by Scaliger, and another in Cumberland, "DEO | SANCTO BELA- | TVCADRO . . .", noted by Camden, as additional evidence.¹¹⁸ He ended by citing the fifteenth-century German scholar Conrad Celtis who affirmed that there were:

in an Abbey at the foot of *Vichtelberg* hil, neer *Vottland*, six Statues, of stone, set in the Church-wall, some VII. foote every one tall, bare head and foote, cloakt and hooded, with a bagge, a booke, a staffe, a beard hanging to his middle, and spreading a Mustachio, an austere looke and eyes fixt on the earth

which he, and Selden, conjectured were images of druids.¹¹⁹ Selden's druids were thus not so dissimilar from their eighteenth-century counterparts: participants in a tradition of

¹¹⁶ Drayton, 151.

¹¹⁷ Drayton, 152.

¹¹⁸ Drayton, 152; Joseph Scaliger, *Ausoniarum lectionum libri duo* (Lyon, 1574), 28; Camden, *Britain*, 770-771. Selden has silently completed the fragmentary inscription on the Cumberland altar, which is read by Camden as "BELATV | CADRO | IVLCI | VILIS | OPT | VSLM" (770). For the context of the quotation from Scaliger's *Ausonius* see Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1983-1993), i. 128-132.

¹¹⁹ Drayton, 154. Celtis himself described the statues as "septem pedum singulae. nudis pedibus: capita intecti. graecanico pallio & cucullato. perulaque & barba ad inguina usque permissa & circa naris fistulas bifurcata in manibus liber & baculus dyogenicus saevara fronte & tristi supercilio obstipo capite: figentes lumina terris"

monotheistic, potentially patriarchal wisdom, associated, as per the relevant classical sources, with the oak and the mistletoe, and in the patriarchal garments in which William Stukeley would drape them one hundred and thirty years later.

After Selden's studies of the druids, Aubrey was most familiar with Thomas Smith's 1664 *Syntagma de Druidum*.¹²⁰ Smith followed Selden in condemning the "*Pseudoepigraphis*" of Annius and reproduced a series of etymological conjectures derived from *Poly-Olbion*.¹²¹ He retraced the etymological origin to the "Celtic" *deru* and its modern "Cambro-Britannic" equivalent, *derw*, both meaning oak, and borrowed from either Camden or, more likely, Selden's *Janus*, when he referenced "*Cerigy Drudion* i.e. *lapides Druidarum*".¹²² These derivative arguments were continued with a rehashing of previous authorities' associations of the druids with the Abrahamic oaks of Mamre, supported by extensive but superfluous quotations in Hebrew and Arabic. Smith was slightly more original in noting the seeming similarity between druidic practices and those of the priests of Diana Nemorensis, an analogy Aubrey would also observe.¹²³ The remainder of the work associated the druids not only with Abraham but also with the Persian magi and the Indian Brahmins and, supported by copious quotations from classical and Near Eastern sources, proved their learning, wisdom, and ubiquitous influence on the classical world.

Aubrey, though he included textual evidence from Selden, Smith, and other earlier authors in the appendix of the *Monumenta*, appears to have had grave reservations as to their accuracy. "The Latin Historians", he wrote:

(Conrad Celtis, "De origine, situ, moribus & institutis Norimbergae", in *Quatuor libri amorum secundum quatuor latera Germania feliciter incipiunt* [Nuremberg, 1502] sig. mviiiir). For the context of Celtis's (mis)identification of these medieval jamb figures at the monastery of Speinshart as druids see Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago, 2008), 1-12.

¹²⁰ Thomas Smith, *Syntagma de Druidum Moribus ac Institutis* (London, 1664). Aubrey's own copy, inscribed "Jo: Aubrey R.S.S.", is now Bodleian Ashmole 1572 and he references it in the appendix (*Aubrey, Monumenta*, 145).

¹²¹ Smith, *Syntagma*, 4-5.

¹²² Smith, *Syntagma*, 7-8.

¹²³ Smith, *Syntagma*, 25.

make great mistakes as to y^e Lawes & customes of the Jewes who lived at Rome & were much more considerable than the Druids, then why may they not mistake more in y^e Religion &c: of the Druids who lived farther from their acquaintance & knowledge?¹²⁴

In the majority of his works, Aubrey treats the pre-Roman Britons as an uncivilised race “2 or 3 degrees I suppose lesse savage then the Americans” and in his commentary on Charleton's *Chorea* objects to the idea that a civilised people such as the eleventh-century Anglo-Saxons could have erected “such rude monuments of their Conquest” as Slipper Stones and similar megalithic sites.¹²⁵ He is not always averse to seeing parallels between the Britons and more sophisticated cultures, however. Thomas Smith, as mentioned above, suggested a connection between the sacred groves of the druids and the famous grove at Nemi, sacred to the Tauric Diana, Diana Nemorensis.¹²⁶ Aubrey seems to have entertained a similar belief, based on passages in Lucan and Ovid, and from communications with the antiquary Thomas Sebastian Price of Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire.¹²⁷ This hypothesis is in the same analogic tradition as Aubrey's folklore collections (discussed in chapter five) and bears some similarity to the arguments he advances there. It does not, however, seem to indicate any real belief in the druids as antediluvian sages as presented by Selden, Smith, and others. Aubrey's druids are the chief priests of a barbarian people at the fringes of the known world and accurate knowledge of their practices cannot be recovered from texts alone.

Aubrey has been praised in both historical and archaeological scholarship for his perceptive conclusion that megalithic monuments such as Stonehenge and Avebury predated recorded British history and were built by an indigenous people rather than Romans, Danes,

¹²⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 147.

¹²⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 10v; Bodleian MS Aubrey 11, fol. 10v.

¹²⁶ Smith, *Syntagma*, 25. For a modern treatment of the cult of Diana Nemorensis see Carin M. C. Green, *Roman Religion and the Cult of Diana at Aricia* (Cambridge, 2007).

¹²⁷ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 135, 144. The relevant note at 135 reads: “from Tho. Price of Llanvillinyon Montgomeryshire. Lucan: lib. 1. et Tarinis Scythica non mitior axa Diana. *Taran* est Britannica Thunderbolt. Item ab eodem *Llundain(i)* Imago Diana.” For the obscure Price see *Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940* (London, 1949), 793. Aubrey probably knew him through Meredith Lloyd or Edward Lhuyd.

or other interlopers.¹²⁸ An argument which has not been explicitly made, but which follows from the foregoing, would be that his identification of megalithic henges with druidic temples was due chiefly to a lack of evidence and an intellectual mindset which preconditioned him to assume a comparatively short, culturally homogeneous pre-Roman history for ancient Britain. In this reconstruction, Aubrey emerges as the heroic precursor of the modern, doing his best with the materials at hand and, if not quite correct, then as good as could be expected from a scholar working during the “birth of modern archaeology”.

There is, however, another way of reading the surviving evidence; one which complicates any overly teleological narrative of methodological development and draws parallels with the archaeological studies produced by Aubrey's Scandinavian contemporaries. It is a truism that nationalist sentiment could provide the motivation and the rationalisation for much early modern scholarly research and, while it has been argued above that such motivations do not necessarily detract from the value or innovation of the scholarship produced, their presence should not be ignored. In Aubrey's case there is reason to think that, particularly towards the end of his life, he participated in a nascent Welsh antiquarian cultural consciousness, one not tied to institutional and political structures, as was the “Gothic” nationalism of the Uppsalan scholars, but one which nonetheless significantly affected the scholarship produced by its adherents.¹²⁹

Aubrey took considerable pride in his Welsh ancestry,¹³⁰ at one stage even attempting to insert his pedigree into Gibson's 1695 edition of Camden's *Britannia*, and making frequent

¹²⁸ Hunter, “Origins of British Archaeology”; Hunter, *Aubrey*, 182-183 and *passim*; Piggott, *Ancient Britons*, 113-115, among others.

¹²⁹ For concise summaries and discussions of the question of pre-nationalist nationalism in the seventeenth-century Celtic fringe see Colin Kidd, *British Identities Before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1999), *passim*, and John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics, 1603-1707* (Oxford, 2008), esp. 115-140.

¹³⁰ The senior branch of the Aubreys had been settled at Abercynfrig in Brecknockshire for many generations and deduced their descent from a semi-legendary “Stiant Awbrey” of Norman extraction who allegedly came to Britain in the train of William the Conqueror (Lewys Dwnn, *Heraldic Visitations of Wales and Part of the Marches*, 2 vols., ed. Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick [Llandovery, 1846], ii. 57).

visits into Wales, at first to his own estates there and later, after the reversal in fortune which led to the sale of his properties, to the seat of his cousin and the head of his family, Sir John Aubrey of Llantrithyd, Baronet.¹³¹ These Welsh connections were strengthened in the final years of his life through his friendship with Edward Lhuyd, keeper of the Ashmolean Museum and researcher into the linguistic and archaeological antiquities of the Celtic fringe. Lhuyd introduced him to a group of young Welsh scholars at Oxford, chiefly based in Jesus College, who regularly beg to be remembered to him at the end of Lhuyd's letters (see chapter two).¹³² Through them, and through his long-time informant Meredith Lloyd many of the speculations of the Restoration-era Welsh antiquarians found their way into the *Monumenta*. It is tempting to suppose that it is to this group and their ethos that Aubrey owes his tendency to view the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes as savages by comparison with the civilised, Romanised ancient Britons (whom he sees as the direct ancestors of the Welsh).¹³³ If so, Aubrey was participating, not so much in a Rudbeckian aggrandisement of his own culture, as a proto-Romantic pride in, and revival of, the Celtic past. There are only a few short steps from the *Templa Druidum* to the *Myrryrian Archaeology* of just over a hundred years later.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Aubrey must have proposed this to Lhuyd in his capacity as sub-editor for Wales. In a letter of 1 April 1694 Lhuyd gently rebuffs him: "you'll be so kind as to excuse me, for taking no notice of [all] Aubreys. For to celebrate those Norman families whom some persons of good account in Wales, call by a name signifying *Grassatores*, and to take no notice of our own Gentry; as it would be in me no sign of an honest patriot, so it would give several just occasion of offence". He then foists the whole matter off onto Tanner, as being more properly pertinent to Wiltshire (Edward Lhuyd, *Life and Letters of Edward Lhuyd*, ed. R. T. Gunther [Oxford, 1945], 234-235). Needless to say, Aubrey's pedigree is absent from the published edition.

¹³² Notable amongst these were Ellis Anwyll, M.A., of Jesus and later rector of Llaniestyn, Carmarthenshire (Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1891-1892), i. 28), John Davies, M.A. and later D.D., of Jesus (*Alumni Oxonienses*, i. 381), Christopher White, a chemist associated with the university (*Alumni Oxonienses*, iv. 1613), and William Wynne, M.A., fellow of Jesus, and editor of David Powel's *History of Wales* (London, 1697) (*Alumni Oxonienses*, iv. 1696). For their greetings to and associations with Aubrey see Lhuyd, *Life and Letters*, 177, 184, 207, 238. Jonathan Edwards, principal of Jesus, also took an active interest in Aubrey and his work (Lhuyd, *Life and Letters*, 216-217, 235).

¹³³ See, for example, Aubrey on ancient embanking and draining: "we must conclude that these great Dreyms were donne by [the Romans]: who were skilfull in all Arts: and the Saxons were barbarous & ignorant" (*Monumenta*, 1023).

¹³⁴ *Myrryrian Archaeology of Wales*, 3 vols., ed. Owen Jones, Edward Williams, and William Owen Pughe (London, 1801-1807). For the growth of modern Romantic, nationalist interest in the Welsh past see the seminal survey by Prys Morgan, "From Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period", in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (Cambridge, 1983): 43-100.

Conclusion

The *Templa Druidum* has undoubtedly had a greater impact on subsequent scholarship than any other work by Aubrey and his vision of Stonehenge, Avebury, and other megalithic sites as the temples of the British druids has enjoyed a curiously persistent afterlife in popular culture long after it was discredited in serious scholarship. Within the context of Aubrey's own work, it is also of prime importance as an example of Aubrey at the cutting edge of his discipline, reshaping antiquarianism's subjects and its tools. Insofar as there is an origin point to prehistoric archaeology in Britain, it lies in the *Templa* and the other sections of the *Monumenta*. That origin, however, lay not within anything resembling modern archaeology, but within the rich and varied tradition of early modern antiquarianism. Aubrey was at the centre of that tradition during the composition of the *Templa*: he read widely in the works of his contemporaries, both English and Scandinavian, and took from the writings of Olof Rudbeck, Ole Worm, William Camden, and John Selden, among many others, the methodologies and contexts needed to formulate his ideas. The nature of Stonehenge and similar megalithic sites forced him to look past the classical texts which formed the framework of much contemporary antiquarian research and led him towards a new and acute understanding of physical artefacts and their place within the British landscape. Finally, the name of a stone circle in rural Denbighshire – Cerrig-y-Drudion – gave him the final clue he needed to reach his famous conclusion. Although incorrect by the standards of modern scholarship, the *Templa Druidum* stands out as one of the great works of early modern antiquarianism in England, a paradigm-shifting text that led to a dramatic reinterpretation of the ancient British past and ultimately became one of the corner stones of prehistoric archaeology.

Chapter Four

Monumenta Britannica:

II. Mapping Roman Britain

The previous chapter examined the genesis of the *Monumenta Britannica* in Aubrey's surveys of Stonehenge and other neolithic sites, tracing it from his first ideas to the thesis of druidic construction elaborated in the *Templa Druidum*. This chapter discusses the remaining two parts of the *Monumenta*, composed between 1668 and the final years of Aubrey's life. These sections catalogued the physical remains of the Roman occupation of Britain, with chapters on encampments, towns, sepulchres, ditches, urns, and a host of other sites, buildings, and objects that Aubrey associated with the ancient British past. Aubrey's study and understanding of these will be set within the larger currents of early modern study of the Roman physical past and the gradual evolution of his theories about ancient Britain will be examined. From a simplistic beginning in which he saw most archaeological sites across England as relics of Julius Caesar's invasion and interpreted barrows as the burial mounds of soldiers who had fallen in battle there, Aubrey gradually developed a sophisticated understanding of Roman Britain, placing a wide array of sites and artefacts within their social and historical contexts, while building up hypotheses concerning the culture of the ancient Britons based upon extensive analogies with ancient Greece and the near east. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Aubrey's attempted publication of the *Monumenta* and its subsequent circulation in manuscript, highlighting its use by subsequent antiquaries and archaeologists such as William Stukeley, William Borlase, and Richard Colt Hoare.

From *Templa Druidum* to *Monumenta Britannica*

The possibility of publishing the *Templa Druidum* arose in early 1673. On 3 February Aubrey wrote to Anthony Wood that “D^r Lock at my L^d Chancellors . . . is much importunate wth me to print it: and he will be at the chardge”.¹ This was John Locke, the philosopher, and the chancellor was Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury.² Aubrey could not have been in a better position to publish. He held fire, however, unsure whether the *Templa* might not find its way into John Ogilby’s *Britannia* project (for which see chapter six), though he did thank Locke profusely “for the honour you doe me to peruse my Scriblings.”³ Shaftesbury must have remained interested all the same, for Aubrey reported on 4 November 1673 that the *Templa* manuscript remained in his keeping.⁴

Aubrey’s decision not to publish was of more than bibliographical importance as the majority of parts two and three of the *Monumenta* probably date from after 1673. Seven years later, on 22 May 1680, he wrote to Anthony Wood discussing a new name for the work and proposing, “Monumenta Britannica for reasons I will tell you hereafter. So Olaus Wormius called his Monumenta Danica. The next thing I goe about shall be to transcribe it faire, & print it”.⁵ In renaming his manuscript *Monumenta Britannica*, Aubrey was positioning it within

¹ Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 196r.

² If the identification of Shaftesbury as Lord Chancellor were not sufficient proof, no man with the surname Lock(e) held a doctorate of any kind from either Cambridge or Oxford during this period (cf. John and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 2 parts in 10 vols. [Cambridge, 1922-1954]; Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, 2 parts in 8 vols. [Oxford, 1891]). Aubrey probably accorded Locke the degree based upon his role as personal physician to Shaftesbury (*ODNB*, *s.n.*).

³ From a letter from Aubrey to Locke (PRO GD24/7/ No. 493), dated Shrove Tuesday (*i.e.*, 11 February) 1673[/74], and published in Maurice Cranston, “John Locke and John Aubrey”, *Notes and Queries* 197 (1952): 383-384. See also Maurice Cranston, “John Locke and John Aubrey”, *Notes and Queries* 195 (1950): 552-554. Cranston, however, is incorrect in thinking that the “Scriblings” are Aubrey’s Wiltshire manuscripts. The date and context makes it far more likely they refer to the *Templa*.

⁴ Bodleian MS Tanner 456a, fol. 14r.

⁵ Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 340r.

a European-wide antiquarian tradition. In classical Latin a *monumentum* was a thing which preserved remembrance and could be applied both to tombs and written records, amongst other things, an ambiguity which persisted in the early modern period. Within antiquarianism, however, *monumentum* came to acquire more precise connotations. In the early seventeenth century this was generally one of a tomb or monumental inscription and several publications from across Europe used *monumenta* in the titles of collections of modern epigraphs, generally taken from the tombs of local worthies.⁶ In these works, usually geographically limited to a city or a province, there was much local posturing and self-praise, with the antiquity and greatness of the region being proved by the magnificence of its medieval and modern funeral monuments. They were characteristic of the local antiquarian tradition that flourished on the continent as well as in England and are parallel to English works such as Weever's *Funerall Monuments*.⁷

The linguistic elasticity of the word, however, allowed for it to develop with the changing interests of antiquaries. Ole Worm titled his study of Danish megaliths and runestones *Danicorum monumentorum libri sex*, the Italian antiquary, Sertorio Orsato, edited an edition of ancient inscriptions from the vicinity of Padua as *Monumenta Patavina*, and the German orientalist Matthias Friedrich Beck produced an edition of Hebrew inscriptions found at Augsburg as *Monumenta Antiqua Judaica*.⁸ Even further afield was the *Monumenta Paderbornensia*, a collection of antiquarian poems (couched in the style of imaginary monumental inscriptions) with associated critical notes by Ferdinand von Fürstenberg, Prince-Bishop of Paderborn.⁹

⁶ Examples include Simon Grinaeus, *Basiliensium monumentor[um] antiographa* (Liegnitz, 1602); Melchior Adam, *Apographum monumentorum Haidelbergensium* (Heidelberg, 1612); François Sweerts, *Monumenta sepulcralia et inscriptiones publicae privataeq[ue] ducatus Brabantiae* (Antwerp, 1613). The genre was sufficiently entrenched by 1613 for Sweerts to give a bibliography of similar works at sig. *7r-v.

⁷ John Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (London, 1631).

⁸ Ole Worm, *Danicorum monumentorum libri sex* (Copenhagen, 1643); Sertorio Orsato, *Monumenta Patavina* (Padua, 1652); Matthias Friedrich Beck, *Monumenta antiqua Judaica, Augustae Vindel. reperta & enarrata* (Augsburg, 1686).

⁹ Ferdinand von Fürstenberg, Prince-Bishop of Paderborn, *Monumenta Paderbornensia* (Paderborn, 1669).

All of these works shared certain common traits. They were concerned with reproducing and explicating texts that had a physical existence inscribed upon artefacts, whether medieval tombs or Roman inscriptions. Even Worm's treatise, whose title was the immediate inspiration for the *Monumenta Britannica*, was more concerned with decoding the telegraphic Old Norse of the runestones than with understanding the medieval context in which they had been carved. It might be supposed, then, that a *Monumenta Britannica* in this vein would be either an updated version of Weever's *Funerall monuments* or a Camdenesque survey of epigraphic evidence from Roman Britain. Aubrey's was neither. Where previous antiquaries had seen *monumenta* as texts in a landscape, Aubrey took a step further and catalogued objects and sites that lacked texts to explicate them. Seen within the larger context of contemporary antiquarianism, this move highlights both his concern with the visual over the textual and the novelty of the *Monumenta*.

Instead of a collection of epigraphic material, parts two and three of the *Monumenta* catalogued a much wider range of evidence. Part two is chiefly architectural in focus, the first four chapters covering camps, castles, military architecture, and Roman towns, with two small addenda on pits and horns.¹⁰ Part three is concerned with funeral monuments and non-architectural intrusions on the landscape and contains chapters discussing barrows, urns, sepulchres, ditches, highways, Roman pavements, coins, and embanking and draining.¹¹ Aubrey's overriding concern was to discover and explain Roman relics in the English landscape, but in the process he found himself engaged in a series of different methodological and historiographical problems: what did the shape of camps reveal about their builders? How did barrows relate to ancient funeral practices? What relationship, if any, did megalithic monuments in Britain have to traditional narratives of a postdiluvian repopulation of the world? These and related questions will be treated in more detail within

¹⁰ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 235.

¹¹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 659.

discussions of the three broad themes of the *Monumenta*: architecture and sites, funeral monuments and customs, and human encroachment upon or alteration of the landscape.

Camps, Castles, and the Interpretation of Archaeological Sites

The second part of the *Monumenta*, conceived in 1668, was originally intended to cover only “camps”, that is, remains of Roman military camps in Britain.¹² To this were later added chapters on the related topics of old castles, ancient military architecture, and Roman settlements. He begins the section with a methodological declaration. Francis Bacon, he notes, wishes that active men “would or could become writers”.¹³ Aubrey goes on to state that his frequent journeys throughout Wiltshire and south Wales qualify him as a Baconian active observer and that he “could not but make somewhat a deeper inspection into [ancient monuments] than one of y^e Vulgar”.¹⁴ What follows is Aubrey at his most lyrical, describing the acts of mental reconstruction he engaged in on his rides through the Downs:

The prodigious graffes and rampires of the old Encampings seemed justly to claim Admiration in the beholder. The greatnesse, and numerousness of the Barrowes (the Beds of Honour where now so many Heroes lie buried in Oblivion) doe speake plainly to us, that Death & Slaughter once rag'd there, and that here were the Scenes, where terrible Battles were fought: wherein fell so many thousands, mentioned by the Historians. By the burying places it might be presumed where about the Engagement began and which way the Victor made his pursuit: and by the Imperial Camps \where now Sheep feed, and the Plough goes/ one may trace out which \way/ the victorious Roman Eagle tooke her Course.¹⁵

¹² See Aubrey’s changing intentions on the title pages, *Monumenta*, i. 229-231 (the second, earlier, title page is dated 1668).

¹³ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 237 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 138r), paraphrasing Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan [Oxford, 2000], 143.

¹⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 237 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 138r).

¹⁵ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 237-239 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fols. 138r-139r).

In an earlier draft of this passage, Aubrey associated it with Meric Casaubon's characterisation of antiquaries as those for whom "visible supervening evidences of Antiquities represent unto their mind former times... as if they were actually present".¹⁶ Indeed, what is most striking about this passage is Aubrey's use of the visual evidence inherent in the landscape to reconstruct the actions of a society. This is the technique and the aim around which the *Monumenta* revolves. Aubrey attempted to reconstruct a culture for which few or no written records survived, through the imaginative interpretation of archaeological data projected onto the familiar landscape of western and southwestern England. It is a work squarely in the tradition of Flavio Biondo and William Camden, but far wider in its scope, taking into account not only political history, but the physical remains of an entire culture.

Aubrey turned first to camps, under which rubric he included not only genuine Roman encampments but many sites now known to be prehistoric hill forts. Michael Hunter has claimed that Aubrey's theories concerning camps and hill-forts were "inconsistent . . . based on questionable assumptions and ideas derived from hearsay", further implying that Aubrey's belief that Danish camps were round came from conversation with "Mr Gethyng of the Middle Temple (an Irish gentleman)".¹⁷ This is inaccurate. At the beginning of the chapter on camps, Aubrey directs his readers to the pseudo-Hyginus's *De castris Romanis* and to the discussion of military encampment in the surviving fragment of book six of Polybius's *Histories*, both conveniently collected in a new edition edited by R. H. Schellius and published in Amsterdam in 1660.¹⁸ To this he appends Edward Grimeston's

¹⁶ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 259; quoting Meric Casaubon, *A Treatise of Use and Custome* (London, 1638), 97-98.

¹⁷ Michael Hunter, *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* (London, 1975), 188. Aubrey's conversation with Gethyng is at Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 121 (=Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 152v), though it should be noted that no such man appears in either H. A. C. Sturgess, *Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple . . .*, 3 vols. (London, 1949) or Charles Henry Hopwood, *Middle Temple Records*, 4 vols. (London, 1904-1905).

¹⁸ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 241; [Rabodus Hermannus Schellius, ed.], *Hygini gramatici, et Polybii Megalopolitani, de castris Romanis, quae exstant* (Amsterdam, 1660).

English translation of the fragment of Polybius in its entirety and subsequently adds a draught of a model Roman camp taken from Sir Henry Savile's dissertation on Roman warfare in the notes to his edition of Tacitus.¹⁹ As such, Aubrey's understanding of the form and composition of a Roman encampment derived from two of the most detailed classical sources – Polybius and the pseudo-Hyginus – together with Savile's standard treatise. His sources are unanimous in describing Roman encampments as square or rectangular and his conclusion that this was indeed the case is unsurprising.

Aubrey ran into difficulties, not with the shape of Roman camps, but in relating the sites he found back to the known history of ancient Britain. The first pages of the chapter on camps, which probably date from 1668, at the very beginning of this project, are replete with extracts from Caesar's *Commentaries* describing the invasion of Britain by the Romans.²⁰ It seems that Aubrey originally imagined that the camps he had discovered in Kent, Surrey, and Middlesex could be identified with those constructed by Caesar himself and had little sense of the long duration of Roman occupation or the possibility that sites could be Roman but could date from hundreds of years apart. He was, however, prepared to consider that camps in different parts of the country might represent later waves of Roman invasion or settlement, wondering whether later invading generals would have learnt from the mistakes of Julius Caesar and landed farther west, "perhaps in Sussex as did W^m y^e Conqueror".²¹

If square camps were Roman, the problem of round camps remained. In 1668, Aubrey draughted a map of southwestern Britain as it would have appeared in Roman times

¹⁹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 260-261; Sir Henry Savile, "A view of certaine militar matters, for the better vnderstanding of the ancient Roman stories", in *The End of Nero and Beginning of Galba: Fower Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus* . . . (Oxford, 1591), sep. pag. 49-75. This was subsequently translated into Latin by Marquard Freher and published independently as *Commentarius de militia Romana* (Heidelberg, 1601). At Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 243-257, he has pasted in pages 291-304 of *The History of Polybius the Megalopolitan . . . Also the Manner of the Romane Encamping* . . ., trans. Edward Grimeston (London, 1634). It was, at the time, the best English translation of Polybius available.

²⁰ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 265-269, 278.

²¹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 281 (=Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 155r).

with modern towns superimposed on the Roman landscape.²² On this he reiterated that “the Roman Campes are allways Square, or at least squarish” (he had observed elsewhere that natural features sometimes meant that camps had to be built around obstacles), but added that “the British Campes [are] Round, or roundish”.²³ At some later stage, however, he altered his ideas and began to identify circular hill forts with double or treble ramparts as Danish. That this may be connected with his reception of Scandinavian antiquarian scholarship is suggested by the entries for Yarnbury Castle, Wiltshire, and Fripsbury, Hampshire.²⁴ In these cases, etymologies identifying the sites as Danish were provided to Aubrey by Petrus Zitzscher, “a learned Danish Gent”, in 1681.²⁵ Any attempt to locate this in the context of the Scandinavian connections described in the previous chapter is frustrated, however, by a lack of data. Zitzscher’s own intellectual contacts and even the reason for his presence in England are unclear; certainly he does not seem to have had Royal Society connections.²⁶ Nonetheless, it is notable that it was around this time that Aubrey began to take greater account of Scandinavian antiquities than before.

Aubrey was proud of his classification of hill fort forms, expressing disbelief that Camden could not tell the difference between Roman and Danish camps (in spite of having access to Savile’s Tacitus) and noting with smugness that Robert Plot “knew not how to distinguish” between the two “till I told him”.²⁷ His satisfaction was misplaced. Nowhere

²² Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 594-595.

²³ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 595.

²⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 287, 289.

²⁵ Petrus Zitschler, or Zitzscher (1652-1697) was a Danish pastor who had studied at Helmstädt, Wittenberg, Leipzig, and Jena, later embarking on a grand tour of the Netherlands, England, and France (P. G. Witsen Geysbeek, *Algemeen Noodwendig Woordenboek der Zamenleving*, 7 vols. [Amsterdam, 1836-1861], vii. 5407). He provided two more Danish etymological arguments for the *Monumenta* (*Monumenta*, i. 355, 519), but does not appear elsewhere in Aubrey’s manuscripts.

²⁶ His name does not appear in Gail Ewald Scala, “An Index of Proper Names in Thomas Birch’s *The History of the Royal Society*”, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 28 (1974): 263-329.

²⁷ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 289, 293 (=Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fols. 158r, 159r). Aubrey’s concern to highlight his teaching of Plot reappears in his annotated copy of Plot’s *Natural History of Oxford-Shire* (Oxford, 1677), where at 336 he notes against “works of the Saxons, being all square”, “tis false”, and against “made by the Danes (they being both round)”, “This note the D^r had from J. Aubrey”. This copy is now Bodleian Ashmole 1722.

in the *Monumenta* or elsewhere does Aubrey speculate how long Britain had been inhabited before Julius Caesar's invasion, but he does not seem to have imagined it to be very long, perhaps no more than a few generations, and he had no sense that a substantial number of the "camps" he identified as Roman or Danish could have belonged to a lengthy and violent British prehistory. He carefully recorded and described the sites he investigated, but lacked the conceptual framework necessary to hypothesise the true age of most of his "camps". In this, he came up against the same barrier as in his study of megaliths – one which would not be overcome until changing perceptions of deep time in the nineteenth century.

The two subsequent chapters, discussing castles and the remnants of ancient military architecture, are complementary to that on camps. Where the latter discussed sites which were only identifiable by their earthworks, the former had remnants of stonework remaining, if not entire structures, and were thus, in theory, more easily identifiable as the product of a specific culture or period. It is hard to avoid seeing Aubrey as somewhat slapdash and disappointing here, especially when compared with his hard-headed enumeration of minutiae in the *Chronologia Architectonica*, which closely informs the chapter on castles. He identifies the Norman ruins of Old Sarum as Roman – having eliminated the Saxons as possible candidates by quoting William of Malmesbury that they did not build in stone – and gives Caerphilly Castle a similar origin on the basis of "severall Busts, scilicet Roman heads and bodies to the wast, in the Roman habit" in the hall there.²⁸ His identification of these sites as Roman is the more surprising in that in the following chapter he gives detailed sketches and descriptions of genuine Roman fortified architecture at Colchester, Silchester, London, and elsewhere.²⁹ He did not synthesise the results of his archaeological investigations here in the same methodical manner that he practised in the *Architectonica* and the accuracy of his work suffered as a result.

²⁸ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 400-407.

²⁹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 422, 425, 429.

The chapter on Roman towns and cities within Britain begins with a short survey of the Roman occupation. Aubrey sites the origins of the fortified Roman settlements in the need to have walled defences against the Britons, comparing their incursions to “the Descent which the Indians \A.D. 16 . . /, lately made on the New-England-men for want of walled Townes”.³⁰ The comparison between the Roman occupiers of Britain and the English settlers in North America gains additional depth when measured against Aubrey’s attempts at asserting cultural continuity between the two in his *Remaines of Gentilisme*, but the majority of the chapter is more concerned with the specifics of uncovering Roman settlements than in the appropriation of Roman culture for the English so in evidence in the *Remaines*. Following on from the comparison, Aubrey, paraphrasing from John Milton’s *History of Great Britain*, establishes a terminus post quem for Roman building in Britain:

In Constantine’s time here were great store of Workmen and excellent Builders. pag. 88. S^t Alban. Theodosius (tpe Valentiniani) rayed on the confines many strong Holds, nunc infestabatur Britannia Scotis, Saxonis, Pictis [ab Aquilone] Maximus having carried away into France the Soldierie & prime youth to fight Gratian, and was overthrown and slaine by Theodosius, &c.³¹

This passage suggests a noticeable growth in Aubrey’s understanding of Roman Britain from his simplistic fascination with Caesar’s invasion in the 1660s. He is now at pains to emphasise the continuity of active Roman rule and building into the fourth century CE instead of reducing all Roman traces in Britain into a palimpsest from which Caesar’s invasion could be recovered. In this he anticipated John Horsley’s history of Roman Britain, which, following Ammianus Marcellinus, emphasised Theodosius’s role in “recover[ing] the provincial cities and forts, which had been very much damaged by the enemy”.³²

³⁰ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 437.

³¹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 437. His source is John Milton, *The History of Britain* . . . (London, 1670), 88-93.

³² John Horsley, *Britannia Romana: or the Roman Antiquities of Britain in Three Books* (London, 1732), 73.

The most striking passage in this chapter is inserted by Aubrey as a “Philosophicall Corollary” to his description of Roman Silchester. Seth Ward and John Wilkins had told him that when viewing the ruins there in 1658:

one ~~may see~~ \might discerne/ in the Corne-ground (?twas about April) the signe of the Streets, passages, and also \of/ the Hearths. qd NB. That expression of Ovid is applicable here, “Iam seges est ubi Troia fuit[?]”.³³

Ward’s and Wilkins’s anecdote must have made an impression on Aubrey, for he quotes the line from Ovid again as the epigraph to part two of the *Monumenta*, but he does not seem to have followed up his own *nota bene*.³⁴ What the two future bishops described were undoubtedly the shadows of former buildings which have been discerned in cropmarks by modern archaeology and Aubrey, in noting that he should investigate the phenomenon, was at the edge of an important conceptual leap.³⁵ It was, however, one he never took. Just as he recognised the importance of stratigraphy in dating artefacts, but did not apply it to practical excavation, so he never conducted any excavation that took such a recognition into account.

This passage highlights the *Monumenta*’s unfinished nature. Although Shaftesbury had offered to print the *Templa* in 1673 and Aubrey would attempt to publish the *Monumenta* in its entirety in the 1690s, it was never really complete. The layers of notes and observations show a noticeable shift in Aubrey’s perceptions of the ancient past over the thirty years of its composition, but contain at least as many ideas not followed as those fully worked out. This is, perhaps, as much due to the immensity of the project as to any inability on Aubrey’s

³³ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 441 (=Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 215r). The quotation (“now corn grows where Troy stood”) is from Ovid, *Heroides*, 1.53.

³⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 231 (=Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 137r).

³⁵ The phenomenon of cropmarks – in this instance based on observation of snow thawing more slowly above concealed drains – was noticed by Stephen Hales in his *Haemastatics* (1733) and again applied to Roman archaeology by the naturalist Gilbert White in his *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne . . .* (London, 1789), 15-16.

part to bring a project to a close. Despite the incompleteness and frequent inaccuracies -- from a modern point of view -- of the chapters on ancient sites and architecture, they nonetheless represent the first attempt at a systematic description and classification of Roman remains in Britain, one which would not be superseded by the more literary work of John Horsley a generation later, or, indeed, until the modern era.³⁶

Funeral Monuments and the Postdiluvian Origins of Prehistoric Britain

The chapters on barrows, urns, and sepulchres form a natural subgroup within part three of the *Monumenta*. Burial practices across cultures were of enduring interest to early modern antiquaries and Aubrey here found himself on better trodden ground than in earlier chapters. He intended to take advantage of the existing literature and the opening chapter in this sequence, on barrows, was conceived on a far more magisterial scale than his more focused studies of other aspects of Roman Britain. This intention was not carried out, but Aubrey's sketch of his plan survives and allows us to reconstruct his theories of funeral practices and their evolution, siting them within contemporary debates about the origin of architecture in the ancient world.

The chapter on barrows opens with a treatment "Of Mausolea", which delineates a genealogy of ancient burial practices.³⁷ It begins with the tower of Babel, proceeds through the Egyptian pyramids and the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, to the monument of Almansor,

³⁶ Horsley, *Britannia Romana*. Horsley focused on the ancient historians and geographers, together with epigraphic evidence, for his reconstruction of Roman Britain. Francis Haverfield, writing in 1907, described it as "till quite lately the best and most scholarly account of any Roman province that had been written anywhere in Europe" (Haverfield, *The Roman Occupation of Britain* [Oxford, 1924], 75).

³⁷ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 670-683 (=Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 25, fols. 7v-11r).

the earthen burial mounds of the Chinese, and Lars Porsenna's tomb.³⁸ Unlike other sections of the *Monumenta*, Aubrey fared widely across ancient history for examples, rather than confining himself to ancient Britain, and unlike other sections he referenced the modern scholarship available on each monument. He evidently imagined the finished text would be richly illustrated and made numerous notes towards the insertions of images within the text, of which the following – intended to be inserted immediately after his discussion of the tower of Babel – is a characteristic example:

De la Val, in his Travells, speakes of the Tower of Babel: and also of Ezechiels Tombe. ~~w^{ch}~~-see: and also of Absolom's Pillar. w^{ch} was cutt out of a Rock: w^{ch} Sr Christ Wren sayes 'twas a pretty thing: insert his draught of it here: and also desire him to shew me his \excellent/ draught of Porsenna's Monument.³⁹

Wren appears as a source at other points in this section and his presence helps establish its context within contemporary understandings of ancient architecture.⁴⁰ Amongst Wren's incomplete architectural manuscripts is a "Discourse on Architecture", whose aim was to "reform the Generality to a truer taste in Architecture by giving a larger Idea of the whole Art, beginning with the reasons and progress of it from the most remote Antiquity".⁴¹ His discussion of postdiluvian architecture begins with Babel – "the first Peece of Civil Architecture" – continues with the pyramids, the pillar of Absalom, Solomon's temple, and

³⁸ For the tower of Babel in early modern thought see Arno Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel: Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, 4 vols. in 6 (Stuttgart, 1957-1963). Although it is not immediately evident in Aubrey's thought, contemporary discussions of Babel could also possess noticeable political overtones, potentially representing a key tyrannical act in the history of government (see also Jim Bennett and Scott Mandelbrote, *The Garden, The Ark, The Tower, The Temple: Biblical Metaphors of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* [Oxford, 1998], section 5).

³⁹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 671 (=Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 7v). See Pietro Della Valle, *Viaggi*, 4 vols. (Rome, 1650-1663), i. 516 (Absalom's pillar), 712-721 (Babel and Ezekiel's tomb).

⁴⁰ He was also Aubrey's source for more information on Porsenna's tomb and on Chinese burial customs (Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 675, 679).

⁴¹ Lucy Phillimore, *Sir Christopher Wren, His Family, and His Times, With Original Letters and a Discourse on Architecture Hitherto Unpublished, 1585-1723* (London, 1881), 341.

the walls of Babylon, and concludes abruptly with Porsenna's tomb.⁴² To some extent, the structures discussed by Aubrey and Wren belonged to a common fund of marvellous ancient buildings, frequently studied and reconstructed in the early modern period, but the references to Wren in the *Monumenta* together with the striking parallels between the two works suggest that they were closely related.⁴³

The most likely point of contact between Aubrey and Wren was their mutual friend Robert Hooke also named as a source in Aubrey's account. On 4 October 1677 Hooke met Wren at a tavern and "Discoursed of Porsennas Tomb".⁴⁴ They disagreed and the following day Hooke drew "a rationall porcena", continuing the conversation with Wren at regular intervals throughout the month.⁴⁵ Aubrey was living with Hooke in the latter's lodgings in Gresham College during the autumn of 1677, and as such, he was in an optimal position to discuss with Hooke, and probably also with Wren, the funeral monuments of the ancient world, material which he then or subsequently incorporated into the *Monumenta*.⁴⁶ Aubrey, however, was not concerned with recovering the larger history of ancient architecture, as were Wren and Hooke, but rather with developing a specific genealogy into which British monuments could be fitted.

Aubrey's discussion of the tower of Babel begins with the *locus classicus* of Genesis 11:3, but then moves on to its present appearance:

⁴² Phillimore, *Wren*, 341-349.

⁴³ This point has been made before by Lydia M. Soo in *Reconstructing Antiquity: Wren and His Circle and the Study of Natural History, Antiquarianism, and Architecture at the Royal Society*, Princeton University Ph.D. Thesis (1989), *passim*, though her understanding of Aubrey's role in this interchange has been limited by her lack of access to manuscript sources.

⁴⁴ Robert Hooke, *Diary of Robert Hooke, M.A., M.D., F.R.S., 1672-1680*, ed. Henry W. Robinson and Walter Adams (London, 1935), 317.

⁴⁵ Hooke, *Diary*, 320-322 (and see Hooke's drawing of Wren's proposed reconstruction at 321). Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey has suggested that Wren's interest in Porsenna's tomb coincided with plans for the mausoleum of Charles I, but this seems speculative at best (du Prey, *Hawksmoor's London Churches: Architecture and Theology* [Chicago, 2000], 14-16).

⁴⁶ This can be proven through his correspondence with Andrew Paschall at that time, including letters from Paschall directed to Aubrey "at Mr Hookes lodgings in Gresham Coll" on 19 August (Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fols. 21-22), 25 October (fol. 24), 31 October (fol. 25), and 20 November 1677 (fol. 26).

This tower of Belus is now a great hill, the arch't brickwork being covered over with dust and earth. The Basis of it is as big as the middle Moore-fields: of w^{ch} you may read a most accurate account in Samuelis Rayheri Mathesis Mosaica”⁴⁷

Aubrey refers here to the German mathematician Samuel Reyher's exegesis of the mathematics of the Pentateuch. Reyher reconstructed the tower as something resembling a ziggurat, but pendulously tall.⁴⁸ He was aided by the precise figures for its size given by the twelfth-century traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, who is also the ultimate source for Aubrey's description of its present state.⁴⁹ The final step in this reconstruction is a passing comment in Wren's "Discourse on Architecture":

Providence scatter'd the first Builders [of Babel], so the Work was left off, but the Successors of Belus the son of Nimrod probably finished It and made it His Sepulchre, upon his Deification.⁵⁰

Wren's discussions with Hooke appear to have provided Aubrey with the identification of Babel as a tomb and this, combined with the narrative of Benjamin of Tudela, as mediated by Reyher's *Mathesis*, allowed him to describe what he understood Babel to be: a squat, four-sided tower, made of arched brickwork, now "a great hill". It was, evidently, the architectural forebearer of the "great Mausolea of Earth" that Wren identified as characteristic of the Chinese, but is also clearly related to native British sites such as Silbury Hill and Rosemary Topping, descriptions of which immediately follow the summary of ancient mausolea.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 673.

⁴⁸ Samuel Reyher, *Mathesis Mosaica, sive loca Pentateuchi mathematica mathematicè explicata* (Kiel, 1679), 177-210. Aubrey also directed his readers towards Athanasius Kircher's *Turris Babel* (Amsterdam, 1679), but was evidently less influenced by Kircher's elegant Baroque phallus than by the ziggurat described by Reyher.

⁴⁹ Reyher, *Mathesis Mosaica*, 186-187. Reyher's measurements derive from the edition and Latin translation by Constantin L'Empereur of Benjamin of Tudela's *Travels (Itinerarium Benjaminis* [Leiden, 1633], 77). L'Empereur in his copious notes has no comment on the ruins of Babel.

⁵⁰ Phillimore, *Wren*, 342.

⁵¹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 683.

Aubrey deployed this diverse array of learning as a frame within which to site the monuments under consideration in the bulk of the *Monumenta*. The implications of this are vast. Aubrey is sometimes portrayed as something of a radical freethinker, dismissing the literal truth of Genesis in his support of Hooke's theories of the origin of the world, and it is tempting to extend that dismissal to his understanding of the ancient human past.⁵² "Of Mausolea" quashes such temptations. Aubrey's view of the ancient past was still essentially the same as that which had held sway for centuries: a gradual repopulation of the world after the fall of Babel leading to a dissemination of primitive Hebraic culture across Europe. While Aubrey was willing to admit that the physical world was much older than commonly supposed, human culture was only a post-diluvian construct with a zero point a few thousand years in the past. Silbury Hill had been built by the not so distant descendants of the builders of Babel, as had Stonehenge.

If Babel had its natural place in Aubrey's narrative, both as "the first Peece of Civil Architecture" and as the precursor of what Aubrey could not know were Iron Age hill forts in England, the significance of Lars Porsenna's tomb remains to be explained. Aubrey devoted more attention to it than to any other single ancient mausoleum and this cannot be explained solely through the interests of Wren and Hooke (theirs was largely born from an attempt to rationalise the description in Pliny's *Natural Historia* with a structure that could both feasibly exist within the strictures of physics and accurately represent the historical evidence).⁵³ In the course of his discussion he cited five different reconstructions and made notes towards obtaining copies for the *Monumenta*.⁵⁴ In the end, however, Aubrey only copied

⁵² See William Poole, *John Aubrey and the Advancement of Learning* (Oxford, 2010), 84-85. Poole rightly notes that this theory came out of conversations with Hooke and readings in Kircher (in this case his *Mundus Subterraneus*, 2 vols. [Amsterdam, 1665]), but was unaware of the other pairing of Hooke and Kircher in the *Monumenta*.

⁵³ See Wren's discussion of it in Phillimore, *Wren*, 347-349, and Alexander Wragge-Morley, "Restitution, Description, and Knowledge in English Architecture and Natural Philosophy, 1650-1750", *Architecture Research Quarterly* 14 (2010): 247-254, though the latter focuses on Wren's and Hooke's reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon.

⁵⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 671, 675, 677. The reconstructions were (1) a draught by Christopher Wren; (2) a "cutt of Porsenna's Tombe", allegedly in an edition of Girolamo Maggi's *De tintinnabulis* (no such item appears

Hooke's reconstruction into the *Monumenta*, so it would seem that his intense fascination with the monument must have derived either from Hooke or from Pliny himself. The text and paratext surrounding his reproduction of the former suggest a possible reason for this fascination. Beneath the reconstruction itself Aubrey noted that "In y^e E: Indies such another Monument is mentioned in a Book, w^{ch} M^r R. Hook hath".⁵⁵ Nearby is a note that:

Mdm in the Mapped [*in margin*: by at the Earle of Pembrokes] of ~~Tartarie~~ Asia [in Tartarie] are severall shap [*sic*] Pyramids, after this manner [a drawing follows] and by them is wrote Sepulchra Regum Tartariae.⁵⁶

Aubrey's small drawings of the four "pyramids" on the map closely resemble the pyramids in Hooke's reconstruction of the tomb of Lars Porsenna. They are both tall and thin, reminiscent more of obelisks than pyramids. In the case of the tombs of the kings of Tartary they are also slightly irregular in shape and resemble nothing so much as Aubrey's drawings and descriptions of British standing stones elsewhere in the *Monumenta*. Porsenna's tomb thus seems to have had a function similar to that of Babel; it served as an ancient parallel to the monuments Aubrey had discovered and recorded in the British Isles, though in this case it paralleled megaliths rather than hill forts.

These parallels were part of a larger attempt by Aubrey to anchor his discoveries within a recognisable historical framework. In a post-diluvian world, it was only reasonable to suppose that similar forms of architecture could be discovered throughout the ancient

in the discussions of Porsenna's tomb at Girolamo Maggi, *De tintinnabulis liber postumus*, ed. Franciscus Sweertius [Amsterdam, 1664], 24-25, 122-123; (3) a draught in Benedictus Pererius's "Roman Antiquities", copies of which Aubrey stated were in the possession of Edmund Wylde and George Ent (no such work is known and in Benedictus Pererius, *Commentariorum disputationum in Genesim Tomi Quatuor* [Mainz, 1612], the chapter on the Tower of Babel (437-459) makes no reference to it nor does Lars Porsenna appear in the index); (4) John Greaves draught in his *Pyramidographia*, "but M^r Hooke doeth not approve of it" (Greaves, *Pyramidographia or a Description of the Pyramids in Ægypt* [London, 1646], facing 67); (5) Hooke's own draught, copied by Aubrey into the *Monumenta*.

⁵⁵ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 677.

⁵⁶ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 675. The exact map to which Aubrey referred has not been identified.

world and Aubrey's placing of the prehistoric British landscape within existing narratives of post-Babelic migration was a naturalising of that strange and foreign landscape into the mapped world of the biblical and classical past. As such, it paralleled the work of Rudbeck (discussed in the previous chapter) more closely than might initially appear. Just as Rudbeck had erected a scaffolding of classical myth around the otherwise alien archaeology of prehistoric Scandinavia, so Aubrey had linked the baffling remains of the ancient British landscape to a recognisable tradition of ancient architecture and learning.

Theories of Burial Practices

The identification of barrows and other monuments as tombs raised questions about the cultures that had built them and the circumstances in which they were constructed. Aubrey had no doubt that barrows were “the Beds of Honour where now so many Heroes lie buried in Oblivion”, but in the course of the *Monumenta* he proposed two separate theories explaining their origin.⁵⁷ At first, he believed that the ancient Britons were buried where they fell in battle and that “[b]y the burying places it might be presumed where about the Engagement began and which way the Victor made his pursuit”.⁵⁸ That this might have been somewhat impractical seems not to have fazed Aubrey, who not only discusses it in his introduction to the chapter on camps, but returns to it as an interpretive tool when discussing a series of prehistoric barrow cemeteries in Dorset:

At Woodyates . . . hath been a terrible fight. there are, but a little within the line, nineteen barrowes and some of them very great: here are also 2 or 3 circular trenches with a little tump or two viz: [birds' eye views of two tumuli] w^{ch} in probabily were the places for combustione cadaverum . . . one may plainly see here that the Chace

⁵⁷ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 239 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 139r).

⁵⁸ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 239 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 139r).

of the Victory runs westwards . . . This great fight by Woodyates ~~I take to be~~ \perhaps was/ that between the Romans and Boadicea: it agrees so well with the Description of Cornelius Tacitus. where the entrance (as a throate) was narrow but grew broader . . .⁵⁹

Aubrey suggests here that the warriors slain in this supposed battle were subsequently cremated and buried in the places where they had fallen. His emphasis on the crematory tumuli probably derives from readings of Ole Worm and Sir Thomas Browne – the latter’s *Hydriotaphia* is quoted extensively in the subsequent chapter – though it may also owe something to the theories of his friend James Long.⁶⁰ Discussing the barrows on the Downs in another context, however, he proposed a radically different interpretation of their presence, one which seems to have been based on a hypothesis by Long:

On the Downes are Barrowes almost everywhere on high ground: for they affected to have their Ashes lie drie. It is to be noted that where Barrowes are, there is alwaies \for the most part/ one circular Trench, or more without any Barrow: which Colonel James Long, ingeniously gheses to be the place for the Combustion of the dead bodies, and for performing the Ceremonies, within w^{ch} circle, every body was not permitted to enter

----- procul ô, procul ite profani.⁶¹

Here theories of burial upon the site of death have been dropped in favour of a carefully sited cemetery. Aubrey bolstered this theory with modern analogies:

My conceit is that the Seaven Barrowes &c: (where are severall together) were not tumuli, or barrowes erected upon the account of any great person slain there in Battle: but in those times they chose to lye drye upon such hilly ground: and those of the

⁵⁹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 533 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 24, fol. 254r). Aubrey is recalling Tacitus, *Annales*, XIV.xxxiv.

⁶⁰ Cf. Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 728-761 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 25, fols. 26r-43r), for the quotations from Browne, *Urn Buriall*.

⁶¹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 705 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 18r). The quotation is a slight variation on Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6.258 (“procul o procul este, profani”), and is the exclamation of the Sybil warning away the uninitiated from the grove through which Aeneas will reach the Underworld.

same familie would desire to be neer one another; as the Kings at Westminster abbey, and at S^t Dionyse in France.⁶²

These passages were probably written later than that concerning the “battle” at Woodyates and suggest the same evolution in thought which occurred in his understanding of camps, beginning at a chronologically compressed point where almost any feature could be related back to the initial Roman invasion of Britain, but gradually opening out to a recognition of a much longer timeline. A comparison of the two passages also suggests that Aubrey’s conception of ancient British society had become more complex. His earlier writings pay scant attention to any Britons who are not either heroic warriors or druids and any discussion of ancient kingship is entirely absent, but the passage quoted above opens up the possibility for some sort of social structure in which kings or heroes could be buried on lines made recognisable by modern analogies.

Urns, Excavations, and Eternal Lamps

Investigation of barrows led naturally to an investigation of their contents. Aubrey’s chapter on urns – the quintessential archaeological find in early modern England – related them back to their physical contexts and used them and their analogies to thicken his description of ancient British society. It opens with a long series of excerpts from Sir Thomas Browne’s *Hydriotaphia* that serve a contextualising purpose similar to the examples of ancient architecture in the chapter on sepulchres.⁶³ Browne famously began *Hydriotaphia* with a

⁶² Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 705 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 18r).

⁶³ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 729-761. Aubrey is quoting from Sir Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia, Urne-buriall* . . . (London, 1658).

history of the practice of cremation across all cultures, and the first lines Aubrey chose to quote in the *Monumenta* are of particular importance:

[T]he practice of Burning was also of great Antiquity, and of no slender extent. For (not to derive the same from *Hercules*) noble descriptions there are hereof in the Grecian Funerals of *Homer*, in the formall Obsequies of *Patroclus*, and *Achilles*; and somewhat elder in the *Theban* warre, and solemn combustion of *Meneceus*, and *Archemorus*, contemporary unto *Jair* the Eighth Judge of *Israel*. Confirmable also among the *Trojans*, from the Funerall Pyre of *Hector*, burnt before the gates of *Troy*.⁶⁴

Aubrey, if he did not take this passage immediately to heart, certainly came to the same conclusion. As we have seen, he theorised barrows to be part of larger ritual complexes which also included crematorial areas, and in finding analogies for the practices he hypothesised, he turned immediately to the passage from Homer cited by Browne. Following the excerpts from *Hydriotaphia* are quotations from the funeral of Patroclus, the funeral of Elpenor, and the burial of Achilles, amongst other Homeric fragments.⁶⁵ Much as hill forts and megaliths could be domesticated and understood through reference to classical and biblical antiquities, so the British warriors and their obsequies could be understood through comparison with Homeric heroes. In thinking about the rituals that would have surrounded burial in barrows, Aubrey turned first to Homer, noting that, “I shall first set downe Homer’s descriptions of burying and raying Tumuli: and then subjoine those of Virgil”.⁶⁶

For Aubrey, then, pre-Roman British culture was essentially comparable to that of Homeric Greece and a close reading of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* could serve as a means of explicating the otherwise unrecoverable culture of the prehistoric Britons. This is not quite

⁶⁴ Browne, *Hydriotaphia*, 4, quoted at Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 729.

⁶⁵ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 758-759 (funeral of Patroclus); 761 (funeral of Elpenor); 763 (Nestor’s directions on the burial of the dead); 765 (burial of Achilles).

⁶⁶ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 699 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 17r).

the same thing as older textually-centred traditions of antiquarianism. Aubrey was, indeed, using texts to understand what he had found, but not in lieu of artefacts. Rather he was using them as something supplementary, a way of siting those artefacts within a known universe, of (as has been argued above in the context of architecture) domesticating them and making them intelligible. In this respect, he was engaging in an antiquarian technique that can be seen in the writings of early travellers to the eastern Mediterranean. David Constantine has discussed Edmund Chishull's attempts to find continuity in the Turkish landscape through quotations of Homer or other ancient poets apposite to what he himself observed, but one could equally see this as a means of domesticating and interpreting a profoundly foreign landscape.⁶⁷ Chishull, in his journal entry for 29 April 1698, contrasted the emptiness of the Caystrian plain in Lydia, on which could only be observed, "a stone bridge of three considerable arches, built directly along the bank of the river; and therefore now serving to no other purpose, but only to witness that the stream had changed its chanel", with "the sweetness of that immortal verse", "Ἀσίω ἐν λειμῶνι Καῦσις ἀμφὶ ῥέεθρα".⁶⁸ Both Aubrey and Chishull took a text familiar to them and used it as a lens through which to understand the novel and strange.

Urn burials were the locus for most early attempts at excavation and, as such, Aubrey's chapter on urns reads somewhat differently from the remainder of the *Monumenta*. Rather than measuring and describing sites, Aubrey recorded excavations, detailing their date, their finds, and their instigator. The original impetus for excavating urns seems to have been the assumption that they would contain buried treasure, but Aubrey recorded a number of instances where a genuine curiosity seems to have led to impressively thorough excavation.

⁶⁷ David Constantine, *In the Footsteps of the Gods: Travellers to Greece and the Quest for the Hellenic Ideal* (1984; repr. London, 2011), 40.

⁶⁸ Edmund Chishull, *Travels in Turkey and Back to England* (London, 1747), 19 (= Homer, *Iliad*, ii. 461). "The Asian mead by the streams of Caystrius".

One of the fuller accounts he recorded was of the excavation by Sir Edward Harley (and unnamed local labourers) of a barrow near Leintwardine, Herefordshire, in 1662:

S^r Edward Harley Knight of y^e Bath Governour of Dunkirk \and my ever honoured friend/ . . . caused one of these Barrowes to be digged A^o 1662, and found therein a great deale of coales, and some pieces of burnt bones: but in the middle he found an Urne about two foot and a half high, full of coales and ashes and some pieces of burnt bones: I had a little piece of the Urne it is of a kind of darke muske colour [umbre] a quarter of an Inch thick and the middle of it is as black as a coale.⁶⁹

Unlike Browne, Aubrey refrained from attempting to identify the burial as Roman, or, indeed, as anything specific, contenting himself with a careful description of what was discovered (he included a drawing of the urn itself in the margin). Understanding of ancient material culture at this level was still too basic to allow for much interpretation or comparison and Aubrey was merely being cautious by refusing to theorise.

The excavation of burial mounds was also of interest from a scientific point of view in so far as they were believed to sometimes contain the so-called “ever-burning lamps” referred to in numerous classical texts. That lamps were sometimes found in Roman burials was well established, but legends of such lamps being found still lit were more difficult to verify.⁷⁰ One of the standard sources amongst early modern scholars for evidence of the legend was a report of such a lamp being discovered in the supposed tomb of Cicero’s daughter, Tullia, but whatever element of truth the story contained was quickly submerged in a sea of imprecise citation and conjecture.⁷¹ By the mid-seventeenth century, it was

⁶⁹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 765.

⁷⁰ The most systematic contemporary discussion in English is John Wilkins, *Mathematicall Magick* . . . (London, 1648), 232-256.

⁷¹ Aubrey would have known the story from Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia epidemica* . . . (London, 1646), 161. An early and oft-quoted reference to the opening of Tullia’s tomb was that by Guido Panciroli (1523-1599), who wrote that it had been opened and the lamp seen “in the time of Paul III” (*i.e.*, 1534-1549), cf. Guido Panciroli, *The History of Many Memorable Things Lost, Which Were in Use Among the Ancients*, 2 vols. (London, 1715), i. 115-116. A collection of translated contemporary documents relating to the opening in 1485 of the tomb which first gave rise to this legend is in Rodolfo Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome* (Boston and New York,

generally assumed that if such lamps had existed, they would have been fuelled with naphtha and it was with this assumption in mind that Robert Plot gave a paper to the Philosophical Society of Oxford concerning their possible construction on 7 May 1684.⁷²

Aubrey came up against this legend twice in his collections for the *Monumenta*. The first was in a letter from William Sydenham to his uncle Thomas Sydenham dated 1675, detailing a barrow excavation much like Harley's.⁷³ Having previously noted that the centre of the barrow was "perfectly like an Oven curiously clayed round", Sydenham wrote that:

I must not omitt the chieftest thing that at the first opening this Oven one of my Servants thrust in his hand and pulling it quickly back againe I demanding the reason of him, hee told me it was very hott: I did also putt in my hand and it was warme enough to have baked bread: severall other persons did the like, who can all testifie the trueth of it . . . I thinke it would puzzle the Royall Societie to give a reason of the heate of the Oven being fifteen hundred yeares old.⁷⁴

Sydenham offered no explanation for the natural phenomenon he had encountered, but Aubrey saw it as corollary evidence for the existence of eternal lamps and commented in the margin "v. Maccabees lib: II. cap. 1 v 32 to the end. sc. about the fire found in the Pitt. v. in Plin. of Tullia's Urne".⁷⁵

Aubrey's interest in ever-burning lamps throws some light on an unusual printed item bound into the *Monumenta* in the chapter on Roman pavements. It is a single sheet, headed "A Strange and Wonderful Discovery Newly made of Houses Under Ground, At

1896), 295-301, which suggests that the identification with Tullia was not universally accepted during the initial excavation.

⁷² Robert Plot, "A Discourse Concerning the Sepulchral Lamps of the Ancients, Shewing the Possibility of Their Being Made Divers Waies", *Philosophical Transactions* 14 (1684): 806-811. The potential use of naphtha had already been proposed by Browne, *Pseudodoxia*, 161, and Fortunio Liceti, *De lucernis antiquorum reconditis libb. sex* (Udine, 1652), 222-224.

⁷³ William Sydenham is not otherwise known, but Thomas (1624-1689) was the well-known physician, author of *Methodus curandi febres* (1666), and friend of John Locke (*ODNB*, *s.n.*). It may have been Sydenham's acquaintance with Locke which first brought this letter to Aubrey's notice.

⁷⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 769-771.

⁷⁵ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 769. 2 Maccabees 1:32-36 is the description of burning petroleum which first described it as 'naphtha'. Aubrey was mistaken, however, in thinking that Tullia's tomb was referred to in Pliny.

Colton's-Field in Gloucester-Shire". The short narrative that follows purports to relate the story of two labourers, engaged in digging a gravel pit, who came by chance upon the entrance to a series of subterranean rooms, at the end of which stood an automaton dressed as a Roman soldier. When they approached it, the figure struck out three times, at the third blow breaking the glass in which an ever-burning lamp was suspended and plunging them into darkness. Further investigation was prevented by "a hollow Noise like a deep Sigh or Groan", which augured the collapse of the entire complex, "our Adventurers" only narrowly escaping.⁷⁶

Stuart Piggott has identified this as a hoax and pointed towards several common medieval and early modern myths that function within the narrative, but it is worth investigating its more immediate sources in an attempt to explain Aubrey's relationship to this lampoon of antiquarianism and natural science.⁷⁷ Leaving aside the vague descriptive passages of the various rooms -- "they went into a Parlour, furnish'd according to the fashion of those 'Times", etc. -- the central point in the narrative is the figure and actions of the ancient automaton. This closely follows John Wilkins's discussion of eternal lamps in his *Mathematicall Magick*:

There is another relation of a certain man, who upon occasion digging somewhat deep in the ground . . . discovered a fair Vault, and towards the further side of it, the statue of a man in Armour, sitting by a table, leaning upon his left arm, and holding a scepter in his right hand, with a lamp burning before him; the floor of this Vault being so contrived, that upon the first step into it, the statue would erect itself from its leaning posture; upon the second step it did lift up the scepter to strike, and before man could approach near enough to take hold of the lamp, the statue did strike and break it to peeces: such care was there taken that it might not be stoln away, or discovered.⁷⁸

Wilkins's account places more emphasis on the eternal lamp, whilst the broadsheet was concerned with the "Medals and Coyns" elsewhere in the vault and reduced the lamp to a

⁷⁶ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 947-949 (= Bodleian MS top. gen. c. 25, fol. 107r-v).

⁷⁷ Stuart Piggott, *Ruins in a Landscape: Essays in Antiquarianism* (Edinburgh, 1976), 77-99.

⁷⁸ Wilkins, *Mathematicall Magick*, 237.

decorative role. More to the point, however, it is sufficiently close to the language of the broadsheet to rule out any possibility that the latter could be other than a hoax. It is significant, also, that the source for this story should derive from a work often associated with members of the Royal Society. The broadsheet claims to have been printed in 1685, a date that suggests a potential allusion to Plot's experiments on eternal lamps the previous year (see above). A third point of connection with the Royal Society comes in the form of a reference at the beginning of the broadsheet to "that Island near *Ireland*, which is described in the Maps, but cannot now be found", a reference to the Irish myth of Hy Brasil, which had exercised Robert Hooke's ingenuity in 1679.⁷⁹ The final clue comes from Aubrey's own annotation on the verso of the sheet, "This Paper I had from M^r Tho: Pigot M.A. Fellow of Wadham coll: Oxon. who went to see it. / Quaere M^r Edw. Stephens of Cheriton + de hoc".⁸⁰

Whatever the precise origin of the broadsheet, it seems clear that it was written by someone familiar with the current interests of the Royal Society and it also seems clear that Aubrey believed it without reserve. This highlights the limits of Aubrey's engagement with funerary artefacts, not least because the descent into the gaping tomb described in the broadsheet was something he categorically refused to do. Referring to a barrow elsewhere he wrote that, "I never was so sacrilegious [*sic*] as to disturbe, or rob his urne: let his Ashes lie \rest/ in peace", and there is no indication that Aubrey ever conducted a single excavation himself.⁸¹ As such, he was unable to distinguish a falsehood composed of common tropes from the other genuine accounts of excavations he had compiled. Modern archaeology and the antiquarianism practised by Aubrey remained worlds apart and his apparent acceptance

⁷⁹ See William Poole and Kelsey Jackson Williams, "A Swede in Restoration Oxford: Gothic Patriots, Swedish Books, and English Scholars", *Lias* (2012): 21.

⁸⁰ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 949 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 107v).

⁸¹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 711.

of the Colton's Field hoax highlights the limits of his interaction with the physical remnants of antiquity.

The Ancient Landscape

The final thematic section of the *Monumenta* is broadly concerned with the ancient landscape and contains chapters on dykes, highways, Roman pavements, and other landscape engineering. Aubrey was chiefly concerned simply with identifying the routes of the Roman roads and ancient dykes that crisscrossed early modern Britain, but *inter alia* reached several larger conclusions about how the landscape interacted with society and how both had changed since the classical period.

The first of these chapters was headed "of Ditches", but Aubrey began by disambiguating the term. "[T]he word ditch", he observed, "did anciently signifie a Bank, or Rampire . . . the same as dyke", whereas by the time he wrote it also had the opposite meaning, describing a "fossa [i.e. a dug-out channel], w^{ch} the Dutchmen call, the graff".⁸² To avoid confusion, Aubrey referred only to the former as ditches and it was with these earthworks that the chapter was concerned. It covered Offa's Dyke, Wansdyke, and other examples of the phenomenon, including remarks by William Dugdale on Hadrian's Wall in which he corrected Camden, and saw Aubrey making interpretative arguments from physical evidence much in line with his study of hill forts elsewhere in the *Monumenta*.

Tracing partially destroyed remnants of past civilisations such as the Saxon dykes across England required the efforts of multiple scholars and Aubrey's entry on Offa's Dyke not only shows him arguing perceptively for its purpose based upon its shape, but mobilising

⁸² Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 881.

a small team of friends and fellow antiquaries to provide information relating to the dyke's course. He began with a short historical summary:

Offa's Dyke (called Clwdd Offa) was made by Offa King of the Mercians (his seat was at Sutton-wall in Herifordshire [*sic*]) It was to separate the Britons from the Saxons, and who (of either partie) was found on the other side of this Dyke armed, was to loose his right hand.⁸³

Thus far Aubrey was only recounting information already known, but he then proceeded to record evidence of its course:

It is to be seen on the top of Bachy-hill, and on Stocky-hill \both/ neer Morhampton-park in Herefordshire: in some places above a mile together. The Graffe is on the Welsh side: viz. Westwards, and the Rampire towards the English side: w^{ch} evidences that it was made by the Saxons . . . [Mdm the range of Hills lyeing north and south are the first that terminate the fair plain \level/ of Herefordshire toward Wales.]⁸⁴

His distinction between the “Graffe”, or excavated ditch, on the western side and the earthworks on the eastern was comparatively elementary, but had not been made before. In this case, the conclusion he drew from it only confirmed something which was already known from written sources – that it had been built by the Mercians against incursions from Wales – but he then later applied this knowledge to Wansdyke, noting that there “the Rampire is to the Southward, and the graffe is to the northward”, and so revealing something about the intent behind its construction which was not otherwise known.⁸⁵

The evidence of the dyke which Aubrey quoted was, he noted in the margin, from his friend John Hoskyns and he supplemented it with a detailed description of the course of the dyke received from “Henry Milbourn Esq Recorder of Monmouth: and a good

⁸³ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 885.

⁸⁴ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 885.

⁸⁵ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 889.

Antiquarie”. Below this he noted that the Domesday Book might, potentially, contain a reference to the dyke and left himself a note that “Mr W^m Guillim of Langston [Hereff.] can tell me”.⁸⁶ Before he could contact Guillim, however, Thomas Gale had read through the *Monumenta* and written “noe mention” next to Aubrey’s note.

Aubrey’s network of antiquarian-minded informants was large, even by the standards of the period, and here he can be seen mobilising that network to obtain answers which could have taken weeks or months to recover if he himself had ridden through the Marches, following the course of the dyke. More than that, however, he sited the dyke within a larger landscape, noting how it filled the level of western Herefordshire between ranges of hills which made artificial defences less necessary. This passage echoes his imaginative reconstruction of ancient Wiltshire at the beginning of the *Description*:

I beleeve that there were several Reguli, w^{ch} often made wars upon one another; & the great Ditches which run on our plaines & elsewhere so many miles, were (not unlikely) their boundaries; & with all served for defense against the incursion of their Enemies, as the Picts wall, & that in China; to compare things small to great.⁸⁷

This passage shows Aubrey’s understanding of the historical landscape at an earlier period – it was probably written around 1670 or 1671 – and in it he seems not to recognise that Offa’s Dyke and similar constructions were Saxon rather than British – but his ability to imagine the landscape and reason out its historical significance remains.

Here, as elsewhere in the *Monumenta*, Aubrey reached an understanding of the place and function of an object in the British landscape through analogy with other objects or sites from the ancient world. His “Picts wall” is Hadrian’s Wall, extensively studied by Camden, which provided a natural point of comparison elsewhere in Britain, but his reference to the

⁸⁶ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 885.

⁸⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 10r.

Great Wall is less expected. It reappears elsewhere in the chapter on dykes, again in the context of Hadrian's Wall:

The Division of Territories and Kingdomes is of great Antiquity. The Chinese walle every one has heard of: which is their defence against the Incursion of the Tartars. "According to the Chinese account that famous Wall, built against the irruptions of y^e Tartars was begun a hundred years before the Incarnation."⁸⁸

The quoted passage is from Sir Thomas Browne's interpretation of a "prophetic" poem referencing the incursion into China of the Tartars, but it seems evident that Aubrey is only citing Browne for the date of the wall's construction.⁸⁹ He knew of the wall which "every one has heard of" already and it would seem, in fact, that despite its vast geographical distance, it was a better known point of reference for a seventeenth-century English scholar than the native earthworks only a few days' ride from London, an instance that serves to confirm just how novel Aubrey's examination of these local, British remains was.⁹⁰

Aubrey was not content solely with identifying and describing these previously neglected sites, but also made several tentative forays into explaining the changes that had come about in the landscape since the classical period. Discussing the abandonment of the Roman ways, he returned to the ideas of Christopher Wren:

S^r Chr. Wren saies to me, that ~~the~~ Roman waies ~~were~~ lost in process of time, by the building of Religious Houses; to which places Pilgrims resorted, and so found-out newer and neerer wayes. qd NB. For exam[ple] Stanstreet causey [in ~~Surrey~~ \Sussex/] is disused; and \so are/ severall others, and Elias Ashmole Esq demonstrates it \who/ by riding often from Wedon to Lichfield by the Watling street way & finding it four miles neerer than by Coventrey, began to guesse that the Watling-street-way

⁸⁸ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 901.

⁸⁹ Sir Thomas Browne, *Certain Miscellany Tracts* (London, 1683), 189.

⁹⁰ Martino Martini, in an account of recent Chinese history, took it as granted that his readers would be familiar with "that great Wall, which extends from East to West". Martini's narrative was translated by Thomas Henshaw and paired with a history of China by the Jesuit, Alvaro Semedo, to make one of the standard early modern English Sinological reference works (see Alvaro Semedo, *The History of That Great and Renowned Monarchy of China*, trans. Thomas Henshaw [London, 1655], Martini's quotation is at 257).

began to be neglected for the advantage of Travellers who had better accommodation at Coventry, after it became a Religious place.⁹¹

As with his notes towards a history of inflation in the *Stromata*, this is another point where Aubrey seems on the verge of thinking about economic and social conditions in a historicised fashion and drawing from them much larger conclusions about the evolution of society in England during the middle ages. As also with the notes on inflation, however, the idea is not systematically carried through, but is only offered as a note amongst descriptions and itineraries of Roman roads.

The abandonment of the Roman ways was also one of the many points at which Aubrey identified dramatic change in the landscape since the classical period and it is, perhaps, this aspect of Wren's and Ashmole's theories that sits better with the rest of the *Monumenta* than an implied changing economic and social history based around the development of religious institutions in early medieval Britain. On the opening page of the chapter "Of Embankeing and Dreyning & Currents", Aubrey copied out a long passage from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

I have myself seen what once was solid land changed into sea; and again I have seen land made from the sea. Sea-shells have been seen lying far from the ocean, and an ancient anchor has been found on a mountain-top. What once was a level plain, down-flowing waters have made into a valley; and hills by the force of floods have been washed into the sea.⁹²

Around this passage, Aubrey has noted relevant examples. The solid earth becoming sea is "as in Cheshire", the land created out of ocean is "as in the Sea not far from y^e Barbados

⁹¹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 921.

⁹² "Vidi ego, quod fuerat quondam, solidissima tellus, | Esse fretum: vidi factas ex aequore terras: | Et procul à pelago conchae jacuere marinae, | Et vetus inventa est in montibus anchora summis; | Quodque fuit campus, vallem decursus aquarum | Fecit, et fluvie mons est deductus in aequor". Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 1019 (= Bodleian MS Top. gen. c. 25, fol. 131r), citing Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 15.262-267, with minor spelling variations.

about 1666”, and the valley caused by sudden flooding is referred back to “Gassendum de hoc”.⁹³ This passage and its paratexts hark back to Hooke’s theories of earthquakes and the alteration of the earth, with which Aubrey engaged in his *Natural History of Wiltshire*.⁹⁴ Aubrey, like Hooke, recognised the possibility that considerable alteration of the earth’s surface could happen within a relatively short period of time and it is within this context that he seems to have read reports such as one by Sir Jonas Moore, surveyor of the fens during the Earl of Bedford’s drainage attempts:

[He] told me that in the Fennes in Lincolnshire they found a Roman Causey fourtie foot under the Low-water-mark at Sea. Math Paris saieith that in his time it was the Paradise of England.⁹⁵

In this chapter, however, he was intent on distinguishing between natural changes, such as the inundation of the Roman causeway in Lincolnshire, and significant man-made alterations. He began with a categorical statement that, “the Saxons were barbarous & ignorant” – in keeping with his general low estimation of the Anglo-Saxon period – so that the Romans must be the builders of all the ancient embankments and drains now known in England, “though I doe not remember it expressly mentioned in any Historian of any particular place”.⁹⁶ Although he provided a few examples, mostly from the area in and around London,

⁹³ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 1019. Aubrey appears to have been referring to Pierre Gassendi, “Philosophiae Epicuri syntagma”, in *Opera omnia*, 6 vols. (Lyons, 1658), iii. 27-36.

⁹⁴ Robert Hooke, “Lecture and Discourses of Earthquakes and Subterraneous Eruptions”, in *Posthumous Works* (London, 1705), 277-450; Poole, *John Aubrey*, chap. 7. Bodleian MS Aubrey 1, fols. 87r-102r (cf. Poole, *World Makers*, 111-112). The immediate sources for most of the conclusions Aubrey draws in this text are Robert Hooke’s lectures to the Royal Society on earthquakes, above, particularly the eleventh lecture, given on 4 January 1688, for which see Ellen Tan Drake, *Restless Genius: Robert Hooke and His Earthly Thoughts* (Oxford, 1996), 285-293 and *passim*.

⁹⁵ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 923. Aubrey’s citation of Matthew Paris may be due to the influence of Thomas Gale (see chapter two) who had made notes towards a new edition of Paris (Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 260).

⁹⁶ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 1023.

to support his argument and quoted several pages from Dugdale's far more comprehensive *History of Imbanking and Drayning*, the chapter is evidently unfinished.⁹⁷

Instead, the majority of the chapter is occupied by an essay "Of S^t Vincents Rocks, and Bristow", which dates from 1668 and was probably written before this section of the *Monumenta* was composed.⁹⁸ It does, however, address the same issues, for Aubrey, noting the absence of any place that could plausibly be identified with Bristol in the *Antonine Itinerary* proposed that:

[I]n those daies, this \now/ illustrious Place \(\together with the great Flat of Somersetshire),/ was under water, that is to say by the over-flowing of the River of Avon, which was pluggd-up, or barred by the bottome of these \Vincientian/ Rocks.⁹⁹

In support of this he quoted a local tradition from Thomas Ax that anchors have been "digged-up in the Meers" nearby. At the foot of St. Vincent's Rock lay a series of smaller rocks called the Lidde, which interfered with navigation and which he supposed were the remnants of a larger barrier that had been partially removed by Roman engineers "at the Declension of their Government."¹⁰⁰ He then laid out the gradual evolution of the landscape around Bristol, from prehistoric times to the present. It was first underwater, but an earthquake, cutting the river channel below the rocks – seemingly, unless he was contradicting himself, in Roman times – it became a marsh.¹⁰¹ Subsequently, after the Roman engineering works it settled into its present state. This essay shows Aubrey at his most

⁹⁷ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 1053-1055, quotations from Dugdale which derive from William Dugdale, *History of Imbanking and Drayning* . . . (London, 1662), 104, 111.

⁹⁸ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 1029-1051, with "now [1668]" at ii. 1037. Other sections of the chapter were certainly written no earlier than 1675 (cf. ii. 1023).

⁹⁹ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 1031.

¹⁰⁰ Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 1033.

¹⁰¹ His inspiration for this was Edward Browne, *Travels* . . . (London, 1677), 62, but it bears an evident resemblance to Hooke's theories of earthquakes as well. As additional evidence for an earthquake he cites the large stones scattered on the downs to either side of the Avon, comparing St. Vincent's Rocks, rather implausibly, with Etna and Vesuvius (Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 1037).

conjectural and, indeed, every positive statement he made in his history of the evolution of the Bristol landscape is incorrect (including its absence from the *Antonine Itinerary*), but nevertheless the passage demonstrates the same historicisation of the landscape and recognition of considerable change since the Roman period that mark other sections of the *Monumenta*.

If Aubrey's interpretations of the ancient British landscape are sometimes counterintuitive in hindsight, it is important to bear in mind the extent to which he was pioneering this kind of thick description of the past. Always alert to new tools with which he could explicate the materials he had discovered, he was sometimes led astray by false analogies and unjustified conjectures, as in the case of St. Vincent's Rocks, but at other times the same methods led him to intuit conclusions which would not be fully proved or worked out in detail until centuries later, such as when he noted that:

In the time of the Siege at Colchester, was found then in the Breach made in the Wall there, a [coarse] gold coyne of Arviragus, on one side hollow like a Buckler, on the other side gibbous . . . on the head is a wild kind of crown: on the Reverse, a Horse like that upon the Sadlers stables, but not so good: w^{ch} was a Reverse usuall with the Britons: Now, this putts me in mind of the \white/ Horse cutt in the hill called White-horse hill in Berks: which some will have to be made by Hengist or Horsa.¹⁰²

Aubrey refers here to the Uffington White Horse. The coin with which he compares the monument was one of several of this type known in the seventeenth century and was doubtfully assigned to the time of Domitian (81-96 CE).¹⁰³ Regardless of the coin's authenticity, however, Aubrey was impressively accurate; modern archaeological surveys

¹⁰² Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 997.

¹⁰³ For the "Arviragus" of early modern scholarship, see *Biographia Britannica*, 6 vols. in 8 (London, 1747-1766), i. 205-206.

suggest a late Bronze Age to early Iron Age (c.600-400 BCE) date for the horse, only about five hundred years earlier than Aubrey's guess.¹⁰⁴

As a pioneer of prehistoric archaeology, Aubrey had to collect -- facts and received knowledge, if not actual artefacts -- before he could interpret and it is from both acts that his works derive their enduring value. Patchy and uneven as they are, his collections towards an understanding of the ancient landscape are unique in their time and represent an important and much-neglected side of the *Monumenta*.

Attempted Publication and Manuscript Circulation

During his intellectual stocktaking of the early 1690s – a time which saw him deposit the majority of his manuscripts with Edward Lhuys in the Ashmolean – Aubrey determined to finally publish the *Monumenta Britannica*.¹⁰⁵ In the latter part of 1692 he had sounded out several London booksellers concerning the possibility of publication, including Samuel Smith, publisher of the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions* and of works by many friends and acquaintances of Aubrey, including William Dugdale, John Ray, and Robert Boyle.¹⁰⁶ However, the cost of paper was high and Smith told him that the three or four volume work he imagined would be far too expensive to publish in the present market. Instead, Smith and some of the other booksellers he approached advised him to obtain subscriptions and

¹⁰⁴ David Miles, et al., *Uffington White Horse and Its Landscape: Investigations at White Horse Hill, Uffington, 1989-95, and Tower Hill, Ashbury, 1993-4* (Oxford, 2003), 18-19 (a slightly inaccurate rehearsal of Aubrey's theories), 63, 77-78.

¹⁰⁵ This account is indebted to Michael Hunter's archival groundwork on the same subject, see Hunter, *Aubrey*, 89-90.

¹⁰⁶ ODNB, *s.n.*

publish in Oxford, where, presumably, a work like the *Monumenta* could be expected to sell more quickly than in London.¹⁰⁷

Aubrey wrote to Edward Lhuyd on 4 February 1693 that he would have advertisements for subscriptions printed by the following Monday and send one or two hundred to Oxford, but Wood's copy of the advertisement is dated 10 April, suggesting it may have been slightly longer in its gestation.¹⁰⁸ When it did appear, Aubrey's proposal was to print the entirety of the *Monumenta* together with the *Stromata* in 160 sheets folio, "with abundance of Cuts."¹⁰⁹ This would have made for a substantial book, 640 pages in length (perhaps in two volumes), with the hefty subscription price of eighteen shillings, nine up front and nine upon delivery. The expense of producing such a monumental work was underlined by the slightly nervous caveat that "there are so few Printed, that care will be taken that none shall be under-sold."

Nonetheless, it seems likely that, despite the expense, this scheme could have gone ahead. Edmund Gibson encouraged the project, while warning Aubrey against printing in Oxford due to the probability of a delay of four or five years, reminding him that "the poor Saxon Chronicle could not be finish'd in less time than a year".¹¹⁰ Thomas Tanner seconded Gibson and promised to solicit Arthur Charlett, master of University College, to seek subscriptions.¹¹¹ Charlett must have proved amenable, for by 4 April, Aubrey reported to Wood that he was sending him copies of the proposal that week, noting also, with evident satisfaction, that Dryden had attempted to place the *Monumenta* with his own bookseller, "but he will print only plays and romances".¹¹² In the following days, Aubrey drew upon his

¹⁰⁷ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 102r.

¹⁰⁸ Aubrey's letter to Lhuyd is Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 102r. For Wood's dated copy of the subscription advertisement see Bodleian Wood 780.

¹⁰⁹ John Aubrey, *Proposals for Printing Monumenta Britannica* (London, 1693).

¹¹⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 138cr. This was Gibson's *Chronicon Saxonicum* (Oxford, 1692).

¹¹¹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 198r.

¹¹² Bodleian MS Wood F 51, fol. 5r. It is unclear who is meant by this, whether Jacob Tonson, Henry Herringman, or another.

network of friends and acquaintances in Oxford, sending four quires of the proposal to Tanner for disposal by him and Lhuyd.¹¹³ Some were to go to subsidiary distributors and some directly to known interested parties, as appears in Aubrey's letter to Lhuyd of 6 April:

I would entreat you to doe me the favour to deliver about 12 [copies of the proposal] to my cosen Levett fellow of Exeter coll: and some to D^r Gregory . . . and to send 2 or 3 to M^r Lud [or a name like] of Baliol [*sic*] coll: he was Proctor about 2 yeares since. a very civill Gent.¹¹⁴

Gibson was also involved in their distribution, promising to “send the *m* into the North and to Worcester”.¹¹⁵ By 4 May, Aubrey reported to Tanner that he had been advised by Samuel Smith that Henry Clements in Oxford was the best choice for a printer and thought that if subscriptions continued to flow in, he would be able to commence printing by Michaelmas of that year.¹¹⁶ Aubrey seems to have asked Tanner to act as an intermediary between himself and Clements and Tanner reported on 16 May that he had not seen Clements himself, but knew he planned to subscribe for fourteen copies in any case and that Aubrey ought to see him in London.¹¹⁷

This optimistic state of affairs did not last. By 19 July Aubrey had obtained only 112 subscriptions, evidently too few to fund the publication without further assistance, and he thought instead of asking the university to subsidise the printing.¹¹⁸ The initial response was

¹¹³ Bodleian MS Tanner 25, fol. 6r.

¹¹⁴ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 90r. The recipients of Aubrey's proposals were Henry Levett, fellow of Exeter, 1688-1700, and later physician at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and the Charterhouse (Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714*, 4 vols. [Oxford: 1891-1892], iii. 904), David Gregory, the mathematician and astronomer, who had taken a medical doctorate in 1692 (Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, ii. 602; *ODNB*, *s.n.*), and Adam Lugg of Balliol who had been proctor in 1691 and was later rector of Brattleby and Fillingham, Lincolnshire (Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, iii. 949).

¹¹⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 195r.

¹¹⁶ Bodleian MS Tanner 25, fol. 39r. Henry Clements, senior, was a well-known Oxford bookseller; see Norma Hodgson and Cyprian Blagden, *The Notebook of Thomas Bennet and Henry Clements (1686-1719) With Some Aspects of Book Trade Practice* (Oxford, 1956), 6.

¹¹⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 199r.

¹¹⁸ Bodleian MS Tanner 25, fol. 66r.

positive, with Ralph Bathurst, president of Trinity College and his old friend, writing that Charlett was very ready to assist in the *Monumenta's* publication, but on 24 May 1694 Aubrey wrote tersely to Lhuyd that, “M^r Gibson saith, that y^e University will not print my MSS: but let them lie among the Rubbish”.¹¹⁹ A few days later, Lhuyd wrote back gently implying that Gibson was being unpleasant without foundation (“I presume the curators of the Presse have not as yet had any perusal of your works”), but proceeded to reprimand him for spreading a false rumour that he had the support of Jonathan Edwards, principal of Lhuyd’s own Jesus College, for the printing of the *Monumenta* in a passage which Aubrey subsequently heavily crossed out.¹²⁰ By the summer of 1694, the initially auspicious project was dead in the water.

Michael Hunter has proposed that the failure of the subscription campaign was due in large part to the simultaneous publication of Gibson’s edition of Camden’s *Britannia*, proposals for which were dated 20 April 1693, just as Aubrey’s own campaign was getting underway.¹²¹ Aubrey, at least, seems to have felt this was the case and that the *Britannia* was attempting to swallow up his own work without giving him sufficient credit, to the extent that Tanner was forced to write on 26 December 1693 insisting that his desire to read the *Monumenta* was entirely above board and regretting Aubrey’s unwillingness to show him the manuscript after learning that he was amongst the antiquaries drafted by Gibson to prepare the new *Britannia*.¹²² Both Tanner and Lhuyd grappled with Aubrey’s disinclination to allow material from the *Monumenta* to be used in their chapters on Wiltshire and Wales respectively, eventually prevailing, so that when the new edition came out in 1695, the pith of Aubrey’s

¹¹⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fols. 23-24; Ashmole 1814, fol. 113r.

¹²⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 257r.

¹²¹ Hunter, *Aubrey*, 89; *New Proposals for Printing by Subscription Camden’s Britannia. English* (n.p., 1693).

¹²² Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 204r. Aubrey’s fears would seem not to have been entirely fantastical, as Tanner admits in the letter that he concealed his involvement with the *Britannia* from Aubrey until he was sure it would go ahead (or, perhaps, that the *Monumenta* would not).

druidic theories was ensconced within several treatments by his two friends of individual megalithic sites.¹²³

The booksellers who handled Gibson's edition of the *Britannia* were Abel Swale and Awnsham Churchill and it may be through his connections with Tanner and Lhuyd that Aubrey proposed the *Monumenta* to Churchill in the summer of 1695.¹²⁴ Churchill had accepted it by 31 August of that year and initially planned to print it almost immediately.¹²⁵ For unknown reasons, however, work stalled and on 12 November 1696 Aubrey wrote to Lhuyd, complaining of Churchill's tardiness and planning to ask Locke and Gibson to speak to him.¹²⁶ Before any further progress could be made, Aubrey died in June 1697 and the manuscript of the *Monumenta* remained, unprinted, in Churchill's hands.

Although the *Monumenta* remained unpublished and was in the possession of Churchill and his descendants until its donation to the Bodleian Library in 1836, its influence on subsequent antiquaries was still considerable.¹²⁷ Just before Aubrey's death, his friend Thomas Gale, who had looked after him and possibly housed him in his last years, made a transcription, now lost, of most or all of the manuscript.¹²⁸ This in turn was the source for a series of extracts, chiefly from the "Templa Druidum", made by William Stukeley and dated 10 December 1718.¹²⁹ A second copy of the original, then in the hands of Churchill's nephew Awnsham Churchill of Henbury, Dorset, was made by the Dorset antiquary John Hutchins (1698-1773), who had corresponded with Stukeley and may have come to know of the

¹²³ William Camden, *Britannia* . . . , ed. Edmund Gibson, et al. (London, 1695); see also Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1995), chap. 12, for its composition.

¹²⁴ It is also possible, however, that John Locke may have been the point of contact. Churchill provided Aubrey with bibliographical details of Locke's publications sold by him in a letter of 15 July 1695 which also invited him to Paternoster Row to discuss the *Monumenta* (Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 451r).

¹²⁵ Aubrey, *Three Prose Works*, 459-460.

¹²⁶ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1829, fol. 78r.

¹²⁷ Hunter, *Aubrey*, 91.

¹²⁸ For evidence of the Gale manuscript see Stuart Piggott, *William Stukeley: An Eighteenth-Century Antiquary* (Oxford, 1950), 44, who unsuccessfully searched for it in Gale's manuscript collection, now in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

¹²⁹ Piggott, *William Stukeley*, 44-45. This manuscript is now Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural Historical Society Library MS 889. The date of Stukeley's extracts, 10 December 1718, is at fol. 65r.

existence of the *Monumenta* from him.¹³⁰ From Hutchins, knowledge of it reached the antiquary Richard Gough (1735-1809), who made a copy of Hutchins's manuscript in 1769.¹³¹ John Britton (1771-1857), the first biographer of Aubrey, also had a copy, made from Gough's manuscript by Edward Meredith of Christ Church College, Oxford, in 1814.¹³² Thus, by the time the manuscript reappeared in a public archive there were at least five copies or series of notes derived from it in circulation amongst the English antiquarian community.

This vibrant manuscript tradition was paralleled by Aubrey's regular appearance as an authority on ancient monuments throughout the eighteenth century. The reception of the ideas in the *Monumenta* during this period, whether at first hand or through intermediary sources, is too extensive to be discussed here, but it is worth observing that while Aubrey's theories concerning Roman Britain received little discussion – apart from that by Hutchins in his *Dorset* – his hypothesis that stone circles were built by druids became the foundation for all subsequent research into the subject.¹³³ They were disseminated first through Tanner's chapter on Wiltshire and Lhuyd's chapter on Wales in the 1695 *Britannia*, albeit with a grain of salt. Tanner, in the end, only listed Aubrey's theory as one of several options in his discussion of Stonehenge, writing, “[t]hat it was a Temple of the *Druids* long before the coming in of the Romans . . . Mr. *John Aubrey*, Fellow of the Royal Society, endeavours to prove”.¹³⁴ Lhuyd, though less doubtful, sidelined Aubrey by supporting the claim for intellectual primacy of his Scottish correspondent, James Garden, “who, for what I can learn,

¹³⁰ ODNB, *s.n.* This manuscript was purchased by the Evelyn family in the nineteenth century, perhaps due to the presence of Evelyn's notes and is now British Library MS Add. 78660 (formerly Evelyn MS 140). Hutchins made use of his find as early as 1768, when he cited Aubrey in a discussion of prehistoric remains in Dorset (*Gentleman's Magazine* 38 [1768]: 109-113). Gough related the circumstances of Hutchins's transcription in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 53 (1783): 937.

¹³¹ Now Bodleian MS Gough Gen. Top. 14.

¹³² Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural Historical Society Library MS 890. When Britton wrote his *Memoir of John Aubrey*, F.R.S. (London, 1845), he was evidently unaware that the original manuscript had already reached the Bodleian and had access only to his copy of Gough's manuscript (88-89).

¹³³ John Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, 2 vols. (London, 1774), ii. 221-222, who quotes, with reserve, Aubrey's early idea that barrows marked the sites where soldiers had fallen in battle.

¹³⁴ Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gibson, 107.

was the first that suspected these Circles for *Temples of the Druids*".¹³⁵ The bare claim that stone circles were druidic temples is repeated in the published edition of Aubrey's introduction to his *Description* of Wiltshire, printed in 1714.¹³⁶

Despite such equivocal beginnings, William Stukeley, the son-in-law of Aubrey's friend Thomas Gale, popularised the identification in his studies of Stonehenge and Avebury, fantasising the druids to be an order of Abrahamic priests and embroidering Aubrey's bald hypothesis with a fabulous narrative reminiscent of many of the earlier texts from which Aubrey had moved away.¹³⁷ Eighteenth-century British scholars also read Aubrey's theory through the medium of Johann Georg Keyssler's *Antiquitates selectae septentrionales et Celticae*, published in 1720, which refuted the passage in the introduction to Aubrey's *Description*.¹³⁸ This refutation was in turn refuted in William Borlase's 1769 history of Cornwall, with reference both to Keyssler and to Stukeley.¹³⁹ After Borlase, however, there was an increasing distinction between the ancient Britons in general and the druids as a specific priestly caste, so that Richard Colt Hoare, the early nineteenth-century archaeologist of prehistoric and Roman Britain, sounded a note of caution in his discussion of stone circles:

The general title of Druidical has been given to all these stone monuments: and some of my readers may be surprized that I have not adopted it. That the Druids existed in our island, at a very early period, and officiated as priests, there can be no doubt, but as the learned Mr. Bryant, in his *Mythology* observes, "Under the sanction of their names we shelter ourselves, whenever we are ignorant and bewildered". And Mr. Borlase, with equal justness remarks, "that the work of Stonehenge must have been that of a great and powerful nation, not of a limited community of priests; the grandeur of the design, the distance of the materials, the tediousness with which all

¹³⁵ Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gibson, 638.

¹³⁶ *Miscellanies on Several Curious Subjects: Now First Publish'd From Their Respective Originals* (London, 1714), 25.

¹³⁷ William Stukeley, *Stonehenge: a Temple Restor'd to the British Druids* (London, 1740); *Avebury: a Temple of the British Druids with Some Others, Described* (London, 1743). For Stukeley see Piggott, *Stukeley*, and David Boyd Haycock, *William Stukeley: Science, Religion, and Archaeology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, 2002).

¹³⁸ Johann Georg Keyssler, *Antiquitates selectae septentrionales et Celticae* (Hanover, 1720), 58.

¹³⁹ William Borlase, *Antiquities, Historical and Monumental, of the County of Cornwall . . .* (London, 1769), 110-123.

such massive works are necessarily attended, all shew, that such designs were the fruits of peace and religion”.¹⁴⁰

Throughout the eighteenth century Aubrey’s druidic theory, though regularly attacked, had remained the most popular and widespread explanation for the majority of prehistoric sites in Britain. It was Colt Hoare, in *The Ancient History of South Wiltshire* (1812) and subsequent works, who began its final demolition, using the greater knowledge of prehistoric British culture then available. Nonetheless, Colt Hoare himself extensively used the *Monumenta*, first relying upon Britton’s manuscript copy, which he borrowed in 1817, and later consulting the original manuscript in the library of William Churchill of Henbury, the great-nephew of Aubrey’s erstwhile bookseller.¹⁴¹

When Aubrey’s theories of prehistoric archaeology did become definitively outdated, his successor was not Colt Hoare or any other member of the English archaeological tradition, but rather the Dane, Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788-1865), whose *Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkyndighed* of 1836 established the Three-Age System (the division of prehistoric time into Stone, Bronze, and Iron ages) and thus provided a reliable method for the relative dating of artefacts within prehistory.¹⁴² With the recognition of definable cultural evolution and technical difference in prehistoric artefacts, Aubrey’s vision of a largely homogenous British antiquity was no longer tenable, but it is a testament both to the intellectual rigour of his scholarship and the emotional attraction of his sometimes romantic theories, that Aubrey remained the central authority on prehistoric Britain for the hundred and twenty years after his death.

¹⁴⁰ Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Bart., *The Ancient History of South Wiltshire* (London, 1812), 173. I cannot find this passage, but Colt Hoare is evidently referring to Jacob Bryant, *A New System, or, an Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, 2 vols. (London, 1774-1776).

¹⁴¹ Britton, *Memoir of John Aubrey*, 89.

¹⁴² For Thomsen and the impact of his methodological innovations, see Bo Gräslund, *The Birth of Prehistoric Chronology* (Cambridge, 1987), 17-30; Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2006), 121-138.

Chapter Five

The Remaines of Gentilisme:

Religion, Folklore, and the Search for Romano-British Culture

John Aubrey's *Remaines of Gentilisme* has traditionally been seen as an important, although chaotic and disorganised, record of Early Modern folk customs.¹ This record was, however, itself only the byproduct of a larger work. Aubrey had collected examples of English folklore as a means to illustrate what he believed was a direct cultural link between the rural English society of his own time and that of the Roman settlers of classical Britain (by “gentilism” he meant paganism, in this case the religions of the Greeks and Romans). This chapter investigates the beliefs and methodologies that led Aubrey through this project. It begins with a discussion of his attitude towards folklore, which he described as “superstition”, situating that attitude within his adherence to a Hobbesian genealogy of religious ritual and arguing that this allowed him to view folk custom in a more neutral light than many of his polemically-minded contemporaries. It then proceeds to analyse his conclusions, demonstrating that he saw English folk custom as one aspect of a homogenous folk culture which had existed in England since the Roman invasion.

¹ The manuscript of the *Remaines of Gentilisme* is now British Library MS Lansdowne 231. It has been printed in full twice, first by the folklorist James Britten in *Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme. By John Aubrey, R.S.S. 1686-87* (London, 1881) and second by John Buchanan-Brown in John Aubrey, *Three Prose Works: Miscellanies, Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme, Observations* (Fontwell, Sussex, 1972). Neither edition is ideal, but Britten's is to be preferred as Buchanan-Brown's reorders the text beyond recognition. See below for a discussion of earlier, partial editions.

The *Remaines* emerges from this study as a work in many ways characteristic of the theological and cultural antiquarianism of Aubrey's period. It is remarkable, however, in the value it places upon the recording and interpretation of folk custom and the links it makes between classical Rome and modern Britain. In this respect it can be seen as another arm of Aubrey's larger project of recovering Romano-British culture, while at the same time manifesting in its focus the textual-philological turn which Aubrey's scholarship took towards the end of his life.

The Structure of the Text

The Remaines of Gentilisme consists of one hundred and forty-three folios and was compiled by Aubrey from February 1687 until shortly before his death.² At the beginning of an unfinished introduction, he set out his rationale for compiling the text:

Old Customes, & old wives fables are grosse things: but yet ^{ought} not to be {quite rejected | buried in oblivion}: there may some truth and usefulnessse be {elicited | picked} out of them: besides 'tis a pleasure to consider the Errours that enveloped former ages: as also the *present*.³

In the pages that follow, Aubrey assembled a collection of folk traditions grouped under relevant headings – everything from the immuring of nuns to the uses of beans – and compared these traditions with passages from a series of classical authors. A characteristic example of his method is an entry headed “Holy-Mawle”. He began with two lines from Ovid's *Fasti*:

² John Buchanan-Brown's editions of the *Miscellanies* and *Remaines* contains important codicological and contextual material (Aubrey, *Three Prose Works*) as do the brief but indispensable discussions of the same texts in Michael Hunter, *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* (London, 1975), esp. 121-125, 197-199.

³ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 102r.

Corpora post decies senos qui credidit annos
Missa neci; sceleris crimine damnat avos.⁴

Against this he wrote a summary of an oral tradition he had collected which seemed comparable:

The Holy-mawle, w^{ch} (they fancy) \an old *Somerset* Cante-story/ hung behind the Church dore, w^{ch} when the father was seaventie the Sonne might fetch, to knock his father in the head, as effoete, and of no more use.⁵

Aubrey then added to this central comparison of classical and contemporary texts passages from Pomponius Mela, Ælian's *Varia Historia*, and Herodotus, all borrowed from Robert Sharrock's *Υπόθεσις Ἡθικῆ* of 1660.⁶ “This old story of the Holy-Mawle”, he writes in conclusion, “no doubt, was derived from the aforesayd histories: but disguised (after the old fashion) with the Romancy-way”.⁷ Aubrey’s drawing of such parallels emphasises his conviction that British folk-ways derived from Roman “gentilisme”.

Paring away the gradual accretion of parallel passages, modern authors, and folk traditions that did not fit into the larger scheme, reveals that the original structure of the *Remaines* centred around a coherent and limited series of texts. These texts were Latin, aside from Homer, and poetic, aside from Pliny. In understanding the development of the *Remaines*, it is necessary to enquire why this particular selection was made rather than any other and what this reveals about Aubrey's intentions.

⁴ "He who believes that after sixty years men were put to death, accuses our forefathers of a wicked crime." British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 109r (Ovid, *Fasti*, v. 623-624).

⁵ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 109r.

⁶ Robert Sharrock, *Υπόθεσις Ἡθικῆ de finibus & officiis secundum naturae jus . . .* (Oxford, 1682), 216; quoted at British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 108v. Aubrey has taken his quotations from the second, 1682, edition. Sharrock was a fellow of New College and a possible acquaintance of Aubrey's (*ODNB*, *s.n.*).

⁷ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 108v.

The ten authors whose works form the core of the *Remaines* are Catullus, Homer, Horace, Juvenal, Ovid, Persius, Pliny, Propertius, Tibullus, and Virgil.⁸ Such a selection does not, at first glance, seem best calculated for the study of ancient customs. Ovid's *Fasti* and Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* both contain material concerning ancient religion and tradition and it is unsurprising that Aubrey, or any other seventeenth-century scholar attempting a similar collection of citations, would have drawn upon them, but the remainder of the list seems capricious, if not downright perverse. Notable is the absence of those two mainstays of the Roman antiquarian tradition, Varro and Aulus Gellius, both of whom enjoyed considerable popularity amongst the scholars of seventeenth-century Europe and both of whom could have been profitably mined for at least as many customs and traditions as Aubrey noted down.⁹ The explanation for this seems to lie in Aubrey's situation at the time when he compiled the *Remaines*. In a letter to Anthony Wood of 23 October 1688, he wrote that he had "diverted" himself since the "Removall of my Bookes", evidently his library, by making extracts from the authors named, which were, seemingly, not part of any research collection he may have assembled, but rather his favourite literary works, texts he kept by him and worked through many times, though not always with such systematic purpose as in 1687-1689. The result is doubly miscellaneous, first in that Aubrey was limited to the classical texts he had near him, thus closing off many potential sources rich in references to classical

⁸ He had known the *Georgics* in English translation as early as 1655, when he purchased Thomas May's translation (Thomas May, trans., *Virgil's Georgicks* [London, 1628], Bodleian Ashmole 1561, which is signed at sig. A 2 "Jack Aubrey. 1655." and contains no notes save a notice by Aubrey on the front pastedown that this edition is sometimes bound together with May's Martial), but his main text of Virgil was the 1632 Cambridge octavo of Paolo Manuzio's edition (Virgil, *Opera . . . Pauli Manutii annotationes brevissimae in margine adscriptae* [Cambridge, 1632], Bodleian Ashmole A. 35, which is signed "Jo: Aubrey" on the pastedown and contains numerous underlinings and annotations).

⁹ The Roman antiquarian inheritance in English scholarship has yet to be studied. One germane example is Selden's preface to his *Janus Anglorum*, a copy of which Aubrey owned. For a comparable continental example of the influence which the Roman antiquarians had on their Early Modern successors, see Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano Dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1999), and his observations in "Arnaldo Momigliano's 'Ancient History and the Antiquarian': A Critical Review", in *Momigliano and Antiquarianism: Foundations of the Modern Cultural Sciences*, ed. Peter N. Miller (Toronto, 2007), 127-153.

custom, and second in that the excerpts he copied out from those texts were conditioned by his own preexisting collection of folkloric knowledge.

The miscellaneous and chaotic nature of the text has encouraged modern scholars to ignore its classical elements and focus upon the more obviously engaging folkloric passages. The early nineteenth-century folklorists who published portions of the text in the 1820s and 1830s, and James Britten in his *editio princeps* of the entire text in 1881, saw it, first and foremost, as a collection of folklore.¹⁰ Since then, this view has been qualified, first by John Buchanan-Brown and later by Michael Hunter. Buchanan-Brown recognised the importance of the classical quotations, which, he correctly observed, were the nucleus of the text around which the folkloric parallels had accreted; the *Remaines* was a fragmentary attempt to draw anthropological links between the classical world and the folk practices of Restoration England. Hunter followed this assessment, seeing the classical extracts for what they were, but viewing the *Remaines* principally as a modern anthropological notebook.¹¹

These interpretations of the *Remaines* are true, but tell only part of the story. For Aubrey, such an attempt at an early comparative anthropology was intimately tied to his convictions concerning the development of religious ritual and custom in the ancient world. He drew on the ideas of Hobbes and other scholars who had engaged with the problems of the origins of Christian ritual and the development of pagan tradition to create a synthesis of his own. In the *Remaines* he built up a corpus of data not only to prove a cultural continuity that stretched from the Roman occupation of Britain to the present, but to demonstrate the

¹⁰ Henry Ellis, who had been attached to the British Museum when the manuscript of the *Remaines* arrived as part of the Lansdowne collection, published extracts from it in his 1813 revision and expansion of John Brand's *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (2 vols. [London, 1813]) and subsequently in *Time's Telescope for 1826; or, a Complete Guide to the Almanack* (London, 1826). Most of the passages not already printed in these texts were gathered by William John Thoms – antiquary, secretary of the Camden Society, and coiner of the term “folklore” for what had previously been known as “popular antiquities” – and published in his *Anecdotes and Traditions Illustrative of English History and Literature From Manuscript Sources* (London, 1839).

¹¹ Hunter, *John Aubrey*, 156, at which he compares it to William Camden's “The Maners of the Irishry, both of old and of later times”, *Britannia* (London, 1610), 140ff. Although it does contain material relating to folk custom, Camden's work is otherwise unrelated to Aubrey's, either in scope or content.

historical contingency underlying the ritualistic trappings of religious belief, whether pagan or Christian. For Aubrey, the “superstition” inherent in folk custom was also present in Christian ritual. To prove that he thought this, however, requires a closer examination of the text and its intellectual contexts.

Hobbesian Discourses of Religion

Aubrey’s method in the *Remaines*, as in most of his works, consists of an accumulation of facts and quotations with little explanation or comment. Besides the introductory passages quoted above, there is only one further significant passage of commentary within the text. This, however, is suggestive of the motivations outlined above and a close interrogation of these three fragments, together with the texts quoted throughout the *Remaines*, allows us to reconstruct the mindset underlying its composition.

Writing of the origins of some of the folk beliefs he had been describing, Aubrey suggested that:

In the Infancy of Christian Religion it was expedient to plough (as they say) with the heifer of the Gentiles:¹² (i) to insinuate with them, and to let them continue and use their old Ethnick ~~Customes~~ \Festivalls/ which they new-named with Christian names, *e.g.* Floralia, they turnd to y^e feast of St. Philip and Jacob, &c. The Saturnalia into Christmas: had they donne otherwise, they could not have gain'd so many Proselytes or established their Doctrine so well, and in so short a time, and besides they well understood that profound Aphorisme of Numa Pompilius, Nulla res efficacius multitudinem regit, quam Superstitio: of which, if taken away, Atheisme, and (consequently Libertinisme) will certainly come into its {room/sted}. This after the Ecclesiasticall politie of those times. The Gentiles would not perfectly relinquish all their Idols; so, they were persuaded to turne the Image of Jupiter with his thunderbolt to Christus crucifixus, and Venus and Cupid into y^e Madonna and her

¹² An echo of Judges 14:18, “if ye had not plowed with my heifer”

Babe, which Mr. Th. Hobbes sayth was prudently donne. See his *Leviathan* pag . . .

¹³

Aubrey attributed several images central to Christian iconography, but more specifically Catholic iconography, to paganism and proposed that they were adopted as a matter of ecclesiastical policy by early Christian priests. These priests, referred to obliquely as “they”, understood the dictum that “nothing rules the mob better than superstition”, a catch-phrase which, *pace* Aubrey, is not attributed to Numa Pompilius, but rather (by Quintus Curtius Rufus) to Egyptian priests in the time of Alexander.¹⁴

The key to unpicking this passage, and to understanding the *Remaines* as a whole, is Aubrey's quotation of Hobbes. Aubrey refers to chapter forty-five of *Leviathan*, “Of Demonology, and other relics of the religion of the gentiles”, a title which may have provided the inspiration for the title of the *Remaines*.¹⁵ Hobbes argues that the worship of images is a “relic of Gentilism”, authority for which cannot be found in the Bible, and that this idolatry led to the making of many costly images which, upon their conversion to Christianity, were retained by the pagans, “[t]he cause whereof, was the immoderate esteem, and prices set upon the workmanship of them.” This was aided and abetted by the priests, who permitted

¹³ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 101r. A similar reference appears later in the text, where Aubrey notes, under the heading “Images in Christian churches”, that “Mr Tho: Hobbes [Malmesburiensis] saies in his Kingdome of Darknesse [speaking there of Images] the Christians found them, not made them: but let them stand” (British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 128r).

¹⁴ “Nulla res multitudinem efficacius regit quam superstitio”, Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Historiae*, IV.x.7 (the passage is unchanged in early modern editions). Aubrey has confused the passage from Quintus Curtius with a similar anecdote in Livy (whom he cites as the original passage's author at British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 102r). Livy, describing the reign of Numa Pompilius, wrote that “omnium primum, rem ad multitudinem imperitam et illis saeculis rudem efficacissimam, deorum metum iniciendum ratus est” – “he thought the very first thing to do, as being the most efficacious with a populace which was ignorant and, in those early days, uncivilized, was to imbue them with the fear of Heaven” (Livy, *Historia*, I.xix.5). A note by Jan Gruter in Gronovius's edition of Livy glosses Numa's actions with a reference to the passage in Quintus Curtius, among others, and may be the source of Aubrey's confusion (see Livy, *Historiarum quod extat*, 3 vols., ed. Jacobus Gronovius [Amsterdam, 1665], i. 41). Aubrey's own copy of this edition, heavily annotated, is lacking its first volume (Livy, *Historiarum ab urbe condita*, 3 vols., ed. Jacobus Gronovius [Amsterdam, 1678], Bodleian Library Ashmole D 23-24, signed on the title page of D 24, “Musaeo Ashmoleano dedit V. C. Joannes Aubrey”).

¹⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London, 1651), 364.

their worship under the names of Christ, the Virgin, and the Apostles, to please their converts and in the hope that they themselves might be similarly honoured upon their decease.¹⁶

Aubrey admired Hobbes, writing his life, seeing to it that his portrait was painted, and even attempting to donate a copy of the banned *Leviathan* to the library of New Inn Hall, Oxford, so it is unsurprising to find such a clear Hobbesian echo in his own thought.¹⁷ More interesting are his deviations from Hobbes's narrative of the rise of Christian idolatry. Aubrey has taken the image of Venus and Cupid transmuted into the Madonna and child directly from Hobbes, but Jupiter as the crucified Christ is his own, slightly more daring, invention. The difference in illustrative images, though, is of less importance than Aubrey's reflections on the motivations of the early priests. Like Hobbes, Aubrey saw the retention of idolatry as a question of political exigency, a means by which to ensure greater and easier conversions, but rather than attributing it, as Hobbes did, to the "worldly ambition" of the priests and their desire to please the new Christians, Aubrey saw it as a move to keep the common people subjugated through ignorance, lest atheism and libertinism win the day. In this he echoed what purports to be a letter of Cardinal Wolsey that appears elsewhere in the *Remaines*. Wolsey was alleged by William Fanshawe to have written that:

¹⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 364. The extent to which this passage, and *Leviathan* as a whole, were actively anti-Christian has been the subject of much debate, with Leo Strauss, in his classic study of Hobbes's religion, arguing that Hobbes from his own point of view was not only Christian, but Anglican, and merely paring away untenable accretions from the primitive truth of Christianity (see Leo Strauss, *Hobbes's Critique of Religion & Related Writings*, trans. and ed. Gabriel Bartlett and Svetozar Minkov [Chicago and London, 2011], esp. 33-37). This view has been reiterated by Aloysius Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge, 1992), while Jeffrey R. Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford, 2005), has proposed a more radical Hobbes and has observed the similarity between his treatment of Christian ritual and the dismissal of pagan religion as myth for the governance of the vulgar in Cicero's *De natura deorum* (38-39). For the continuing debate see Martinich, "Interpreting the Religion of Thomas Hobbes: An Exchange: Hobbes's Erastianism and Interpretation" and Collins, "Interpreting Thomas Hobbes in Competing Contexts", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70 (2009): 143-180, and see also Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes, Ezra, and the Bible: The History of a Subversive Idea", in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), 383-431; Jürgen Overhoff, "The Theology of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 51 (2000): 527-555; George Wright, "Curley and Martinich in Dubious Battle", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40 (2002): 461-476.

¹⁷ For Aubrey's friendship with Hobbes see Hunter, *John Aubrey*, 55-56, 78-80; Anthony Powell, *John Aubrey and His Friends* (London, 1948); and his life of Hobbes, Bodleian Library MS Aubrey 9 (published in John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries, Set Down By John Aubrey, Between the Years 1669 & 1696*, 2 vols., ed. Andrew Clark [Oxford, 1898], i. 321-403), and chapter two of this work.

when you have reformed . . . others will come, & refine upon you, and others again upon them; et sic deinceps: that at ~~last~~ last there will be no Religion left; but Atheisme will spring-up. The Mysteries of ~~the~~ Religion are to be let alone: they will not beare an examination.¹⁸

Aubrey claimed that “this recitall here is foreigne to these Remaines”, but the parallel with his opinions concerning the conversion to Christianity is too exact to be coincidental.¹⁹ Instead the letter, regardless of its actual provenance, was simply a different approach to the same assumptions made in Aubrey’s passage on the development of Christianity. As the mysteries of religion were manmade, they were also inherently fragile.

The passage quoted above crucially advanced Aubrey’s understanding of folklore. By demonstrating, via Hobbes, that at least some Christian rituals had derived from similar pagan religious customs, he established a precedent for the argument he would subsequently make that English folk custom derived from the Roman world. In his argument that ritual served to subjugate and control the masses, however, he came close to the position of many of his Protestant contemporaries, who held that folk customs were merely the pernicious remnants of Catholic superstition designed for that exact purpose. As will be discussed below, Aubrey was nevertheless separate from these contemporaries and viewed organised religion, and, consequently, folk custom, in a different light.

We have seen the influence of Hobbes’s *Leviathan* on the *Remaines*. Aubrey also drew on Hobbes’s translations of Homer and the ideologies that underlay them in creating his genealogy of religion. In his *Perambulation of Surrey* Aubrey had commented on a supposedly

¹⁸ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 131v. Little is known of William Fanshawe (d. 1708). His only other recorded contact with Aubrey was a letter dated 7 August 1691 in which he enquired where to obtain “Puffendorfs booke of Naturall Religion” (Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 115r), which Michael Hunter has plausibly identified as *The Whole Duty of Man According to the Law of Nature*, published in English translation in 1691 (Hunter, *John Aubrey*, 60). He owned the estate of Great Singleton, Lancashire, and was the son of a woman about whom Aubrey recorded an anecdote elsewhere (Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ii. 24-25; Joseph Jackson Howard and Frederick Arthur Crisp, *Visitation of England and Wales: Notes*, 14 vols. [s.l., 1896-1921], vi. 153).

¹⁹ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 131v.

magical cave at Frensham, observing of the legends surrounding it that “So powerfull a thing is custome, joynd wth ignorance”. He then added that:

Homer in his Odysses, reports that Ulysses in his Travells came to \a/ Towne, where at one end of it was day, & at the other, night: M^r Th. Hobbes in his Translation, makes the observation in the margent; Homer did not believe this; “but ‘twas a pleasure to him to thinke how much the Learned could make the Ignorant to believe”.²⁰

This passage, hitherto unnoticed, confirms recent speculation concerning the motivations behind Hobbes’s translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.²¹ As Eric Nelson has argued, Hobbes’s intention in his translations seems to have been to deflate the tradition of *Homerus Sophos*, the wise, sometimes even divinely-inspired poet-prophet who appears in many Renaissance commentaries, including contemporary English examples such as James Duport's *Homeri gnomologia* (1660).²² Nelson plausibly finds the reasoning behind Hobbes’s attempted deflation of the Homeric mythos in his dialogue with William Davenant in the introductory material to *Gondibert*. In his preface Davenant writes that:

[I]nspiration is a spirituall Fitt, deriv'd from the ancient Ethnick Poets, who then, as they were Priests, were Statesmen too, and probably lov'd dominion; and as their well

²⁰ Bodleian MS. Aubrey 4, fol. 140ar. Aubrey also reports Hobbes’s opinion about Homer at Top. Gen. C. 24, fol. 52r, but there he specifies that the town seated betwixt day and night is in the tenth book of the *Odyssey*.

²¹ Paul Davis, “Thomas Hobbes's Translations of Homer: Epic and Anticlericalism in Late Seventeenth-Century England”, *The Seventeenth Century* 12 (1997): 231-255; Aloysius Patrick Martinich, “Hobbes’ Translations of Homer and Anticlericalism”, *The Seventeenth Century* 16 (2001): 147-157; Thomas Hobbes, *Translations of Homer*, 2 vols., ed. Eric Nelson (Oxford, 2008). The passage in Aubrey's *Surrey* is of note in that Hobbes’s translations famously contain no notes; the passage quoted by Aubrey must be a manuscript one, presumably by Hobbes himself, and, if so, offers the only surviving direct evidence of Hobbes’s intentions.

²² Hobbes, *Homer*, ed. Nelson, xxi-liii; James Duport, *Homeri poetarum omnium seculorum facile principis gnomologia, duplici parallelismo illustrata* . . . (Cambridge, 1660). The bulk of the *Gnomologia* consisted of parallels drawn between Homer’s works and biblical passages, supporting earlier beliefs that Homer had himself been divinely inspired. That this was by no means a fringe viewpoint can be seen by Duport’s quotations from Hugo Grotius and Meric Casaubon, two scholars at the centre of the seventeenth-century intellectual world, in support of the same belief (sig. e2v-3r).

dissembling of inspiration begot them reverence then, equall to that which was payd to Lawes.²³

In his “Answer to the Preface” Hobbes replies that:

their Poets were their Divines; had the name of Prophets; Exercised amongst the People a kind of spirituall Authority would be thought to speake by a divine spirit; have their workes which they writte in Verse (the divine stile) passe for the word of God, and not of man; and to be hearkened to with reverence. Do not our Divines (excepting the stile) do the same, and by us that are of the same Religion cannot justly be reprehended for it?²⁴

The poet-prophet Homer here enacts the same construction of authority over the masses as Aubrey's priests. Superstition, for Hobbes and Davenant, as for Aubrey, is an artificial construct, either created or appropriated by the elite for the control of the masses. It serves to prevent the rise of an ill-defined atheism and libertinism by providing the common people with objects of veneration that they are capable of comprehending. In this, Hobbes and Davenant were participating in the same pessimistic estimation of the mob's mental capacities as expressed by Thomas Browne: “[t]heir understanding . . . submitteth unto the fallacies of sence, and is unable to rectifie the error of its sensations”.²⁵ This abstract statement, for Aubrey, was applied to the worship of idols; unable to conceive of an abstract god, they could only be kept within the bounds of religion by the application of images concomitant with their understanding.

It is one thing to see superstition as an artificial construct that can be used to preserve the power of a priestly class and quite another to draw the inference from this that superstition is inherently bad. In the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Aubrey identified both truth or usefulness and the pleasure of discerning error as potential reasons

²³ Sir William Davenant, *Gondibert*, ed. David F. Gladish (Oxford, 1971), 22.

²⁴ Davenant, *Gondibert*, ed. Gladish, 48.

²⁵ Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, 2 vols., ed. Robin Robbins (Oxford, 1981), i. 15.

for preserving the folkloric material he had included in the *Remaines*. At the beginning of the second division of the *Remaines*, Aubrey copied out a lengthy passage from a sermon by Robert Sanderson, subsequently bishop of Lincoln, delivered at Berwick in July 1639 on 1 Timothy 3:16 in which the bishop opined that:

The ancient church both Greeke and Latine . . . tooke the Liberty to make use of sundry words and phrases, fetch't from the very drags [*sic*] of Paganisme, for the better explication of sundry points in the Christian faith . . . I have noted it the rather, to let you know that the godly and learned Christians of those Primitive times were not so fondly shy and scrupulous (as some of ours are,) as to boggle at it; and much lesse so rashly supercilious (I might say, and superstitious too), as to cry down and condemn for evil, and even *eo nomine*, the use of all such whether names of things, as were invented, or have been abused by Heathens, or Idolaters.²⁶

This presents a more benign face for superstition, in which existing idolatry can be harnessed and used for a greater good. It does not necessarily contradict what Aubrey, following Hobbes, wrote elsewhere, for the use of superstition to control the people may nonetheless result in a general good, in this case the spread and understanding of Christianity. It also sharply divides Aubrey from his immediate successor in the collection of folk belief. The clergyman and folklorist Henry Bourne in his *Antiquitates Vulgares* (1725) also assumed that folk customs were, by and large, “the Produce of Heathenism; or the Inventions of indolent *Monks*”, but saw it as his duty to reform, cull, and control what he perceived to be the traditions of the devil rather than simply observe and take scholarly pleasure in “the Errours that enveloped former ages: as also the *present*”.²⁷ Aubrey’s citation of Sanderson is suggestive of a more tolerant view, one that embraced superstition as a potential tool for good. His quotation of Hobbes, that for Homer “’twas a pleasure . . . to thinke how much

²⁶ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 132v. Aubrey is citing Robert Sanderson, *Twenty Sermons . . .* (London, 1660), 176.

²⁷ Henry Bourne, *Antiquitates Vulgares; or the Antiquities of the Common People: Giving an Account of Several of Their Opinions and Ceremonies With Proper Reflections Upon Each of Them; Shewing Which May be Retain'd, and Which Ought to be Laid Aside* (Newcastle, 1725), x-xi; British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 102r.

the Learned could make the Ignorant to believe”, set within the context of Hobbes’s portrayal of Homer as a poet-priest, indicates a further distinction. Although Aubrey was content to accept religious ritual as manmade but nevertheless beneficial to humanity, he seems to have held more negative views of the purveyors of that ritual, the priests themselves.

‘Priest-cheate’: Anti-Catholicism vs. Anti-Clericalism

The first step towards understanding Aubrey’s anti-clericalism is to differentiate it from the institutionalised anti-Catholicism of so many writings about English folk custom. Bourne’s depiction of “indolent *Monks*” as the inventors of folk belief tapped into a long-established strain in Protestant polemical writing; seeing remnants of “monkish” superstition in English folk customs was nothing new. Examples abounded in the Protestant polemical literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as the Scot Thomas Morison’s *Papatus* (1594), later used as a source by nineteenth-century folklorists, which castigated the medieval church for its “superstitious” and “gentilistic” accretions, insisting upon the necessity of a return to the “evangelicae religionis”.²⁸ From Polydore Vergil’s *De inventoribus rerum* (1499-1521) through Joshua Stopford’s *Pagano-Papismus* (1675) to Conyers Middleton’s *Letter from Rome, showing an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism* (1729), there was a long tradition of seeing elements of pre-Christian religions and folkways in Catholic ceremonies.²⁹ These

²⁸ Thomas Morison, *Papatus, seu depravatae religionis origo et incrementum* (Edinburgh, 1594).

²⁹ Alexandra Walsham, “Recording Superstitions in Early Modern Britain: The Origins of Folklore”, *Past and Present* 51 (2008): 183-184; *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2011). Polydore Vergil, *On Discovery*, ed. Brian P. Copenhaver (Cambridge, Mass., 2002); Joshua Stopford, *Pagano-Papismus; or, an Exact Parallel Between Rome-Pagan and Rome-Christian in Their Doctrines and Ceremonies* (London, 1675); Conyers Middleton, *A Letter From Rome, Showing an Exact Conformity Between Popery and Paganism: or, the Religion of the Present Romans Derived From That of Their Heathen Ancestors*, 3rd ed. (London, 1733). For Polydore Vergil’s treatment of the relationship between pagan and Christian liturgical practice see also Catherine Atkinson, *Inventing Inventors in Renaissance Europe: Polydore Vergil’s De inventoribus rerum* (Tübingen, 2007), chap. 6.

texts shared a belief that accretions of pagan tradition had been tacked onto the pure core of the early church (which might still be recovered) by a conniving and malicious Catholicism, an argument dependent upon and implicitly referring back to sixteenth-century protestant polemics against the supposed innovations and abuses of the medieval church. Both Stopford and Middleton are of particular note for the parallels they provide to Aubrey's arguments, agreeing that the appropriation of gentile ceremonies was a "piece of Policy they seem to have learn'd of the old *Pagans*", but that:

this kind of Reasoning, however plausible it may be in regard to the first Ages of Christianity, or to Nations just converted from *Paganism*, is yet so far from excusing the present *Gentilism* of the *Church of Rome*, that it is a direct Conviction and Condemnation of it.³⁰

If Aubrey was using "superstition" in the sense defined by this particular discourse, then the *Remaines* would fit into an accepted genre of religious writing that was widely known and accepted across the Protestant world. Before assuming this, however, Aubrey's understanding of superstition needs to be more closely interrogated. To do this, it is necessary not only to examine certain anti-Catholic passages in the *Remaines*, but to reappraise his position within the early modern religious spectrum, and to consider his relationship with the religious and philosophical orthodoxies of the period.

There are several passages in the *Remaines* that focus on what were seen as stereotypical Catholic frauds. The most notable is that under the heading of "Nodding of Images", in which Aubrey recounts "an old piece of Priest-craft \cheate/":

³⁰ Stopford, *Pagano-Papismus*, p. 3; Middleton, *Letter From Rome*, 70.

The Image of the B. Virgin nodded to S^t Bernard, and said (id est, the boy \ Priest/ with a tube behind the statue) Good morrow Father Bernard: I thanke your La^p q^d he; but S^t Paul saith that is not lawfull for women to speake in the church.³¹

The sub-heading for this passage, “Piae Fraudes”, echoes Thomas Browne's critique of miracles wrought by relics in the *Religio medici*.³² Aubrey elsewhere identifies *Religio medici* as the book “which first opened my understanding” as a young man and it is tempting to see this entire passage as an example of a mild, Brownean anti-Catholicism.³³ However, following a subsequent anecdote about a similar animated statue in the nunnery at Leominster, Aubrey copied out a line purportedly from Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, “In all Religions Preist-craft is the same.”³⁴

This addition forces the passage to be read in a different light. Significantly, Aubrey has misremembered his source. The line comes from a description of the subjection of the Jebusites by the Hebrews and stands in a context germane to the concerns of the *Remaines*:

And, what was harder yet to flesh and blood,
Their Gods disgrac'd, and burnt like common wood.
This set the Heathen Priesthood in a flame;
*For Priests of all Religions are the same.*³⁵

Aubrey's misquotation is probably due to a confusion with the opening line of the poem – “In pious times, e'r Priest-craft did begin” – but the substitution of “Priest-craft” for the more neutral “Priests” is telling. Contemporary interpreters of Dryden's poem agreed that the Jebusites were a cipher for “Papists” and one reading of Aubrey's note would simply

³¹ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 134v. Aubrey's sources for this anecdote were “D^r Brevint of ye Masse & Preface to ye Translation of S^t Bernard's Soliloquies”. The former is Daniel Brevint, *Missale Romanum, or the Depth and Mystery of the Roman Mass* (Oxford, 1672, and subsequent editions), an anti-Catholic tract; the latter I have been unable to trace.

³² “I compute among your *Piae fraudes* . . .”, Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio medici* (London, 1643), 65 (Part I, §28).

³³ *Brief Lives*, i. 37.

³⁴ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 134v.

³⁵ John Dryden, “Absalom and Achitophel”, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vols., ed. H. T. Swedenberg, Jr., et al. (Berkeley and London, 1956-2000), ii. ll. 96-99. Emphasis added.

place him as another such interpreter, “identifying” the cipher and quoting the relevant line in another context describing the “Gods disgrac’d” of English Catholicism.³⁶ Priestcraft, however, is the “Ecclesiastical politie” exercised by Quintus Curtius’s Egyptians and shifts the moral of the St. Bernard story from one that shows up the hypocrisy of Catholicism, to one that tars all religion, or at least every religion’s priestly caste, with the same brush.

Aubrey is thus doing something more than repeating an anti-Catholic truism. Buchanan-Brown saw in this and similar passages “ample evidence of the Deistical tendency” of the *Remaines*, but Buchanan-Brown was intent upon “upset[ting] the traditional picture of the musty antiquary” given by older accounts of Aubrey's work and was apt to err towards the other extreme.³⁷ A more balanced account of Aubrey's religion comes from an examination of the scattered references he made to it throughout his works, particularly in his *Idea of Education of Young Gentlemen*.³⁸

In his correspondence Aubrey displayed a dislike of priesthoods, Anglican or otherwise. Writing to Anthony Wood on 9 April 1674, when he was destitute and the only options before him seemed to be emigration to the New World or the taking of orders, he was adamant in his decision, “Fough! the Cassock stinkes: it would be ridiculous”.³⁹ Later in the same year, he excoriated Dean Fell for his opposition to Anthony Wood as a “walking Common Prayer booke” and “such a dry bone such a consecrated stalking Hypocrite”, though this is probably more personal animus than a jibe at the priesthood.⁴⁰ It is difficult,

³⁶ Alan Roper has demonstrated the active role taken by contemporary readers of *Absalom and Achitophel* as well as noting the common equation of the Jebusites with Catholics (Roper, “Who’s Who in *Absalom and Achitophel*?”, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 63 [2000]: 98-138, esp. 136), an equation also evident in the newly-discovered key written by the mathematician Robert Wood in a letter of 21 November 1681 to Aubrey’s friend Sir William Petty (Rhodri Lewis, “An Early Reader of Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel*”, *Notes and Queries* 57 [2010]: 67-69). See also Phillip Harth, *Pen for a Party: Dryden’s Tory Propaganda in its Contexts* (Princeton, 1993), esp. chap. 3.

³⁷ Aubrey, *Three Prose Works*, xxxv.

³⁸ Now Bodleian Library MS Aubrey 10. The edition by J. E. Stephens (*Aubrey on Education: a Hitherto Unpublished Manuscript By the Author of Brief Lives* [London, 1972]) is textually unreliable and has not been used.

³⁹ Bodleian Library MS Ballard 14, fol. 98r.

⁴⁰ Bodleian Library MS Aubrey 21, fol. 76r. Noel Malcolm has seen evidence of “fierce anticlericalism” in these two passages, but this may be pressing the point too far (*The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, 2 vols., ed. Noel Malcolm [Oxford, 1994], ii. 781).

however, to identify the boundary between disaffection, and lack of interest in ecclesiastical matters. The latter seems to predominate in a letter to Wood of 14 May 1673 in which he considered selling his copy of the Eton edition of Chrysostom and ended with the expostulation:

Now God graunt me health & Leisure to court my old m^{ris} Urania, & Algebr: & a little of the new discouerys of y^e Virtuosi, & Antiqu: of Engl: I shall be well enough contented to let the Fathers be thumbed by the Divines.⁴¹

This may be balanced against his longing, shortly after the loss of his estates in 1671, to enter a monastery, though it is doubtful whether the religious aspect of monastic life played much of a role in his daydreams.⁴² By and large, his aversion to the priestly profession seems to have been consistent.

Aubrey's Theology and the Philosophical Underpinnings of the *Remaines*

An aversion to priests is not the same as an aversion to religion, however, and there is no evidence to suggest that Aubrey was remotely atheistical. His religious opinions would probably be left in no doubt had his *Hypothesis ethicorum* survived. This tract was entitled, first *Hypothesis Ethicorum & Scala Religionis* and later *Religio Naturalis, or a Scale of the decay of the Christian Religion, with a prospect or foresight where it will settle*.⁴³ It is now lost, but the title is sufficiently suggestive. Hunter proposes that it may be linked to an opinion of Sir William Davenant's quoted by Aubrey in the *Lives* that religion would come to a settlement "in a kind

⁴¹ Bodleian Library MS Wood F 39, fol. 206v.

⁴² Powell, *John Aubrey*, 137-138.

⁴³ See Hunter, *John Aubrey*, 56-57.

of ingeniose Quakerisme”, which matches well with the religious precepts that are present in his *Idea of Education*.⁴⁴

The religion Aubrey proposed for his model school was essentially tolerant and latitudinarian, quoting the Italian scholar Fortunio Liceti that, “when we are become men . . . every one makes a Religion to himselfe”.⁴⁵ He believed that “justitia universalis” was the foundation of religion and quoted Cicero that “religion is our justice and gratitude toward God” as well as emphasising that the first rule to be taught in the school was “[d]oe as you would be donne to”.⁴⁶ This last, as well as being the Golden Rule, also closely echoes Hobbes’s contraction of the laws of nature “into one easie sum, intelligible even to the meanest capacity”, namely, “[d]o not that to another, which thou wouldst not have done to thy selfe”.⁴⁷ This ethical emphasis reappears when he notes that “Our Saviours Sermon on the Mount is, as it were the quintessence of all [religion], distilled in an Alembic”.⁴⁸

If Aubrey’s ethics are those of the New Testament, his opinions, so far as he had any, on doctrinal issues seem to have been less orthodox. Although he described Jesus as “Our Saviour” in the passage quoted above and proposed vaguely Trinitarian prayers for his model school, he also remained skeptical of the Trinity as doctrine, which is apparent in a relevant passage in the *Remaines*.⁴⁹ He began by quoting John Selden’s *Table Talk*, which he wrote elsewhere “will not endure the Test for y^e Presse”.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 209.

⁴⁵ Bodleian Library MS Aubrey 10, fol. 133r. Liceti (1577-1657) was a scientist and antiquary whose works included a study of ancient lamps, *De lucernis antiquorum reconditis libb. sex* (Udine, 1652), and another of rings, *Hieroglyphica, sive antiqua schemata gemmarum anularium* (Padua, 1653). The source of Aubrey’s quotation has not been found.

⁴⁶ Bodleian Library MS Aubrey 10, fol. 132r, cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum*, I.xli.116 (“Est enim pietas iustitia adversum deos”). Aubrey’s “gratitude” is his own addition.

⁴⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 79.

⁴⁸ Bodleian Library MS Aubrey 10, fol. 45r.

⁴⁹ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 168v-170r. For the prayers, which are doctrinally vague, see Bodleian Library MS Aubrey 10, fols. 128r-131r.

⁵⁰ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 133r.

The 2^d person is made of a piece of Bread by y^e Papist. Y^e Third Person is made of his owne Frenzy, Malice, Ignorance & Folly by the Roundhead [to all these the Sp^r is intituled] One the Baker makes, the other the Cobler; and between these Two, I think y^e first Person is sufficiently abused.⁵¹

He did not comment directly on this passage, but moved into an anthropological discussion of visual representations of the Trinity, discussing iconoclasm and the argument from Daniel against it. More significant, however, is his quotation of 1 John 5:7-8 (the *comma Johanneum*) in the Greek of the *textus receptus*:

ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ πατήρ, ὁ λόγος, καὶ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσιν.⁵²

“The last clause of this verse”, Aubrey noted, “is not found in ancient MSS copies. e.g. that in the Vatican Library, and y^e Tecla MS in S^t James Library and others: as it is not in an old MS in Magdalen Coll: Library in Oxford”.⁵³ In the margin against this passage is a reminder to “peruse these MSS again, and see if y^e whole verse be there”.⁵⁴ This particular crux, one of the principal biblical authorities for the doctrine of the Trinity, had attracted considerable attention in previous decades with the publications of the New Testaments of Fell and Mill and would later be publicly shown up as a late addition by Bentley at his inaugural lecture as Cambridge Regius Professor of Divinity in 1717.⁵⁵ It was also considered by Aubrey’s fellow Royal Society member, Isaac Newton, who composed a detailed disproof of the *comma* in his

⁵¹ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 170r (= John Selden, *Table-Talk*, ed. Richard Milward [London, 1689], 56).

⁵² British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 168v. He quotes only verse seven, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (1 John 5:7, KJV).

⁵³ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 168v. Surprisingly, this passage is quoted by the bibliographer Thomas Hartwell Horne in his discussion of the 1786 facsimile of the Codex Alexandrinus (*An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* [Philadelphia, 1836], ii. 13).

⁵⁴ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 168v.

⁵⁵ Kristine Louise Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass., 2011), 207. For this, and more general shifts in Trinitarian scholarship, see Haugen, “Transformations of the Trinity Doctrine in English Scholarship”, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 3 (2001): 149-168.

Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture.⁵⁶ Aubrey, by contrast, did not go so far as to indict the Trinity as false doctrine, contenting himself merely with noting the absence of one of its proof-texts from the manuscripts available to him. As such, Aubrey was by no means making a novel claim, but only stating what had been common knowledge since Erasmus first observed the absence of the *comma* from the Greek manuscript tradition in 1516.⁵⁷ What is surprising is Aubrey's interest in biblical philology (which is not implied elsewhere in his surviving manuscripts), his active consultation of several significant exemplars of the Greek New Testament in England, and his willingness to discount what Anglican orthodoxy saw as a keystone of Trinitarian theology.

Aubrey emerges from this inquisition as less actively heterodox and more simply indifferent to many of the theological issues of the period, but indifference too is a judgment of value and belief. The intentness with which he stripped the religion of his model school of any ritual or credal specificity, even down to only including bibles on the hypothetical reading list as a means to improve his pupils' palaeographical and linguistic abilities, supports the implications proposed here of the texts of the *Remaines*.⁵⁸ He was Christian, Protestant, and not utterly deviant in his beliefs, but he was equally happy to consider all the gradual accretion of ritual and custom, whether Catholic or Protestant, as "superstition" broadly construed. Indeed, from the evidence of the *Remaines*, he saw it in the same light as those superstitions, referred to above, which Hobbes's primitive Christians had adopted as a means of gaining power over the newly-converted pagans and which Quintus Curtius's Egyptian priests had manipulated to retain control of the otherwise volatile and "atheistical" mob.

⁵⁶ Isaac Newton, *An Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture, in a Letter to a Friend* (London, 1841), 1-58.

⁵⁷ Erika Rummel, *Erasmus' Annotations on the New Testament: From Philologist to Theologian* (Toronto, 1986), 132-134.

⁵⁸ Bodleian Library MS Aubrey 10, fol. 104ar. His students are to read the Vulgate in "the old black printe" so as "to read MSS, and Records", Martin Luther's German bible, which "will open to them a way for y^e understanding of y^e old Saxon Lawes, and old English: and Etymologies", a suggestion he notes was made by John Pell, and "the new Edition of Ethardus Lubinus' New Testament . . . excellent use for Learning the German language".

As a corollary to this interpretation, it is notable that after its composition Aubrey was concerned with how his text would be received. At some stage the manuscript went astray and on 27 March 1694 he wrote to Edward Lhuyd, plaintively asking, “[h]ave you my Ms of *Remaines of Gentilisme*? I feare it is too light for the University”.⁵⁹ It was probably at about this time that Aubrey scribbled on a letter from Lhuyd dated 9 January 1693/94 that “my Gentilisme would not be fitt to leave to y^e Critiques of y^e University”.⁶⁰ Lhuyd responded with an enthusiasm which disregarded Aubrey’s concerns, noting that he did have the manuscript, that it was “very curious” and that while “we have not many at present in the University that prosecute that study very far . . . [we] may well hope that such collections will make more”.⁶¹ It is impossible to say whether Lhuyd recognised the Hobbesian foundations of the *Remaines* or to what extent he discounted it as only a harmless eccentricity, but it is evident that Aubrey was aware of its potentially disquieting nature and hesitated over depositing it in a public repository such as the Ashmolean. Evidence for his continued awareness of the *Remaines* as a somewhat sceptical work may also be implicit in his lending of it to the Deist John Toland, who had it in his possession in October 1694.⁶² Such analysis of their relationship is complicated, however, by Toland’s lasting fascination with druids and it is possible that his acquaintance with Aubrey was based not on any shared radical theologies so much as a shared interest in the British prehistoric past.⁶³

Other individuals with similarly heterodox approaches to conventional religion can be linked to the *Remaines*. Aubrey wrote to Lhuyd 26 January 1695/96 asking him to enquire of White Kennett, who had been supposed to be organising and editing the volume, whether

⁵⁹ Bodleian MS. Ashmole 1814, fol. 109a.

⁶⁰ Bodleian MS. Aubrey 12, fol. 251.

⁶¹ Bodleian MS. Aubrey 12, fol. 255r.

⁶² Bodleian MS. Ashmole 1814, fol. 117.

⁶³ He did make use of the *Monumenta Britannica* and had a high opinion of Aubrey’s archaeological studies (John Toland, “The History of the Druids”, in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland, Now First Publish’d From His Original Manuscripts*, 2 vols. [London, 1726], i. 112). On Toland, see Stephen H. Daniel, *John Toland: His Methods, Manners, and Mind* (Kingston and Montreal, 1984); *John Toland’s Christianity Not Mysterious: Text, Associated Works, and Critical Essays*, ed. Philip McGuinness, Alan Harrison, and Richard Kearney (Dublin, 1997).

“he haz donne anything as to my Remains of Gentilisme, or whither he will” and asking that, if not, it be returned and the project turned over to his long-time friend Walter Charleton.⁶⁴ Charleton had long been a close friend and “high admirer” of Hobbes and his own *Darknes of Atheism* (1652) owed much of its natural theology to the works of Hobbes, among others.⁶⁵ That Aubrey considered him at all suggests that he considered the Hobbesian cast of the *Remaines* to be one of its key characteristics and wished to see it completed by someone of the same philosophical bent.

This investigation into the minutiae of Aubrey’s beliefs and his own understanding of the text ultimately leads to a new interpretation of the *Remaines*. As an anti-clerical Hobbesian, intent on stripping all but the most basic credal specificity from his own version of Anglicanism, Aubrey fell outside of the theological discourses in which most contemporary treatments of folk custom existed. He saw folk custom as a form of superstition, but felt no need to castigate it as Papist or in any way inherently pernicious; while “old wives fables are grosse things . . . there may some truth and usefulness be {elicited | picked} out of them”.⁶⁶ This in itself is a possibly unique intellectual standpoint for a scholar of the seventeenth century.

The implications of the *Remaines*’ philosophical underpinnings went beyond a neutral view of folk custom, however. Aubrey, in line with Hobbes, had identified many Christian rituals and customs as having pagan origins. The antiquarian corollary to this was that the modern folk customs traditionally seen to contain remnants of Papistry and idolatry could instead be used as a rich ethnographic mine for the study of cultural continuity between the

⁶⁴ Bodleian MSS. Ashmole 1814, fol. 1; Ashmole 1829, fol. 78.

⁶⁵ Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, i. 371; Walter Charleton, *The Darknes of Atheism Dispelled By the Light of Nature: A Physico-Theologicall Treatise* (London, 1652). For Charleton and his ideas see Eric Lewis, “Walter Charleton and Early Modern Eclecticism”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2001): 651-664; *ODNB*, *s.n.*; Lindsay Sharp, “Walter Charleton’s Early Life, 1620-1659, and Relationship to Natural Philosophy in Mid-Seventeenth Century England”, *Annals of Science* 30 (1973): 311-340. See also his notes towards an essay on the “Fundamentals of Natural Religion”, Bodleian MS Smith 13, fols. 89ff.

⁶⁶ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 102r.

classical and the early modern worlds. The sense of continuity which was of so much concern to so many writers could be turned on its head to reach a radical new understanding of contemporary England's relationship with its classical heritage. Aubrey was overly modest, if not actively disingenuous, when he implied that one of the principal motivations of compiling the text was that it was "a pleasure to consider the Errours that enveloped former ages".⁶⁷ The central motivation behind the *Remaines* was, instead, the attempt to prove a visible cultural link between English folk custom and the society of imperial Rome.

Cultural Continuity between Rome and England

When Aubrey wrote that "[t]he Britons imbibed their Gentilisme from the Romans", he meant by "Britons" the Celtic peoples who inhabited the British Isles before and after the Roman Conquest and whose modern descendants were the Welsh, the Scots, the Cornish, and the Irish.⁶⁸ These were the same aboriginal inhabitants to whom he attributed Stonehenge and other megalithic monuments in the *Monumenta Britannica*. Faced with the difficult fact that most of the customs he related came not from the Celtic fringe but from solidly Anglo-Saxon parts of the island, he noted that "indeed the[se customs] are most north-ward, and towards Wales; the South retaines but few of them".⁶⁹ The assumption was that folk custom followed patterns of diffusion similar to language, holding on in peripheral areas that retained a proportionally larger native population than those areas which were overrun by Saxon settlement, such as in eastern and southern England (Aubrey, as we have seen, was fond of thinking of himself as Welsh, despite his mixed heritage).

⁶⁷ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 102r.

⁶⁸ BL MS. Lansdowne 231, fol. 133r.

⁶⁹ BL MS. Lansdowne 231, fol. 133r.

The possibility that the Britons had embraced Roman culture prior to being invaded by the Saxons had already been posited by William Camden, who, in a passage concluding his history of Roman Britain, wrote that:

I consider and thinke otherwhiles with myselfe, how many Colonies of Romans were in so long a time brought hither, how many souldiers continually transported over hither from Rome to lie in garrison, how many sent hither to negotiate either their own busines, or the affaires of the Empire, who joyning in marriage with Britans, both planted themselves, and also begat children here . . . [a]nd meet it is we should beleeve, that the Britans and Romans in so many ages, by a blessed and joyfull mutuall ingrassing, as it were, have growen into one stocke and nation . . .⁷⁰

In his study of English toponyms Aubrey echoed Camden's theories, albeit only allusively, noting that "[t]he Romans were settled here, & mixt with the Britons [for a] hundred yeares".⁷¹ For Camden and Aubrey, then, the Britons were not only culturally, but genetically interchangeable with the Romans. If this was assumed it would be only natural that they should preserve the same folk customs and religious rituals.

What Camden and Aubrey do not confront is the question of the Saxon invasions. Elsewhere, in the *Templa Druidum*, Aubrey admitted that "[i]n the Declension of the Roman Empire . . . the memorie of Things here, became obliterated", but this rift in cultural continuity between the ancient and modern worlds is smoothed over in the *Remaines*.⁷² There are several reasons for this. In part, he may simply have believed that, as with the linguistic remnants to be found in the place names he analysed in the *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum*, folk custom endured when written history and collective cultural memory had perished. It seems more likely, though, that a considerable impetus for this association came from his position within the Romanophilic tradition of British archaeology and his engagement with

⁷⁰ William Camden, *Britain*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1610), 87-88.

⁷¹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19ar.

⁷² Aubrey, *Monumenta Britannica*, i. 31 (= Bodleian Library MS Top. Gen. C. 24, fol. 29r).

the first generation of eighteenth-century adherents of *Britannia Romana*.⁷³ Aubrey was engaging in the same type of cultural appropriation that Inigo Jones had practised when claiming Stonehenge for the Romans or that William Stukeley would when he created the Society of Roman Knights two decades later.⁷⁴ Philip Ayres has described the antiquarian manifestations of that “propensity of the English aristocracy and gentry to imagine themselves as virtuous Romans” in the long eighteenth century, seeing such tendencies chiefly in the circle whose core members were Stukeley, the Gale brothers, Alexander Gordon, and Sir John Clerk of Penicuik.⁷⁵ These active and, at times, mildly delusional antiquarians, obsessed with the recovery of Roman Britain far beyond their Restoration predecessors, were Aubrey’s intellectual heirs. The Gales were sons of Aubrey’s friend Thomas Gale whilst Stukeley read and made use of Aubrey’s *Monumenta*, and all of them participated in the archaeological inheritance of which he was a part. Aubrey can then be sited within this Romanising nexus as a forerunner of the spirit which produced Gale’s edition of the Antonine itinerary, Horsley’s *Britannia Romana*, and the itineraries of Stukeley and Gordon. In the *Remaines* he is trying to recover an occluded, but still very real, link with Britain’s Roman past, just as a later generation of antiquaries were to do with hill forts and Roman roads. This led him to marginalise possible Saxon, Viking, or pre-Roman British

⁷³ See Philip Ayres, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1997) for a survey of the eighteenth-century Romanisation of England and some of its seventeenth-century precedents.

⁷⁴ Ayres, *Classical Culture*, chap. 3, esp. 85-88.

⁷⁵ Ayres, *Classical Culture*, xii, 88-89. This circle, which dominated both the Society of Antiquaries and the Society of Roman Knights, was most notably represented by Stukeley and his theories concerning the religion and monuments of the druids, for which see Stuart Piggott, *William Stukeley: An Eighteenth-Century Antiquary*, rev. ed. (London, 1985); David Boyd Haycock, *William Stukeley: Science, Religion, and Archaeology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, 2002); William Stukeley, *Stukeley's 'Stonehenge': An Unpublished Manuscript, 1721-1724*, ed. Aubrey Burl and Neil Mortimer (New Haven and London, 2005), as well as his two major works, *Stonehenge: a Temple Restor'd to the British Druids* (London, 1740) and *Abury: a Temple of the British Druids, With Some Others, Described* (London, 1743). For Stukeley's brothers-in-law, the Gales, see John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 9 vols. (London, 1812-1815), iv. 543-550, and Mary Clapinson, "Roger Gale, an Eighteenth-Century Antiquary", *Bodleian Library Record* 12 (1986): 106-118. For Alexander Gordon see the ODNB, *s.n.*, and Iain Gordon Brown, "Chyndonax to Galtgacus: New Letters of William Stukeley to Alexander Gordon", *Antiquaries Journal* 67 (1987): 111-128. For Sir John Clerk of Penicuik see Iain Gordon Brown, *Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (1676-1755): Aspects of a Virtuoso Life* (University of Cambridge Ph.D. Thesis, 1980). There is, as yet, no survey of this circle as a whole.

influences in favour of a vision of a fully Romanised Britain in which English folk tradition could be traced back to a particular point of cultural and genetic interchange with the classical world.

Aubrey's Roman Britain was not, however, entirely like Stukeley's or Horsley's. It was more concrete, more precise, and tied to the quiddities of existence, as might be expected from a Britannia reconstructed out of folklore and folk custom. Aubrey was concerned with customs rather than folklore in the sense of stories or myths, and the material he cited usually consisted of factual accounts of folkways which existed at the time he wrote or which had existed in the relatively recent past. Unsurprisingly, given his more general critiques of religious ritual discussed above, religious traditions feature largely, including entries on churches, masses for the dead, praying towards the east, and washing hands before prayer, as well as a cluster of entries on important days in the liturgical year.⁷⁶ Other broad categories included occupations, objects, food, and actions. Throughout his works he made a number of comparisons between the pastoral world of Greek and Roman poetry and the pastoral economy of his native Wiltshire and this comes through in his entries on occupations such as shepherds, bond servants, rhymers, and goodmen.⁷⁷ The objects and foods he mentions are, inevitably, timeless ones such as garlands, shields, musical instruments, staves, ale, bridal cakes, beans, and the like, while actions vary between traditions associated with the quotidian, such as sneezing or drawing lots, and more ritualised situations, including cockfighting at Shrovetide, the making of offerings at funerals, and trial by fire.⁷⁸ Occasionally he mentions

⁷⁶ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 107v (praying), 108r (masses), 170r (churches), 196r-197r (washing of hands), and for holy days fols. 108r (May Day), 138r (Childermas), 154r (Christmas), 159r (Candelmas).

⁷⁷ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 125r (shepherds), 126r (bond servants), 148r (rhymers), 213v (goodmen).

⁷⁸ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 115v (cockfighting at Shrovetide), 134r (offerings at funerals), 146r (shields), 155r (lots), 167r (beans), 168r (sneezing), 171r (garlands), 180r (trial by fire), 212v-213r (musical instruments), 215r (staves), 218v (ale), 221r (bridal cakes).

customs associated with a specific form of landscape – examples include high places and springs – or the uses of a mythical figure such as the green man.⁷⁹

What emerges from this most clearly is the extent to which Aubrey reacted to and allowed for the particularities of his data. Conspicuously absent from the *Remaines* are most of the aspects of classical culture that had attracted the particular notice of other antiquaries during the preceding century (see chapter one). Little mention is made of the lamps, rings, triremes, tombs, and other paraphernalia of early modern studies of classical material culture. Instead, Aubrey was original not only for his initial conceptual leap in linking Roman culture with British but for what he chose to emphasise. The folk customs he recorded, many of them deriving from the Wiltshire downs near his home of Easton Piers, pointed back to a different aspect of the classical world, the idealised pastoral of the poets rather than the bureaucratic, technological empire of the historians. This interchange works both ways, casting forward onto the early modern folk customs he describes something of the golden lustre of Greek and Roman pastoral poetry.

Conclusion

The foregoing chapter has explored the *Remaines* from a number of angles, drawing out its philosophical underpinnings, setting these within a study of Aubrey's theological views to draw conclusions about his understanding of custom and superstition, and then demonstrating how that understanding informed his attempts to trace continuities between the culture of the Romans in Britain and that of early modern rural English society. It has

⁷⁹ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fols. 162r (high places), 177r (springs), 186r (the green man).

explored the ways in which he composed the work and shown how his choice of sources and his knowledge of folk customs interacted to define the tone and content of the text.

The place of the *Remaines* within the antiquarian tradition and within the context of Aubrey's other works remains to be considered. Studies of folklore fell well within the remit of antiquarianism, broadly conceived. The eighteenth-century philologist and bibliographer of antiquarian studies, Johann Albrecht Fabricius (1668-1736), devoted the sixth subsection of the chapter "on general writings concerning Christian antiquity" in his *Bibliographia Antiquaria* (1713) to "the conformity of Christian with Jewish and Pagan ritual", heading his list of recommended writers with the works of Aubrey's contemporary, the Dutch scholar Antonius van Dale.⁸⁰ Likewise, Edward Herbert of Cherbury's *De religione gentilium* can regularly be found filed under the category of "libri antiquarii" in library sale catalogues of the early eighteenth century.⁸¹ As such, Aubrey was treading an already broad antiquarian road by planning a work designed to show the development of modern customs from ancient and Christian customs from pagan.

Within Aubrey's own work, the *Remaines* fits into his larger studies of Roman Britain, as discussed above. Likewise, in its concern with changing cultural norms and customs it reflects the interests of the *Chronologiae*, particularly the *Chronologia Vestiaria*, with which it overlaps in part. Aubrey was always apt to view the past in essentially social terms, focusing on the role of people in the landscape and how human interaction and innovation caused alterations within a culture, and the *Remaines* stands out as his single largest work of what may anachronistically be called social history. In its concerns and emphases it highlights Aubrey's engagement with the writings of Hobbes, Dryden, Browne, and other contemporaries.

⁸⁰ Johann Albrecht Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1716), 103-109.

⁸¹ *A Catalogue of Choice and Valuable Books . . . the Collection Made By Thomas Rawlinson* (London, 1722), unpag.; *Bibliotheca Duboisiana . . .*, 4 vols. (The Hague, 1725), iv. 661.

The *Remaines* is a complex text, working towards several goals at once in a form both telegraphic and profoundly intertextual. Its Hobbesian underpinnings led to an unusually tolerant and inquisitive view of contemporary folk custom while at the same time informing the presupposition of cultural continuity necessary to draw parallels between classical and modern customs. Aubrey's lifelong study of Roman Britain is then carried into the realm of ethnography and anthropology, but in this case his collection of data resulted not in a catalogue of archaeological sites or a survey of architectural styles, but rather in a manuscript informed by and informing a collection of classical poetic texts. These poetic texts serve, paradoxically, to comment upon and naturalise the folk customs of seventeenth-century England in a form unique to the period. Throughout, the *Remaines* challenges the accepted form and content of contemporary texts concerned with folk customs and emerges from this study as one of Aubrey's most innovative works.

Chapter Six

Recovering Medieval England:

Chorography, Chronology, and Philology

The *Monumenta Britannica* and *Remaines of Gentilisme* developed out of Aubrey's attempts to conceptualise and recover Roman Britain. Throughout his scholarly career, however, Aubrey also engaged with England's medieval past. In the early 1670s he wrote his county histories of Wiltshire and Surrey, journeyman pieces of antiquarianism which reflected his immersion in the chorographical tradition of Camden and Dugdale. Thereafter he began to chart a new course: attempting to bring order to the physical remains of the middle ages through chronologies of architecture, scripts, heraldry, and clothing, and ultimately turning to philology to unravel the complicated narrative of post-Roman conquest and cultural change. This chapter looks at Aubrey's studies of the medieval and recent past, moving chronologically from the early county histories to the late works on linguistics and toponyms. Throughout, the shadow of Roman Britain loomed large behind Aubrey's medieval studies and there is little doubt as to the relative importance he placed upon the two periods, but, nonetheless, in his attempts to rejoin the sundered worlds of Roman Britain and Restoration England, Aubrey dramatically reassessed and rewrote the ways in which his era understood and interpreted the medieval past.

The Description of the North Division of Wiltshire

When Aubrey began to compile material towards the *Templa Druidum* – what would ultimately become the *Monumenta Britannica* – in the mid-1660s, he had already been part of an abortive collaborative attempt to write the first county history of Wiltshire. In its preface he recalled that:

At a meeting of Gentlemen at y^e Devises for choosing \of/ Knights for y^e Senate in March 1659[/60], It was wish't by some, that this County (wherein are many observable Antiquities) were surveyed in Imitation of M^r Dugdales Illustration of Warwickshire: but it being too great a Taske for one Man, M^r Yorke (Counsellor at Lawe, & a Lover of this kind of Learning) advised to have the Labour divided.¹

Yorke offered to oversee work on the middle division of the county while Aubrey took the north and Thomas Gore, Jeffrey Daniel, and John Ernle served as their assistants.²

As their gathering place at the county elections suggests, this was not merely a chance encounter of like-minded antiquarians. William Yorke, who was married to the widow of Aubrey's cousin Henry Danvers of Baynton may have been serving as agent for Ernle in the 1660 elections, and was returned as M.P. for Devizes in the Cavalier Parliament the following year.³ Ernle himself was a noted Royalist who ultimately rose to high office and married the widow of Aubrey's close friend Charles Seymour, 2nd Baron Seymour of Trowbridge, while Daniel was Ernle's brother-in-law and had ties with the Seymours, Charles bribing him with "indifferently good" oysters when he sat on a committee to restore the dukedom of Somerset to the family in late 1661.⁴ Gore was the junior member of the association, only twenty-eight years old and probably brought in through Aubrey's acquaintance with him as the mortgage

¹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 10r.

² Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 10r.

³ Basil Duke Henning, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1660-1690*, 3 vols. (London, 1983), iii. 790-791.

⁴ Henning, *Commons, 1660-1690*, ii. 188 (Daniel), 271-274 (Ernle).

holder of his estate at Broad Chalke.⁵ Collectively, the group consisted of several leading members of Royalist families in the county and it is plausible that what was intended was not only the publication of a county history, but also a clear statement about the central place of the Wiltshire gentry in post-Restoration politics and society.

In the end, however, the projected work was never written. Yorke died shortly afterwards, in 1666, and with his death Aubrey seems to have become the only member of the party interested in continuing. Thinking of the eventual fate of his manuscript, he recalled that:

I have since [Yorke's death], occasionally made this following Collection w^{ch} perhaps may some time or other, fall into some Antiquaries hands to make a handsome worke of it: I hope my worthy friend M^r Anth: Wood of Oxford will be the man. I am heartily sorry I did not sett downe the Antiquities of these parts sooner: for since the time aforesaid many \are/ things irrecoverably lost.⁶

Aubrey returned to the *Description* in 1670 and 1671.⁷ His initial plan was evidently left over from the time when it had been a collaborative project, for he planned to cover only the hundreds of Malmesbury, Chippenham, Damerham North, and Colne in the north and northwestern part of the county.⁸ Within this framework, he planned a text similar to Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, but with more emphasis on the genealogies and heraldry of county families. He began the work with several pages of the arms of local gentry and noted to himself to include "Pedigrees of the ancient Families to K. Edward y^e Sixth", foregrounding the medieval history of the Wiltshire landowners.⁹ He also planned a systematic search of archival sources, along the lines proposed by Dugdale, making a note to "Search the Records

⁵ ODNB, *s.n.*

⁶ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 10r.

⁷ His general preface is dated 28 April 1670 (Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 11v) and in his autobiographical notes he recalled that he finished the work in 1671, immediately after losing his estates (Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 41-42).

⁸ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 30r.

⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fols. 3r (pedigrees), 13r-15v (arms).

of y^e Tower of London” and preparing a list of sixteen private archives which would need to be consulted, with brief descriptions of their contents.¹⁰ In this latter task he was concerned chiefly with manuscripts which would shed light on land ownership and the history of landed families.

Aubrey’s plan, like the original plan of the larger group, was never carried through in full. The *Description* as it survives is one half of his completed work; the second volume (“liber B”) was borrowed from the Ashmolean by his brother, William (who had assisted in its compilation), in 1703 and never returned.¹¹ What does survive, however, suggests that he never proceeded further than an initial itinerant survey of the county, apparently conducted in 1671. Over half of the surviving manuscript reflects the notes of a single itinerary, beginning at Poole in the far north of Malmesbury Hundred, gradually moving south and dwelling upon the area around Aubrey’s home at Easton Piers, wandering through the western regions of the county, and ultimately ending at Marlborough.¹² The remainder of the manuscript is taken up with smaller itineraries, usually no more than two or three parishes in length, throughout the county and no longer confined to Aubrey’s original remit of the northern hundreds, suggesting that by this stage he had given up on the possibility of any collaboration and had begun to consider covering the entire county himself. Nowhere is there any indication that public records were subsequently added to the material discovered in the itinerary, as he had originally planned, though scattered notes do indicate that Aubrey and his brother William returned to the work in subsequent decades with the intention of adding to their existing collection.¹³

¹⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 3r (Tower records), 1v (archive list), where a characteristic entry is “Col W^m Eyres of Neston in Cosham parish hath the Legier-booke of the Family of Tropnel of Neston ~~see~~ it is an excellent booke; in parchm^t well writt and retrieves the ancient and extinct families of this North division”.

¹¹ Liber B was evidently more miscellaneous in nature and Michael Hunter has conjectured that it may have contained those biographical writings by Aubrey which pre-dated the composition of the *Lives* (Hunter, *Aubrey*, 241-242).

¹² Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fols. 19r-135v.

¹³ See, for example, the letter from William to John dated 7 January 1684/85 at Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 155r.

What Aubrey noted in each parish varied depending on the time he had there – he recalled that while making his journey he was in perennial danger of being arrested for debt, which may account for at least some of the lacunae in his manuscript – and the number and type of antiquities preserved.¹⁴ A characteristic entry is that for the parish of Dantesey, where his ancestors the Danvers had been lords of the manor for centuries. He began with a brief description of the parish church:

This is a very fine church, and hath had better luck in the late warres then any here about. In the chancel on the N. side is an Altar monum^t of freestone of good *Gothique* worke . . .¹⁵

This was followed by a detailed account of the monumental inscriptions, heraldry, and stained glass in the church, stretching over three pages. The focus was entirely on reconstructing the histories of individual gentry families and no mention was made of other antiquities, much less of the general state or history of the parish at large. Occasionally, Aubrey was diverted from his standard method of collecting by some notable site or relic in the area, as when he discussed the traditions surrounding the supposed site of the martyrdom of St. Oswald, or copied a relevant charter or other document referring to the place in question.¹⁶

Aubrey recognised that what he had collected was only a series of notes towards a larger work and later renamed the manuscript *Hypomnemata Antiquaria*, from the Greek *υπομνηματα*, notes or memoranda.¹⁷ He hoped that Anthony Wood might complete what he had begun, but ultimately the *Description* remained in manuscript until published in the nineteenth century, first by Sir Thomas Phillipps and later by the historian of Wiltshire, J. E.

¹⁴ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 42.

¹⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 45r.

¹⁶ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 98r (St. Oswald), *passim* (for charters, deeds, and other late medieval documents).

¹⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 1r.

Jackson.¹⁸ It is not easy to judge what form the finished work would have taken, given its incomplete state, but what survives suggests a county history that had, in many ways, turned away from Dugdale's attempts at combining the disparate strands of antiquarian tradition discussed in favour of an older style of itinerant collecting more reminiscent of Camden, if not, indeed, Leland. The focus on the genealogies and heraldry of the gentry that had been present from the inception of the project meant that the itinerary itself remained intent upon materials which could illuminate those concerns, rather than expanding into a history of architecture, folklore, or economic history, as might have been expected given Aubrey's later intellectual concerns. What remains of the *Description* suggests an early work, predating the mature Aubrey's diverse interests in the physical world of ancient and medieval Britain, but also prefiguring them in his careful draughts of monuments within churches and his care in recording the clothing and bearing of figures in glass windows. The occasional interaction with folklore and the ancient landscape, as in his description of Hubba's Lowe, hints at the interests which also appear in the *Monumenta* and the *Remaines*, but ultimately the *Description* remains a comparatively slight work, valuable for its collection of now vanished material rather than for any new methodological insights or advances.¹⁹ Lacking a focal point such as that provided by prehistoric sites in the early drafts of the *Monumenta*, the *Description* tended towards diffuseness and made no larger arguments about the history of the Wiltshire gentry. The middle ages depicted is a static age, with lord succeeding lord in an undifferentiated past.

The *Perambulation of Surrey*

¹⁸ John Aubrey, *Aubrey's Collections For Wilts., Part I*, [ed. Sir Thomas Phillipps] (London, 1821); John Aubrey, *An Essay Towards the Description of the North Division of Wiltshire*, ed. Sir Thomas Phillipps (Middle Hill, Worcs., 1838); John Aubrey, *Wiltshire: the Topographical Collections of John Aubrey, F.R.S., A.D. 1659-70, With Illustrations*, ed. John Edward Jackson (Devizes, 1862). None of these are to be relied upon textually.

¹⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 96r.

The year after completing the *Description*, Aubrey, still in dire financial straits, returned to county history. In 1669 the publisher and entrepreneur, John Ogilby, had received a royal patent to produce an “English Atlas” to rival Blaeu’s.²⁰ It would consist of several volumes, covering Africa, America, Asia, and Europe, and would be lavishly produced and illustrated. The first volume, *Africa*, appeared in 1670, followed by *China* and a more general *Asia* in 1671.²¹ These were compilations and summaries of earlier travel narratives, containing no original research, but presenting what was already known in a lavish and easily digestible format. Ogilby, however, contemplated something more ambitious for what was to be the concluding volume covering Great Britain and on 12 August 1672 Aubrey wrote to Wood that Christopher Wren had “contrived an employment for me”, namely to assist Ogilby, who “is writing the History of all England”. Aubrey was to peregrinate across England and Wales between February and November 1673, collecting material for Ogilby’s atlas in the style of Leland, Camden, and the other great chorographers of the sixteenth century.²²

Aubrey seems not to have been dismayed by the monumental task proposed and at the end of the year, on 7 December, John Hoskins wrote to him suggesting he begin his survey in the West to save on expense.²³ By May 1673, however, his responsibility had been narrowed to a survey of Surrey alone.²⁴ At about this time a committee brought together by Ogilby, and including Aubrey, Christopher Wren, John Hoskins, Robert Hooke, and the young herald, Gregory King, drew up a series of queries to be used by Ogilby’s researchers.²⁵ The queries were primary geographical, but allowed considerable scope for antiquarian

²⁰ The royal patent is reproduced at the beginning of John Ogilby, *Africa: Being an Accurate Description of the Regions of Ægypt, Barbary, Lybia, and Billedulgerid* . . . (London, 1670), sig. ar-v. For Ogilby see Katherine S. van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times* (Folkestone, 1976), esp. chap. 7 (on the *Britannia*).

²¹ Ogilby, *Africa*; *Atlas Chinensis* (London, 1671); *Asia* (London, 1673).

²² Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 181r.

²³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 206r.

²⁴ Anthony Powell, *John Aubrey and His Friends* (London, 1948), 149.

²⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 244r, contains a list of the committee in Aubrey’s hand.

digression, directing researchers to note the “Places of Birth, Education, or Habitation of Eminent Persons, in all Ages” as well as “*Roman Ways and Stations, Coyns and Monuments, &c.*”.²⁶

Aubrey had been making preparations for his travels throughout the spring and wrote to Wood from Westminster on 17 June that he had hired an assistant and was almost ready to set off, but had been delayed by the laming of his horse.²⁷ He finally began at South Lambeth on 1 July and seems to have enjoyed the journey, writing to Wood on 10 August that it was “the pleasantest Pilgrimage that ever any man has had I thinke since the reformacon”.²⁸ He was still engaged in his work ten days later, when Christopher Wase wrote offering financial encouragement if he would enquire more particularly into the history and endowments of free schools for Wase’s own purposes.²⁹ He left off “about the middle of September”, perhaps due to the onset of winter, and almost as soon as he returned to London he began to have doubts as to Ogilby’s reliability.³⁰ On 11 October:

M^r Og: told me he had altred his mind & he would now make no more use of me, but get w^t scraps he can out of bookes or by heare say, and will not write above 4 or 5 leaves [at most] of any County.³¹

Ogilby seems to have realised that redoing the decades long efforts of a Camden or a Leland would have required an immense cost and taken far longer than the year or so he appears to have envisaged, so he retrenched, going back to a plan more in keeping with the earlier

²⁶ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 243r. These are from the first version of the queries. For the differences between the two, see below.

²⁷ Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 214r.

²⁸ Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 221r.

²⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 246r. This was presumably research for Wase’s book, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools As Settled in England* (Oxford, 1678), see *ODNB*, *s.n.*

³⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 34r; Wood F 39, fol. 226v.

³¹ Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 231r.

volumes of the *Atlas*. In the end, all that was printed was an initial volume of road maps.³²

Aubrey was left out of pocket and fuming, writing to Wood, “God deliver me from such men”.³³

Aubrey had left off the composition of the *Perambulation* abruptly, shortly before hearing from Ogilby that his services were no longer needed, and seems to have subsequently cast the project aside, depositing it with Anthony Wood to be cannibalised for biographical material for the latter’s *Athenae Oxonienses*.³⁴ He only returned to it in October 1691, when Wood pressed him to make a fair transcription of his original notes. Aubrey had begun this by St. Thomas’s Day (21 December) 1691, but noted with regret that:

The Papers are like *Sibyllae folia*: and I now sett them downe tumultuarily as... \if tumbled out/ of a Sack, as they come to my hand, mixing Antiquities and Naturall things together.³⁵

He was still transcribing when he wrote to Edward Lhuyd on 29 March 1692 and seems to have completed the manuscript by May of that year.³⁶ The majority of Bodleian MS Aubrey 4 is this transcription, made between about December 1691 and June 1692, and, as such, may not represent the organisation of the original manuscript (now lost).³⁷ While he was occupied in the transcription, two Surrey gentlemen of Aubrey’s acquaintance, John Evelyn and Charles Howard, added their voices to Wood’s, asking him to “leave to Posterity \as/ intelligible [sc. in Manuscript]” a draft as possible.³⁸ It was probably at their request that he

³² John Ogilby, *Britannia, Volume the First: or, an Illustration of the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales* . . . (London, 1675).

³³ Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 231r.

³⁴ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 31r.

³⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 31r.

³⁶ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 99r.

³⁷ The transcription is Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fols. 32r-end. It seems to have been mostly, but not entirely, complete by 19 May 1692 when Aubrey wrote to Wood that he “would willingly finish my transcription of my Surrey – w^{ch} I can doe in a fortnight” (Bodleian MS Tanner 456a, fol. 40r).

³⁸ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 99r. Aubrey dedicated the new manuscript to Howard and Evelyn, writing “These ~~hasty and indigested~~ Memoires are ~~with much gratitude~~ dedicated for their friendly assistance”.

added a new section on Southwark, dated 1 May 1692, which he had previously neglected in the larger work, “Mr J. Stowe having so carefully donne it allready: to whom I refer the Reader”.³⁹

The actual perambulation, conducted between July and September 1673, is organised in accordance with Aubrey’s path, like the Wiltshire *Description*, beginning at South Lambeth and gradually running south and west into the country. Although compiled only a year after the *Description*, it is noticeably different. In his Wiltshire manuscripts, Aubrey had made a clear division between antiquities and natural history, but in the *Perambulation* these are mixed together, with entries of both sorts being included in the descriptions of towns and parishes. More than this, however, the antiquarian material itself has become more luminous and there is a sense of the specificity of place that is oddly lacking from Aubrey’s descriptions of his native county. In Surrey Aubrey became more alert to the land around him and monumental inscriptions, though still a substantial part of the work, became intermingled with passages such as this, on the College for Secular Chaplains at Lingfield:

I have scarce seen any Religious House ~~so~~ remaine so intire, as this is. The first story of this College is of Freestone: above that, the butting is of Brick and timber, palle, as one may \say/, w^{ch} was the \generall/ fashion heretofore when the land was so encontred with Trees. ‘Tis a neat built college, \as/ for those times, and such a private place. Within this College is a little square Court, ~~and~~ about that a Cloyster, for conveniency of Walking for the Priests here.⁴⁰

Not only have the vague architectural comments in the *Description* become more specific, and more historicised, the medieval landscape itself is more present, this “private place . . . encontred with Trees”. There are sketches of landscapes as in the *Description*, but architecture

seemingly having had second thoughts about the self-effacing language he had originally used (Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 30r).

³⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 5ar. Aubrey refers to John Stowe’s *Survey of London* (London, 1598), which included material on Southwark. Aubrey’s account was nine leaves in folio (as noted at fol. 5ar) and is at Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fols. 5ar-27r.

⁴⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 71r.

is more prominent here, not only in descriptions but in drawings as well.⁴¹ One particularly lavish example is Aubrey's watercolour and ground plan of the Duke of Norfolk's seat at Albury, strongly reminiscent of his watercolours of Easton Piers done a few years before.⁴² Elsewhere he includes discussions of classical remains which later found their way into the *Monumenta Britannica*, one example being the Roman temple at Black Heath, Aubrey's description of which is copied verbatim.⁴³ There are also digressions in something approaching the "Worthies" tradition of local hagiography, including a long note on the mathematician William Oughtred.⁴⁴

Over all, the *Perambulation* is a far richer work than the *Description*, a dramatic distinction that may have most to do with the different plans and motives underlying their composition. Rather than a group of status-conscious provincial gentry, the "Queries in Order to the Description of *Britannia*" prepared for Ogilby's project and annexed by Aubrey at the end of the manuscript, were prepared by a committee of natural philosophers, antiquarians, and heralds.⁴⁵ What is most notable in comparing the list of queries with Aubrey's manuscript is the extent to which he failed to follow them. The majority of the *Perambulation* is still taken up with monumental inscriptions, which could, at best, only fall with the remit of query sixteen, "Places of Birth, Education, Habitation, and Sepulture of *Eminent Persons*" (most of those inscriptions which Aubrey had recorded, though, are of persons who were hardly eminent even within their own parishes, much less England at large). The other queries, chiefly concerned with the human and natural landscape, as well

⁴¹ As an example of one of the sketches of views, see the bleak skyline of the Bansted Downs at Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 87br.

⁴² Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 95r-v. For the drawings of Easton Piers see Bodleian MS Aubrey 17.

⁴³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 102r, copied into Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 953. Another example of this is the description of Stanstreet Causeway at fol. 126r, copied into Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 925.

⁴⁴ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fols. 102v-105v.

⁴⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, fol. 244r.

as improvements in the form of mines, planting, stock-raising and similar activities, are only treated by-the-by and ensconced within the framework of parish by parish inscription lists.

It is possible to read into this paradox the conclusion that while the *Perambulation* is a richer, more sensitive, and more alert text than the *Description*, it is so despite Aubrey himself. It was, after all, written in 1673, predating most of Aubrey's significant antiquarian work, and it is probable that the new interest in the landscape and its history, in architecture and in the specificities of place beyond what could be found in cartularies and tombs stemmed rather from the interests and desires of the *Britannia* committee than from Aubrey. As has been discussed in relation to the *Monumenta*, however, Aubrey owed many of his inspirations in this period to the conversation and writing of Wren and Hooke. Although unrecoverable, it is also tempting to suppose that the shift here can, in part, be pinned down to their influence and, more generally, to Aubrey's failure to fence explicitly antiquarian topics away from natural history as he had done in his Wiltshire texts. Regardless of its origin, the changing shift in perspective evident throughout makes for a striking contrast with his *Wiltshire* manuscript of the previous year.

The county histories are two of Aubrey's least engaging works – compilations of a limited range of antiquarian material which seem tone-deaf to many of the issues which would become the focus of his later research – but they are significant not only for what they incidentally saved but for their record of Aubrey's first engagement with the English middle ages. Between the composition of the *Description* and the *Perambulation*, Aubrey had begun to think about how the physical particularities of architecture could be used to form a chronology of architectural styles, a tool which would allow the undifferentiated face of post-Roman, pre-Reformation England to become divided into a series of recognisable styles and eras. It was this latter way of understanding the past, rather than the chorographical approach of the county histories, to which he was subsequently to turn; the next step in his

engagement with the medieval past was through a project of systematisation and categorisation largely without precedent in earlier antiquarian scholarship.

Chronologies: Placing Artefacts in Time

Sometime shortly before his death, around the time he attempted to see the *Monumenta Britannica* published, Aubrey collected together a series of smaller works under the title of *Stromata, or Certain Miscelany [sic] Tractates*.⁴⁶ Taking their name from a devotional work by Clement of Alexandria – στρώματα is a patchwork or miscellany in Greek – these works are heterogeneous, but share a common theme in their fascination with technological, cultural, and social change. The four *Chronologiae* chart the evolution in Britain of architecture, heraldry, script, and clothing, while the *Nouvelles* combine Aubrey's concern for scientific and technological priority with an antiquarian-minded narrative of the introduction of new customs, flora, machines, and skills into England and their consequent effect on the country's social fabric. His notes towards histories of weights and measures, the values of money, and the price of corn are not only drafts of a larger economic history, but are tied to Aubrey's own attempts to reform the system of measures used in seventeenth-century England.

The *Stromata* are not simply neutral works in the angeiographic tradition of antiquarianism, however. All of them, especially the *Chronologiae*, partake in Aubrey's greater project of linking seventeenth-century Britain with its Roman past. In architecture, in writing, and elsewhere, Aubrey saw his own age as one in which the Romano-British past had been almost perfectly restored and this fundamental belief, both in the primacy of

⁴⁶ The *Stromata* are now Bodleian MS. Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 150r-242v. They have never been published in full, though a portion of the *Chronologia Architectonica* was published as John Aubrey, *Fashion of Windows, in Civil and Ecclesiastical Buildings, Before the Conquest*, (n.p., n.d. [c.1765]), for which see below.

Roman culture and in its successful recreation in Baroque England, informed his attitudes towards the physical and cultural changes he described in the medieval period.

These works also clarify the ways in which Aubrey thought about historical change. With their insistence on individual agency, the *Nouvelles*, as well as the *Chronologiae*, reveal a historical worldview that was essentially personal, one in which a single enterprising individual could fundamentally change the habits and well-being of England as a whole. This is not to say that Aubrey's views were unsophisticated. In his treatment of the impact of new inventions, plants, or weights and measures, he concerns himself not only with the introduction of the object itself, but with its social and economic impact, and places weight on the ways in which technological changes could produce longer term cultural change. Likewise, his notes towards studies of coinage and prices reflect the beginnings of an economic history alert to the implications of gradual inflation and governmental regulation.

There is no single narrative to be drawn from this diverse collection of tracts, but those sketched above serve to illustrate their similarities as well as their differences and to place them within the larger context of Aubrey's other works. Written in parallel with the *Monumenta*, the *Remaines*, the *Lives*, and his other principal antiquarian studies, these texts reflect the same concerns and illustrate the same conclusions that Aubrey drew elsewhere. More than that, though, they show him at his most original as an antiquarian: engaging with largely unstudied fields, observing, systematising, and laying the foundations for a series of new disciplines.

Recovering the Roman: *Chronologia Architectonica*

The *Stromata* now form an appendix to the manuscript of Aubrey's *Monumenta Britannica* (Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25), but their title-page indicates that they had previously been

appended to his *Description of Wiltshire* and suggests the possibility that some of the tracts eventually included in the *Miscellanies* – those on day fatality, omens, and dreams – had once been considered for inclusion within the *Stromata*.⁴⁷ This manuscript genealogy implies that the *Stromata* were not originally conceived as an integral part of the *Monumenta* or the *Description* or, indeed, necessarily intended to be taken as an interrelated whole. Instead, they are largely free-standing – though the four *Chronologiae* were inspired by and to some extent inform each other – and were probably appended to the larger works only out of a desire to ensure their publication (the *Architectonica*, for example, includes directions for its organisation when sent to the printers).⁴⁸ As such, the tracts included within the *Stromata* are considered here as independent texts, rather than as chapters or sections within any coherent larger work.

Of these tracts, the *Chronologia Architectonica* was the first to be composed – its title-page is dated 1671 – and eventually became the largest by page count (fifty pages in Aubrey’s numeration).⁴⁹ It was planned as a visual history of architecture in the British Isles, from Roman times to the present, and H. M. Colvin has seen in it the first sympathetic and reasonably accurate treatment of Gothic architecture.⁵⁰ Aubrey, Colvin argued, stood apart from the common early modern consensus that, as Sir John Clerk of Penicuik wrote, the Goths had “introduced a bad manner not only in Architectory but in all other arts & sciences . . . we have been for upwards of 200 years endeavouring to recover ourselves from this Gothicism”.⁵¹ Colvin thought that to Aubrey “must go the credit for being the first to think historically about medieval English architecture” and saw him essentially as a precursor to

⁴⁷ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 150r.

⁴⁸ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 153r. The note at the top of this page (“begin to print this Treatise at page. 31.”) was probably added when Aubrey was contemplating the publication of the *Monumenta Britannica*.

⁴⁹ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 152r-179r. The standard study of the *Architectonica* is now Olivia Horsfall Turner, “‘The Windows of this Church are of several Fashions’: Architectural Form and Historical Method in John Aubrey’s ‘Chronologia Architectonica’”, *Architectural History* 54 (2011): 171-193.

⁵⁰ H. M. Colvin, “Aubrey’s *Chronologia Architectonica*”, in *Concerning Architecture: Essays on Architectural Writers and Writing Presented to Nikolaus Pevsner*, ed. John Summerson (London, 1968), 1-12.

⁵¹ Colvin, 2, citing Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, “The Country Seat” (1727).

the nineteenth-century architectural historian Thomas Rickman, a scholar willing both to sympathise with the style and to see in it a clear process of historical change extending from the late antique to the early modern.⁵²

These views are untenable. Aubrey does appear to have been the first antiquarian to attempt a rough chronology of medieval architectural styles, but his ideological conception of architectural progress was entirely at odds with those of the nineteenth-century Romantic antiquarians of Rickman's generation. In the "diatribe" prefacing the *Chronologia* Aubrey set out his views on the development of architectural style, seeing a decline from the "primitive beautie" of Roman architecture into the "barbarous" and "fantastick" architecture of the middle ages, and a subsequent gradual recovery, shepherded by Palladio and Inigo Jones, until once again "the old Roman fashion is become the common Mode".⁵³

By contrast with Rickman, who defined the architecture of the early middle ages as the "Roman mode debased" but who believed that the architecture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries represented "the perfection of the English mode", Aubrey's architectural chronology is a straightforward one of decline and recovery; Roman architecture degenerated into Gothic, but was gradually restored to its antique purity.⁵⁴ This parabola of change maps on to the understanding of the middle ages elsewhere in his works. Aubrey had no sympathy for the barbarian successors of the Romans, seeing them as both superstitious and ignorant of technical skills.⁵⁵ Moreover, the generic "Goths" of this narrative could be specified as the brutish Saxons:

⁵² See especially Colvin, 3, 11. For Rickman see his *An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England, From the Conquest to the Reformation . . .*, 3rd ed. (London, 1825). The first edition was published in 1817.

⁵³ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 168r-169r.

⁵⁴ See Rickman, 4-5.

⁵⁵ See, for comparison, Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 24, fol. 29r, in which he describes the Goths and quotes the essayist Balzac that they "seemed to come to hasten time and precipitate the end of the world, [and] declared so particular a war to written things, that it was not wanting in them, but that even the Alphabet had been abolished".

Here was a mist of ignorance for 600 yeares. They were so far from knowing Arts, that they could not build wall with stone. They lived sluttishly in poor howses, where they ate a great deale of beefe & mutton, and dranke good Ale in a browne mazard: and their very Kings were but a sort of Farmers.⁵⁶

Though Aubrey understood the evolution from Romanesque to Gothic, for him all post-Roman architecture remained a single “Barbarous fashion” until the importation of Palladian designs into England. Aubrey’s chronology here is slightly muddled, but his attribution of a change in architectural style brought on by Palladio and, implicitly, by his *I quattro libri dell’architettura* (1570) is entirely accurate.⁵⁷ For Aubrey, however, the central hero in the revival of classical architecture was not the geographically and chronologically distant Palladio, but rather Inigo Jones (1573-1652), whose Banqueting House at Whitehall he singled out as “so exquisite a piece, that if all the Books of Architecture were lost, the \true/ art of Building might be retrieved {thence | there}”.⁵⁸ In such a narrative, there is no place for any exaltation of the Romanesque and Gothic architecture with which the majority of the text is concerned; at best it can only be tolerated.

This does not, however, vitiate Colvin’s placement of Aubrey as the first historian of Gothic architecture, as Olivia Horsfall Turner has shown. The *Architectonica* was undeniably original in its emphasis on the specific shapes of architectural forms and the ways in which these could be arranged into a recognisable, chronological pattern of change. Turner has seen in this the influence of Aubrey’s contemporaries in the Royal Society, notably Wren (whose contribution to Aubrey’s understanding of biblical and classical architecture is discussed in chapter four), as well as Meric Casaubon’s *Treatise of Use and Custome*, which Aubrey cites in the *Monumenta* and elsewhere.⁵⁹ She links Casaubon’s emphasis on “bare

⁵⁶ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 10v.

⁵⁷ See Rudolf Wittkower, *Palladio and English Palladianism* (London, 1974) and Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House* (New Haven and London, 1983). For a general study see Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, 5th ed. (Chichester, 1998).

⁵⁸ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 169r.

⁵⁹ Turner, 180.

forms or matter” as the crucial means by which to evaluate “old things” to the growing interest in palaeography and the established dating techniques for epigraphic evidence in the same period, seeing in these the methodological origins of Aubrey’s architectural schema.⁶⁰ This is undoubtedly the case, both here and in the other *Chronologiae*. Systemising tendencies in traditional antiquarian fields such as epigraphy led to the creation of systems in previously untrodden areas, the history of architecture among others. Here as elsewhere the significance of Aubrey’s text is its application of an existing methodology to a novel set of data.

The vast majority of the architectural examples recorded by Aubrey date from no earlier than the Conquest and no later than the mid-sixteenth century. If he viewed this as a period of “Barbarous” and “fantastick” fashions, why did he record its morphologies with such care? A clue to this can be found in his methods. Early in the work he notes that “I found by Mr Anthony Woods Antiquities of Oxford, in what Kings reigne & yeare of y^e Lord such or such a part of a college was built”.⁶¹ This is borne out by the text, in which the majority of the precisely dated examples are from Oxford colleges. Aubrey had recognised early on that the shape of windows was the surest indicator of the age of a building and the text consists chiefly of watercolours of windows, in greater or lesser detail depending on what feature he wished to emphasise. Below these are notes such as that appended to a drawing of a Perpendicular Gothic window:

At All-Souls Colledge in Oxford built tpe Hen: 6. 1437. Mdm there are two windows of double Lights, as here. A windowe at y^e Parsonage house at Streete in Somerset, just of this fashion. v. the glasse in the inside. The old window of the old Hall at Easton-Piers is of this very fashion. In these western parts are many windowes of this fashion.⁶²

⁶⁰ Turner, 180-181. Aubrey’s paraphrase of Casaubon’s argument is at Bodleian MS Top. gen. C. 25, fol. 5v.

⁶¹ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 153r; Anthony Wood, *Historia et antiquitates Universitatis Oxoniensis*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1674). Aubrey could, however, have had access to Wood’s manuscripts by virtue of their friendship and correspondence before the *Historia et antiquitates* were published.

⁶² Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 163r.

Aubrey derived the initial date from materials gathered by Wood, then used his knowledge that the style of windows changed rapidly and predictably to identify similar buildings which could then be determined to be of a similar age. The *Architectonica* is thus not a history of architecture, though Aubrey attempted to briefly sketch such a history in his introduction, but rather a handbook for the dating of buildings whose age would otherwise be unknown.

Aubrey's schematisation of Gothic architecture went beyond window style. The *Architectonica* does not address the fabric of buildings, but it does include reflections on the technological and physical changes associated with the visual changes in architecture, a notable example of which Aubrey had from Sir William Dugdale:

S^r W. Dugdale tells me, that he finds by W. Malmesbury &c: that glasse was not used but in churches, & great persons chiefe Roomes: and I ~~can~~ remember that before the Civil-warres, poor peoples windowes were not glassed: nor yet in Herefordshire, Shropshire, &c: even at free-holders houses. S^r W^m Dugdale also saith, that painting in glasse came into England in King John's time. Heretofore, the Lead for the glasse was cast in a mould; which was strong & substantiall, and continuous in Sarum Cast: church \&c/ to this day. The Glasiers Vice is not above 140 years since \sc./ about A.D. 1550. ~~But~~ it drawes the lead too thin & weake; but 'tis the better for y^e Glazier.⁶³

In this there is an echo of the *Nouvelles* (discussed below), with its concern for the social and technological practicalities that influenced changes such as that from plain to painted glass.

Like many of Aubrey's works, the *Stromata* were looked over and annotated by several of his acquaintances at various stages in their composition. The most important annotations in the *Architectonica* are those by Aubrey's friend the polymath John Evelyn. Evelyn himself shared Aubrey's visions of a neo-Roman Britain and had translated Roland Fréart de Chambray's *Parallèle de l'architecture antique avec la moderne*, a work drawing heavily on Palladio and striking a blow for the revival of ancient, rather than the creation of modern, architectural

⁶³ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 167ar.

styles.⁶⁴ Evelyn made additions to Aubrey's historical preface, chiefly notices of important buildings, offered sociological explanations of the change in window fashions, and provided comparisons between English and Italian architecture, but none of his additions materially affected the larger structure and intent of the text.⁶⁵

The *Architectonica*, alone of the texts contained in the *Stromata*, enjoyed a robust afterlife in the eighteenth century. At Aubrey's death two variants of it already existed, the one now in Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25 and a shorter version placed at the beginning of Bodleian MS Aubrey 3 (the *Description of the North Division of Wiltshire*).⁶⁶ Both of these were used by eighteenth-century antiquarians. The original of the former remained inaccessible in the hands of the Churchill family during this period, but a copy made by John Hutchins was the basis for a pamphlet entitled *Fashion of windows, in civil and ecclesiastical buildings, before the Conquest* probably published in 1765 by the engraver Francis Perry under the auspices of the antiquarian Andrew Coltee Ducarel.⁶⁷ Despite its title, the pamphlet contained not only engravings and descriptions of several windows Aubrey thought, largely incorrectly, to date from before the Conquest, but also a series of Gothic windows and a somewhat butchered transcription of his historical "diatribe".⁶⁸ Moreover, in or before 1769, William Huddesford, keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, transcribed the version of the *Architectonica* in Aubrey 3 and mentioned it in a letter to Richard Gough of 6 November 1769, at which time he had plans "to give it to the publick, with some other detached pieces worth preservation".⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Roland Fréart de Chambray, *Parallèle de l'architecture antique avec la moderne* (Paris, 1650); John Evelyn, *A Parallel of the Antient Architecture With the Modern* (London, 1664). The *Parallel* went into several editions and was republished as late as 1733.

⁶⁵ For Evelyn's additions see esp. Bodleian MS. Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 164v, 165v-166r.

⁶⁶ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fols. 2r-7v.

⁶⁷ Aubrey, *Fashion of Windows*. For the history of this publication see Michael Hunter, *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* (London, 1975), 206.

⁶⁸ The variations between the *Fashion of Windows* and Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25 are to be found in the origins of the former. The *Fashion* was typeset from a copy by the antiquary Joseph Ames (1687-1759) of Hutchins's copy of the original (see John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century* . . . , 9 vols. [London, 1812-1816], vi. 385).

⁶⁹ John Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, 8 vols. (London, 1817-1858), iv. 478; Hunter, *Aubrey*, 206-207. This MS is probably now Bodleian MS Aubrey 16. Huddesford's letter is of

Otherwise, however, the *Architectonica* seems to have been unknown to the antiquaries and architectural historians of the later eighteenth century. It is possible, however, that it may have served its original purpose as an antiquary's handbook or architectural *vade mecum* for A. C. Ducarel during the composition of his pioneering study of Norman medieval architecture, *Anglo-Norman antiquities considered, in a tour through part of Normandy* (1767).⁷⁰ Regardless of its later influence, or lack thereof (like all of Aubrey's work, it was only patchily known during the generations immediately succeeding its composition), it stands out as the first attempt to systematically trace the development of medieval architecture in England, while still conforming to Aubrey's deeply held faith in the superiority of Roman culture and artistry.

Dating Manuscripts: *Chronologia Graphica*

In the autumn of 1672 Aubrey was staying with his friend and patron, Nicholas Tufton, 3rd Earl of Thanet (1631-1679).⁷¹ While writing the first draft of the *Architectonica* the previous year he had noted to himself in the margin that it would be “an easy matter to make a Scriptura Chronologica of y^e severall hands from the Conquest till now, w^{ch} would be of good use”.⁷² Now, with the ancient deeds of Hothfield, Thanet's estate, at his disposal, he set himself to work, producing a draft of a “Chronologia Scriptoria” from the tenth century

considerable interest as the only catalogue of the Aubrey MSS known to have been made during the eighteenth century.

⁷⁰ Andrew Coltee Ducarel, *Anglo-Norman Antiquities Considered, in a Tour Through Part of Normandy* (London, 1767). Turner has argued (186-189) that the influence of this edition was negligible, but it is nonetheless significant that Ducarel should have been the force behind its publication.

⁷¹ Thanet, who was married to Robert Boyle's niece, was a long-standing, albeit overbearing, friend of Aubrey (see Anthony Powell, *John Aubrey and His Friends* [London, 1948], 91, 144-150). Aubrey was staying at his Kentish estate, Hothfield, by 22 August 1672 (Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 185) and was still there on 22 October (Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 190).

⁷² Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 3v.

to the present.⁷³ Almost twenty years later, in 1689, he returned to this project, expanding it into the *Chronologia Graphica*.⁷⁴ In 1672 he had wished “that some Graver would sett forth the hands of severall Raignes, or centuries”, producing in print a version of his original chronology, but by 1689 Mabillon’s *De re diplomatica* had been published in France as well as Edward Bernard’s table of the evolution of scripts in England.⁷⁵ Aubrey did not think that Mabillon and Bernard had removed the necessity for his own work, recognising the importance of a study of scripts focusing on English documents. His rationale for the *Graphica* was the same as for the *Architectonica*:

A matter of eight or nine hand-writings will reach from the Conquest to this Age \1689/. By a collection of those several hands (i) fashions of Characters) one may know primâ facie the Kings Reigne of a Manuscript [unless the Reigne were very short] It may also be usefull for detection of Forgeries.⁷⁶

The *Graphica* was designed as another research aid: a means by which undated medieval documents could be securely dated to the reign of a specific king.

Aubrey’s discussion of early medieval scripts is impressionistic compared to the *Architectonica*, but it follows a similar structure. “As the Roman Architecture did degenerate into Gothick in like manner did the Roman Character”, he wrote, adding that:

As they deviated from the Roman character, so they grew wanton in their manner of writing, and run into the hand now called Court hand and their \initial Text/ Capital letters were very flourishing and phantastick: so as Ovid saies,
et pars minima est ipsa puella sui.⁷⁷

⁷³ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 189r-190v.

⁷⁴ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 185r-196r.

⁷⁵ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 185r. Aubrey cites both Mabillon and Bernard here and includes a copy of Bernard’s table at fol. 194. See Jean Mabillon, *De re diplomatica* (Paris, 1681) and Edward Bernard, *Orbis eruditè literatura à Characterè Samaritico deducta* ([Oxford], 1689).

⁷⁶ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 185r.

⁷⁷ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 185v-186r. “The least part of it’s the girl herself” (Ovid, *Remedia amoris*, l. 344). The line was used in Early Modern contexts to imply an outward show concealing some inner emptiness

Here, as in the *Architectonica*, Aubrey denominates medieval artistry “phantastick”, meaning “arbitrary” or “eccentric”, in opposition to the regularity of classical forms.⁷⁸ This does not impair his interest in distinguishing between the various “phantastick” scripts of medieval England, however. He begins with “[t]he highest [manuscript] in Antiquity that I know of in our nation, [which] is the Charter granted by King Athelstan to the Corporation of Malmesbury”.⁷⁹ As in the *Architectonica*, he draws on a local Wiltshire source, although in this case a spurious one. He is similarly confused regarding a second Anglo-Saxon charter, this one the famous document in which King Edgar (943/4-975) is styled “regum insularum oceani que Brytanniam circumjacent”.⁸⁰ Aubrey saw a copy of this charter in the hands of Silas Taylor, possibly the twelfth-century example which is now British Library MS Harley 7513, and noted that its script was similar to that of a fragment of Ecclesiasticus which he pasted into his manuscript immediately after.⁸¹ The only authentic Anglo-Saxon charter he included in the *Graphica* appears to have been added after its initial composition when he had access to the *Red Book of Bath*, then in the hands of his friend Thomas Guidott. This was the 814 charter from Coenwulf, King of Mercia, to his *comes* Swithnoth which Aubrey reproduced in facsimile, noting in the margin that he had advised Guidott to have it engraved.⁸² If Aubrey had not recognised its importance – it is the earliest insular script in the *Graphica* by two hundred or more years – Thomas Gale certainly did. Gale annotated it

or insufficiency, cf. Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 6 vols., ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, et al. (Oxford, 1989-2000), ii. 98.

⁷⁸ OED, *s.v.*

⁷⁹ Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 186r.

⁸⁰ Nicholas Brooks, “Anglo-Saxon Charters: the Work of the Last Twenty Years”, *Anglo-Saxon England* 3 (1974), 211–231 (undoubtedly a 12th century forgery).

⁸¹ Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 186r. The fragment of Ecclesiasticus consists of two leaves in Carolingian Minuscule at fols. 187r-188r, which Aubrey notes he removed from the cover of a copy of Cyprianus Leowitz’s *De conjunctionibus magnis* and which he also compares to a grant of Henry I (fol. 186v).

⁸² Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. fol. 192br.

“Literâ Longoberdicâ” in his notes on the *Graphica*, a descriptor which identifies it as similar to what is now described as “Beneventan Script”.⁸³

It is only about the time of the Domesday Book that Aubrey’s chronology finds surer ground and he is able to trace the development from eleventh-century Carolingian Minuscule, which he describes as being “most part plain” to the Blackletter of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸⁴ He recognised that court and chancery hands had diverged from standard script in the fourteenth century, noting that the script ordinarily used in the reign of Edward III was “a fine small legible kind of court hand but easier than [modern] court hand”. He also saw that by the reign of Henry VIII the Blackletter-influenced court hand was radically different from the Italianate chancery cursive, “the *which* same as now”.⁸⁵ As in the *Architectonica*, Aubrey saw the seventeenth century as a period of improvement after the “indifferent” writing of the sixteenth:

In King James time they wrote a fine Fast-hand; handsome & usefull: but the great hooked hand the long d in their engrossing hands were not gracefull. The handsome engrossing hand now in use, came in at the Restauration of King Charles II.⁸⁶

The *Graphica* is parallel to the *Architectonica* in its combination of aesthetic value judgments and close attention to the physical evolution of the objects under study. Like the *Architectonica*, it was written as a handbook or a tool to aid antiquarian study, a purpose highlighted by Aubrey’s recollection of correctly guessing the age of a manuscript in Thomas Guidott’s possession solely on the basis of its script.⁸⁷ Unlike the *Architectonica*, it remains

⁸³ See Elias Avery Lowe, *Scriptura Beneventana: A History of the South Italian Minuscule*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1929).

⁸⁴ Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 189r-190r.

⁸⁵ Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 190r. For a modern equivalent of Aubrey’s study of the evolution of court hand see Charles Johnson and Hilary Jenkinson, *English Court Hand, A.D. 1066 to 1500*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1915), 1-57.

⁸⁶ Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 185v.

⁸⁷ Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 186v. Aubrey dated “that delicate MS of Bathe” (probably a portion of the *Red Book of Bath*) to the reign of Henry VI.

unpublished and seems to have exerted no influence on subsequent scholarship. Although his first essays towards the *Graphica* predated the publication of Mabillon's *De re diplomatica* by a decade, it was Mabillon's *magnum opus* that inaugurated the modern study of diplomatic and palaeography.⁸⁸

Greeks and Turks: *Chronologia Aspidologica*⁸⁹

The *Chronologia Aspidologica* is undated, but it was probably conceived of not long after the *Architectonica*, as initial notes for its succession of shield shapes appear amongst mixed into the version of the *Architectonica* preserved in Bodleian MS Aubrey 3.⁹⁰ It is much smaller than either the *Architectonica* or the *Graphica* and differs from them in its goals and content.

One page of the *Aspidologica* does resemble the other *Chronologiae*. This, which Aubrey notes he “did with the advice of S^r William Dugdale”, differentiates between five distinct types of escutcheons. He correctly identifies the earliest as the knee-length shield to be found on the knightly effigies in the Temple Church in London and in Salisbury Cathedral.⁹¹ From there, however, he jumps to the reign of Henry VI, skipping over the triangular “heater shields” of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to the shields *a bouche* common on the

⁸⁸ See chapter one.

⁸⁹ The title was evident influenced by Henry Spelman's *Aspilogia* (London, 1654), as evinced by Aubrey's note, “see Spelman's Aspidologie” (Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 183r), but Aubrey's work is unrelated to Spelman's.

⁹⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 7v.

⁹¹ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 182r.

continent from the fifteenth century. His fourth and fifth escutcheons are the inverse Tudor arch of sixteenth-century heraldry and the oval introduced in the reign of Charles I.⁹²

The majority of the text, however, is not concerned with medieval heraldry, but rather with its supposedly ancient origins. Although Aubrey noted that “The Heralds of y^e Office assure me, that crests were used but about Edw: the third time: rarely in Edward the first. qd NB”, he gave more weight to the widely-held medieval and Renaissance belief which was typified in an extract he made from Camden’s *Remaines* asserting that arms began to be hereditary as early as archaic Greek society.⁹³ There are sections discussing squires, helmets, crests, and shields with accompanying extracts from Homer, Ovid, Pliny, Polybius, Propertius, Theocritus, and Virgil.

The nature of the work – classical extracts compared with modern customs – and the choice of ancient authors strongly suggest that the majority of the *Aspidologica* was written at about the same time as the *Remines of Gentilisme*, between 1687 and 1689. That the insertion of the classical extracts postdates the sequence of shields is also suggested by their absence – excepting two passages from Livy and one from Tacitus – in the notes towards the *Aspidologia* in Aubrey 3.⁹⁴ Likewise, the 1689 date on the title-page of the *Graphica* may indicate a return to, and expansion of, these older projects at that time. If so, it is noteworthy that Aubrey’s interests seem to have turned decisively from the medieval to the antique by the final decade of his life and his focus shifted from establishing chronologies of change to finding similarities across long stretches of history.

The other notable feature of the *Aspidologica* is the germ of an idea which Aubrey seems not to have followed through. Having recalled from the *Iliad* that Achilles – or Hector,

⁹² For the development of heraldic shields, see John Woodward, *A Treatise on Heraldry British and Foreign*, new ed., 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1896), i. 57-65.

⁹³ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 183r, citing William Camden, *Remaines, Concerning Britaine* (London, 1614), 207.

⁹⁴ Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 7v.

he could not recall which – “wore for his Crest a Horse taile in his Helmet”, Aubrey noted that:

[A]mongst the Turkes, a Horse-taile fastned to the end of a halfe-pike is the most honourable Ensigne, next to Mahomets Banner: \but/ it is originally from the Tartars.⁹⁵

The same connection had been made before, by John Selden in his 1614 *Titles of Honour*, but Aubrey’s comparison seems independent, or, if derivative, then only unconsciously so.⁹⁶ While Selden saw no cultural link between the Trojan and Turkish banners, writing doubtfully that “some think [the latter] deriud from *Alexander’s* militarie Ensigns” Aubrey appears to have been more open to the possibility, at least in theory.⁹⁷ His willingness to see remnants of the classical world in foreign cultures is also evident from a passage in the *Vestiaria*:

What the Roman Habits were, we may see by the \old/ Statues and Bass relievos. which is ~~still~~ \the same/, (or very neer) with that \the/ Moores \doe still/ use (except their little Turbans: as Elias Ashmole & I observed, when the Morocco Ambassador was in London 16 . . we were walking in the Privy-Garden at Whitehall, and looking on the old Senatorian habits of the Statues there, we found the fashion of those to be almost the same \with these/, and the Highlandish Plad is something like it.⁹⁸

Although the “Highlandish Plad” seems to be recognised as similar, but unrelated, to the toga, the phrase “the Moores doe *still* use” (emphasis added) indicates that Aubrey thought their clothing had been a direct cultural inheritance from the ancient world. How far Aubrey

⁹⁵ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 181r. It was, in fact, Achilles, see Homer, *Iliad*, 16.167.

⁹⁶ John Selden, *Titles of Honor* (London, 1614), 378-379.

⁹⁷ Selden, *Titles of Honor*, 378.

⁹⁸ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 197r. Aubrey is recalling the celebrated 1682 embassy of Mohammed bin Hadou, on which see Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford, 2011), 147, 222.

had seriously considered a potential archaic Greek inheritance amongst the Turks, or a Roman inheritance amongst the Moroccans, remains unclear. It is notable, however, that he may have been thinking about a series of foreign cultures' potential ancient inheritances in the same way he thought of Britain's.

Ultimately, the *Aspidologica* remains a dead-end, a path that was never fully pursued and from which no conclusions were drawn, but the thinking and presuppositions that went into it are in accord with the maturation and shift of Aubrey's scholarly preoccupations towards the end of his life and reinforce the arguments made elsewhere as to how he viewed the England – and, indeed, the wider world -- of his own time in relationship to the classical world.

The History of Dress: *Chronologia Vestiaria*

The *Chronologia Vestiaria* comes last among the *Chronologiae* in Aubrey's table of contents for the *Stromata* and may have been last in composition as well, given that one of the notes on the title-page can date from no earlier than 1682 and the other no earlier than 1688.⁹⁹ It is a study of clothing and utensils on broadly similar lines as the other *Chronologiae*, but in form is a rougher draft than either the *Architectonica* or the *Graphica* and more concerned with invention and individual change, akin to the *Nonvelles*, than are the others. It is only loosely organised, but there are sections discussing bands and cuffs, beards, caps, chaplets, codpieces, coats, crowns, girdles, hair, hoods, ruffs, shoes, spoons, tabards, and trunk-

⁹⁹ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 151r, 197r. The first note refers to the Moroccan embassy of 1682, quoted above, while the second is a reminder (crossed out, presumably once it had been accomplished) to “[t]ransfer the minutes of Habits out of from Gentilisme part y^e . . . hither: for it was tackt on there, as foreigne”. The indication of a part of the *Remaines* dates the note to October 1688 or later, at which point Aubrey was beginning to write the second part (cf. British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 132).

hose.¹⁰⁰ It is one of the earliest antiquarian investigations of post-antique dress in Europe, pre-dated in England only by Randle Holme's "Severall Habits used by the people inhabiting this our Citty & Country" of 1658-59.¹⁰¹

Unlike the other *Chronologiae*, there is no overarching narrative tracing the change of clothing styles from antiquity to the present. The closest comparable passage is in Aubrey's discussion of crowns – Anglo-Saxon crowns seem to have been of particular interest to him – in which he gives an outline of their development:

The original of Crowns, was a Diadem, (to compare Royal ornam^{ts} with vile;) like the \leather/ strap the Shoemakers wear on their heads at their work: so we reade in Virg. Æn:

----- redimitus tempora lauriis [*sic*]

Constantine the Great, and severall of the Roman Emperors in their Coines, have only a Diadem (or Chapelet) on their heads. The first Crownes were but with the addition of pointed Spikes to the diadem: w^{ch} points \in/ after \time/ they adorned, or tipped with pearles. and \after/ that adorned the intervells \interstices/, with trefoiles. But as the Gothick building ~~was sud~~ deviated from the Roman, so did their Habits, and their Crownes; as is to be seen in the Crownes of our Saxon Kings.¹⁰²

Aubrey thus seems to have had a similar narrative of cultural change in mind for this, as for the other *Chronologiae*, but did not develop it to the same extent. Instead he was more interested in specific developments in dress that had occurred comparatively recently. In this, the *Vestiaria* is strongly reminiscent of the *Nowelles* and provides a narrative of invention more than change. A characteristic example is his discussion of male headgear:

¹⁰⁰ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 197v-198ar, 201br (crowns), 198br (girdles), 199r (caps, codpieces, coats), 199v, 200br (chapelets, bands & cuffs), 200ar (trunk-hose), 200br, 203r (shoes), 201br (ruffs), 201v (tabards), 203v (beards), 205av (hoods), 206ar (hair, spoons).

¹⁰¹ Holme's manuscript is now British Library MS Harley 2014 (cf. Aileen Riberio, "Antiquarian Attitudes – Some Early Studies in the History of Dress", *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society* 22 [1994]: 60-70). Johannes Albrecht Fabricius in his *Bibliographia Antiquaria*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1716) discusses studies of the history of dress in chapter XVII, but knows of no studies of post-antique dress comparable to Aubrey's.

¹⁰² Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 197v. Aubrey's "redimitus tempora lauriis" should, of course, be "redimitus tempora lauro", the sacred laurel crown worn by Anius when he met Aeneas and the Trojans on Delos (cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, III.iv.69-83).

Cappes, sc. Bonnets, were the generall Fashion, till about the middle of Queen Elizabeth's raigne. King Edward the sixth, and his Father are alwaies drawn with Cappes [like those worne by the D^{rs} of Lawe] and so all the Aldermen of London, downe pretty late in the Queens \Elizabeths/ time. I have heard my honrd & learned friend D^r Edw: Davenant S. Th. D. say, that his father [a London merchant] was the first Citizen of London that wore a Hatt, and brought them into use among the Citizens; as also coloured Clothes: -- before the Citizens wore Tawny, or puke-coloured Cloackes, and short Rockets. / vide Statut. A. 5. Hen. 7. and A. 1. Mariae.¹⁰³

Aubrey is concerned not only with dating the point at which the new item of clothing – in this case, the hat – was first worn, but also with identifying its originator.

Aubrey's sources for the *Vestiaria* are of note for their mixture of the textual and the visual. Although he is eager to use paintings, funeral monuments, and coins as evidence where available, a large amount of his material still derives from texts.¹⁰⁴ When he does quote from texts they are largely literary – though, as in the example quoted above, he also refers to royal statutes – and his methods here resemble those used in the *Remaines*, the *Aspidologica*, and elsewhere. His sources for the *Vestiaria*, however, are not ancient texts, but rather medieval and near-contemporary English literature, including *Piers Plowman*, Chaucer, and Donne.¹⁰⁵ The *Vestiaria* is less purely visual than the *Architectonica*, but whether this is due to a more textually-focused phase in Aubrey's scholarship or whether it simply reflects a slightly differing set of available sources is not entirely clear.

The *Vestiaria* is more confused and note-like than the other *Chronologiae*, but there is no reason to doubt that its purpose was substantially the same as that of the *Architectonica* and the *Graphica*: to serve as a guidebook for the dating of historic objects, probably in this case

¹⁰³ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 199r.

¹⁰⁴ See the passage on crowns, above, for his use of coins (and see the discussion of Sir James Long's coin collection in chapter four). For funeral monuments see Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 202r, and fol. 203v for the citation of specific paintings as evidence of changing styles of dress.

¹⁰⁵ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 199r (*Piers Plowman*), 203r (Donne, *Satires*), 205br (Chaucer, *Summoner's Tale*).

chiefly funeral monuments.¹⁰⁶ Like the *Architectonica*, it attracted John Evelyn's interest and contains heavy annotations by him throughout. Evelyn's annotations place slightly more emphasis on the social implications of dress and the way it reflected social and cultural change, but Aubrey's own intent seems to have been simply to identify and record points of change or transition, dating them as exactly as possible and identifying the person or other factor which caused the change to occur.

Economies of Invention: the *Nouvelles*

The *Nouvelles* comes immediately after the *Chronologiae* in Aubrey's organisation of the *Stromata* and, although undated, its style of composition suggests it may have been composed about the same time as the *Vestiaria*. In content, it is a series of short accounts of "nouvelles": customs, plants, technologies, and trades imported into England, usually within the two or three generations immediately before Aubrey's own time. Antiquarian lists of inventions or technologies were by no means new; Polydore Vergil's *De inventoribus rerum* is an early and notable example, as is Francis Bacon's famous list of technologies through which the moderns had surpassed the ancients.¹⁰⁷ The tone of Aubrey's *Nouvelles* is different from these, however. Rather than asserting a Modern superiority over the Ancients – a position

¹⁰⁶ cf. Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 202r.

¹⁰⁷ Francis Bacon, *The Instauration magna Part II: Novum organum and Associated Texts*, ed. Graham Rees and Maria Wakely (Oxford, 2004), 194 ("those three things which were unknown to the ancients and whose origins, though recent, are dark and inglorious: namely the *Art of Printing*, *Gunpowder*, and the *Mariner's Compass*").

largely foreign to Aubrey's worldview – the *Nowelles* is an investigation of priority and individual agency within a newly capitalistic, mercantile nation.

Aubrey's recognition of the importance of establishing scientific priority was central to many of his biographical projects. The *Nowelles* shows him establishing a different sort of priority; one which he considered equally important. A characteristic entry in the *Nowelles* is that for gunpowder:

Not far from Wotton in Surrey [the Seate of . . . ~~John~~ Evelyn Esq] upon the streames & ponds since filled up & drein'd, stood formerly many Powder mills, erected by his Ancestors, who were the first who brought that Invention into England: before which we had all our Powder out of Flanders. The Grandfather of John Evelyn Esq aforesayd transferr'd his Patent to the later S^r John Evelyn's Grandfather of Godstone in the same County in whose family it continued till the late Civil Warres. By this Novell He gott \left/ a great estate \that would be worth now above eight thousand pounds per annum/ honestly & ingeniosely. which his Posterity enjoyd: and \hath much/ augmented.¹⁰⁸

With Evelyn's hand lying so heavy elsewhere on the manuscript, it is perhaps unsurprising that his ancestors' efforts should be included here. However, Aubrey is doing something more than paying tribute to his friend and fellow Royal Society member. Gunpowder is the "novell", but it is not the chemical process or the effect it had on English warfare which concerns him. Rather, Aubrey is intent to show its economic impact: the Evelyns' mills made England independent of trade with the Low Countries, their patent for its production was a commodity which could be transferred amongst family members, and, most importantly, "a great estate" could be gotten "honestly & ingeniosely" through a piece of individual agency reminiscent of the many aborted and untried plans listed in Aubrey's own *Faber fortunae*, a list of schemes to recover financially from the loss of his family's estate.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Bodleian Library MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 208r. See also Gillian Darley, *John Evelyn: Living For Ingenuity* (New Haven and London, 2006), 2-4.

¹⁰⁹ See Hunter, *Aubrey*, 109-111, for a discussion of the *Faber fortunae* (now Bodleian MS Aubrey 26).

This conception of invention and change is tied to the primacy of individual agency evident in the *Vestiaria*. Aubrey believed this sort of change was caused by the agency of identifiable persons and accordingly focused as much on their character and careers as on the inventions themselves. A notable example of this is in his entry on Castile soap where he describes Richard Rogers, the first soap maker to use the process in England:

He was a plaine dull man: and understood nothing beyond his Trade, but became the richest man in the City. His Neighbours did believe that he found a barrell or barrells of money, from Spaine, instead of Commodities: but I have a conceit his estate was ~~gain~~ \obtained/ by his great industrie, and \his/ skill in turning the penny.¹¹⁰

Here Aubrey rejects the popular myth surrounding the acquisition of Rogers's fortune in favour of a psychological analysis. This emphasis on the character of individuals as the key to understanding the changes they brought about in their lives and in the wider world is at the root, not only of the *Novelles*, but also of the *Lives* and associated collections (see chapter seven). Rather than an aneigographic antiquarian work like those delineated in Spon's survey of the discipline (see chapter one), the *Novelles* are biographical, almost anecdotal, and more concerned with economics than technology.

The Economic Tracts

Following the *Novelles* in Aubrey's plan for the *Stromata* are three tracts – *Weights and Measures, Diversity of Standards, or Values of Money*, and *Prices of Corne* – all broadly economic, as well as antiquarian, in their concerns. Although only fragmentary, the notes towards these three projected tracts show an otherwise unknown side of Aubrey's antiquarianism: an

¹¹⁰ Bodleian Library MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 206av.

interest in economic history that was intimately tied to a concern for modern economic and social reform, some of it through the medium of the Royal Society.

The study of ancient weights and measures was an antiquarian common-place and Aubrey's notes towards his own tract on the subject begin in a familiar tone:

I have often wondred, that it should so happen, that the Saxons having made such an absolute Conquest as even to obliterate the British language, that we should still retain the Roman measures (i) more neer the Roman Acre, foot \ounce/ &c. than any other Nation in Europe.¹¹¹

Rather than going on to discuss medieval measures in detail, as might be expected if the *Weights & Measures* were to follow the model of the *Chronologiae*, Aubrey only briefly mentions the standardisation of the yard by Henry I – his only source for this appears to be an Elizabethan novel by Thomas Deloney – before shifting forward to his own time.¹¹² He quotes a letter from Sir William Petty that “[e]very Nation and Government have their different Feet, and Ounces, *which* doeth cause a great trouble to the merchant to reduce them to \their own/” and goes on to discuss the invention of the “universal yard” by the Royal Society in 1664.¹¹³ Hooke warned him that the universal yard was not necessarily universal if “the Earth is not sphericall, but Ovall: which will make an alteration in the Pendulum” used to find out the yard, but it was the practical implementation of a universal measure which interested Aubrey.¹¹⁴

The reasons for this interest lie in the agricultural origin of the Aubrey family's wealth and in Aubrey's own desire to promote social reform. If a universal yard could be made, he queried, why not a universal bushel, which “would be of great importance”? A standard

¹¹¹ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 221v.

¹¹² The study of ancient weights and measures was a recurring antiquarian interest, see chapter one. Aubrey quotes Deloney's novel *Thomas of Reading* concerning Henry I's yard (Bodleian MS Top Gen. c. 25, fol. 222bv).

¹¹³ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 221v-222ar.

¹¹⁴ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 221v.

bushel weight was already required by statute and was known as the Winchester measure or Winchester bushel, but the farmers and labourers in the West Country, near Aubrey's own home, used the larger Long or Great measure. Previous attempts to standardise had not been successful:

What the reason is I cannot tell: but the poor (who are ignorant) are against it: my great-grandfather \my Mothers grandfather/ Browne \in King James. the firsts time/. . . made \an/ attempt to have brought Winchester-Bushell in use over all England, at least over the West: but the Country people mutined and were like to have knock't him in the head at Salisbury.¹¹⁵

Aubrey was baffled by this popular resistance, knowing, as he did, that “these great Corne-buyers, doe buy by the Long-measure and sell by the Statute [Winton] measure”, thus profiting greatly from the lack of standardisation. He noted to himself that he ought to ask his cousin Thomas Scott and his friend Anthony Ettrick, “what makes the poor to be \so/ fond of the great measure? For they buy the small one”.¹¹⁶ This rudimentary investigation of market psychology was only one possible solution, however, as he also considered asking Ettrick and Sir William Petty:

to find-out a way to putt the Act in Execution by the Justices of Peace, to prevent this Fraud & Grievance to the Pore, by compelling the buyers & sellers to use One Standard measure.¹¹⁷

For Aubrey these meditations on economic engineering seem to have been intimately tied with his interest in changing standards and values. Contrary to Michael Hunter's dismissal of the economic tracts as “almost the study of change for its own sake”, the notes

¹¹⁵ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 222ar.

¹¹⁶ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 224v. Thomas Scott has not been identified. Anthony Ettrick was an old friend of Aubrey's from the Middle Temple; see Kelsey Jackson Williams, “Training the Virtuoso: John Aubrey's Education and Early Life”, *The Seventeenth Century* 27 (2012): 161, 176, n. 38.

¹¹⁷ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 223r.

he built up around these musings indicate a concerted research programme to identify documents which would indicate the relative value of important commodities, especially corn and bread, at various points in English history, possibly for use as an index of inflation over the course of the later middle ages and early modern period.¹¹⁸ That his interest was chiefly in inflation and focussed only secondarily on the impact of increased technology and proximity to centres of commerce on prices seems clear from the quotations he copied out of Fabian Phillips's *Compositions for the Kings Pourveyance*.¹¹⁹ Within those notes he underlined a passage indicating that in 1641 rents in the home counties were "above twenty times more than [they were] in the Reign of Henry the seventh, and ten times more than . . . in the fourth year of Queen Elizabeth".¹²⁰ For Aubrey, the value of money and the changes brought about by inflation could be schematised within an antiquarian framework; indeed, the economic tracts represent the first tentative movements towards a type of economic history otherwise unknown in the period.

It was probably in relation to these notes and musings that Aubrey added two items to the *Stromata* which are now no longer present, "A Discourse of Hen: Milbourne Esq." and "Mr Furmin", which follow immediately after the "Prices of Corne" in the table of contents.¹²¹ Henry Milbourne had been recorder of Monmouth and sometime after 1660 Aubrey had obtained two tracts attributed to him, one on the organisation of the poor and one on the decay of rents, which are now Bodleian MS Aubrey 20.¹²² "Mr Furmin" was the London philanthropist Thomas Firmin (1632-1697) and the tract that Aubrey had

¹¹⁸ Hunter, *Aubrey*, 164.

¹¹⁹ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fols. 231r-233v. Fabian Phillips, *The Antiquity, Legality, Reason, Duty and Necessity of Prae-emption and Pourveyance For the King, or, Compositions For His Pourveyance* (London, 1663).

¹²⁰ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 231r.

¹²¹ Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 151r.

¹²² Bodleian MS Aubrey 20 (cf. Hunter, *John Aubrey*, 111). Aubrey dates the manuscript as a whole to 1660 (fol. 1r). The tracts, which are of considerable interest, are headed (1) "For the better ordering the poore of the parish whose charge to the parish beinge very excessive and dayly growinge higher and higher without yealding any considerable Aduantage or effect to that parish from which they drawe so much . . ." (fol. 2r) and (2) "The decay of rents and turneing ffarmes into the Landlords hands . . . the Inquirie into the causes, And . . . some Probable Remedie" (fol. 6r).

intended to include was probably his *Some proposals for the employment of the poor*, a copy of which Aubrey is known to have owned.¹²³ Milbourne's discussion of rents fits naturally into the larger context of Aubrey's interest in inflation and changing monetary value seen elsewhere in the *Stromata*. His and Firmin's tracts on the organisation of the poor, however, are closer to Aubrey's own musings on an enforced change of measures. Though it was not developed in full, these tracts and Aubrey's own seem to have been marshalled together as evidence, perhaps justification, for large-scale social engineering. Even though such plans were never more than pipe-dreams, they demonstrate that economic antiquarianism was no more politically and ideologically neutral than any other form of historical investigation.

Origins of English: *The Proportion of Languages*

The Proportion of the severall Languages Ingredients of our English or, the Proportion of the Languages mix't in our present English, The final tract in the *Stromata*, was probably also the last composed (it is dated 1692/3 on the title-page). It is a series of tables identifying etymologies contained in the Lexicographer John Rider's *Dictionary*, a popular school-text of the late sixteenth century, of a sort which Aubrey himself might have used as a child.¹²⁴ Aubrey went through the *Dictionary* methodically, noting the origins of words and keeping running tallies of those whose origins could be identified in English (i.e. Old English), French, Latin, Greek, British or Welsh, and Danish.¹²⁵

¹²³ See Hunter, *John Aubrey*, 111, for this identification. The title-page of Bodleian MS Aubrey 20 supports this with its cross-reference to "M^r Fourmin's booke of setting y^e poor to worke" (fol. 1r). Aubrey's copy is now Bodleian Ashmole 1672, item 10, bound with a series of other political and economic tracts.

¹²⁴ For Rider, cf. *ODNB*, s. n. Aubrey used an edition of Rider edited and enlarged by Francis Holyoke, but which is unclear. For the purposes of this work, the 1649 edition has been used (John Rider, *Riders Dictionarie, Corrected and Augmented . . .*, ed. Francis Holyoke [London, 1649]).

¹²⁵ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 239rff.

The decision to place the *Proportion* within the *Stromata* probably came from Aubrey's sense of it as another investigation into the mutability of custom over the course of time. This is highlighted by his quotation from Horace's *Ars Poetica* on the title-page:

Many terms that have fallen out of use shall be born again, and those shall fall that are now in repute, if Usage so will it, in whose hands lies the judgement, the right and the rule of speech.¹²⁶

Aubrey is thinking of language here in much the same way as he thought of architecture in the *Architectonica* or writing in the *Graphica*: it was continuously changing and had its own distinct historical morphology. Although the surviving parts of the *Proportion* are concerned only with the linguistic origins of early modern English, Aubrey appears to have had plans to collect obsolete words as well. After noting that Rider's *Dictionarie* claimed to omit "Barbarous words" to encourage good style, Aubrey added that he had read through Philemon Holland's translations of Livy and Pliny's *Historia naturalis* in parallel with the Latin exemplars in search of "the English words & phrases, now obsolete: w^{ch} amount to a page in folio close writt on both sides; w^{ch} is in the Museum at Oxford".¹²⁷ This suggests a larger scope for the *Proportion* than its surviving pages would otherwise indicate.¹²⁸

What does survive is an attempt to quantify the influence of other languages upon seventeenth-century English. Aubrey was aware that many words then in use did not have Anglo-Saxon roots, commenting that "it appears, that the English Speech that we now use, furtivis nudata coloribus, will shrink into a little roome".¹²⁹ His conclusions from analysing Rider's *Dictionarie* were that while authentically "English" words were in the majority (at

¹²⁶ Horace, *Ars poetica*, ll. 70-72 ("Multa renascentur, quae jam cecidere, cadentque | Quae nunc sunt in honore, vocabula, si volet usus, | Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi").

¹²⁷ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 238v.

¹²⁸ Livy, *The Romane Historie*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1600). Aubrey's word list is at Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fols. 91r-92v.

¹²⁹ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 238v. The quotation ("stripped of its stolen colours") is from Horace, *Epistles*, I.iii.20.

3,459), Latin (1,892) and French (1,002) were of considerable importance, with Greek (208) and Welsh (13) being more marginal.¹³⁰ Though he included a column for it, he recorded no Danish words at all, noting only that “M^r . . . Arnold a Danish Gent an acquaintance of mine who hath lived in England ever since 1659, tells me, we have abundance of Danish words in our Language: but I suspect many of these words are also Dutch”.¹³¹

Despite the impressionistic nature of Aubrey’s survey – and his own admission that his Welsh was insufficient to properly assess its place in English – his figures were not entirely inaccurate. Surveys of modern English suggests 28% of the language has a Latin root, compared with Aubrey’s 29%, though his 15% for French (the modern estimate is 28%, including loans from Norman-French) is too low and his 53% for English is wildly too high. His 3% for Greek is fairly close to the modern 5%.¹³² Aubrey did not, however, draw conclusions from these statistics – although it is possible that he saw the high proportion of words with Latinate origins as additional proof for his own theories of Anglo-Latin cultural and genetic unity – and there is no evidence that the *Proportion* was ever read or used by later scholars.¹³³

Toponyms and the Primordial Language: *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum*

Another way into the history of Britain and its landscape lay through toponyms. The study of place names was ubiquitous in early modern scholarship, with older schools of thought proposing a cratylic, pre-determined relationship between objects and meaning, an

¹³⁰ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 241r.

¹³¹ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 240v.

¹³² See Thomas Finkenstaedt and Dieter Wolff, *Ordered Profusion: Studies in Dictionaries and the English Lexicon* (Heidelberg, 1973), 199, for these statistics.

¹³³ John Evelyn did read it and made one note on the congruence of English and Persian, but did not otherwise engage with Aubrey’s work (Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 238v).

understanding of which could allow the proper names of places, people, and things to be read as a historical palimpsest.¹³⁴ Such theories had declined in favour, however, by the early seventeenth century and by the end of the century there was a growing recognition of the relationships between languages and the ways in which toponyms could reflect the linguistic past of a place. In England, this form of linguistic and antiquarian enquiry had been popularised first by Camden and subsequently by the Gresham professor of astronomy, Edward Brerewood, whose 1614 *Enquiries touching the diversity of languages* articulated a theory of internal linguistic change which historicised the development of Greek and Latin as well as hinting at the possibility of larger, more dramatic linguistic changes which could provide an alternative narrative to the biblical confusion of tongues.¹³⁵

Aubrey's *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum* built upon these gradual shifts in early modern linguistic theory and represents the beginning of a never completed attempt to provide a comprehensive etymological dictionary of English, Scottish, and Irish toponyms.¹³⁶ Aubrey had long been interested in Welsh and its relationship to Modern English, first "perusing" John David Rhys's Welsh grammar in the 1650s, and obtaining a Welsh-English word list from his London-based friend Meredith Lloyd in 1675.¹³⁷ In 1680 he even went so far as to request the former Royal Society printer, Octavian Pulleyn, then in Rome, to search the Vatican Library for a manuscript allegedly by the late antique British historian Gildas,

¹³⁴ For this theory and the history of such studies in the period immediately before Aubrey, see Angus Vine, "Etymology, Names and the Search for Origins: Deriving the Past in Early Modern England", *The Seventeenth Century* 21 (2006): 1-21.

¹³⁵ Edward Brerewood, *Enquiries touching the diversity of languages . . .* (London, 1614); Vine, "Etymology, Names and the Search for Origins", *passim*.

¹³⁶ The *Interpretation* is now Bodleian MS Aubrey 5. The sole previous study of it is by Gillian Fellows-Jensen, "John Aubrey, Pioneer Onomast?", *Nomina* 23 (2000): 89-106, who, regrettably, contents herself with pointing out his linguistic errors to the exclusion of any understanding of the project as a whole.

¹³⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fols. 4-5 (Lloyd's word list), 17v (Rhys). The grammar was John David Rhys, *Cambrobrytannicae Cymraeae linguae institutiones et rudimenta accurate, & (quantum fieri potuit) succinctè & compendiosè conscripta* (London, 1592), a copy of which Aubrey donated to the Royal Society Library on 15 December 1670 (John Buchanan-Brown, "The Books Presented to the Royal Society By John Aubrey, F.R.S.", *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 28 [1974]: 168, 181-182).

apparently in the hope that it could be used to shed light on linguistic issues.¹³⁸ This history of engagement culminated in a decision in the 1680s to comb Henry Spelman's catalogue of English toponyms, the *Villare Anglicanum*, for "the small Remnant of British words, that have escaped the Deluge of y^e Saxon Conquest; and to interpret them by the help of D^r Davies Welsh Dictionary" and the assistance of a Welsh-speaking acquaintance, Mr. Evans.¹³⁹ He later expanded this to include "the hard obsolete Saxon words" which lay behind other toponyms, until by the time he had written the preface to the *Interpretation*, on 31 October 1687, he had planned an etymological dictionary of place names that would, in theory, cover every significant toponym in England.¹⁴⁰

For Aubrey, linguistic traces, like the remnants of folklore in his *Remaines of Gentilisme*, were indicators of previous cultural exchange or conquest, and though he did not explicitly state the purpose of the *Interpretation*, his ultimate aim seems to have been to use the etymologies he intended to recover to shed light on pre-Saxon Britain. Unlike many of his other antiquarian projects, the *Interpretation* gives surprisingly little attention to the Roman presence in Britain, with Latin being marginalised as a possible origin for toponyms, despite a repetition of his assertion that "[t]he Romans were settled here, & mixt with the Britons hundred yeares".¹⁴¹ Instead, Aubrey highlighted the role of "British" as spoken in the classical word, pleading for its historical importance within the framework of learning:

¹³⁸ See Pulleyn's letters to Aubrey, dated 15/25 May 1680 (Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 166r-v) and 2/12 November 1680 (Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 165r-v), and a subsequent note at Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19av, which suggests that he planned to compare the language of the manuscript with modern Scottish and Irish (puzzlingly, as he gives it a Latin title, "De rebus sui temporis" in the lost letter to which Pulleyn responded in May).

¹³⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17r; Sir Henry Spelman, *Villare Anglicum, or, a View of the Townes of England* (London, 1656; 2nd ed., 1678). The dictionary is John Davies, *Antiquae linguae Britannicae . . .* (London, 1621; 2nd ed., 1632), but Mr. Evans, described as "of the Bridge-house at London", has not been identified.

¹⁴⁰ For the interpretation of Saxon words, Aubrey intended to use Abraham Wheelocke's Anglo-Saxon dictionary, presumably a manuscript copy, as it had been left incomplete at the latter's death (*ODNB*, *s.n.*).

¹⁴¹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19ar.

This ancient Language (that is now crept into Co[rners] and dis~~respect~~ \esteemed/
 [sic]) was heretofore the current Speech over a[ll] Brittaine & Gaule: from the Orcades
 and the northern Isles, to the Appenine-hills; (~~may~~ the very name \[Pen]/ yet [---
]denies it
 \seemes yet to speak it./ and to the Pyrenan-hills: and though it be out of fashion; is
 in it selfe, as Significant & copious as a[ny] of the modern languages, w^{ch} the Learned
 that understand [it] doe assert.¹⁴²

This concern with the ancient British language led Aubrey to discuss more generally the development and interaction of languages in the British Isles. He was under no illusions that etymologies could be straightforwardly derived, one from Welsh, or another from German, observing that:

Graines of allowance are [to] be given to these Etymologies. There were (no doubt) severall Dialects in Britaine, as we see there are now [in] England: they did not speake \alike/ all over this great Isle: just as the South, or North-Welchmen doe now; who also diff[er] Besides a thousand yeares & (a foraigne language be[. . .]setled) will make a great alteration in pronunciation w^{ch} will much disguise words, as we well know how names of men & Places are \so/ by the Vulgar.¹⁴³

When Aubrey referred to “British” he did not, then, equate that unproblematically with modern Welsh. Instead he recognised that from an ancient beginning of multiple dialects, the language had subsequently evolved, not only by the intrusion of another language through conquest (here he meant Anglo-Saxon, rather than Norman French), but also, more subtly, by gradual internal change. This echoes Brerewood’s discussion of Byzantine Greek, which, he concluded, was certainly different from the classical Greek dialects, but which difference could not be attributed to foreign invasion or settlement:

which is to me a certaine argument, that it had no violent nor sodaine beginning, by the mixture of other forrain nations among the^m, but hath gotten into their language, by the ordinarie change, which time and many common occasions that attend on

¹⁴² Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17v.

¹⁴³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17r.

time, are wont to bring to all languages in the world, for which reason, the corruption of speech growing upon them, by little and little, the change hath beene unsensible.¹⁴⁴

Aubrey, in attributing linguistic difference to a combination of gradual change and foreign influence, was analysing his topic in line with the most recent scholarship and it is unsurprising that he positions himself as engaged in the same activity as “Buxhornius [who] has made e Tensamen for the Interpretation of the names of severall Townes, and Rivers in France”.¹⁴⁵ Aubrey is referring to the Dutch scholar Marcus Zuerius van Boxhorn’s *Originum Gallicarum*.¹⁴⁶ In the *Originum* Boxhorn had argued for a kinship between ancient British and Gaulish and for the status of Breton and Welsh as their closest living descendants.¹⁴⁷ This was one portion of a larger project arguing for a single, “Scythian” origin for all European languages, but a crucial one, as Boxhorn believed the ancient Celtic languages were amongst the earliest exemplars of his theorised “Scythian”. As such, he takes pains in the *Originum* to argue against the mythical Hebrew origin for Welsh which had been proposed by Welsh scholars in the sixteenth century, asserting instead its relationship to the other Celtic languages.¹⁴⁸

Aubrey accepted Boxhorn’s theories, but only up to a point. In referring to the Dutch scholar, he questioned the validity of his linguistic knowledge, insisting that “no body

¹⁴⁴ Brerewood, *Enquiries*, 10.

¹⁴⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17v.

¹⁴⁶ Marcus Zuerius van Boxhorn, *Originum Gallicarum liber* (Amsterdam, 1654). Aubrey may have been introduced to Boxhorn’s work by his friend Meredith Lloyd, who wrote approvingly of it to the Welsh antiquary, Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt, as early as May 1655 (Prys Morgan, “Boxhorn and the Welsh: Some Cambro-Dutch Contacts in the Seventeenth Century”, *Dutch Crossing* 24 [2000]: 188, citing NLW Peniarth MS 275, fol. 7). However, his close friend Edmund Wyld had recommended Boxhorn to Edward Lhuyd, which may instead suggest that Aubrey became acquainted with the *Originum* in Wyld’s library (Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 240r, letter from Lhuyd to Aubrey, 12 February 16[86/87?]).

¹⁴⁷ Boxhorn, *Originum*, *passim*; cf. also Kees Dekker, *Origins of Old Germanic Studies in the Low Countries* (Leiden, 1999), 208-215; Prys Morgan, “Boxhorn, Leibniz, and the Welsh”, *Studia Celtica* 8/9 (1973-74): 220-228; Morgan, “Boxhorn and the Welsh”, 183-190; Toon Van Hal, “When Quotation Marks Matter: Rhellicanus and Boxhornius on the differences between the *lingua Gallica* and the *lingua Germanica*”, *Historiographia Linguistica* 38 (2011): 241-252.

¹⁴⁸ Boxhorn, *Originum*, 89-102. In this context see also the discussion of Hebrew in relation to mystical theories of language at Lewis, *Language, Mind, and Nature*, 110-128.

can doe [such a project] as it should be, but a Welshman, that is master of the French tongue” (why a Frenchman who was also fluent in Welsh was not an option is unclear).¹⁴⁹ More substantially, however, he differed from Boxhorn on the origins of ancient British. He agreed that those who derived Welsh from Hebrew “forceth it too much, and drawe the thred beyond the Staple”, but was more accepting of the similarities between Greek and Welsh.¹⁵⁰ Rather than seeing such concordances as evidence of a single proto-European language, he instead interpreted them by recourse to the invasive theory of language change:

I am assured by severall learned Gentlemen of Wales, as Capt: Rob. Pugh è soc: Jesus, S^r Llewelin Jenkins [Secretary of Estate] & M^r Meredith Lloyd, that there are more Greeke words intermixt with the British, than there are Latin. I would have another Sample or Collection to be made of the Greeke words yet remaining in the Welsh: w^{ch} would afford good Evidence (without being beholding to Historie) that there was a time, when the Greekes had Colonies here.¹⁵¹

In making this choice, Aubrey was falling back on earlier theories of linguistic change, particularly the historico-linguistic ideas of Samuel Bochart, who had proposed on linguistic grounds that the Phoenicians had had colonies in Britain.¹⁵² In this case, rather than accepting that cultural exchange and internal decay could occur simultaneously, as he had done with the medieval evolution of the Celtic languages, he seems to have been shutting down the possibility of an internal decay which would allow for a genetic relationship between Welsh and Greek by emphasising the probability that the Greek loan words in Welsh were due solely to cultural exchange. His preference for the invasion hypothesis is confirmed by a brief excursus in support of the Greek colonisation:

¹⁴⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17v.

¹⁵⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19ar. Aubrey was reacting specifically against Charles Edwards’s *Hebraismorum Cambro-Britannicorum specimen honorandis antiquae Britannicae gentis primoribus* . . . (London, 1675).

¹⁵¹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19ar.

¹⁵² Samuel Bochart, *Geographia sacra* (Caen, 1646). See Zur Shalev, *Sacred Words and Worlds: Geography, Religion, and Scholarship, 1550-1700* (Leiden, 2012), 180-190.

There are severall Persian words mixt with the German, w^{ch} Shewes that there has been an Incursion of them into those northern countryes; but no Historie tells us when: Time and Oblivion have obliterated it.¹⁵³

This is an even more direct attack on Boxhorn, who had refuted the Frisian scholar Bernhardus Furmerius's assertion that Old Frisian (and, by analogy, German) displayed Persian elements.¹⁵⁴

Aubrey emerges from this as aware of the current linguistic theories, but essentially conservative in his outlook. While prepared to accept internal decay as a cause of linguistic change during recorded history, he rejected the idea that such decay could ultimately result in distinct languages and did not recognise a potential common origin in any of the languages of antiquity, instead seeing British/Gaulish as essentially autochthonic. In this, his linguistic stance was in accordance with his treatment of British prehistory in the *Monumenta*. While accepting that "Time and Oblivion have obliterated" detailed knowledge of aspects of the ancient past, he still framed his study of the ancient British past within an essentially Biblical chronology that allowed for only a limited period of time between the Flood and the classical era, with a still shorter duration between the fall of Babel and the first documented evidence of the Celtic peoples.

The care with which Aubrey placed the ancient British language in a larger context may seem at first excessive, given that it fared so far beyond the remit of what was intended to be a study of British toponyms, but it would be more accurate to see this prologue as creating a framework within which such toponyms could be successfully interpreted. Aubrey was aware of the extent to which language could evolve, even over a comparatively short

¹⁵³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19ar.

¹⁵⁴ Boxhorn, *Originum*, 87; For an overview of understandings of the relationships between Teutonic languages during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see Kees Dekker, *Origins of Old Germanic Studies*, esp. 212 (Boxhorn vs. Furmerius), as well as *Bonaventura Vulcanius, Works and Networks*, ed. Hélène Cazes (Leiden, 2010), and Toon van Hal, "A Man of Eight Hearts: Hadrianus Junius and Sixteenth-Century Plurilingualism", in *The Kaleidoscopic Scholarship of Hadrianus Junius (1511-1575): Northern Humanism at the Dawn of the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. Dirk van Miert (Leiden, 2011), 188-213.

period and recognised the necessity of understanding the development of the British languages through time in order to accurately interpret toponyms.

The task Aubrey set himself was not unfeasible, for he limited himself to a selection out of Spelman's *Villare Anglicum* for the English toponyms and the principal names present on maps of Scotland and Ireland for the latter sections.¹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the actual etymologies within the English section are few and far between, while there are next to none in the sections covering Scotland and Ireland.¹⁵⁶ By 1691 he had given up the hope of completing it himself, writing to Edward Lhuyd on 21 April of that year that he had sent it to Anthony Wood and desired that it be deposited with his other manuscripts in the Ashmolean. His letter to Lhuyd lays out the fate he intended for the manuscript in no uncertain terms:

There is no body that I know, that is so fitt to goe through with that Designe as your selfe. ~~You will doe me~~ If you doe undertake it, I hope you will doe me the Right, to make mention of me. The Taske will be extreme easy to you, and it will be delightfull to ingeniose persons to peruse.

When you have donne that: I ~~would~~ wish you would take the like paines for France: there is a Villare of that Kingdome, w^{ch} I have seen, and speake of in the Preface. If you did dedicate it to the King of France, 'tis likely he might make you an honourable

Present. Boxhornius [a learned man] hath been tampering at Gaulish Etymologies \and fumbled at it/, but, though as to other Languages a man may help himselfe by Dictionaries: 'tis not so (you know in the British language) because of the British way of altering the initial letter in oblique cases; w^{ch} a stranger can never understand.¹⁵⁷

Lhuyd did not take up Aubrey's work, despite sharing an interest in onomastics, but instead published his own *Archaeologia* in 1707, which provided the first solid philological foundation

¹⁵⁵ For Aubrey's selection out of Spelman, compare the *Villare Anglicum*, *passim*, with Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fols. 22r-79r. For Scottish toponyms he relied on the published index for Robert Morden's edition of the map of Scotland in Blaeu's *Atlas* (fols. 98r-106av) and for Irish toponyms he used a similar published index for Nicolaus Visscher's map of Ireland (fols. 107r-119r).

¹⁵⁶ In part, this was probably due to timing. The *Villare Hibernicum*, at least, was not begun until 1691 and the manuscript was out of Aubrey's hands by April of that year (Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fols. 2r, 107r).

¹⁵⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 2r.

on which a project such as the *Interpretation* could be based.¹⁵⁸ The *Archaeologia* did, however, address some of the larger issues of linguistic change discussed in the introduction to the *Interpretation*. Lhuyd agreed with Aubrey that British and Gaulish had a common origin, but had a far subtler understanding of linguistic evolution, proposing six rules for the “Origins of Dialects which . . . become in time distinct Languages”.¹⁵⁹ Of these, the invasive theory which held such a prominent place in Aubrey’s linguistics was the last and seemingly, in Lhuyd’s judgment, the least significant, far greater weight being given to gradual internal change. Aubrey’s specific project, a study of British toponyms, has remained neglected and parallel work on the topic did not recommence systematically until the late nineteenth century.¹⁶⁰

Aubrey and the Middle Ages

Aubrey was a student of the Middle Ages incidentally, as a by-product of his wider study of the ancient past, and there is no doubt that he never possessed minute knowledge of the period akin to that exemplified in the works of William Dugdale, George Hickes, or even his friend Anthony Wood. Aubrey, first and last, dreamt of the ancient world. Nonetheless, some of his most original thought can be found in texts ostensibly largely, if not entirely, designed to recover and interpret the medieval past: the *Chronologiae*, the *Nonvelles*, and the *Interpretation*, among others. His systematising instinct allowed him to see slow changes across the later middle ages where they remained unnoticed by his contemporaries and his

¹⁵⁸ Edward Lhuyd, *Archaeologia Britannica* (Oxford, 1707).

¹⁵⁹ Lhuyd, *Archaeologia*, 3.

¹⁶⁰ Toponymy was still in its infancy when J. Horace Round issued a call to arms under the title of “Notes on the Systematic Study of Our English Place-Names”, *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, N.S. 16 (1900): sep. pag. 1-8, emphasising the need for an English equivalent to the French *Dictionnaire Topographique de la France comprenant les noms de lieu anciens et modernes*, 30 vols. (Paris, 1861-1941).

determination to understand the origin of the linguistic variety of modern English gave him the germs of a much larger idea about the relationship of modern languages in antiquity.

This paradox should not surprise us. Coming, as he did, from the antiquarian culture which produced texts like his *Wiltshire* and *Surrey*, with their emphasis on the history of the medieval and Tudor land-holding gentry, Aubrey was by no means unfamiliar with the intellectual topography of late medieval England. Nor, indeed, did he find it in any way actively distasteful: his pleasure in recapturing the tenor of fifteenth and sixteenth-century life shines through in many of his texts. It was simply that, for him, antiquity was more important and the only way to meaningfully recover that antiquity, as it had existed in Britain, was to link it to the modern world through an understanding of the intermediate cultural changes that had occurred in the middle ages. As such, most of Aubrey's medieval scholarship – always excepting the early county history – was a means to an end, but that did not translate into shoddy or unoriginal work. Here, as elsewhere, Aubrey was ready to move beyond existing paradigms and realise the significance of texts and artefacts which other antiquaries took for granted.

Chapter Seven

The Biographical Writings

The biographical collection known as the *Brief Lives* is a modern invention popularised by Andrew Clark in his 1898 edition of John Aubrey's biographical manuscripts. Its title ultimately derives from Aubrey's own short title for Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, 'Σχεδιάσματα. Brief Lives', but this obscures a more complex manuscript history.¹ In the 1680s and 1690s, Aubrey engaged in three separate biographical projects. First, he wrote his *Life of Mr Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, a stand-alone biography of the philosopher which was, from the beginning, intended for publication. About the same time, after some years spent aiding his friend and fellow antiquarian Anthony Wood in the collection of material for his *Athenae Oxonienses*, he began to compile a substantial amount of miscellaneous biographical information which he explicitly intended for the use of future generations. This material he variously called 'Minutes', 'Memoires', or 'My booke of lives'.² Third, having been encouraged by Richard Blackburne, his sometime collaborator in the *Life of Hobbes*, he prepared a series of *Lives of our English Mathematicians*, which was also ultimately intended for publication.

¹ John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries, Set Down By John Aubrey, Between the Years 1669 & 1696*, 2 vols., ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1898), i. 8. The alternative Greek title is from Σχεδιάσμα, a whim or caprice, but Aubrey's usage probably more closely approximates to its naturalised form in English, "schediasm", an extempore work or jotting (*OED*, *s.v.*).

² For convenience, this study refers to it as the *Minutes of Lives*, the title by which Aubrey most often refers to his work.

During the course of these three projects, Aubrey's theories of biography developed dramatically. The present chapter examines the course of that development, from a position which was relatively conventional to one which refocused biographical writing onto minutiae and humanity rather than panegyric. I will argue that this shift demonstrated an application to the writing of biography of tools and methodologies originally drawn from antiquarianism, but fed into the form of Theophrastan character-writing. Crucially, these were then theorised within the context of Lipsian Tacitism, which provided Aubrey with the necessary framework in which to prioritise the "inner life" of his subjects. Aubrey's *Lives* are a study in antiquarian biography or history, focusing on individuality, minute detail, and the visual in the same way as his other, more explicitly antiquarian, works such as the *Monumenta Britannica* or the *Chronologiae*. These contextualisations allow us to read the *Lives*, not as a collection of gossip or anecdotes, but as an attempt to practise a new form of writing. Aubrey's brief, at times brutal, summations of character and action are a world away from the leisurely commemoration practised by contemporaries such as Izaak Walton.³ In drawing together antiquarianism, character-writing, and Tacitean narrative history, he produced a strikingly new form of biographical text and one radically at odds with traditional early modern life writing.

Writing the *Life of Hobbes*

Aubrey had long been interested in biography. As early as 12 December 1655, Samuel Hartlib had written to John Worthington that one "Mr. Aubrey an English gentleman is

³ Izaak Walton, *The Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert . . .* (London, 1670, and subsequent editions). For an argument stressing their modernity see Jessica Martin, *Walton's Lives: Conformist Commemorations and the Rise of Biography* (Oxford, 2001). Martin, however, is concerned with the rise of intimate, exemplary biography, a genre far removed from Aubrey's biographical works.

about to write the Life of that Noble Scholar [*i.e.*, Bacon]. I wish he may do it to the life”.⁴ His plan for a life of Bacon may have been of some years standing by that point, as he had already visited Bacon’s former retainer, Thomas Bushell, at Lambeth in 1650.⁵ It is probable that some of the material he collected then went into the minutes concerning Bacon in the *Lives*, but he did not at the time produce any connected narrative biography. Instead, his first attempt at this form came almost three decades later when he wrote the life of his friend and fellow Wiltshireman, Thomas Hobbes.

Hobbes had died at Hardwick Hall on 4 December 1679.⁶ Long before, in 1667, Aubrey had promised to write Hobbes’s life, but there is no mention of this in the final letter from him to Aubrey, dated 18 August 1679, and it appears that Aubrey and several others must have revived the plan shortly after news of his death.⁷ Certainly it was well under way by 16 January 1679/80, when Hobbes’s former amanuensis, James Wheldon, wrote to Aubrey with responses to a series of biographical queries.⁸ Wheldon wrote of “what you designe to get written by way of Commentary on his [Hobbes’s] life” and thanks Aubrey for what he, Anthony Wood, and Sir George Ent “designe for Mr. Hobbes his honour”.⁹ The implication is that Aubrey, Wood, and Ent, sometime in December 1679 or the first days of January 1680, had conceived a plan for publishing a biography of their recently deceased friend.¹⁰

⁴ James Crossley and Richard Copley Christie, eds., *The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge*, 2 vols. in 3 (Manchester, 1847-1886), i. 68-69.

⁵ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 132-133.

⁶ ODNB, *s.n.*

⁷ For the final letter see *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, 2 vols., ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford, 1994), ii. 772-773.

⁸ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 382-384 (= Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 18).

⁹ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 382 (= Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 18r).

¹⁰ This would accord well with Wood’s note in his diary for 1 January 1679/80 that he “sent to Mr. <John> Aubrey a transcript of what I say of Mr. <Thomas> Hobbs with other notes”, indicating that Aubrey’s biographical project was already in full swing (Andrew Clark, ed., *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695*, 5 vols. [Oxford, 1891-1900], ii. 475-476).

Aubrey, uncertain of his own style, soon enlisted an assistant, the young physician, Richard Blackburne, one of the “the best schol[ars] in London of his age, & φιλοHobbist”.¹¹ The immediate connection seems to have been that Blackburne had been a pupil of Aubrey’s friend Thomas Gale when at Trinity College, Cambridge some years before.¹² Aubrey spoke of him in a letter to Wood dated 10 February 1679/80 and their collaboration seems to have been decided by 16 February, when Hobbes’s former publisher, William Croke, wrote an anxious letter to Aubrey arranging a meeting with him and Blackburne to forestall another, unspecified, plan to publish a life of Hobbes.¹³

An undated letter from Aubrey to Blackburne from about this time suggests that their original collaboration was to consist of Aubrey preparing a draft which Blackburne would then correct and improve stylistically. It had not yet been decided whether the biography was to be in Latin or English and Aubrey was content to give Blackburne carte blanche in revising his initial text, describing him as “my Aristarchus”, in an allusion to the second century BCE Alexandrian grammarian whose severe editing of the Homeric texts was proverbial.¹⁴ He seems to have envisioned Blackburne editing for style, noting that he should, “correct and marke what you thinke fitt. First draughts ought to be rude as those of paynters, for he that in his first essay will be curious in refining will certainly be unhappy in inventing”.¹⁵

¹¹ Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fol. 125r. Blackburne was otherwise undistinguished and was elected an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1685 (see *ODNB*, *s.n.*).

¹² Blackburne matriculated as a pensioner at Trinity in 1665 and appears to have been taught by Gale throughout his degree (*ODNB*, *s.n.*; John and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 2 pts. in 10 vols. [Cambridge, 1922-1954], part I, i. 160).

¹³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 88r. Their concern was perhaps justified, given the sudden market for Hobbesian relics. Hobbes’s Latin autobiographical poem had been published towards the end of December and Anthony Wood reported that only a “fortnight after”, around 10 January 1679/80, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, Written By Himself in a Latine Poem, and Now Translated into English* (London, 1680) appeared, so Aubrey and his associates were hardly making the first inroad into the biographical market. Evidence for the publication dates of the poems comes from Wood’s copy of the latter, now Bodleian Wood 657 (6).

¹⁴ Aubrey would have known of Aristarchus as a critic or editor through the reference in Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l. 450, among many others and frequently uses the ancient critic’s name to refer to the (hoped for, but non-existent) editors of his own works.

¹⁵ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 20-21 (= Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 28v).

By the following month this working relationship had soured. It had been decided that Blackburne would translate Aubrey's *Life* into Latin and, writing to Wood on 7 March, Aubrey complained that he was "a great judge, & consequently magisterial: he is much *against* Minutiae".¹⁶ Blackburne was being advised by John Dryden and his friend Lord (John) Vaughan, sometime governor of Jamaica and correspondent of Henry Oldenburg, and the latter two had apparently objected to the not always flattering details in Aubrey's draft.¹⁷ By 22 May the disagreement had reached a head and Aubrey fulminated to Wood that:

This afternoon I shall see the profe of the first sheet of M^r Hobbes. I hope to gett all my originall papers into my hand, & then I will transcribe a faire Copie to be preserved in your hands. Pox take your orators & piety, they spoile lives & histories. The D^r [*i.e.*, Blackburne] says that I am too minute; but a hundred yeere hence that minutenesse will be gratefull... \S^r W^m Petty ordered me to be so/. He would putt it in the High Style.¹⁸

The proofs were presumably those of Blackburne's *Thomae Hobbes Angli Malmesburiensis philosophi vita*, though it was not published until the autumn.¹⁹ That Aubrey had decided to transcribe a fair copy and deposit it with Wood suggests that by May 1680 he had reached a parting of ways with his former collaborator and saw his *Life* of Hobbes as something essentially separate from Blackburne's *Vita*.²⁰

In the course of his disagreements with Blackburne, Aubrey had begun to articulate his own theory of biography. "Now I say the Offices of a Panegyrist, & Historian, are much different", he wrote. "A Life, is a short Historie: and there minutenes of \a/ famous person

¹⁶ Bodleian MS Tanner 456a, fol. 23r.

¹⁷ Evidence for the involvement of Dryden and Vaughan comes from Aubrey's letter to Wood of 27 March (Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fol. 131r).

¹⁸ Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 340r.

¹⁹ [Richard Blackburne, et al.], *Thomae Hobbes Angli Malmesburiensis philosophi vita* (Carolopoli [*sic*], 1681).

²⁰ It is likely that the fair copy he envisaged was never written. Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, the surviving version of the *Life*, appears to be that which was sent to Blackburne (cf. fol. 55v).

is gratefull”.²¹ This linking of biography with history also appears in the *Life* itself, which he describes as “this *Historiola* of our Malmesbury philosopher”, but it is evident that it was not narrative history that Aubrey had in mind.²² In a letter to Wood of 27 March, he tellingly remarked, “I never yet knew a Witt (unless he were a piece of an Antiquary) write a proper Epitaph, but leave the reader ignorant, what countryman &c: only tickles his eares with Elogies”.²³ For Aubrey, then, biography was a matter of minute detail rather than elogium. The “high style” of Blackburne was antithetical to an antiquarian precision of recollection which changed biography from misty hagiography to a recollection of specific facts.

If Blackburne was advised by Dryden, it is useful to compare Aubrey’s views on biography with those of the poet laureate’s in his *Life of Plutarch* (published in 1683, not long after the *Life of Hobbes*). Dryden’s views in their very proximity to Aubrey’s show up more clearly the crucial points of difference.²⁴ In his *Plutarch* he gave a taxonomy of history, dividing the subject into annals, narrative history, and biography.²⁵ Biography, according to Dryden, was “in dignity inferiour to *History* and *Annalls*, [but] in pleasure and instruction it equals, or even excells both of them”.²⁶ In his explanation of the role of biography, he seems, at first, to hold a position similar to that of Aubrey himself, for he observes that:

There is withal, a descent into minute circumstances, and trivial passages of life, which are natural to this way of writing . . . you are led into the private Lodgings of the Heroe: you see him in his undress, and are made Familiar with his most private actions and conversations.²⁷

²¹ Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fol. 131r.

²² Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 322 (= Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 30r).

²³ Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fol. 131r.

²⁴ See also Steven N. Zwicker, “Considering the Ancients: Dryden and the Uses of Biography”, in *Writing Lives: Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Oxford, 2008), 105-124.

²⁵ John Dryden, “Life of Plutarch”, in *Works of John Dryden*, 20 vols., ed. Samuel Holt Monk, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956-1989), xvii. 270-277.

²⁶ Dryden, “Plutarch”, 274.

²⁷ Dryden, “Plutarch”, 275.

But Dryden's "minute circumstances" are not Aubrey's. His distinction of the subject as "the Heroe" in itself suggests a different viewpoint and this is confirmed by his examples of private actions: "a *Scipio* and a *Lelius* gathering Cockle-shells on the shore, *Augustus* playing at bounding stones with Boyes; and *Agesilaus* riding on a Hobby-horse among his Children".²⁸ In each case the private action illustrated serves to illuminate the character of the subject in such a way as to teach a moral or social lesson, harking back to Dryden's initial praise of biography for the "pleasure and instruction" it gives. Dryden imagined a perfect and polished public hero, a far cry from Aubrey's recollection of General Lambert's saying, "that the beste men are but men at the best".²⁹ It was this attempt to reduce a life into a lesson against which Aubrey fought.

Aubrey's convictions reappear in his preface to the *Life* itself. He justified the work by recalling his long-standing promise to the late Hobbes to publish his biography and remarking with pride that "nobody knew so many particulars of his life as myselfe."³⁰ He then offered a full justification for his unconventional biographical style:

Amongst innumerable Observables \of Him/ w^{ch} had deserved to be sett downe these few (that have not scap't \slipt/ my memory) I humbly offer to y^e present Age and Posterity, tanquam Tabula naufragii; \&/ as plankes & lighter things swimme, and are prserved, where the more weighty sinke & are lost.—But, for that the ~~recrementa~~ of such a Person are valueable. It is with matters of Antiq. \And/ as with the \light/ after sun-sett – at which time, clear; by and by, comes the crepusculum; then, totall darknes: \in like manner is it with matters of Antiquitie./ Men thinke, because every body remembers a memorable Accident shortly after 'tis donne, 'twill never be forgotten, w^{ch} for want of writing \registring/ at last is drowned in Oblivion. \This reflection/ haz been a hint, that by my meanes many Antiquities have been reskued ~~from Oblivion~~, & preserved (I myselfe now growing \inclining/ to be ancient \senescens/) – or els utterly Lost & forgotten.³¹

²⁸ Dryden, "Plutarch", 275.

²⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 12r.

³⁰ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 17-18 (= Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 29r).

³¹ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 18 (= Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 29r).

This is an astonishingly forceful exposition of the biographer's duties. Next to *recrementa* Aubrey has added a note to "meliorate this word", but has not, in the end, done so.³² Meaning dross or refuse, Aubrey was probably aware that *recrementum* had also been used to mean human excrement by the Augustan antiquarian Aulus Gellius.³³ Such bluntness was a far cry from Blackburne's polite Latin, but, more than speaking out against the "orators & piety" he had fulminated about to Wood, it graphically drove home his belief that the smallest remnants of a great personality were worth preserving. This was supplemented by his quotation of Bacon's famous description of antiquities, *tanquam tabula naufragii* ("like planks from a shipwreck"), itself a borrowing from the fifteenth-century Italian antiquarian Flavio Biondo, whose work provided the model for Camden's *Britannia*.³⁴ Aubrey was doing much more than asserting the need for detail in biography: he was wrenching it away from the hagiographic tradition that had dominated seventeenth-century English forms and grafting it onto the stem of antiquarianism.³⁵

Tied to Aubrey's association of biography with antiquarianism is a sense of urgency, an apprehension at the fleeting nature of human memory. The biography he advocates is not antiquarianism in the conventional sense – the restoration of what is long past – but rather a sort of preventative or micro-antiquarianism in which the planks from the shipwreck are not ancient statues or coins but the minutiae and specificity of an individual life. He justifies his indulgence in these minutiae:

³² The cancelled section in the main quotation has been replaced by Aubrey with a variant reading in the margin: "The Recrementa of so learned a Person \will/ are valueable" (Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 29r).

³³ Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 17.11.2.

³⁴ Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford, 2000), 66 ("ANTIQUITIES, or Remnants of History, are, as was saide, *tanquam Tabula Naufragij*"). For the transmission of this quotation, see Anthony Grafton, "The Universal Language: Splendors and Sorrows of Latin in the Modern World", in *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2009), 136.

³⁵ For the sea-change in biographical style brought about by what he describes as a "rhetoric of exemplarity", see Michael McKeon, "Biography, Fiction, and the Emergence of 'Identity' in Eighteenth-Century Britain", in *Writing Lives*, ed. Sharpe and Zwicker, 339-355.

For that I am so minute, I declare I never intended it; but setting downe in my first \rude/ draught every thing \particular/, (with purpose, upon review to retrench \cut off/, *what* was superfluous & triviall), I shewed it to some Friends of mine (who also were of Mr. Hobbes acq;) whose judgements I much value: who gave their opinion: & 'twas clearly their opinion to let all stand; for though to soome \at present/ it might appeare too triviall, yet hereafter 'twould not be slighted \scorned/ but goe \passe/ for Antiquity.³⁶

Despite his appeal to the unnamed friends – amongst whom was presumably Anthony Wood and perhaps also George Ent and William Petty – the sentiment is in accord with Aubrey's own, developing theories. The “soome at present” is surely a backward glance at Blackburne and his advisers. Aubrey the antiquarian was beginning to understand how the remnants of his own time would one day be “antiquities”, and was concerned to preserve these for future students of his favoured discipline.

The manuscript of the life which now survives (Bodleian MS Aubrey 9) is that of the third draught, “hastily writt” and has been corrected by both Aubrey and Wood.³⁷ It originally consisted of twenty-five sheets, marked on the outside “For Doctor Blackburne with care”, indicating that this was the copy used in the composition of Blackburne's Latin life.³⁸ It began with Aubrey's note to the reader, discussed above, and continued with a sixteen sheet narrative biography of Hobbes from his birth until his final removal to Derbyshire under the patronage of the Earl of Devonshire in 1675.³⁹

What followed the *Life* proper was more unusual. In the subsequent sheets Aubrey analysed Hobbes's appearance, mannerisms, and character with antiquarian precision, beginning with his complexion and covering his wit, reading habits, diet, exercises, illnesses,

³⁶ Aubrey, *Lives*, i. 18-19 (= Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 29r).

³⁷ See Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 28v for it being the third draught (noted in a letter from Aubrey to Wood of 12 February 1679/80).

³⁸ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 55v.

³⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 30r-46r. This is probably Aubrey's longest piece of connected prose (as opposed to the fragmentary style which appears in his other antiquarian manuscripts).

and predominant emotions.⁴⁰ The emphasis in these recollections – for they are chiefly Aubrey’s personal memories of the philosopher – is on physicality. Aubrey described Hobbes with the same vivid detail with which he brought to life works such as the *Chronologia Graphica*, noting that:

His Skin was soft, and that kind w^{ch} my L^d Ch: Bacon in his Hist. of Life and death calles a Goose-skin (i) of \a/ wide texture

Crassa cutis, crassum cerebrum, crassum ingenium.⁴¹

Or:

Besides his dayly Walkings, he did twice or thrice a yeare play at Tennis [at about 75 he did it] then went to bed there, and was well rubbed. this he did believe would make him live two or three yeares the longer.⁴²

These recollections were not inserted for their own sake, but reflect Aubrey’s stated intention that even the *recrementa* of a great man are worth preserving. Aubrey was attempting to verbally dissect Hobbes in an effort to reach the well-springs of the individuality which made him great. The belief underlying this seems to have been that the exceptional could be traced back to identifiable causes and it was undoubtedly this belief which caused Aubrey to react with such disgust to Blackburne’s smoothing over of the problematic aspects of Hobbes’s life.

The physical description of Hobbes was followed by a “Catalogue of his Learned familiar Friends & Acquaintance”, setting Hobbes within a larger intellectual context and

⁴⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 46r-50r.

⁴¹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 45v. The Latin tag (“coarse skin, coarse brain, coarse nature”) does not translate perfectly into English, *crassus* having the additional meaning of dull or stupid. Bacon does not endorse this, but merely observes that “thick and sponge skin (like, as they say, goose-skinned)” does *not* betoken long life, unlike a firm skin that is “at once hard and compact” (Francis Bacon, “Historia vitae & mortis”, in *The Instauration Magna, Part III*, ed. Graham Rees with Maria Wakely [Oxford, 2007], 227).

⁴² Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 47r.

including several of the mutual friends who would figure amongst the first subjects for entries in Aubrey's *Minutes of Lives* (Sir William Petty and Sir Christopher Wren, among others).⁴³ This catalogue of emotional debts and credits has the same specificity as the physical description, and places Hobbes in dialogue with his famous contemporaries, indicating points of difference as well as points of concurrence (the final sheet has a short addendum of "His Chiefe Antagonists").⁴⁴ By including it, Aubrey cuts away at the idea of a great man as a being apart from his fellows and sets Hobbes amongst the scholars with whom he interacted, showing how his work was a product not only of his own intellect, but of the intellectual currents of his time.

Blackburne's *Vita* was finally published in October or November 1680.⁴⁵ Prefaced with laudatory poems by Cowley, Ralph Bathurst, and allegedly Aubrey (in fact, per Wood, Blackburne) it began with Hobbes's own autobiographical notes, but the vast bulk of the text was taken up with the Aubrey-Blackburne life, the *Vitae Hobbianaë auctarium*.⁴⁶ The variants between the two are too numerous to list in detail, but they bear out Aubrey's complaints in his letters. Blackburne omitted all of Aubrey's information on Hobbes's family and vastly curtailed the account of his early education, noting only that he studied under Robert Latimer and, while still a schoolboy, translated *Medea* into Latin verse.⁴⁷ The anecdote of the *Medea* offers a characteristic example of Blackburne's method. Where Aubrey had written:

It is not to be forgotten, that before he went to the University, he had turned Euripidis Medea \out of Greeke Iambiques/ into Latin Iambiques, w^{ch} he presented

⁴³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 50r-54r.

⁴⁴ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 54r.

⁴⁵ Wood received his copy, given by "his affectionate friend, and humble Servant Jo: Aubrey", on 6 November 1680 (now Bodleian Wood 434).

⁴⁶ Blackburne, *Hobbes vita, passim*. The *auctarium* is at 21-218. In Wood 434, Wood has noted against the Latin poem attributed to Aubrey that it was written by Blackburne (sig. A8v).

⁴⁷ Blackburne, *Hobbes vita*, 24-25.

to his Master. M^r H. told me, that he would faine have ~~seen~~ \had/ them, to have seen how he did grow.⁴⁸

Blackburne gives a subtly different story:

Moreover, he made such great progress in Greek and Latin letters while still at grammar school that he had elegantly translated Euripides' *Medea* into Latin verses of a similar meter.⁴⁹

What for Aubrey is a schoolboy folly, albeit an admirable one, is for Blackburne an integral step in Hobbes's literary development. The, it may be presumed rather rough, iambics of the original narrative have become polished "Latin verses" which Hobbes "elegantèr expresserit".

Blackburne's *Vita* does retain the structure of Aubrey's *Life*. After the narrative chronology of the life itself, he gives, though in an attenuated and shortened form, Aubrey's account of his character, and this is followed, as in the *Life*, by the list of Hobbes's friends.⁵⁰ In Blackburne's account the *amici* have two notable additions. One is Anthony Wood, whose appellation of "Author celeberrimus" may have been more of a politeness by Blackburne towards one of his sources of information than a true estimation of Wood's fame in London circles.⁵¹ The other is Aubrey, who is described as Hobbes's oldest friend and he "who first gave me [*i.e.*, Blackburne] the opportunity of writing, and humanely furnished me material".⁵² This faint praise, characterising Aubrey as little more than a source of information, would seem to support the evidence of a parting of ways that comes from his letters. Nowhere in

⁴⁸ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 33r-34r.

⁴⁹ Blackburne, *Hobbes vita*, 24-25 ("Tantos autem jam adhuc in ludo literario degens in literaturâ tam Latinâ quam Graecâ progressus fecit, ut *Euripidis Medeam* simili metro Latinis versibus elegantèr expresserit").

⁵⁰ Blackburne, *Hobbes vita*, 158-181 (character), 181-187 (*Amicorum elenchus*).

⁵¹ Blackburne, *Hobbes vita*, 186.

⁵² Blackburne, *Hobbes vita*, 187 ("qui princeps mihi scribendi anfam praebuit, & materiam humaniter suppeditavit").

the printed *Vita* is Aubrey credited as Blackburne's sole source for the biographical material, nor is it stated that the *Vita* is, ultimately, a loose and partial translation of Aubrey's original.

Towards Antiquarian Biography: the *Minutes of Lives*

When writing the *Nouvelles*, Aubrey often ascribed new inventions or conceptual leaps to a single point of inspiration, an eureka moment from which a revolutionary idea sprang fully formed. This extended to his descriptions of his own studies. In two letters to Anthony Wood, he recalled that on the night of Sunday, 15 February 1679/80 (three days after finishing the third draught of his *Life of Hobbes*), "taking a pipe of Tobacco in my chamb[er]s":

it came into my mind to ingrose a sheet of paper close, w^{ch} I shall enlarge (much) with the Lives of y^e worthy & ingeniose K^t S^r W. Petty from his cradle; S^r Chr. Wren the like. as also M^r Rob Hooke; w^{ch} I thinke fitt to be lodged in y^r hands.⁵³

This is the first mention of what Aubrey came to describe as his *Minutes of Lives* (the heart of the composite text named by Clark and later editors as the "Brief Lives"). His initial inspiration seems to have been to write an independent life of William Petty, but this thought led him to recall a series of "sheets of Minutes" of the lives of John Dee, Francis Bacon, Christopher Wren, Robert Hooke, William Aubrey, John Pell, and the first earl of Cork which he had deposited in the hands of Elias Ashmole about 1675.⁵⁴

From the start, Aubrey conceived of these lives as something quite different from the *Life of Hobbes*. Writing to Wood on 21 February about the projected life of Petty he mused that it "will be a fine thing, & . . . he shall passe [it] himselfe, & then it shall be left among y^r papers, for Posterity hereafter, to read (published)".⁵⁵ It is likely that in the wake of his disagreements with Blackburne (and, through Blackburne, with the more powerful

⁵³ Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fols. 126r, 127r.

⁵⁴ Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fol. 127r.

⁵⁵ Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fol. 127r.

figures of Dryden and Vaughan) Aubrey had decided that, although he believed intensely in the biographical methodology he had outlined in his *Life of Hobbes*, such biographies should not be immediately published, lest they give offence. His initial conception seems to have been to write biographies of several of his closest and most respected friends (Petty, Wren, and Hooke), to be preserved in Wood's nascent archive until an imagined posthumous publication.

The following month was one of intense composition. Writing to Wood on 27 March, he reported that:

I have to my Booke of Lives made a Kalendar of 55 persons, & have donne 10 of them: 3 or 4 leaves in fol a piece . . . it will be a pretty thing, & I am glad you putt me on it; I doe it playingly. This morn: being up by 10 I writt two.⁵⁶

To this letter he appended a list of eight of the ten completed lives, though not evidently in the order in which they were written.⁵⁷ The list included William Petty, Edward Davenant, Sir John Suckling, Edmund Waller, Thomas Randolph, William Camden, William Oughtred, and Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland.⁵⁸ By 22 May the *Lives* had expanded to fill two quires "close written" and Aubrey, newly recovered from illness, wrote again to Wood, worrying about their ultimate fate:

They are fine things, but few fitt to be printed in my Life or yours, if you die, your papers will be all in the possession of D^r. J. Wallis (ex officio) as keeper of the Archives: so there 'twill be stifled, for ~~I spare neither~~ I am like Almansar in the Play, that spare neither friend nor Foe. but a religious John Telltroth.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fol. 131r.

⁵⁷ This may be presumed as Aubrey speaks of writing the life of Suckling that morning in the same letter, but Suckling is placed third in the list of eight.

⁵⁸ Bodleian MS Ballard 14, fol. 132v. These lives are now in Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fols. 13r-15v (Petty), 39r-42v (Oughtred), 43r-45r (Davenant), 93r-94r (Carey), 109v-110v (Suckling), 111r-113r (Waller), 113v-114r (Randolph), 119ar-v (Camden).

⁵⁹ Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 340r. Aubrey here compares himself to Almansar, the hero of Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* (cf. *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vols., ed. H. T. Swedenberg, Jr., et al. [Berkeley, 1956-2000], xi. 1-100).

Aubrey, always concerned with the fate of his papers, had already decided that the *Lives* should ultimately be lodged with Wood.

The structure and content of the first lives followed straightforwardly on from the *Hobbes*. The life of Petty closely imitated its structure, beginning with a narrative of his life from birth upwards, followed by a written physiognomy, and concluding with a list of writings.⁶⁰ All that had been jettisoned was the catalogue of friends. In March, the same month in which he was composing the life, Aubrey had also convinced Petty to sit for a portrait by the engraver David Loggan, probably with a view to matching it with his pen portrait (he seems at this time to have still been planning to prepare Petty's life for eventual publication).⁶¹

Subsequently, however, Aubrey changed tack from his original intentions. In his letter to Wood of 17 February, he considered pairing the life of Petty with those of their mutual acquaintances Wren and Hooke, but ultimately the lives he wrote after Petty's were of men of the previous generation: the mathematicians Davenant and Oughtred, the historian Camden, the poets Randolph, Suckling, and Waller, and the politician Falkland. The overall rationale behind his order of composition seems to have been one of association. Petty and Waller appear amongst his list of Hobbes's friends in the *Life of Hobbes*.⁶² In the life of Waller Aubrey noted that he was a familiar acquaintance, not only of Hobbes, but also of Viscount Falkland.⁶³ In turn, Waller and Hobbes are both listed as intimates in the life of Falkland.⁶⁴ Suckling and Davenant seem to be linked in the form of Aubrey's late friend the

⁶⁰ For Petty and Aubrey see Rhodri Lewis, "A Babel Off Broad Street: Artificial Language Planning in 1650s Oxford", *History of Universities* 20 (2005): 108-145; Rhodri Lewis, "William Petty's Anthropology: Religion, Colonialism, and the Problem of Human Diversity", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 74 (2011): 261-288; Harold Love, "Sir William Petty, the London Coffee Houses, and the Restoration 'Leonine'", *The Seventeenth Century* 22 (2007): 381-394; Ted McCormick, *William Petty and the Ambitions of Political Arithmetic* (Oxford, 2009), chap. 2.

⁶¹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 15r.

⁶² Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 51r.

⁶³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 111r.

⁶⁴ Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 93v.

poet laureate Sir William Davenant (friend to one and relation of the other) who was another friend of Hobbes. The only odd men out are Oughtred and Camden, who, it may be speculated, Aubrey included due to their pre-eminence in two of his favoured subjects: mathematics and antiquarianism.

Aubrey was not, then, jotting down recollections so much as reconstructing patterns of friendship and influence that had existed in the previous generation. Though he describes writing the *Lives* “playingly”, elsewhere he suggests a more sober sense of urgency, recalling to Wood that “after I had begun it I had such an impulse on my spirit that I could not be at quiet till I had donne it”.⁶⁵ As with the *Life of Hobbes*, Aubrey viewed the writing of the *Lives* as an act of conservation, preserving the telling minutiae of individual lives for future generations, as well as highlighting the friendships and debts that linked the individual lives together. The number of his early lives which take pains to note the chief friends and acquaintances of the subject – in line with the catalogue of learned friends in the *Hobbes* – underlines this last concern. Aubrey, who was himself at the centre of a circle of scholarly acquaintances and whose autobiography includes a similar catalogue of “amici”, was keen to place each life within its social context.⁶⁶

By 15 June 1680 Aubrey had finished the first set of *Minutes of Lives* and transmitted them to Wood. Writing on that date he credits Wood with first encouraging him towards the project, though this seems to overrate Wood’s contribution given that in the letters of February and March Aubrey stated it had been his own inspiration. He asserts his authority by citing his “generall acquaintance” and praises “the moderne advantage of Coffee-houses in this great Citie; before w^{ch} men knew not how to be acquainted, but with their owne Relations, or Societies”.⁶⁷ When it came to the fate of the *Lives*, however, he was in two

⁶⁵ Bodleian MSS Ballard 14, fol. 131r; Wood F 39, fol. 340r.

⁶⁶ Bodleian MS Aubrey 7, fol. 4v.

⁶⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 12r. Aubrey wrote from experience. In the years leading up to 1680, he was one of the members of a coffee house club which also included Edmond Halley, Robert Hooke, and Edmund

minds. First, he wrote to Wood that “after your perusal, I must desire you to make a Castration (as Raderus to Martial) and to sewe on some Figge-leaves (i) to be my Index expurgatorius”.⁶⁸ This seems to imply at least some thought of immediate use or publication, but it may be that Aubrey was simply thinking of the *Lives*’ potential use by Wood in his *Athenae*, for elsewhere in the letter he cautioned:

Now these arcana are not fitt to \lett/ flee abroad, till about 30 yeares hence; for the author & the Persons (the Medlars) ought to be rotten first; But in whose hands must they be deposited in the meane time?⁶⁹

Aubrey’s recurring concern that the *Lives* should not “flee abroad” too soon is in itself evidence that he did envisage their eventual publication, albeit after his death, and the question as to their fate above, combined with his worry about their potential “stiffling” should they fall into the hands of John Wallis, may also suggest that he found Wood to be a less than ideal custodian in the meantime. Nonetheless, when in 1681 he wrote an *Auctarium* – *i.e.*, a supplement – to the *Lives*, it was subscribed on the title-page “For M^r Anthony Wood at Oxford”.⁷⁰

Both surviving volumes of the *Minutes of Lives* written by Aubrey in 1680 and 1681 are headed with the same quotation from Bacon with which he began the *Life of Hobbes*: “tanquam tabula naufragii”.⁷¹ This explicitly ties the *Minutes* back into his larger antiquarian project and, together with their structure and contents, indicates his continued adherence to

Wylde, and met at Jonathan’s in Change Alley, later to become the London Stock Exchange (cf. Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fols. 147-148, for a letter from Halley to Aubrey, dated 26 November 1679, giving a partial list of “our friends that used to meet at Jonathans”).

⁶⁸ Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 12r. Aubrey is alluding to the Jesuit scholar Matthaeus Raderus, whose bowdlerised Martial had run to twenty-two editions by 1660 (J. P. Sullivan, *Martial, the Unexpected Classic: a Literary and Historical Study* [Cambridge, 1991], 294).

⁶⁹ Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 12r.

⁷⁰ Bodleian MS Aubrey 8, fol. 4ar.

⁷¹ Bodleian MSS Aubrey 6, fol. 2r; Aubrey 8, fol. 4ar. Bodleian MS Aubrey 7 contains fragments of the second part of the *Minutes*, largely destroyed by Wood (for which, see below).

the principles of biography set out in the preface to the *Hobbes*. The *Lives* were not antiquarianism in a conventional sense, but used antiquarian techniques to produce a new sort of biography, one which had no parallel in late seventeenth-century England. They grew out of a desire to memorialise the great thinkers and men of action with whom he had been acquainted, but Aubrey's great leap was to do more than produce predictable, pious biographies. Instead he applied the techniques of his own discipline, its systematisation, its concern with minutiae, with networks and patterns, to create biographies that focussed on individuality, drawing a portrait of their subject for posterity through the enumeration of physiognomy, personality, habits, and characteristic actions.

An Apparatus for the Lives of our English Mathematical Writers

Nine years after finishing the *Minutes of Lives*, Aubrey began a final biographical project: *An Apparatus for the Lives of our English Mathematical Writers*.⁷² This small work, only fifteen sheets in length, is dated 25 March 1690 and was composed by Aubrey at the same time as the *Remaines of Gentilisme*, notes towards which are scattered across its title-page.⁷³ Aubrey's intention was to write the framework of the *Apparatus*, then ask Anthony Wood to "find-out one that is master of a good Latin stile; and to add what ~~Mr Wood has~~ \is/ already in his printed Booke".⁷⁴ He appears to have envisaged a collaboration between Wood, himself, and another figure (presumably a more tractable version of Richard Blackburne), resulting in the publication of a Latin history of English mathematicians. He planned to limit his scope

⁷² Bodleian MS Aubrey 8, fols. 69r-88v. See also Kate Bennett, "John Aubrey and the 'Lives of our English mathematical writers'", in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Mathematics*, ed. Eleanor Robson and Jacqueline Stedall (Oxford, 2009), 329-352, for a study of the *Apparatus* within the larger context of Aubrey's mathematical interests and contemporary portrayals of mathematics and mathematicians.

⁷³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 8, fol. 69r.

⁷⁴ Bodleian MS Aubrey 8, fol. 70r.

to mathematicians living in the reign of Henry VIII or later, but intended to preface the work as a whole with John Selden's poem and accompanying commentary on medieval English mathematicians prefixed to Arthur Hopton's *Concordancy of Yeares*.⁷⁵

Aubrey's projected work, which would have been one of the first significant publications on the history of English mathematics, never materialised, probably due to a cooling of relations with Wood soon after the composition of the *Apparatus*.⁷⁶ However, even in its incomplete state, the *Apparatus* is an important antiquarian text and a work different from either the *Life of Hobbes* or the *Minutes of Lives*, though they share the same biographical style and methodology. In the *Apparatus*, Aubrey found himself for the first time facing the lives of figures with whom he had no oral link, but only their published writings or a biographical entry in one of Wood's collections. As such, the earliest lives in the collection are little more than bibliographies, with an occasional assessment of the works' value by a contemporary mathematician. In many cases, also, there was overlap with the existing lives in the *Minutes*, in which instances Aubrey only referred back to the earlier biography rather than tailoring a new one for the *Apparatus*.

The *Apparatus* is thus noticeable not for what it does, which is little, but for what it attempts. It reflects the same preconceptions as the *Nouvelles* (themselves probably a product of the mid- to late-1680s): an interest in individual achievements, as opposed to a gradual increase in knowledge, and a curiosity to establish a distinctly English lineage of invention and progress. To do this, Aubrey turned again to the repertoire of the antiquarian, but while the *Minutes* had allowed him to make use of his keen observation, the *Apparatus* did not play

⁷⁵ Arthur Hopton, *A Concordancy of Yeares . . .* (London, 1612); Bodleian MS Aubrey 8, fol. 70r. See Gerald Toomer, *John Selden: A Life in Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009), i. 17, who does not, however, discuss the intellectual content of Selden's contribution.

⁷⁶ Aubrey had been anticipated by Edward Sherburne in an appendix to his monumental 1675 translation of the ancient astronomical poet, Manilius. Sherburne had compiled a 126-page "Catalogue of the most Eminent Astronomers, Ancient & Modern" which included a large number of British astronomers (Sherburne, *The Sphere of Marcus Manilius Made an English Poem With Annotations and an Astronomical Appendix* [London, 1675], sep. pag. 1-126). Aubrey knew of Sherburne's prosopography and planned to refer to it in the composition of the *Apparatus* (Bodleian MS Aubrey 8, fol. 69r).

to his strengths. Though he knew how to use the relevant records, Aubrey's antiquarian interests did not tend towards the searching of parish registers and public archives engaged in by friends like Wood and Sir William Dugdale. Instead he was concerned with the visual and the physical: strengths for which biographies of sixteenth-century mathematicians offered little scope. This suggests both the limits and the purpose of Aubrey's unique form of biography. It lacked interpretative power when it fared beyond the oral history and autopsy upon which his more nuanced lives were based. This was, however, not, ultimately, a failing, for the purpose of Aubreian biography was not to recover, but to preserve. Both the *Hobbes* and the *Minutes* were urgent, feverish attempts to preserve knowledge as it was being lost, as "by and by, comes the crepusculum; then, totall darknes".⁷⁷ The *Apparatus*, in contrast, was an attempt to recover and enumerate the already lost lives of Elizabethan mathematicians and Aubrey's insistence that his work be complemented by that of Anthony Wood, who was skilled in understanding the records of the previous century, suggests that he knew his weaknesses and planned to supplement them with the strengths of his friend.

Aubrey, the Theophrastan Character, and Tacitism: Placing the *Lives* in Context

I have argued that the *Lives* were a new form of biography, alien to Restoration England. In so far as they combined the narrative history of traditional biography – detailing ancestry, birth, education, career, and the other accidents of a life – with attention to physiognomy, personality, habits, and revealing actions, they were. However, these latter details, for which Aubrey has chiefly been known, were not solely his invention. They derive ultimately from

⁷⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 9, fol. 29r.

two quite different literary traditions: the Theophrastan “character” and Tacitean historiography.

The genre of the “character” had its origin in the work of that name by the fourth century BCE writer, Theophrastus. The character was a pen-portrait of a human type, usually a person identifiable by the preponderance of some specific vice in their personality, and originally seems to have stemmed from Theophrastus’s teaching of rhetoric.⁷⁸ Attached to the rhetorical tradition, the sketching of characters was relatively well-known in sixteenth-century humanist circles and gained renewed popularity with the publication of Isaac Casaubon’s edition of Theophrastus in 1592.⁷⁹ Numerous English imitations appeared in the first decades of the seventeenth century, the most notable being by Joseph Hall,⁸⁰ Sir Thomas Overbury,⁸¹ and John Earle.⁸² In 1664, Samuel Person described the character as:

[A]n Hieroglyphick, a little Enchiridion that ensphears much . . . they may be termed petty Chronologies or Chronicles, the impress and token that is stamped upon each man . . . a Microcosmography or a Map of man, the Anatomy of the Soul . . .⁸³

Person’s verbiage is noteworthy for its dual metaphor: the character is both a map, showing the geography of an individual, and a chronicle, delineating their development. This

⁷⁸ W. W. Fortenbaugh, “Theophrastus, the *Characters*, and Rhetoric”, in *Peripatetic Rhetoric After Aristotle*, ed. Fortenbaugh and D. C. Mirhady (New Brunswick and London, 1994), 15-35.

⁷⁹ Theophrastus, *Ethikoi Karakteres*, ed. Isaac Casaubon (Geneva, 1592), and see Jacques Bos, “Individuality and Inwardness in the Literary Character Sketches of the Seventeenth Century”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 61 (1998): 142-157. For the evolution of the Theophrastan character, see Richard A. McCabe, “Refining Theophrastus: Ethical Concerns and Moral Paragons in the English Character Book”, *Hermathena* 159 (1995): 33-50.

⁸⁰ Joseph Hall, *Characters of Vertues and Vices* (London, 1608).

⁸¹ ps.-Sir Thomas Overbury, *A Wife Now the Widdow of Sir Thomas Overburye, Being a Most Exquisite and Singular Poem of the Choice of a Wife, Whereunto Are Added Many Witty Characters . . .* (London, 1614). It had gone through seventeen impressions, with widely varying content, by 1664 (Gwendolen Murphy, *A Bibliography of English Character-Books, 1608-1700* [Oxford, 1925], 15-25), and was certainly not by Overbury (cf. ODNB, *s.n.*).

⁸² John Earle, *Microcosmographie, or, a Peece of the World Discovered; in Essayes and Characters* (London, 1628). See generally Benjamin Boyce, *The Theophrastan Character in England to 1642* (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), J. W. Smeed, *The Theophrastan “Character”: the History of a Literary Genre* (Oxford, 1985), chap. one, and Murphy, *Bibliography of English Character-Books*.

⁸³ Samuel Person, *An Anatomical Lecture of Man, or, a Map of the Little World, Delineated in Essayes and Characters . . .* (London, 1664), 1-3.

complicates Bos's suggestion that what he calls "temporally structured character sketches" belong solely to the end of the seventeenth century and beyond.⁸⁴ Instead, it is clear that by the 1660s, the possibility that the static Theophrastan character could exist in time was, if not well-established, certainly conceived of.

The character as an atemporal description of an abstract type is, however, far from the minute description of individuals' lives found in Aubrey. The bridge between the two comes in the form of historical characters.⁸⁵ The details of their genesis are not entirely clear, but they were undoubtedly in existence by 1641, when Sir Robert Naunton wrote a series of characters of the Elizabethan court entitled *Fragmenta Regalia*, and by the last quarter of the seventeenth century, they were a sufficiently standard literary form to be introduced as set pieces in the histories of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and Gilbert Burnet.⁸⁶ It is in Clarendon's writings that the nearest parallel to Aubrey's *Minutes of Lives* may be found.

Clarendon's characters take the idea and structure of the Theophrastan character and apply it to an individual, relating action back to personality in the same way that a Theophrastan character does, but allowing for a greater complexity of being.⁸⁷ They generalise, but do not reduce their subjects to two-dimensionality. Frequently they turn upon the discontinuity between outward appearance and inward personality, as in the portrait of Thomas Howard, the collector earl of Arundel (for whom see chapter one):

It cannot be denied, that he had in his person, in his aspect and countenance, the appearance of a greate man . . . He wore and affected a habitt very different from that of the tyme, such as men had only beheld in the pictures of the most considerable

⁸⁴ Bos, "Literary Character Sketches of the Seventeenth Century", 152-153.

⁸⁵ For better or for worse, critical understanding of historical characters has traditionally been dominated by the anthology edited by David Nichol Smith, *Characters From the Histories & Memoirs of the Seventeenth Century, With an Essay on the Character and Historical Notes* (Oxford, 1918).

⁸⁶ Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia* ([London], 1641). Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* was not published until 1701-02 and Burnet's *History of My Own Time* was not published until 1724, but the composition of both works occurred squarely within a decade or so to either side of Aubrey's *Lives*, that is to say the 1670s-1700s.

⁸⁷ For Clarendon's characters see Martine Watson Brownley, *Clarendon and the Rhetoric of Historical Form* (Philadelphia, 1985), chap. five.

men, all which drew the eyes of most and the reverence of many towards him . . . But this was only his outsyde, his nature and true humour beinge so much disposed to levity, and vulgar delights . . .⁸⁸

Like Aubrey, Clarendon was concerned with recording outward appearances (though he often focused on clothing and carriage, rather than features) and setting these against manifestations of personality, as in his description of John Earle, himself a characterist and author of the *Microcosmographie*. There Clarendon linked Earle's appearance with his intentions, observing that:

No man was more negligent in his dresse, and habitt, and meene, no man more wary and cultivated in his behaviour and discourse, insomuch as he had the greater advantage when he was knowne, by promisinge so little before he was knowen.⁸⁹

Also like Aubrey, he noted the friendship and patronage networks in which his subjects moved, highlighting Earle's friendship with Viscount Falkland, and the importance of John Selden's acquaintance to Clarendon's own family.⁹⁰

Allowing for the inevitable variation of individual style, and for the differences inherent in a manuscript of lives and a polished narrative history, Clarendon's characters are the contemporary texts closest in style and intent to Aubrey's *Lives*. Elements of these derived from the Theophrastan characters popular in England earlier in the century, but it is here that the Theophrastan character – a static, generalising genre, albeit one that allowed for considerable psychological subtlety – was transformed by the influence of Tacitus and Tacitism.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* . . ., 6 vols., ed. W. Dunn Macray (Oxford, 1888), i. 70.

⁸⁹ Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The Life* . . ., 2 vols. (Oxford, 1760), i. 40.

⁹⁰ Clarendon, *Life*, i. 24-25.

⁹¹ A comprehensive history of Tacitism in early modern English thought remains to be written, but aspects are considered in Saúl Martínez Bermejo, *Translating Tacitus: The Reception of Tacitus' Works in the Vernacular Languages of Europe, 16th-17th Centuries* (Pisa, 2010); A. T. Bradford, "Stuart Absolutism and the Utility of Tacitus", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 46 (1983): 127-155; J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, 5 vols. to date

Clarendon's debt to Tacitus is well known, but in establishing a parallel line of influence for Aubrey, some explanation is necessary.⁹² One of the salient aspects of early modern Tacitism was a fascination with that aspect of Tacitus's writings focusing on hidden motivations. This is evident in the work of continental historians such as Paolo Sarpi and Enrico Davila, who in turn influenced Clarendon, but seems more generally to have been a characteristic of Tacitus which was foregrounded in contemporary readings.⁹³ Both Justus Lipsius, in his 1581 commentary on the *Annales* and his 1585 edition of the works, and Sir Henry Savile, in his 1591 translation, highlighted this aspect of Tacitean historiography.⁹⁴ For Lipsius, indeed, that aspect of the historian's works which revealed the "inner life" of its protagonists was a main attraction.⁹⁵ Lipsius's Tacitean philosophy of history was particularly influential in England, informing not only Savile's translation, but also, it has been convincingly argued, Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, whose description of antiquities was so frequently quoted by Aubrey.⁹⁶ Likewise, Richard Tuck has plausibly demonstrated that the "Discourse on Tacitus" in *Horae Subsecivae* (1620) was written by Hobbes, which only serves to underline the former's Tacitism.⁹⁷ Aubrey's immense intellectual debt to both Bacon and

(Cambridge, 1999-), i. 232-234; ii. 9-10; iii. 17-31; J. H. M. Salmon, "Stoicism and Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50 (1989): 199-225; M. F. Tenney, "Tacitus and the Politics of Early Modern England", *Classical Journal* 37 (1941): 151-163; Richard Tuck, "Hobbes and Tacitus", in *Hobbes and History*, ed. G. A. J. Rogers and Tom Sorell (London and New York, 2000), 99-111; Steven N. Zwicker and David Bywaters, "Politics and Translation: the English Tacitus of 1698", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 52 (1989): 319-346.

⁹² Paul Seaward, "Clarendon, Tacitism, and the Civil Wars of Europe", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68 (2005): 289-311; Brownley, *Clarendon and the Rhetoric of Historical Form*, 148 and *passim*.

⁹³ Peter Burke, "Tacitism", in *Tacitus*, ed. T. A. Dorey (London, 1969), 155.

⁹⁴ Justus Lipsius, *Ad annales Corn. Taciti liber commentarius sive notae* (Antwerp, 1581); C. Cornelij Taciti opera quae exstant, ed. Justus Lipsius (Antwerp, 1585); Sir Henry Savile, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba; Fower Bookes of the Historie of Cornelius Tacitus; The Life of Agricola* (Oxford, 1591).

⁹⁵ Tacitus, *Opera*, ed. Justus Lipsius (Leiden, 1590), sig. *4r ("hic mihi quisque principum aulas, principum interiorem vitam, consilia, inussa, facta consideret, & obvis in plerisque . . .").

⁹⁶ Adriana McCrea, *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England, 1584-1650* (Toronto, 1997), 79-87. See also Kenneth C. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago, 1976), 157-163, and Edwin B. Benjamin, "Bacon and Tacitus", *Classical Philology* 60 (1965): 102-110. For a more general account of the influence of Lipsius's Neostoicism, see *(Un)masking the Realities of Power: Justus Lipsius and the Dynamics of Political Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Erik De Bom, et al. (Leiden, 2011).

⁹⁷ Tuck, "Hobbes and Tacitus".

Hobbes thus makes a bridge back to Tacitus and his earlier reception, while his use of Savile's translation of Tacitus in the *Monumenta Britannica*, as well texts of Tacitus in Latin and French together with Lipsius's commentary, makes explicit the debt that is implicit in the *Lives*.⁹⁸

Hidden motivations and the gap between rational and emotional decisions are key interpretative points in Tacitus's writings, but his analyses of these are not cast in the form of characters. However, Savile in his translation of the *Histories* added "the end of Nero and the beginning of Galba", his own "reconstruction" of a lost portion of the *Annales*.⁹⁹ There, the tendency to focus on individual persons, unravelling their conflicting motivations, is much more pronounced. It seems likely that it was through this English reconstruction and translation of Tacitus, mediated by the political theory of Lipsius and combined with the influence of the Theophrastan character, that a style of character description focusing on motivations and the gap between the public and the private first entered the English biographical and historiographical spheres.

Seen from this angle, neither Clarendon nor Aubrey were entirely novel in their literary creations. Both were influenced by larger trends in the early- to mid-seventeenth century intellectual climate, both relied upon classical models mediated through earlier scholarship, and both applied theories of Tacitean history to the form of the character, Theophrastan or otherwise. Aubrey's innovation was not the creation of the genre in which he wrote, but rather his combining with it the techniques and concerns of antiquarianism, which gave the traditional character a new sharpness and precision, at odds both with the historical tradition represented by Clarendon and the biographical tradition promoted by Blackburne. In addition, Aubrey's antiquarianism and Tacitism divested the character of its

⁹⁸ For Aubrey's use of Savile's *Tacitus* see chapter four. He cites Lipsius's *Commentarius* at Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 67v and British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 146v. Citations to the *Annales*, the *Historiae*, and, less frequently, the *Agricola* and *Germania*, appear throughout Aubrey's works and in his treatise on education he specifies the desirability of consulting them "cum notis J. Lipsii" (Bodleian MS Aubrey 10, fol. 99ar).

⁹⁹ Savile, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba*. See David Womersley, "Sir Henry Savile's Translation of Tacitus and the Political Interpretation of Elizabethan Texts", *Review of English Studies* 42 (1991): 313-342.

tendency towards moral judgment, leading away from the abstract depiction of vice or virtue and towards a penetrating but essentially non-judgmental analysis of individual psychology.

The Fate of the *Lives*

Aubrey had helped Anthony Wood to information for his projected biographical dictionary of the writers and bishops of Oxford, the *Athenae Oxonienses*, long before the composition of his own *Lives* and he continued to do so afterwards, depositing the manuscripts of the *Lives* with Wood for long periods and encouraging him to draw upon them, wholesale, for the biographies contained within the *Athenae*. This generosity was repaid by Wood's complete failure to acknowledge Aubrey's assistance in the published *Athenae*, which were printed in 1691-1692.¹⁰⁰ Worse, however, was the aftermath. The second volume of the *Athenae*, containing a biography of Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon, Aubrey's fellow biographer, was published in July of 1692. On 11 November of that year, the earl's son took Wood to court for libel, having taken exception to Wood's assertion that his father took bribes from office-seekers.¹⁰¹ It seems likely that the contested statement must have originally derived from the second part of Aubrey's *Minutes of Lives*, for some time between 11 and 29 November Wood removed pages nine to forty-four of that volume as well as other unspecified pages. Aubrey noted with considerable concern that therein were:

contained Truths; but such as I entrusted no body with the sight of but himself: whom I thought I might have entrusted with my Life. There are severall papers, that may cutt my throate. I find too late, Memento dissidere was a Saying worthy one of the Sages [*sic*]. He hath also embezill'd the Index of it.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* . . . , 2 vols. (London, 1691-1692), i. sig. a.r-v.

¹⁰¹ The relevant court documents are reproduced in full in Andrew Clark, ed., *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695, Described By Himself*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1891-1900), iv. 1-50.

¹⁰² Bodleian MS Aubrey 7, fol. 2r.

Aubrey's rage was not permanent, for on 10 October 1694 he asked Edward Lhuyd to remove the sheet on which his comments were written from the manuscript, "which (though true) would make him [*i.e.*, Wood] angry".¹⁰³

Not long after this, Aubrey gave the manuscripts of the *Lives* to the Ashmolean Museum, having established a rapport with its keeper, Edward Lhuyd (see chapter two). The exact date of deposition is uncertain, but it is likely that they were in the "Boxfull of Antiquities" which Aubrey sent to Lhuyd on 31 August 1693 and which he did not give outright, but only deposited in the Musuem, "for there are some things reflecting upon Dr Wallis &c not fitt to be seen (yet) by every body".¹⁰⁴ What he deposited must have been parts one and three of the *Lives* (now Bodleian MSS 6 and 8) bound in vellum wrappers, together with the loose sheets remaining from part two, which had been "gelded" by Wood the year before. The modern Bodleian MS Aubrey 7, containing those sheets, was compiled by Edmund Malone during his study of the *Lives* in September 1792.¹⁰⁵ Once in the Ashmolean, the *Lives* appear to have been entirely neglected until 1761, when Thomas Warton, the literary historian, used them in his *Life* of Aubrey's friend and contemporary at Trinity College, Oxford, Ralph Bathurst.¹⁰⁶ Since then, they have been published in part numerous times, though frequently inaccurately and universally without respect to their original structure.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 117r.

¹⁰⁴ Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 92r. The "things reflecting upon Dr Wallis" were no doubt the unflattering life of him at Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 94v-95r.

¹⁰⁵ Bodleian MS Aubrey 7, fol. 1r.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Warton, *The Life and Literary Remains of Ralph Bathurst, M.D.: Dean of Wells and President of Trinity College in Oxford* (London, 1761), 153-155. Malone seems to have come to Aubrey through Warton, who passed on to him the details of Aubrey's life of Shakespeare as early as 1789, see Bodleian MS Malone 33 and *The Correspondence of Thomas Warton*, ed. David Fairer (Athens, Ga., and London, 1995), 634.

¹⁰⁷ For their full bibliography see Michael Hunter, "The Bibliography of John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*", *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review* 1 (1974): 6-8. The best edition to date is that by Andrew Clark (1898), but is soon to be superseded by a definitive edition edited by Kate Bennett.

The Place of the *Lives* in Aubrey's Works

When biography came to be studied as a separate literary genre in the early twentieth century, the Lytton Strachey image of Aubrey – a foolish, disorganised drunkard – distorted any attempt at an accurate assessment of his work.¹⁰⁸ Donald Stauffer, whose *English biography before 1700* otherwise remains a standard survey, fantasised the *Lives* as “gathered over the dinner-table in English country-houses” and concluded dismissively that “because Aubrey’s writings are unfinished notes and to a large extent formless, they are not of major importance in a study of the art of English biography”.¹⁰⁹ This view was largely unchanged when in 1988 Reed Whittemore classed Aubrey as an eccentric, “devoid of literary talent” (here he was quoting from Richard Garnett’s entry in the Victorian *DNB*), and described the *Lives* as “a large collection of oddly specific brevities – call them curiosities – about odd people, mostly his friends”.¹¹⁰ Some slight progress was made by Allan Pritchard, who recognised, at least, the importance of Aubrey’s emphasis on “minuteness” in his letters to Wood. Nonetheless, Pritchard repeated the old saw that the *Lives* were unfinished and credited Aubrey with “literary sense and critical discrimination” solely on the basis of his taste for Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Jonson – hardly outstanding examples of an unusually discriminating literary palate.¹¹¹

Leaving aside their wildly inaccurate characterisations of Aubrey, all the works discussed above also failed to recognise that the *Lives* were a form of antiquarianism and in

¹⁰⁸ Lytton Strachey, *Portraits in Miniature* (London, 1931), 19-28.

¹⁰⁹ Donald Stauffer, *English Biography Before 1700* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930), 165.

¹¹⁰ Reed Whittemore, *Pure Lives: the Early Biographers* (Baltimore and London, 1988), 132.

¹¹¹ Allan Pritchard, *English Biography in the Seventeenth Century* (Toronto, 2005), 170-198.

this failure lies the key to their misinterpretations.¹¹² To understand the *Lives* it is necessary to understand the context of their creation, Aubrey's reaction to Blackburne's *Vita* of Hobbes, and his determination to record as much data as possible for the use of future generations. Aubrey achieved this act of preservation by creating a new form of antiquarianised biography and it is only within the context of his other antiquarian studies that the sources and models for that biographical form can clearly be seen.

Inverting the viewpoint and examining the *Lives* as one aspect of Aubrey's larger antiquarian project, recognisable strands of thought can be identified within them as well. As with all of Aubrey's antiquarian works, the greatest emphasis is placed on the minute recording of the visual and on an attempted reconstruction of an unstable, continuously evolving social and cultural sphere. In their form, the *Lives* echo the subject categories of the *Remaines of Gentilisme* or the lists of inventions in the *Novelles*; a series of discrete textual units which together reveal a map of intellectual and social ties across time and space. Equally, the centrality of the individual human life recalls Aubrey's concern with scientific and scholarly priority and his conceptualisation of discovery as a moment of realisation or understanding that could be pinned down to the thoughts of a single person at a unique point in the course of history.

The *Lives* enjoy a preeminent position in Aubrey's canon today due to the modern taste for intimate biography, but seen as part of Aubrey's larger antiquarian work they assume a different character. Placed in that context they are an act of preservation occurring in tandem with far larger acts of recovery and interpretation (the *Monumenta Britannica*, the *Remaines of Gentilisme*). They were Aubrey's gift to the imagined intellectual historians of the

¹¹² Kate Bennett has pointed out, in a justly critical review, Pritchard's failure to recognise that Aubrey was "engaged in historical writing" (Kate Bennett, review of Allan Pritchard, *English Biography in the Seventeenth Century*, *Review of English Studies* 57 [2006]: 803-805).

future, but, as such, remained ancillary to his more central concerns with the recovery of the ancient world.

Conclusion

Aubrey and the Shape of Seventeenth-Century Antiquarianism

In his seminal article, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian”, Arnaldo Momigliano inaugurated the modern study of early modern antiquarianism with a précis of developments in the field during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹ Momigliano saw the crisis that had occurred at the turn of the eighteenth century as one essentially stemming from doubts over the validity of different forms of historical evidence. Pyrrhonism, exhibited in its most overwhelming form by Jean Hardouin, impugned the value of the antiquarians’ traditional preserve – classical texts – forcing a shift in which literary texts were “altogether subordinated . . . to coins, statues, vases and inscriptions”.² More recently, Peter Burke has reiterated the Momiglianian line by focusing on the shift from text-centred to artefact-centred methods of study, and seeing this shift as the central crux on which seventeenth-century antiquarianism turned.³

Such narratives of antiquarian development are deeply problematic and tend to reduce the complex relationship between text and artefact down to a simple binary. Aubrey’s

¹ Arnaldo Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 285-315.

² Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian”, 285. The keyword is “subordinated”. The history of scholarship surrounding inscribed artefacts such as coins and inscriptions goes back to the earliest stages of the Renaissance, see M. H. Crawford, C. R. Ligota, and J. B. Trapp, eds., *Medals and Coins from Budé to Mommsen* (London, 1990), *Numismatische Literatur 1500-1864: die Entwicklung der Methoden einer Wissenschaft*, ed. Peter Berghaus (Wiesbaden, 1995), John Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious: The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1999), and William Stenhouse, *Reading Inscriptions and Writing Ancient History: Historical Scholarship in the Late Renaissance* (London, 2005).

³ Peter Burke, “Images as Evidence in Seventeenth-Century Europe”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003): 273-296.

career, in particular, complicates any vision of a straightforward development from “backward” humanist methodologies (i.e., recovering data about traditionally “antiquarian” subjects from texts) to a proto-modern “professional” methodology which is meant, in some way, to anticipate modern archaeology or the social sciences. This conclusion traces the developments in Aubrey’s scholarly career which have been examined in previous chapters, discusses how these allow us to reinterpret Aubrey, and then suggests how case studies such as this suggest a substantially different developmental narrative for antiquarianism than that outlined by Momigliano and Burke.

Aubrey’s Antiquarian Career

Aubrey dated the beginning of his antiquarian career to 1654, when he “began to enter into pocket memorandum bookes philosophical and antiquarian remarques” and tried, unsuccessfully, to transmit a drawing of a Roman inscription from Caerleon to the dying John Selden.⁴ His first attempt at writing an antiquarian text, however, dates from 1663, when he began preparing the *Templa Druidum*, his landmark study of prehistoric monuments in Britain that would ultimately become the first part of his *Monumenta Britannica* (see chapter three). The first phase of Aubrey’s antiquarian work extends from the inauguration of his megalithic project to the compilation of his two county histories in 1671-1672, immediately after his bankruptcy. In this early period, his debt to the sub-discipline of chorography and county history is considerable. The first drafts of the *Templa Druidum* and the essay “Of Camps” are part of the tradition begun with Camden’s *Britannia*, the systematic study of

⁴ John Aubrey, ‘Brief Lives’, *Chiefly of Contemporaries, Set Down Between 1669 & 1696*, 2 vols., ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1898) i. 39; John Aubrey, *Monumenta Britannica*, 2 vols., ed. Rodney Legge and John Fowles (Sherborne, Dorset, 1980-1982), i. 455.

ancient monuments across Britain, while the county histories of Wiltshire and Surrey as well as the essay “Of St. Vincent’s Rocks and Bristol” fall squarely within the well-trodden path established by Burton, Dugdale, and numerous others in the first half of the seventeenth century.⁵ These are uncontroversial identifications, but they overturn one of the basic assumptions traditionally made about Aubrey’s antiquarianism: that his culminating achievement was the identification of Stonehenge as a British temple. Instead, this was the hypothesis from which the *Templa Druidum* sprang while Aubrey was still in his antiquarian apprenticeship. The more significant, methodologically revolutionary aspects of the *Monumenta* were added later. His mature work is hinted at, however, by his composition of the *Chronologia Architectonica* and the *Chronologia Graphica* (in its first, shorter version) in 1671 and 1672.⁶ The *Chronologiae* owe their focus to the chorographical tradition, in which architecture and manuscript public records were central, but Aubrey’s move towards systematisation was something new.

The 1670s represent a lull in what we know of Aubrey’s writing; he continued revising and expanding the *Monumenta* and the *Description of Wiltshire*, but began no new work until the *Life of Hobbes* in December 1679 (see chapter seven). This second phase is dominated by the composition of the *Minutes of Lives* in 1680 and 1681. As with the *Chronologiae*, Aubrey was indebted to an earlier antiquarian tradition – in this case the biographical dictionaries of “worthies”, of which Wood’s *Athenae* was the only the most recent and most scholarly – but transformed it in his own work, melding Lipsius’s interpretation of Tacitus with the Theophrastan character to create a cutting, trenchant new form of biography. It was also in 1681 that Aubrey made the acquaintance of the travelling Swedish scholar Johan Heysig and came into contact with the ideas of Olof Rudbeck, so influential on his later prehistoric work

⁵ It is thus unsurprising that Aubrey understood his copying of the Caerleon inscription in 1654 as “adding” to Camden’s *Britannia* and contextualised it with a citation to a similar epigraph in Hubert Goltzius’s *Thesaurus rei antiquariae hibernicae* (Antwerp, 1579); see Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 455.

⁶ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 152r, and see chapter six.

(see chapter three).⁷ This period saw considerable revision and expansion of that project, as indicated by his decision in May 1680 to rename the *Templa Druidum* as the more expansive *Monumenta Britannica* (see chapter four). During this second phase Aubrey can be seen moving away from the English chorographical tradition and towards a closer engagement with the works of European scholars such as Lipsius and Rudbeck.

The final phase of Aubrey's antiquarian career extended from 1687 to 1693, after another lull during most of the 1680s.⁸ In February 1687 he began writing the first part of the *Remaines of Gentilisme* (parts two and three would follow in autumn 1688 and spring 1689) and in October of the same year he wrote the preface to his never-completed *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum*.⁹ In 1689 he prepared a dramatically expanded version of the *Chronologia Graphica* and later in the year he finished compiling a fair copy – evidently with many additions – of the *Monumenta Britannica*.¹⁰ This frenzy of composition, which went hand in hand with his efforts to find a secure home for his manuscripts and books in the Ashmolean Museum, continued with *An Apparatus for the Lives of our English Mathematical Writers* (1690), the fair copy of his *Perambulation of Surrey* (1691-1692), and the *Proportion of the severall Languages Ingredients of our English* (1693).¹¹ Aubrey's determination to recover the ancient English past – which may be taken as characteristic of most seventeenth-century English antiquarians – had never waned, but the tools he chose for the task had shifted dramatically from his early work in the 1660s and 1670s. His late period was also his most philologically and linguistically focused, with texts such as the *Interpretation* and the *Proportion* using statistics and etymologies to recover data about the settlement patterns and culture of ancient and early

⁷ For the circumstances of this intellectual encounter see Kelsey Jackson Williams and William Poole, "A Swede in Restoration Oxford: Gothic Patriots, Swedish Books, and English Scholars", *Lias* 39 (2012): 1-66.

⁸ The *Chronologia Vestiaria* and the *Nouvelles* may, however, date from the mid-1680s; see chapter six.

⁹ British Library MS Lansdowne 231, fol. 102r; Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19av.

¹⁰ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 185r. This fair copy is the surviving autograph manuscript (Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 24-25).

¹¹ Bodleian MSS Aubrey 4, fol. 31r (*Surrey*), Aubrey 9, fol. 69r (*Mathematical Writers*), Tanner 456a, fol. 40r (*Surrey*), and Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 239r (*Proportion*).

medieval England in a way quite foreign to his earlier fieldwork for the *Monumenta*. This work was anchored in his reading of the Dutch comparative linguist Marcus Zuerius van Boxhorn and in his correspondence with Edward Lhuyd on Welsh philological issues (see chapters two and six). *The Remaines of Gentilisme* was another arm of the same project, using folklore in conjunction with classical texts to generate new knowledge about Romano-British culture and, in some instances, to follow up Rudbeck's theories of prehistoric European cultural unity with hints towards a shared cultural inheritance throughout ancient Europe. In this phase Aubrey, drawing on the combined resources of European antiquarianism and philology, was groping towards a way of conceptualising something which might now be called Indo-European culture. This, his most theoretically advanced antiquarian work, was also, paradoxically, that which was least reliant upon an analysis of fieldwork and the examination of artefacts. Although he continued to add and refine to the *Monumenta Britannica* throughout his life, his later writings showed an increasing move away from the methodologies which had inspired it and towards anthropological and philological approaches. Ultimately, his work came more to resemble Edward Lhuyd's, a mixture of antiquarian and philological investigations into the same culture (in Lhuyd's case the Celtic fringe, in Aubrey's prehistoric and Roman Britain), rather than that of his successors in prehistoric archaeology such as William Stukeley and the younger Gales.

Aubrey's Contributions to the Antiquarian Project

Aubrey's importance as an antiquarian does not rest upon his unusually heavy reliance on visual evidence, nor upon a lucky (albeit not quite right) guess as to the origins of Stonehenge. Instead, his work represented a significant advance within the larger antiquarian tradition due to his continued efforts to date, systematise, and compare the data he recovered. When John

Woodward criticised Aubrey's megalithic theories for relying "so much on fancy & conjecture" he did the older scholar a disservice.¹² Aubrey's initial hypothesis was just that, but the remainder of his work on the *Monumenta Britannica* consisted of an unprecedented accumulation of fieldwork, which provided the first systematic survey of prehistoric and Roman monuments in Britain. This accumulation of data provided the same impetus for analysis as Ole Worm's collection of data from runestones had in the Danish antiquarianism of the early seventeenth century: it allowed Aubrey to form intelligent conjectures about the nature and use of stone circles, standing stones, barrows, hill forts, and other features of the landscape in a far more informed manner than had been possible before. Even where Aubrey's failure to recognise the depth of prehistory led him to radically misunderstand the hill fort forms he recorded, methodologically he moved forward, in his recognition of the importance of carefully recording data about physical remains in the landscape as a way of understanding a period of history for which few or no written sources survived.

The *Chronologiae* broke new ground in a different aspect of antiquarian study. Aubrey had recognised early on the necessity of establishing a solid chronology within which ancient and medieval British history could be understood and went one step further than his contemporaries in recognising that such a chronology had to encompass dateable physical remains. The novelty of Aubrey's compositions came not from an increased reliance upon artefacts as evidence, but from an understanding that artefacts could be organised into chronological series which might then be used to solve problems of dating in other contexts. His chronology of scripts, in particular, anticipated Jean Mabillon's 1681 *magnum opus* and is one of the first known essays on diplomatic. While remaining a devoted adherent to neo-

¹² Woodward wrote to Edward Lhuyd on 23 January 1693 that "[a]s for Mr. Aubry, he may be for aught I know a very worthy person; but, after this I think I may pretty freely pronounce him mistaken, if he contend y^t Stonehenge was a British or Druids Temple: 'twere to be wisht y^t writers on these subjects would not rely so much on fancy & conjecture, but consult y^e Ancients, as those who are y^e most proper Judges of these Matters" (Bodleian MS Ashmole 1817b, fol. 367v).

classicism in all its forms, Aubrey recognised the changes which had taken place in architecture between the Norman Conquest and his own time in the *Chronologia Architectonica* and laid the groundwork for the antiquarian-aesthetic appreciation of medieval material culture which emerged in the eighteenth century. His great originality in these tracts was an understanding that the high middle ages were not an undifferentiated era of bad taste and Popery, but had their own distinct epochs, which, when properly understood, could shed light on a host of antiquarian issues, although for Aubrey the ultimate purpose of studying such an era was in order to bridge the centuries between the culture of his own time and the Romano-British culture on which he believed it was based. The middle ages were never Aubrey's principal era of study, but he achieved more than most in repairing the perceived rift in knowledge and approach between them and the ancient world.

Nonetheless, Aubrey's greatest achievement was theoretical. His realisation that there existed a European prehistory largely, if not totally, independent of the Biblical prehistory which had straitjacketed earlier scholars was epoch-making. This manifested itself in his survey of ancient sites in the *Monumenta*, together with his comparisons of them to other sites in France, Germany, Scandinavia, and elsewhere, as well as in his inchoate studies of Celtic linguistics and his attempted anthropology of folklore in the *Remaines of Gentilisme*. These works had begun as an attempt to recover the history of Roman Britain and, secondarily, to demonstrate the cultural origins of modern England (and Wales) in a perceived Romano-British inheritance. What Aubrey eventually came to believe, however, was that the concordances he had discovered were only one corner of a much larger, now vanished prehistoric culture. He seems to have understood this to be essentially Celtic, as when he described the proto-British language having been, "heretofore the current Speech over a[ll] Brittaine & Gaule: from the Orcades and the northern Isles, to the Appenine-hills", but the boundaries he placed on it more accurately reflected a Boxhornian Scythian, Proto-

Indo-European language and culture from which both Romans and barbarians took their origins.¹³

Aubrey's work was, indeed, a turning point, but not one from textual to visual study. Instead, he existed between the meticulous, but minute, antiquarianism of the seventeenth century which recorded, categorised, and published accounts of the ancient past, and the grand, but vague, world-building of eighteenth-century philosophic prehistorians.¹⁴ Already liberated from a narrowly Biblical worldview, he could still see in Iron Age hill forts a parallel with the ruins of the Tower of Babel as recorded by Benjamin of Tudela and a Baroque German mathematician (see chapter four). Rejecting Rudbeck's virulent nationalism, he could nonetheless take from him ideas of stratigraphy which, although not practised in his own work, pointed towards a new and vaster prehistory than had previously been conceived of. In his greatest works, the *Monumenta* and the *Remaines*, Aubrey was less a student of the known past, whether classical or medieval, than a pioneer into the unknown. His significance derives from his position in the first generation of scholars for whom the recovery of a genuinely unknown prehistory was conceivable and his ground-breaking studies within that newly revealed continent of learning.

The Shape of Antiquarianism in the Seventeenth Century

This picture of Aubrey's career fails to neatly map onto the textual-visual binary discussed above, and for good reason. Momigliano's survey of antiquarianism remains central to any understanding of the field, but its emphasis on the emergence of a more visually-focused

¹³ Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17v.

¹⁴ For the latter see J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Volume IV: Barbarians, Savages and Empires* (Cambridge, 2005), part one.

antiquarianism in the early eighteenth century is misplaced. The study of ruins, coins, inscriptions, vases, lamps, and a host of other artefacts was standard from the very beginning of modern antiquarian study in the Italian Renaissance and was, by Aubrey's time, as ordinary as could be.¹⁵ What changed was not that these artefacts *were* studied, but the *ways* in which they were studied. Antiquarians in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries tended to focus on portable artefacts, ideally ones which contained readable inscriptions, and to ignore the contexts in which they had been discovered. There were exceptions to this rule, but by and large this earlier period of antiquarian study can be conceived of as the study of artefacts at the expense of sites.

In the latter half of the seventeenth century this began to change. Aubrey, as has been seen, led the way in England with his meticulous and comprehensive surveys of prehistoric and Roman archaeological sites across Britain, but he was not alone in this advance. Ole Worm in Denmark and Jean-Jacques Chifflet in France paid increasing attention to the geographical contexts in which the artefacts they discussed were discovered (the non-portable nature of megaliths and runestones undoubtedly assisted Worm's approach in this respect), while Antoine Desgodets took a major step forward in his architecturally exact measurements of ancient ruins in Rome, published in 1682.¹⁶ Desgodets and Aubrey were of a piece in their insistence on the importance of precise measurement and delineation of sites and ruins *in situ*. This development was far more revolutionary than

¹⁵ For the contours of antiquarianism in the later seventeenth century, see the list and explanations in Jacques Spon, *Miscellanea eruditae antiquitatis* (Lyons, 1685), sig. ã3r-v, discussed in chapter one.

¹⁶ Jean-Jacques Chifflet, *Anastasis Childerici I Francorum regis, sive thesaurus sepulchralis . . .* (Antwerp, 1655); Ole Worm, *Danicorum monumentorum libri sex* (Copenhagen, 1643); Antoine Babuty Desgodets, *Les édifices antiques de Rome* (Paris, 1682). For the place of Chifflet and Worm in the history of archaeological method see Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology*, trans. Ian Kinnes and Gillian Varndell (London, 1996), 160-165, 203-204. Desgodets remains unstudied, but see Wolfgang Herrmann, "Antoine Desgodets and the Académie Royale d'Architecture", *The Art Bulletin* 40 (1958): 23-53, and *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, ed. J. Balteau, et al. (Paris, 1929 -), x. cols. 1358-1359.

the collections of images, sometimes seen as a turning point in antiquarianism, such as Bernard de Montfaucon's *L'antiquité expliquée*.¹⁷

The recognition that sites as well as individual artefacts could produce knowledge about the ancient past was one significant advance on the part of late seventeenth-century antiquarianism. Another, of equal significance, is what Peter Burke has described as “the discovery of the barbarians”.¹⁸ The seventeenth century saw unprecedented interest in the non-classical antiquities of the European nations, an interest which manifested itself in the excavation of Childeric's tomb in France, the Stonehenge controversy in England, the scholarly war over the date of the old church at Uppsala in Sweden, and the cataloguing of runestones in Denmark. Scholars began to apply techniques originally developed to interpret the physical remains of classical culture to the “barbarian” cultures which had preceded modern Europe. This had been done to a limited extent before, but the seventeenth century saw an upsurge far greater than that either before or, crucially, after.

The second weak point in the traditional, and admittedly teleological, view of antiquarianism put forward by Momigliano is his insistence on a straightforward, organic development of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century antiquarianism into Gibbonian and nineteenth-century narrative history.¹⁹ Ingo Herklotz has moderated this and suggested that, instead, antiquarianism fed into nineteenth-century, post-Wolffian *Altertumswissenschaft*, but even this tells only part of the story.²⁰ The tectonic cultural shifts of the early eighteenth century which eventually congealed into the Enlightenment were not favourable to

¹⁷ Bernard de Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée, et représentée en figures*, 5 vols. in 10 (Paris, 1719-1724). See Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven and London, 1993), 131-133. Montfaucon's programme of systematic illustration had been anticipated in the previous century by the Roman antiquary, Cassiano dal Pozzo; see Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (München, 1999).

¹⁸ Burke, “Images as Evidence”, 282.

¹⁹ See Arnaldo Momigliano, “Gibbon's Contribution to Historical Method”, *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 2 (1954): 450-463.

²⁰ Ingo Herklotz, “Arnaldo Momigliano's ‘Ancient History and the Antiquarian’: A Critical Review”, in *Momigliano and Antiquarianism: Foundations of the Modern Cultural Sciences*, ed. Peter N. Miller (Toronto, 2007), 127-153.

antiquarian study and shifted the goal posts by which research was assessed. Aubrey had unproblematically engaged both in field work and grand theorising, but increasingly these became separated. The scholars most immediately in the tradition of seventeenth-century antiquarians such as Aubrey, Worm, or Chifflet engaged in ever more systematic and comprehensive study and excavation of ancient sites, increasingly under the patronage of aristocrats or societies as the cost of such specialised study became too much for individual scholars to bear.²¹ This study, however, was reconceptualised as the recovery of classical art and its new-found aesthetic purpose meant that any investigation of “barbarian” antiquities was left out in the cold. The barbarians, instead, were studied by the *philosophes* rather than the *érudits* and the recovery of the physical culture of, say, the ancient Goths or Saxons, was subjugated to a more general theorising concerning their origins, the development of their societies, and their relationship to modern nations. Archaeology and anthropology became crucially separated, the one the purview of technicians, the other of philosophers. This, more than anything, was the great shift in antiquarianism during Aubrey’s time, a shift that ultimately led to its fragmentation into multiple modern disciplines.

Aubrey and Literature

Aubrey’s place in the early modern literary canon has never seriously been contested, but his “literary” compositions are generally taken to have been the *Lives*, with his antiquarian and scientific works remaining outside the pale. This is a gross anachronism. Literature, before the sea-change brought about by the Battle of the Books, was a state of being, not a series

²¹ It is significant in this respect that much of the original archaeological work undertaken in the eighteenth century was funded by organisations such as the London-based Society of Dilettanti (see Jason M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti: Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment* [New Haven and London, 2009]).

of canonical texts containing material similar to our modern understanding of “creative writing”. To have “literature” meant being an individual who had read and assimilated ancient and modern learning, antiquarianism as well as plays, poetry, and biographies.²² The antiquarian texts discussed in this volume may not be literature in the narrow, modern sense, but certainly contributed *towards* having literature in an inclusive, early modern sense. Like his friend and contemporary, Sir Thomas Browne, Aubrey was an antiquarian before antiquarianism became non-literary.

These shifting definitions go far to explain some of the peculiarities inherent in Aubrey’s writing in particular and seventeenth-century antiquarianism in general. Aubrey’s careful drafting and redrafting of the prefaces to his major works, changing a verb here, inverting a comparison there, was an integral part of his conception of antiquarianism as a *literary* activity (in both the early modern and the modern sense of the word). Style, I would argue – in contrast to many previous writers on antiquarianism – was equally important when writing an essay on burial urns as when writing an essay on poetry and both texts existed within different divisions of the same larger humanist project. A conception of Aubrey either as an amateur or as a writer of dry, technical works would be to misunderstand the issue in two very different, but equally serious ways. He was not an amateur, for there were no professionals (not, at least, in the sense that teleologically-inclined historians of scholarship tend to mean) in the field within which he worked. Nor was he a writer of technical works any more than a poet was a writer of technical works; each was simply engaging with a different side of the same coin.

To recover Aubrey’s antiquarian works and understand them within their contemporary context, then, is not only an engagement with current debates about the shape and development of early modern antiquarianism, it is also a challenge to any projection of

²² See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977), 45-54.

modern understandings of the scope of literature onto the early modern. Boundaries were more fluid in the seventeenth century than in today's regimented universities and to understand Aubrey's scholarship, it is necessary to recognise the essential interpenetration of well-crafted prose with antiquarianism, of antiquarianism with science, of science with philosophy, and so on. The present work has endeavoured to do this and, in doing so, to propose not only a new way of looking at Aubrey, but a revision of our present understanding of early modern antiquarianism and early modern learned culture as a whole.

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