Abstract and Keywords

Focusing on his friendships with the younger scholars Thomas Gale and Edward Lhuyd, this chapter explores Aubrey’s late interest in philology and linguistic evolution. Gale’s study of the *Antonine Itinerary* bled over into his notes on Aubrey’s *Monumenta* and may also have been the inspiration for Aubrey’s own *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum*, a planned etymological dictionary of British toponyms. Later, Aubrey passed this project on to the Welsh scholar Lhuyd, who adapted it and included it in his ambitious *Design* for a comprehensive ‘British dictionary’. Aubrey’s philological writings prove to be a crucial connecting point in an evolving tradition of toponymic and etymological study stretching from seventeenth-century Cambridge to eighteenth-century Wales and beyond.

*Keywords:* Edward Lhuyd, etymological, linguistic evolution, philology, Thomas Gale, toponyms
At first glance a study of Aubrey’s philology might seem like an oxymoron. Unlike many of his contemporaries he never edited a text, prepared a dictionary, or proposed a conjectural emendation. Nor did his studies of pre-Roman and Roman Britain fit easily into the intellectual frameworks of a generation of English philologists who were increasingly focused on the exotic, whether Greek, Arabic, or Anglo-Saxon. However, Aubrey was nonetheless a philologist. In his manuscript tracts *The Proportion of the Several Languages Ingredient of our English* and *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum* and in his interactions with younger scholars he applied philological approaches to the same problem he had taken up in the *Remaines of Gentilisme*: the ethnic and cultural origins of seventeenth-century England. The fragmentary, scattered nature of this material has caused it to be largely overlooked, but when examined as a whole it reveals that Aubrey’s final years were increasingly dominated by a fascination with the mutability of language and the ways in which that mutability could be interrogated to reveal the shifting nature of the ancient cultural landscape. These fascinations aligned him with an evolving tradition which began in Restoration Cambridge and reached its culmination in the work of Aubrey’s friend and younger contemporary Edward Lhuyd, a tradition in which Aubrey played a central, though subsequently forgotten, role.

Thomas Gale and the *Antonine Itinerary*
On 6 December 1677 the Royal Society saw one antiquary, the traveller George Wheler, proposed as a member, and three more, Robert Plot, (p.137) Thomas Smith, and Thomas Gale admitted.¹ The last of these, Dr Gale, had already had a meteoric career as a fellow and tutor at Trinity College, Cambridge, followed by a brief stint as Regius Professor of Greek there before becoming High Master of St Paul’s School in 1672, doctor of divinity at his alma mater in 1675, and prebend of St Paul’s Cathedral in 1676.² Gale was steeped in Restoration-era classical scholarship and shared his contemporaries’ fascination with Hellenistic Greek texts, particularly mythological and rhetorical works. By 1677 he had already published three volumes, each consisting of editions of multiple classical texts, including the imposing 1675 *Historiae poeticae scriptores antiqui*, which included his ‘Dissertation on Mythological Writers’, a substantial essay placing his work in the tradition of Scaliger and Selden, as well as 151 pages of explanatory notes and 18 genealogical tables illustrating the works edited.³
No letters between Gale and Aubrey survive—there may not have been any, if they simply met each other in London—but their collaborations can be reconstructed from the textual traces each left in the other’s archive. If shared membership in the Royal Society was not enough, it seems likely that they must have known each other by the time Gale proposed Johan Heysig—a visiting Swedish scholar and friend of Aubrey’s—for membership in the Royal Society on 23 November 1681. This chronology dovetails closely with Gale’s growing interest in medieval British texts; already in his 1678 edition of the De mysteriis of Iamblichus his notes include references to Gerald of Wales and the early history of post-classical Britain. Subsequently this led him to a dramatic volte-face in his scholarship, leaving the world of Greek texts behind and editing two major folio editions of medieval chronicles, the Historiae Anglicanae scriptores quinque of 1687 and the Historiae Britanniae, Saxonicae, Anglo-Danicae, Scriptores XV of 1691. At some point between the publication of these latter two volumes Gale gave Aubrey a manuscript list of his works, both published (p.138) and in preparation, which shows the full extent of his ambitions. From then on, aside from a projected edition of the Naumachica (a tenth-century CE Byzantine tract on naval warfare), Gale’s projects were all British in focus, including new editions of the Venerable Bede and Matthew Paris, a collection of laws from Ethelbert to Edward I, a history of the reign of Edward II, a baronage of England in three parts, and an edition of the British section of the so-called Antonine Itinerary.
Whether this change in focus is in any way indebted to Aubrey is unknown, but the two men certainly worked closely together on these topics during the 1680s and 1690s. Beginning in December 1692, Aubrey’s letters began to be directed to Gale’s London address, at least while Aubrey was resident in the city, with correspondence sent to him there from that date until as late as 31 July 1695 marked ‘to be left with Doctor Gale’. It may have been during this time of shared post, shared company, and perhaps a shared library, that a series of annotations were made by Aubrey in Gale’s copy of the 1607 edition of Camden’s *Britannia*. Besides extensive annotations by Gale, largely concerning ancient British toponyms, there is a note on the recto of the flyleaf, unmistakeably in Aubrey’s hand, reading ‘A ms history of England in the possession of James Earl of Abingdon. Anno. … .Henrici III. a very great dearth of corn sold for … ’ This was evidently related both to Aubrey’s interest in economic history, which manifested itself elsewhere in the *Stromata*, and to Gale’s collection and publication of medieval histories and chronicles.

More substantial, however, were Gale’s footprints in Aubrey’s works. Gale contributed extensive annotations to Aubrey’s *Monumenta Britannica*, his *Perambulation of Surrey*, and his *Naturall Historie of Wiltshire*, as well as making a transcription, now lost, of the *Monumenta*. His annotations were 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 the passe over Severn. Here hath happened a misplacing of these two names as it doeth often happen in Antonine.’ Elsewhere he was concerned with more fully contextualizing 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 [pavement borders].’ His notes were sufficiently expansive that the manuscript of the *Monumenta* which Aubrey envisaged, optimistically, as compositor-ready copy, stated that it was ‘Illustrated with Notes of Thomas Gale, D.D and John Evelyn Esquier’.

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Gale’s philological comments on British toponyms, which make up a large part of his annotations to the *Monumenta*, were derived directly from his own project to re-edit the British section of the *Antonine Itinerary*. The *Itinerary* was a text dating possibly to the third century CE which recorded stations and the distances between them along the main roads of the Roman Empire; as such it offered a unique snapshot of later imperial Britain complete with a geographical framework which, theoretically, allowed for the equation of classical toponyms with modern locations.\(^{16}\) The only catch was that the surviving manuscripts were extremely corrupt in their readings, offering a tantalizing puzzle to any would-be editor. By Gale’s time this had already been attempted more than once. Abraham Ortelius had edited the complete *Itinerary* in 1600 and the philologist and antiquary William Burton had prepared an English commentary on the British section of the *Itinerary* which was posthumously published in 1658.\(^{17}\) By this latter date textual scholarship on the document was already sufficiently advanced for Burton to point to previous editions and corrections by Aldus Manutius, William Harrison, Josias Simler, and Jerome Surita.\(^{18}\)

*Place Names and the Language of Ancient Britain*
Gale’s study of ancient toponyms was significant not just for the ways in which it informed his annotation of the *Monumenta Britannica*, but also for the blueprint it provided Aubrey when he subsequently came to attempt his own study of toponyms within the context of ancient linguistic change. Gale, focusing on recovering accurate manuscript readings, had dealt with linguistic change only incidentally, but both his work and that of Aubrey derived from a longer history of linguistic study. Earlier schools of thought had proposed a predetermined relationship between objects and meaning in the tradition of Plato’s *Cratylus*, an understanding of which could allow the proper names of places, people, and things to be \((p.141)\) read as a historical palimpsest.\(^22\) 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 popularized 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 historicized 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.\(^23\)
When Aubrey composed his *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum*, he built upon these gradual shifts in early modern linguistic theory and attempted to provide a comprehensive etymological dictionary of English, Scottish, and Irish toponyms and their origins, setting works like Gale’s upon firm and systematic etymological foundations. 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. In 1680 he even went so far as to ask 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, apparently in the hope that it could be used to shed light on linguistic issues. This pattern of philological 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 the Saxon Conquest; and to interpret them by the help of Dr Davies Welsh Dictionary’ and the assistance of a Welsh-speaking acquaintance, Mr Evans. He later expanded this to include ‘the hard obsolete Saxon words’ which lay behind other toponyms. By the time he came to write the preface to the *Interpretation*, on 31 October 1687, he envisaged an etymological dictionary of place names that would, if completed, cover every significant toponym in England.

For Aubrey, linguistic traces—like the remnants of folklore in his *Remaines of Gentilisme*—were indicators of previous cultural exchange or colonization. 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* gave surprisingly little attention to the Roman presence in Britain, with Latin being marginalized 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’. Instead, Aubrey highlighted the role of ‘British’ as spoken in the classical word, pleading for its historical importance within the framework of learning.
this ancient Language (that is now crept into Co[rners] and disesteemed) was heretofore the current Speech over a[l] Britaine & Gaule: from the Orcades and the northern Isles, to the Appenine-hills ... and though it be out of fashion; is in it selfe, as Significant & copious as a[n]y of the modern languages, which the Learned that understand [it] doe assert.³⁰

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 (p.143) pronunciation which will much disguise words, as we well know how names of men & Places are so by the Vulgar.³¹

When Aubrey referred to ‘British’ he did not, then, equate the term unproblematically with modern Welsh. Instead he recognized 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 echoed Brerewood’s discussion of Byzantine Greek earlier in the century. It was certainly different from the classical Greek dialects, Brerewood had concluded, but that 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 ... but hath gotten into their language, by the ordinarie change, which time and many common occasions ... are wont to bring’.³²
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 positioned himself as engaged in the same activity as ‘Buxhornius [who] has made … the Interpretation of the names of several Townes, and Rivers in France’. Aubrey was referring to the Dutch scholar Marcus Zuerius van Boxhorn’s 1654 *Originum Gallicarum*. 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. This was only 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 theorized ‘Scythian’. As such, he took pains in the *Originum* to argue against the Hebrew origin for Welsh which had been proposed by Welsh scholars in the sixteenth century, asserting instead its relationship to the other Celtic languages.

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 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). 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. Rather than seeing such concordances as evidence of a single proto-European language, he interpreted them by recourse to the theory of invasive language change:

> I am assured by severall learned Gentlemen of Wales, as Capt: Rob. Pugh è soc: Jesus, Sir Llewellin Jenkins (Secretary of Estate) & Mr 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: which would afford good Evidence (without being beholding to Historie) that there was a time, when the Greekes had Colonies here.
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. 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, Aubrey seems to have been shutting down the possibility of an internal decay which would allow for a genetic relationship between Welsh and Greek by emphasizing the probability that the Greek loanwords in Welsh were due solely to cultural exchange. His preference for the invasion hypothesis is confirmed by a brief excursion in support of Greek colonization: ‘There are several Persian words mixt with the German, which Shewes that there has (p.145) been an Incursion of them into those northern countries; but no Historie tells us when: Time and Oblivion have obliterated it.’ 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.

Aubrey emerges from this 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 appears to have viewed languages as separate, autochthonous units, which might interact with each other but did not share a common genealogy beyond that caused by Babel.

The care with which Aubrey placed the ancient British language in a larger context might at first seem excessive, given that his work ventured 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 these toponyms could be successfully interpreted. Aubrey was aware of the extent to which language could evolve, even over a comparatively short period, and recognized the necessity of understanding the development of the British languages through time in order to accurately interpret place names.

Edward Lhuyd: Collaboration and Inheritance
Aubrey prepared the preface of the *Interpretation* in 1687, but the work was still incomplete four years later when he wrote to his then-new acquaintance Edward Lhuyd, keeper of the recently founded Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, telling him that ‘there is no body that I know, that is so fitt to goe through with that Designe as your selfe ... the Taske will be extreme easy to you, and it will be delightfull to ingeniose persons to peruse’. How had Aubrey come to know the young Welsh scholar and what made him choose Lhuyd as the preferred continuator of his project?

Lhuyd was the illegitimate son of a failed gentry entrepreneur and had gone up to Jesus College, Oxford, in 1682. He quickly became associated with the Oxford Philosophical Society, then headed by Robert Plot, the first keeper of the Ashmolean Museum and an acquaintance of Aubrey’s; in 1687 he was appointed Plot’s assistant, a position he would hold until he succeeded him as keeper in 1691. Despite their mutual association with Plot, Aubrey and Lhuyd appear to have first met in the house of Aubrey’s longtime friend the gentlemanly virtuoso Edmund Wylde in Bloomsbury. Wylde is an enigmatic figure, a ‘rich philosopher’ according to one contemporary account, who played Maecenas to some of the less financially stable individuals surrounding the Royal Society and ‘delighted in nothing more than in showing his multifarious contrivances’. Although it does not survive, he possessed a library known for its rare works on antiquarian and other subjects, which may have led him into acquaintance with the budding antiquary and natural philosopher Lhuyd. Certainly Lhuyd subsequently recalled that it was Wylde who ‘was the first that gave me any encouragement to study British Antiquities’. 
Lhuyd had already demonstrated his linguistic capabilities by the time Aubrey proposed that he take on the task of continuing the _Interpretation_. In May of 1690 he had penned a peculiar etymological document, apparently under the pseudonym of Meredyth Owen, and sent it to Plot.\(^4^9\) This was in response to the publication in 1689 of George Hickes’s _Institutiones grammaticae Anglo-Saxonicae et Moeso-Gothicae_.\(^5^0\) Included in Hickes’s treatise was the _Etymologicon Britannicum_ of Edward Bernard, one of the senior oriental philologists then active in Oxford.\(^5^1\) Bernard, in (p.147) a virtuoso demonstration of multilingualism, had attempted to demonstrate the Russian, Slavic, Persian, and Armenian origins of English and British (i.e., Welsh) words, a feat which Lhuyd believed was a bridge too far. In his pseudonymous letter he criticized Bernard for his unnecessary exoticism and instead gave a table of Welsh words with their Latin and English cognates, as well as mentioning potential sources which might help further investigations of the origins of the Celtic languages. At about the same time he contributed a list of Welsh words parallel to northern English dialect words to a new edition of John Ray’s _Collection of English Words not Generally Used_.\(^5^2\) By 1691 Lhuyd already had a reputation as a scholar on the make with a particular interest in the Celtic languages; in short, he was the ideal person to continue the etymological project Aubrey had begun.

Much of their early correspondence focused on philological issues. Aubrey, probably recollecting Lhuyd’s earlier work on the etymological origins of Welsh, mentioned to him in December 1691 that his friend the natural philosopher, phonetician, and musician William Holder hoped that ‘somebody should runne over a good English Latin-Dictionary, and make markes of all the _radicall words_ of the Latin English and French. You might pick-out some British words.’\(^5^3\) Aubrey, continuing to heap unsolicited projects on Lhuyd’s shoulders, ended by hoping that ‘some time or other, pian piano [little by little], you may finish this piece of Curiosity’.\(^5^4\) This was in addition not only to his suggestion that Lhuyd take the lead on the _Interpretation_ but also to an even grander proposal that Lhuyd might also attempt a similar project for France. Boxhorn, Aubrey wrote, ‘hath been tampering at (and fumbled at it) Gaulish Etymologies’ and besides, if Lhuyd accomplished such a work, ‘tis likely [the King of France] might make you an honourable Present’.\(^5^5\)
Aubrey evidently intended Lhuyd to be a collaborator in a larger project to recover, not just the origins of toponyms, but the relationships of the several languages in Britain. In a letter of February 1692 he wrote excitedly that he had ‘lately accidentally at the Coffee-house fall’n into the acquaintance of an ingeniose young Cornish Gent’. This new informant told him of John Keigwin, the scholar of Cornish who would later meet Lhuyd and contribute to his work, and Aubrey sanguinely observed to Lhuyd that his coffee-house acquaintance would write to Keigwin and ‘putt him upon making a Cornish Dictionary, in order to my desired Designe’ for the *Interpretation*.\(^{56}\) Aubrey returned to the subject of Keigwin in December of the same year, asking Lhuyd, now in possession of the manuscript of the *Interpretation*, to insert a paragraph discussing him, his manuscripts, and the possibility of his authorship of a Cornish dictionary, ‘out of my notebooke, into my Villare’.\(^{57}\) As with his other manuscripts, Aubrey was using the manuscript of the *Interpretation* both as a working text and as a series of notes and memoranda towards its completion.
In 1691 and 1692 Aubrey and Lhuyd corresponded on specific philological issues arising from the Interpretation project. In one letter Aubrey mentioned that he had been told that the name of ‘the Whithway’ in North Wales (i.e., Yr Wyddfa—better known as Snowdon) meant simply ‘locus perspicuus’, a high place. Lhuyd responded systematically to the implicit question. First, he began, the word wydhva must be restored to its nominative case of gwydhva. This word could signify ‘locus perspicuus’ but ‘the most natural signification ... is a wyld place or Desart’ or perhaps a ‘woody place’. Yr Wyddfa, Lhuyd added, was ‘the highest peak in the Forrest of Snowdon, & is certainly the most desert place that may be in a countrey inhabited; no place in the three Kingdomes being so high; or more steep & rockie’. This was something more than simply an equation of a place name with a similar word; Lhuyd was using the landscape as a tool with which to understand language in the same way that Aubrey had used the landscape to recover ancient history in the Monumenta Britannica. This was the seed of Lhuyd’s later attempt—in a letter to William Nicolson—to systematically describe Welsh place name elements and relate them back to the natural and human geographies of their locations. In that document the same etymology of gwydhva reappears together with more general observations such as that ‘the most common way of naming Hills was by Metaphors from the Parts of the Body’, while ‘another Way of Denomination of Mountains was from Persons who had been once Proprietors of them’.

Elsewhere, this geographically centred approach to understanding toponyms touched even more closely on the two men’s shared interest in material antiquities. In 1691 Aubrey had asked Lhuyd, ‘what is Crick? Is it not a contraction of Kerig’ (i.e., stone, stony)? At the time Lhuyd had responded that it seemed a ‘very probable’ conjecture, but did not pursue the matter for lack of evidence. In August 1693, however, having returned to Oxford after a perambulation through Wales gathering material for his portion of the 1695 edition of Camden’s Britannia, he wrote to Aubrey stating that
you askd me formerly the meaning of Crig of Cric Howel; which question I could not then solve, but now I can assure you, that by Crick Howel is meant nothing else but Howels Barrow. I have seen at least 12 ancient Tumuli this journey in several places which are all of them call’d Crigau.63

In the same letter speculations by Aubrey’s two philological collaborators finally met when Lhuyd commented that ‘Gwŷg or y Wŷg signifies a Wood; and thence probably Wickham, etc. and so there may be something in that notion of Dr. Gales, (when we consider it narrowly) that some places that have Wick in their names, have been heretofore consecrated to the Druids.’64 In both cases past and present landscapes were related to language to reveal the imprint of past cultures upon them.

It was at about this time that Aubrey added another small tract to the Stromata, his collection of works on the evolution of scripts, heraldry, architecture, clothing, and other aspects of the material past.65 This was the Proportion of the several Languages Ingredients of our English or, the Proportion of the Languages mix’t in our present English, the final tract in the Stromata, and probably also the last composed (it is dated 1692/3 on the title page). It was a series of tables identifying etymologies contained in 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.66 Aubrey went through the Dictionary methodically, noting the origins of words and keeping running tallies of those whose origins could be identified as English (i.e., Old English), French, Latin, Greek, British or Welsh, and Danish.67
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 of the *Proportion*: ‘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.’ Aubrey was thinking of language here in much the same way as he thought of architecture in the *Architectonica*: 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, he added that he had read through Philemon Holland’s translations of Livy and Pliny in parallel with the Latin originals in search of ‘the English words & phrases, now obsolete: which amount to a page in folio close writt on both sides; which is in the Museum at Oxford’. This suggests a larger scope for the *Proportion* than its surviving pages would otherwise indicate.

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’. His conclusions from analysing Rider’s *Dictionarie* were that, while authentically ‘English’ words were in the majority (at 3,459), Latin (1,892) and French (1,002) were of considerable importance, with Greek (208) and Welsh (13) being more marginal. Though he included a column for it, he recorded no Danish words at all, noting only that ‘Mr … 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’. More exotically, and harking back to Edward Bernard’s *Etymologicon*, John Evelyn read the *Proportion* at some stage after its completion and made a note therein on the congruence between English and Persian.
The *Proportion* bears an obvious resemblance to Lhuyd’s journeyman work on Welsh and to William Holder’s 1691 proposal for a study of English word origins. It also speaks directly to Aubrey’s concerns in the *Interpretation*. By trying to recover reliable statistics on the languages incorporated into contemporary English, Aubrey was attempting to test larger theories about cultural inheritances, engagements, or oppositions, which were predicated upon his linguistic essentialism and his conviction that linguistic change was more likely to be brought about by external interaction than by internal change. That he viewed the *Proportion* as an important part of his larger work is clear from a letter to Lhuyd of 10 May 1694 in which he remarked ruefully that ‘it did cost me 4 months time, at halfe an houre every morning to doe it: fresh & fasting, but a Task unpleasant enough’. In the same letter he emphasized to Lhuyd that the *Proportion* was ‘annexed’ to the *Monumenta Britannica* and sent him both his ‘English Pliny’, the 1600 Holland translation which he had previously used as a source for obsolete words, and his copy of Rider’s *Dictionary*, ‘to let it appeare how I found out the proportion of the severall Languages of which our present English doth consist’. These two volumes were to be deposited in the Ashmolean as permanently available auxiliary material which could elucidate Aubrey’s larger linguistic project.
As the decade progressed, Aubrey increasingly relinquished the leading role to Lhuyd in what he viewed as their joint endeavour. From the elder scholar asking Lhuyd for specialist advice on toponyms, he became the assistant in turn, seeking out books and advising Lhuyd of new arrivals on the antiquarian scene who could be enlisted onto the project. One ongoing saga, which regularly reappears in the two men’s letters, was Aubrey’s attempt to convince Edmund Wylde that he ought to lend certain rare volumes to Lhuyd. As early as March 1693 Lhuyd mentioned to Aubrey that he had ‘been long enquiring after’ Claude Fauchet’s *Recueil des antiquités gauloises et françaises* (1579), which had been recommended to him by Wylde, but, unable to locate another copy, he hoped that Wylde might consider lending his.77 Aubrey’s initial response was not calculated to encourage: ‘Mr Wyld remembers him to you but will send no booke to anyone.’78 Nonetheless, when Lhuyd subsequently expressed a wish to borrow an ‘Armorican’ (i.e., Breton) dictionary from Wylde’s (p.152) collection, Aubrey did his best to wear their mutual friend down.79 By August 1693 he thought he had ‘almost prevailed’, but the dictionary was still in Bloomsbury at Wylde’s death and one of Aubrey’s last letters, dated 19 March 1696, recorded the promise that he ‘shall gett of Mr Wylds Gentlewomen the Armoric Dictionary for you’.80

By the autumn of 1695 Lhuyd’s own plans had progressed to the point of publishing *A Design of a British Dictionary, Historical and Geographical*.81 This was a fundraising advertisement on a far more ambitious scale than any request for subscriptions prior to printing. Lhuyd outlined a vast, tripartite work consisting of a historical and geographical dictionary of Britain, a linguistic essay entitled *Archaeologia Britannica*, and a natural history of the island. This would, he maintained, entail extensive travel and the first section would not be ready for at least five years, the next not until two years after that, and as for the natural history, ‘I can set no time for its Publication, as not being able to guess how tedious it may prove.’82 While this project went far beyond the remit of anything he had discussed with Aubrey, two of its subsections deserve further scrutiny.
The historical and geographical dictionary was to contain not just names of persons, but also ‘of all Places in Britain mention’d by the Greeks and Romans; and of all Hundreds, Comots, Towns, Castles, Villages, and Seats of the Nobility and Gentry of chiefest Note now in Wales’. Moreover, these names were to be ‘interpreted’ with the ultimate goal of ‘rectifying several Errors already committed in the Interpreting of the Names of Places in this Kingdom; and the preventing of many more in Wales and Scotland; as also in some Places of England, where the British Names, either entire or corrupt, are still preserv’d’. Nor, Lhuyd added, was there any need to apologise for such a plan, given the evident usefulness of such ‘Etymological Observations’ made by previous scholars including Bochart, Camden, Boxhorn, Vossius, and Ménage.83

This section, described in more detail than any other part of Lhuyd’s project, may (p.153) have been narrower in scope, but its debt to Aubrey’s Interpretation is clear. Lhuyd was proposing to carry through with the Interpretation, as Aubrey had asked him to do four years before, but to focus exclusively on place names of ‘British’ origin.

Lhuyd’s dictionary was never compiled, but the second section of the overall project, the Archaeologia Britannica, was. In the Design Lhuyd had intimated that its first part would contain a ‘Comparison of the Modern Welsh with other European Languages; more especially with the Greek, Latin, Irish, Cornish, and Armorican’.84 In the published Archaeologia this had become a ‘comparative etymology’ which examined both the ‘Changes or Alteration into various Dialects’ of the Celtic languages and ‘the Analogy they bear to those [languages] of our neighbouring Nations’.85 This was supported by an extensive apparatus of vocabularies and grammars for the languages central to Lhuyd’s argument. While undertaken on a far more detailed and systematic level, Lhuyd was working towards the same answers that Aubrey had sought in the Proportion and Interpretation: how were languages formed? What relations did they bear to each other? What could be inferred about historical linguistic, and, by extension, cultural, change from the composition of modern languages?
It has been remarked before that Lhuyd carried Aubrey’s tradition of meticulously surveying ancient sites and locating them within local landscapes into the next generation. Likewise, his crucial role as keeper of the Ashmolean and, as such, receiver and preserver of Aubrey’s material and textual archives has been observed. In addition, however, his famous linguistic projects, which bore fruit in the *Archaeologia Britannica*, appear to have been closely related to and influenced by Aubrey’s earlier studies and by the two men’s correspondence on philological topics in the 1690s. Looking back through Aubrey’s *Interpretation* to its roots in Thomas Gale’s studies of the *Antonine Itinerary* and the *Ravenna Cosmography*, it becomes possible to chart an evolving culture of toponymic and etymological study of ancient Britain from the Cambridge classicists of the 1670s through to Lhuyd’s monumental achievements in the early eighteenth century, with Aubrey occupying a crucial mediating position.

Notes:


(3) *Historiae poeticae scriptores antiqui... accessere breves notae & indices necessarii*, ed. Thomas Gale (Paris, 1675).*Opuscula mythologica, ethica et physica* *Rhetores selecti* *De elocutione*


(9) Bodleian MSS Aubrey 12, fols. 136–7, Wood F 45, fol. 208.

(10) William Camden, Britannia ... (London, 1607)


(12) For Gale’s transcription of the Monumenta, see Chapter 2; for the several annotators of Aubrey’s manuscripts see Hunter, Aubrey, 88. It is perhaps significant that the three works Gale annotated—Surrey, the Naturall Historie, and the Monumenta—were those of which Aubrey made fair copies between 1689 and 1692 (see Hunter, Aubrey, 87).

(13) Aubrey, Monumenta, i. 465.

(14) Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 935.

(15) Aubrey, Monumenta, i. 3.


(17) Abraham Ortelius, ed., Itinerarium Antonini Augusti, et Burdigalense (Cologne, 1600); William Burton, A Commentary on Antoninus his Itinerary, or Journies of the Romane Empire, so far as it Concerneth Britain (London, 1658).

(18) Burton, Commentary on Antoninus, passim.


(21) Subsequent generations of scholars were unimpressed. The biography of Gale in the *Biographia Britannica* caustically notes that `this is the most exceptionable of Dr Gale’s works: for, out of an affectation for saying something new, he hath displaced most of the ancient stations, without sufficient authority; and hath indulged himself a great deal too much in fancy and conjectures’ (*Biographia Britannica* [London, 1747], iii. 2076).


(23) Edward Brerewood, *Enquiries Touching the Diversity of Languages* ... (London, 1614); Vine, `Etymology, Names and the Search for Origins’, *passim*.


(26) 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.

(27) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17r; Sir Henry Spelman, *Villare Anglicum, or, a View of the Townes of England* (London, 1656; 2nd edn., 1678). The dictionary is John Davies, *Antiquæ linguae Britannicae* ... (London, 1621; 2nd edn., 1632), but Mr Evans, described as ‘of the Bridge-house at London’, has not been identified.
(28) 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.).

(29) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19ar. The ellipsis is Aubrey’s.

(30) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17v.

(31) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17r. The edge of the page is illegible.

(32) Brerewood, Enquiries, 10.

(33) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17v.

(34) Marcus Zuerius van Boxtorn, Originum Gallicarum liber (Amsterdam, 1654). Aubrey may have been introduced to Boxtorn’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 Wylde had recommended Boxtorn to Edward Lhuyd, which may instead suggest that Aubrey became acquainted with the Originum in Wylde’s library (Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 240r, letter from Lhuyd to Aubrey, 12 February 1687?).


(37) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 17v.

(38) Charles Edwards’s Hebraismorum Cambro-Britannicorum specimen honorandis antiquae Britannicae gentis primoribus ... (London, 1675).
(39) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19ar.


(41) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 19ar.


(43) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 2r.

(44) *ODNB*, s.n.

(45) Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 240r is a letter from Lhuyd to Aubrey dated 12 February (by internal evidence 1691), the first in the series of their correspondence, in which Lhuyd writes that, ‘I remember when we talk’d last together at Mr. Wylde.’


(47) Traces of Wylde’s library appear in Aubrey’s manuscripts as notes and memoranda: ‘Edmund Wyld Esq has it’ (Bodleian MS Aubrey 10, fol. 25r), ‘Edm: Wyld Esq has a copie’ (Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 24, fol. 208r), or ‘from the library of Edmund Wyld’ (Bodleian Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 8v).

(48) Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 250r.

(49) R. T. Gunther, *Dr. Plot and the Correspondence of the Philosophical Society of Oxford* (Oxford, 1939), 329–32.


(54) Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 98r.

(55) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 2r.

(56) Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 96r. For Keigwin see *ODNB*, s.n.

(57) Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 101r. By ‘Villare’ Aubrey meant his *Interpretation of Villare Anglicanum*.

(58) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 2r.

(59) Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 247r.

(60) BL Harleian MS 2289, fols. 158–9.

(61) Bodleian MS Aubrey 5, fol. 2r.

(62) Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 247r.

(63) Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 248r.

(64) Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 248r.

(65) See Chapter 3.
(66) For Rider, cf. ODNB, s.n. Aubrey used an edition of Rider edited and enlarged by Francis Holyoke, but which is unclear.

(67) Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 239rff.

(68) Horace, Ars Poetica, ll. 70–2 (‘Multa renascentur, quae jam cequidere, cadentque | Quae nunc sunt in honore, vocabula, si voleat usus, | Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi’).

(69) Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 238v.


(71) Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 238v. The quotation (‘stripped of its stolen colours’) is from Horace, Epistles, I.iii. 20.

(72) Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 241r.

(73) Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 240v. Mr Arnold (recte Arnoldt?) has not been identified.

(74) Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 25, fol. 238v. Evelyn’s knowledge of Persian, such as it was, may have been the result of his acquaintance with Pietro Cesij, a Persian convert to Christianity, who also supplied materials for Evelyn’s History of the Three Late Famous Impostors (Geoffrey Keynes, John Evelyn: A Study in Bibliophily and a Bibliography of his Writings [Cambridge, 1937], 194; Michael Fixler, ‘A Note on John Evelyn’s History of the Three Late Famous Impostors’, The Library, 5th ser., 9 [1954]: 267–8).

(75) See Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 98r.

(76) Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 112r.

(77) Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 241r.

(78) Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 90r.

(79) Archaeologia\textit{Convents}Archaeologia Britannica\textit{Jehan Lagadeuc’s Le Catholicon} (Tréguier, 1499),
(80) Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 92r; MS Ashmole 1829, fol. 13r.


(82) Lhuyd, *Design*, verso.


(84) Lhuyd, *Design*, recto.


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