Stonehenge and the Druids

Antiquarian Controversy in Restoration England

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DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198784296.003.0002

Abstract and Keywords

Aubrey is famous for his groundbreaking survey of Stonehenge and his identification of it and similar megalithic stone circles as Druidic temples. This chapter explores how his study of prehistoric monuments developed out of a mid-seventeenth-century scholarly controversy over the origins of Stonehenge and explores its parallels to similar archaeologically minded scholarship in Denmark and Sweden, emphasizing Aubrey’s methodological debts to the works of Ole Worm and Olof Rudbeck. Like his Swedish contemporaries, Aubrey, although an innovative and intelligent scholar, was strongly conditioned by nationalist presuppositions, and his reconstruction of ancient British culture was inflected by his own Welsh self-identification and his consequent marginalization of Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian contributions to modern English culture.

Keywords: Druids, megalithic stone circles, Ole Worm, Olof Rudbeck, scholarly controversy, Stonehenge
Fifteen years after Aubrey’s first encounter with Avebury, megaliths were at the centre of English scholarly debate. A series of publications—by the architect Inigo Jones, his assistant John Webb, and the physician and Fellow of the Royal Society Walter Charleton—had made the origins of Stonehenge a high-profile and controversial subject. The young John Dryden wrote a poem on the topic and the excitement generated by scholarly controversy reached as far as the court itself. There, one morning in 1663, Charles II had a long conversation with the courtier and president of the Royal Society, Viscount Brouncker, and one of the leading figures in the debate, Walter Charleton himself. They began by discussing Stonehenge, but someone, probably Charleton, mentioned in passing Aubrey’s anecdotes about Avebury. ‘His Majestie admired that none of our Chorographers had taken notice of it: and commanded Dr Charlton to bring’ Aubrey to him.¹

Aubrey showed Avebury to the King during the latter’s progress to Bath and was commanded by him ‘to write a Description of it, and present [it] to him’ (the Duke of York made a similar request that Aubrey should ‘give an account of the old Camps and Barrows on the Plaines’).² The Royal Society seconded the royal command at a meeting on 8 July 1663 when Charleton presented them 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 his Wiltshire neighbour and fellow antiquary Colonel James Long were ‘desired to make further (p.21) inquiry’.³ Aubrey surveyed both Avebury and Stonehenge in September of the same year (see Figure 1.1) and soon afterwards composed a short manuscript treatise entitled Templa Druidum, outlining his results and their implications, which he presented to the King.⁴ In it he identified these and other megalithic sites in Britain as temples of the Druids, dating to a period before the Roman invasion. This claim was to be his seminal contribution to the study of British prehistory.
Aubrey’s treatise later grew to mammoth proportions, becoming the *Monumenta Britannica*, his attempt at a systematic survey of all prehistoric and Roman sites and artefacts across Britain. Its origins, however, lay within the controversies of the 1650s and 1660s when English scholars tried to fit the inconveniently square blocks of Britain’s megaliths into the round holes of biblically informed ancient history. This chapter interrogates Aubrey’s deceptively straightforward interpretations of these and other prehistoric sites by first examining this moment of intellectual ferment and its relationship to Aubrey’s first drafts of the *Templa*. Then it moves outwards to understand how this debate paralleled another scholarly controversy which occupied scholars in later seventeenth-century Sweden—the origins of a mysterious ancient temple near Uppsala—which sheds light on the methodologies and motivations of Aubrey and his contemporaries. Aubrey’s Druidic theories emerge as a product of their time: brilliant and polymathic in their use of widely divergent sources and methodologies, but uncomfortably predetermined in their content and nationalistic in their conclusions.

**The Battle for Stonehenge**

Stonehenge had been the subject of myth-making and speculation long before Aubrey’s time. The predominant popular explanation for its (p.22)
presence on Salisbury Plain had been laid out by Geoffrey of Monmouth, who recounted its construction by Merlin, with the help of certain giants, as a memorial to Britons slain in battle by the Saxons, and its subsequent role as a burial place for several legendary British kings. Elizabethan antiquaries, however, 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. When William Camden discussed Stonehenge in his *Britannia*, he could only repeat Geoffrey’s account and throw up his hands at the impossibility of explaining the origins of such an ‘insana substructio’. In 1624 Edmund Bolton had proposed that Stonehenge was the tomb of Boudica, but after that there was a lull in interest until the posthumous publication of Inigo Jones’s *Stone-Heng Restored* in 1655. Despite Jones’s name appearing prominently on the title page, the work’s preface elaborated 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. In fact, it seems to have been a collaboration between Jones and his assistant, with Jones providing the ideas and
Webb posthumously rounding out his master’s text with appropriate classical citations.\(^{11}\)

*Stone-Heng Restored* systematically explicated the classical sources relating to Britain and the Druids, concluding that as the ancient writers clearly proved the Britons of that time had been ‘destitute of the *(p.24)* knowledge, even to clothe themselves’, then it stood to reason that they surely lacked the skills necessary ‘to erect stately structures, or such remarkable works as *Stoneheng*’.\(^{12}\) It then refuted Geoffrey of Monmouth and his followers, ‘who, when they could not search out the truth in deed, laboured to bring forth narrations invented by themselves, without or reason, or authority’, and criticized both Camden and Bolton for their failure to reach Jones and Webb’s own conclusions.\(^{13}\)

For a work written by an architect and claiming to found its hypothesis on a survey of the site, *Stone-Heng Restored* relied overwhelmingly on textual evidence. Although Jones surveyed and drew the site during the course of his study, the core of his and Webb’s architectural argument rested on readings of Vitruvius and Palladio rather than first-hand observation.\(^{14}\) Having established the inferiority of the Britons and their architecture, it concluded that Stonehenge was a Roman temple dedicated to the deity Caelus or 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 gracefulnesse, and *Decorum* in them’.\(^{15}\) It then became syllogistically clear that attributing Stonehenge to the Britons was impossible, for, if they were rude and barbaric and it was an ‘admired and magnificent’ monument, then they could not possibly have been its authors. ‘[W]ho more magnificent than the *Romans*’, however?\(^{16}\)
At this point, the open-roofed temple to Coelus which the text attempted to find described in Vitruvius and fulfilled in Stonehenge might seem almost superfluous to the main thrust of Jones’s argument, but this misses the other goal of the text. Jones and Webb’s work was not only antiquarian, but also served, as Rumiko Handa has noted, a very present political purpose. Jones had already used Coelus, the presumptive dedicatee of Stonehenge, as a symbol for James I in his Coelum Britannicum (1634) and elsewhere. The god’s reappearance here was an attempt to yoke the Stuart monarchy to the Romano-British past, with Vitruvius’s architectural theories serving as a convenient rope to tie the two together.\(^{(p.25)}\) The publication of Stone-Heng Restored in the midst of the Commonwealth was, perhaps, a not-so-subtle piece of Royalist propaganda.

Jones and Webb’s overly deft deployment of textual evidence at the expense of less predetermined observation of the site itself did not sit well with some antiquaries, Aubrey included. In his preface to the Templa Druidum, 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 ...

\(^{(18)}\)

It was not, however, Aubrey who launched the first attack on Stone-Heng Restored, but Walter Charleton, the physician who had proposed Aubrey to the Royal Society only months before and who had introduced him to the King.\(^{(19)}\) Charleton’s Chorea Gigantum—Latin for ‘giant’s dance’, a name given to Stonehenge as early as the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth—published in 1663, claimed to take a dramatically different comparative 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 far removed from the antiquarian politics of Stone-Heng Restored.\(^{(20)}\) Analogous politics did not necessarily lead to analogous scholarly theories.
Charleton demonstrated the falseness of the Jones–Webb reading of Vitruvius and observed, in addition, that Roman sites nearby bore no architectural similarity to Stonehenge.\textsuperscript{21} Having deconstructed the existing theory to his satisfaction, he proceeded to erect his own: Stonehenge had been built by the Danes as a site for the election of their kings. His argument for a Danish origin rested on a perceived architectural resemblance between Stonehenge and similar sites in Denmark, though he admitted that (p.26) the concordances were by no means exact.\textsuperscript{22} 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 discovery of a tablet written in an unknown language near the site, which he took to have been a runic inscription.\textsuperscript{23} But, like Jones and Webb, Charleton had other motives beyond mere scholarly curiosity. \textit{Chorea Gigantum} was dedicated to Charles II, a dedication which explicitly referenced the fact that, in 1651, Charles was ‘pleased to visit that Monument, and, for many hours together, entertain [him]self with the delightful view thereof’, even in the midst of the Civil Wars.\textsuperscript{24} The liminal verses contributed by Dryden made it clear how this, and Charleton’s argument as a whole, was to be understood: ‘STONE-HENG, once thought a Temple, You have found | A Throne, where Kings, our Earthly Gods, were Crown’d.’\textsuperscript{25} Charleton, despite disagreeing with their theory, had made explicit what Jones and Webb had only implied: Stonehenge was a lasting monument to the durability and Divine Right of the Stuart monarchy.

Charleton’s contribution to the debate was game changing, not for his argument itself, but for his choice of principal source: Ole Worm’s \textit{Danicorum monumentorum libri sex} (1643), a study of Danish prehistoric monuments and runestones.\textsuperscript{26} Worm, professor of medicine at the University of Copenhagen, had close ties with the English scholarly community, having visited England in his youth and subsequently corresponded with the English antiquary Henry Spelman.\textsuperscript{27} In his (p.27) correspondence with the latter, the same tensions between antiquarian discovery and nationalist aggrandizement seen in Charleton’s work had already played out, albeit in a somewhat different context.
On 18 April 1629 Spelman had written to Worm, providing a copy of the inscription found on the Bewcastle Cross in Cumberland and asking Worm whether it was in the Gothic alphabet found in Bonaventura Vulcanius’s edition of the surviving fragments of the Codex Argenteus, a sixth-century Gothic manuscript of portions of the New Testament. Worm responded magisterially on 18 July that, ‘Runic is nothing other than Gothic’ (and therefore to Worm nothing other than Danish) 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. Spelman, in his following letter, proposed that ‘rune’ derived from Old English ‘ryne’, a secret or hidden thing, a conclusion supported by later scholarship. 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 Archaiologicum. For his part, Worm eagerly awaited the second part of Spelman’s Glossarium and sent him a copy of his De aureo cornu in the spring of 1641. While the two scholars’ correspondence might at first appear to be a model of transnational cooperation, Worm’s determined equation of ‘Gothic’ with Danish reveals the nationalist motivations present in his work, as they were in Charleton’s. In both cases the study of ancient monuments could bolster the authority of modern nations, whether the Divine Right of English monarchs or the supposed ancient extent of Danish sovereignty.

Their correspondence also highlighted Worm’s interest in runic epigraphy, the subject which dominated his Monumenta Danica. The majority of the work is a region-by-region survey of surviving runestones throughout Denmark. What set Worm apart was his methodology. The systematic list of runestones was not compiled solely through Worm’s own travels, but also 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. More importantly, 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 antiquaries.
Worm categorized the sites known to him according to pre-existing models, but with modifications which 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 ceremonies). Of 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. 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 bodies were inhumed in barrows with grave goods; and finally the Christian era, in which current burial customs first began to be practised.

As well as constructing a methodological framework, Worm also provided an unusually large corpus of data with which to compare later finds, a corpus for which there was no equivalent in contemporary antiquarian scholarship. Klavs Randsborg has made the important point that ‘fresh rich data’ had at least as much impact on changing antiquarian theories as developments in methodology; the paradigm-shifting possibilities of publishing a wide-ranging selection of material such as Worm’s should not be underrated.

Charleton’s Chorea is completely indebted, in its basic premises, to Worm’s chapter ‘of places for considering the election of kings’, and the early acquisition by the Bodleian Library of the philologist and antiquary John Selden’s copy of the Monumenta Danica—along with the rest of his formidably erudite library—meant that it was comparatively easily accessible to English scholars.
Charleton’s use of Worm also ensured his favourable reception amongst Danish scholars. 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. In this letter, dated 10 August 1663, he noted with approval that Charleton had published a work—the *Chorea Gigantum*—in accord with the arguments of Worm and went on to summarize 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 *Antiquitates Danicarum* of 1689, long after Charleton’s work had lapsed into comparative obscurity in English antiquarian circles. Charleton’s major contribution to the debate was his association of it with similar investigations in the Scandinavian countries, a trend which Aubrey would subsequently follow, despite having serious reservations about Charleton’s work itself.

(p.30) The penultimate contribution to this controversy was John Webb’s *Vindication of Stone-Heng Restored*. It was not published until 1665 but possesses a 6 June 1664 imprimatur and appears to have been composed while *Chorea Gigantum* was still circulating in manuscript form. It added no new information, but only rehearsed Jones’s arguments in greater detail. If Aubrey did consult it, he does not mention having done so, and it appears to have had no influence on his own thought.
By the time Aubrey began his own investigations, Stonehenge and its origins had already become a matter for heated antiquarian debate. Jones, Webb, and Charleton had all used comparative approaches to identify the megaliths’ builders, relying upon Vitruvius’s prescription or Worm’s description to provide them with parallels which would clinch an identification. They had gestured towards the possibility of using the megaliths themselves as a potential source, but their material comparatism remained relatively simplistic: almost any stone placed on end could be dragooned into their arguments as a potential parallel to Stonehenge. Likewise, for all of them much more was at stake than simply the identification of the megaliths’ builders. Stonehenge had become a site for competing Royalist narratives of kingship, a visible symbol of royal power within the landscape. While Jones and Charleton’s divergent interpretations made it clear that this could be manifested in widely differing scholarly theories, any subsequent study of the monument would nonetheless be forced to confront this additional layer of meaning.

Temple of the Druids
Aubrey dismissed the works of Jones, Webb, and Charleton as ‘several Bookes … much differing from one another, some affirming one thing, some another’ and claimed, as Charleton had before him, to have made a fresh start with his surveys of Stonehenge and Avebury. Despite this, his methodology was not so very different from the comparatism of his predecessors. He wrote that:

\[(p.31)\] 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 Equation: so (being but an ill Orator my selfe) to make the Stones give Evidence for themselves.
By ‘Algebraical method’, Aubrey meant comparatism; he was using analogies between different kinds of monuments to make them ‘give Evidence’ which could not be retrieved from the study of a single site in isolation. He also claimed to have placed textual sources in a supporting role, concentrating instead on the physical remains themselves. In so doing, he recognized the necessity of taking as wide a sample as possible and comparing surviving monuments with each other. His intent, he wrote, was to ‘proceed gradually à notioribus ad minus nota [from things more known to those less known] that is to say, from the Remaines of Antiquity less imperfect, to those more imperfect’. This necessity apparently provided the first impetus for his attempt 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’. He turned to artefacts and archaeological sites out of a lack of written sources, not because he believed in the absolute superiority of physical over textual evidence. Aubrey was no prototype Jean Hardouin to use physical evidence to undermine the textual tradition, or even to doubt the relative value of textual versus artefactual sources as bases upon which to reconstruct history. Instead, he came to the study of non-textual sources out of necessity and a conviction that his predecessors had reached faulty conclusions through a failure to give due weight to the sites themselves.
Working within this methodological framework, 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 Jones, Webb, and (despite Charleton’s interpretation of him) Worm. 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. This being so, they could hardly have been built by either Jones’s Romans or Charleton’s Danes, neither of whose spheres of influence had reached all the regions in which those 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 not of some classical purity but of an ‘antique rudenesse’. Leaving aside the thorny question of the Scandinavian monuments, which Aubrey elsewhere argued were an example 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 Britaines: ‘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.
Aubrey was not the first scholar to reach this conclusion. In Scottish historiography there was a tradition associating stone circles with Druids which dated at least as far back as the Aberdonian humanist Hector Boece. Boece, in his 1527 *Scotorum historiae a prima gentis origine*, had described the religious innovations of the mythical Scottish king, Maynus, including ‘havand ane huge stane to the grete south’ of temples, ‘in memorie heirof remains yite to our dayis mony huge stanys, drawing to giddir in forme of (p.33) circulis, namyt be the pepill the ancient tempillis of goddis. It is na litill admiracioun’, he added, ‘be quhat ingyne and strength sa huge stanys bene brocht to giddir.’\(^53\) While the Druids were not specifically mentioned, Boece elsewhere made it clear that they were the priests of the ancient Scots and there is little doubt that he understood them to be the ones sacrificing amongst the ‘mony huge stanys’.\(^54\) By the seventeenth century this had become the orthodox line amongst Scottish historians such as David Calderwood, whose treatment of ‘the ethnick religion of the Scots’ identified their priests as Druids and noted that ‘it is said that Mainus, the third king, caused designe certaine places of the countrie, and compassed them about with hudge stones, circle-wise’, closely echoing Boece.\(^55\) It remains to be seen how this percolated into English antiquarian thought, but its shadow reappears more than once in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts, including *Stone-Heng Restored* itself, which went so far as to systematically discredit any possible Druidic origin for Stonehenge.\(^56\)
Aubrey’s reception of this link between Druids and megaliths came from two earlier English scholars: William Camden and John Selden. In his *Britannia* Camden had given a brief account of the Druids from classical sources but did not elaborate on his texts. He did, however, provide a crucial clue for Aubrey by noting that amongst the hills of Denbighshire, ‘there is a place commonly called Cerrig y Drudion, that is, *The stones of the Druidae*, and certain little columns or pillars are seen at Yvoellas, with inscriptions in them of strange characters, which some imagine to have been erected by the Druides’. Selden followed Camden in concluding that the monuments at Cerrigydrudion were ‘lapides Druidarum’ (stones of the Druids) in his discussion of the Druids in *Janus Anglorum*, although he drew no larger conclusion about other megalithic monuments, lamenting instead that the pillars at Yvoellas were no longer readable. Aubrey was convinced that ‘the Hinge of this Discourse depends upon Mr Camden’s *Kerrig y Druidd*’, a belief that evidently stemmed from the etymology given by Camden and repeated by Selden. For Aubrey, the traditional name of a stone circle in Wales was the last link in the chain needed to conclusively identify stone circles across Britain with the holy sites of Druids before the Roman invasion; material and philological evidence worked in tandem to recover the origin of these contested antiquities.
Having established to his satisfaction that the Druids were the architects of Stonehenge, Aubrey added to the *Templa Druidum* an appendix ‘On the Religion and Customs of the Druids’.⁶¹ This appendix was in effect a literature review containing extracts from classical and modern sources discussing the Druids. The classical texts singled out by Aubrey included the standard passages on the subject known to the early moderns from 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*.⁶² More revealing of Aubrey’s notions of Druidism, however, were 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, numerous exemplars of which were known to him.⁶³ Of these, the works of John Selden and Thomas Smith reappear most frequently and suggest that Aubrey’s work was imbricated with an antiquarian tradition which saw (p.35) the Druids as central to the dispersal of patriarchal wisdom across the ancient world.
Although now better known for his exploration of Hebrew culture, John Selden addressed the Druids and their place in ancient history in a series of works published in the second decade of the seventeenth century. As early as 1605, when he composed his *Analecta Anglo-Britannica* (not published until 1615), Selden had stressed the parallels between the supposed Druidic belief in metempsychosis and the teachings of Pythagoras. By the time he composed his *Janus Anglorum* (1610) this had gained the status of an obvious intellectual kinship, although ‘Whether the Druids ... had their *Metempsychosis* or transmigration of Souls, from *Pythagoras*, or he from them, I cannot tell.’ The Druids, in Selden’s reconstruction, ‘were of the oldest standing among the Philosophers of the Gentiles, and the most ancient among their Guardians of Laws’. Two years later, when he composed the antiquarian notes accompanying Michael Drayton’s chorographical poem *Poly-Olbion* (1612), he elaborated yet again on his reconstruction of Druidic practice, this time crediting the Druids with a sort of monotheism: even if ‘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*’. Selden claimed that the Druids had worshipped a single god under the name of Apollo, quoting ambiguous epigraphical evidence to support his theory. Both here and in the *Janus* he supplemented his philological arguments with a vivid visualization of the Druids, quoting the fifteenth-century German antiquary Conrad Celtis, who claimed that he had seen:

[I]n 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.
Both Aubrey and Selden had no doubt these were images of Druids. These statues fit perfectly with the picture of patriarchal wise-men, steeped (p.36) in the *prisca theologia*, which Selden had elaborated in his works—unsurprisingly to modern eyes, given that they were almost certainly medieval jamb figures of biblical prophets. For Selden the Druids were no savages, but rather the inheritors of an ancient tradition of wisdom and learning, perhaps even the tutors of Pythagoras himself.

A generation later, the young Oxford orientalist Thomas Smith published a virtuosic monograph entitled *Syntagma de Druidum moribus ac institutis* (1664). Smith built upon Selden’s work, referencing his etymological arguments as well as the by-then standard inference that the stones at Cerrigydrudion were simply ‘*lapides Druidarum*’. He went further than Selden in his comparative approach, however, doing for the Druids’ sacred groves what Jones, Webb, and Charleton had done for Stonehenge. He saw in them echoes, not only of the grove of Diana Nemorensis, but of the Abrahamic oaks of Mamre, and in an ingenious game of intellectual hopscotch proceeded to link the Druids with patriarchal wisdom, the Persian magi, and the Indian Brahmins in a series of increasingly far-fetched hops and skips. Forget Pythagoras, Smith argued (although he nonetheless had a role to play), the Druids were the primeval religious order, dispensing the *prisca theologia* across the entire ancient world.
Aubrey quoted both Selden and Smith extensively in his textual appendix to the *Templa* and citations to their works appear regularly throughout the manuscript of the *Monumenta*. However, their ideas existed in tension with statements he made elsewhere concerning the uncivilized state of the pre-Roman Britons, ‘2 or 3 degrees I suppose lesse savage then the Americans’, and his emphasis that stone circles generally were ‘such rude monuments’ that even the none-too-sophisticated Anglo-Saxons could have produced something more polished. And yet Aubrey could speculate, along with the Welsh antiquary Thomas Sebastian Price, that Smith’s identification of the Druidic groves with the famous cult of Diana at Nemi had some basis, not least in a supposed etymological link with the ancient British language.

For Aubrey, the ancient culture he studied could go both ways: purveyor of *prisca theologia* or primitive barbarism. This vacillation went hand in hand with his Pyrrhonistic conviction that classical texts could only go so far in making sense of the Druids. ‘The Latin Historians’, he wrote, ‘make great mistakes as to the Lawes & customes of the Jewes who lived at Rome & were much more considerable than the Druids, then why may they not mistake more in the Religion &c: of the Druids who lived farther from their acquaintance & knowledge?’ By undercutting any absolute authority on their part, Aubrey could use the classical texts he copied out and quoted so copiously, but was not hampered by their disagreement with his more novel theories.
While Aubrey did not wholeheartedly embrace Selden and Smith’s visions of the lost wisdom of the ancient world, his association of their work with his own identification of megalithic sites as Druidic has a striking parallel in another antiquarian dispute which erupted almost simultaneously in Sweden. This latter debate arose independently of the English controversies over Stonehenge and the Druids, but it involved analogous issues of control over a national past, tendentious interpretation of evidence, and rejection of textual in favour of artefactual or site-based sources. Later, Aubrey himself would make use of the texts produced during this controversy, drawing upon both the English and the Swedish traditions in his writings of the 1680s and 1690s. Even before that point of contact, however, a closer examination of the Swedish debate provides an illuminating parallel to the English one, helps clarify the ways in which early modern nationalisms profoundly shaped the arguments that Aubrey and his contemporaries advanced, and provides the tools with which to place those arguments within continent-wide trends in antiquarian research and discourse.

The Swedish Atlantis and Antiquarian Nationalism

Swedish antiquarian scholarship already had a legacy of cultural imperialism, claiming for itself the entire—still only recently rediscovered—saga (p.38) corpus, all runic texts, and a variety of other materials as part of its ‘Gothic Renaissance’ earlier in the seventeenth century.75 These claims were made in the teeth of a previous, and still vigorous, Danish scholarly ascendency.76 The rediscovery of the sagas had been spearheaded by Danes and Icelanders, but in the decades following the Peace of Westphalia and Swedish domination of the north their discoveries were contested, appropriated, and reconfigured by Swedish scholars. In the midst of this fight for antiquity, the Swedes turned to non-textual artefacts and sites as potential sources with which to buttress their competing understandings of ancient Scandinavian history.77
In 1666 Johann Scheffer, a Strasbourg-born scholar and something of an outsider at the University of Uppsala, had published his *Upsalia*, an urban antiquarian study in the tradition of Flavio Biondo and the architectural and topographical antiquaries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In it he argued that pagan Uppsala was built on the site of the present town, not at the village of Gamla (Old) Uppsala, a few miles away, and that the pagan temple described by the eleventh-century chronicler Adam of Bremen was not to be confused with the church at Gamla Uppsala, which was, Scheffer argued, only a few hundred years old. This argument went against historical orthodoxy as set forth in Erik Olofsson’s fifteenth-century *Historia Suecorum Gothorumque* and elsewhere. In 1672 Scheffer’s colleague Olof Verelius published his *editio princeps* of *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* and went out of his way, in a note discussing the burial of the legendary lovers Ingibjörg and Hjalmar in a barrow there, to contest the age of the church at Gamla Uppsala. Verelius, in a move reminiscent of both Jones and Aubrey, measured and illustrated the remains of the church and found its structure reminiscent, not only of the building described by Adam of Bremen, but also of the arch of Janus Quadrifrons in Rome. Like Jones and Webb he attempted to naturalize an unidentified monument into the classical framework of early modern scholarship. In the following years both sides published additional squibs until forbidden to continue by Uppsala’s chancellor, Count Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, but their main lines of argument changed little. Scheffer was 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 comparatism were common to both sides, but given the lack of any real evidence to analyse (the church at Gamla Uppsala was, as Scheffer had supposed, only built in the eleventh century but survived in a very damaged form), no broader conclusions could be drawn.
Both methodologically and ideologically, the Uppsala temple debate not only bore a resemblance to the Stonehenge controversies of previous decades, but also set the stage for the greatest and most problematic product of the Swedish antiquarian tradition: Olof Rudbeck’s *Atlantica sive Manheim* (Rudbeck had already weighed in on Verelius’s side during the earlier debate). Published between 1679 and 1702 in four volumes and an accompanying elephant folio of plates, the *Atlantica* brought every resource of philology and antiquarianism to bear on Sweden’s ancient past, resulting in the inescapable conclusion that Uppsala was none other than Plato’s Atlantis. Rudbeck opened his first volume with a methodological chapter on the ‘necessary preparations for a valid knowledge of antiquarian matters’. In it he distinguished six possible sources: *truditio* (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 outlined the ways in which they could profitably be used together. His summary of the importance of the study of ancient monuments paralleled 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 great antiquity’, certainly much greater than that of Rome. Nonetheless, had Rudbeck stopped there his archaeological methodology would have been little different from that of Scheffer or Verelius. His innovation was the development of a theory of stratigraphy, outlined in chapter 6 of the *Atlantica* (‘in which the old Swedish race is deduced out of ancient tumuli and burial mounds’) and experimentally tested.
Rudbeck had observed that the undisturbed surface of the earth was covered with a layer of humus, made up of vegetation and airborne debris. To prove the nature of its accretion he left an empty pot exposed to the elements over the course of the 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 of undisturbed topsoil. Using this technique he dated numerous sites around Sweden, including the barrows outside Gamla Uppsala, which he concluded—in line with modern archaeological scholarship—were built c.600–1000 CE.90

(p.41) 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.91
Rudbeck stands in relation to Scheffer and Verelius much as Aubrey stood to Jones, Webb, and Charleton. He built upon the arguments of his predecessors, adopting their comparative methodologies but taking a dramatically material, non-textual turn in his own scholarship and using artefacts and sites as sources through which to reconstruct a previously unknown ancient past. As with the other scholars discussed in this chapter, methodological innovation moved in an uneasy alliance with a series of nationalist presuppositions; while his use of stratigraphy helped Rudbeck prove the antiquity of his burial mounds, their Suevo-Atlantean nature had never been in any doubt to him. As Edward Gibbon would later comment of Rudbeck, ‘whatever is celebrated either in history or in fable this zealous patriot ascribes to his country’.  

Aubrey came into contact with Rudbeck and Verelius’s ideas in 1681 when their student Johan Heysig arrived in London, acting as a travelling tutor to the young nobleman Baron Erik Axelsson Sparre. Aubrey was, however, already familiar with the basic concept underlying Rudbeck’s stratigraphy, having encountered it a decade before in the 1671 English translation by Henry Oldenburg of the Dane Nicolaus Steno’s 1669 *De solido intra solidum naturaliter contento dissertationis prodromus*. In their (p.42) 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—Rudbeck’s sediment deposition experiments writ large. Aubrey’s marginalia in his copy of Steno make it clear that he read and agreed with the Dane’s theories. Among his notes are a series on the flyleaf including ‘Origin of the Strata’, ‘Some strata remaining since the Creation’, and ‘The Beds wherin Bones of Animals are most certainly since the Creation’. We also know that Aubrey read and approved of Rudbeck’s parallel experiments and, together with Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke, made observations on the changing ground level of London since the Roman period. Like Rudbeck, he had become increasingly fascinated with the possibility that physical remains traditionally at or beyond the edge of the antiquary’s purview could be used to explain otherwise unknown tracts of the ancient past.
But Aubrey’s seemingly ‘modern’ antiquarianism—his emphasis on material objects, his comparatism, his knowledge of stratigraphy, his questioning of traditional, text-based arguments—should not beguile us into believing he existed outside of contemporary national, religious, or ethnic controversies. Like the other scholars who participated in the debates over Stonehenge or the temple at Uppsala, he combined intellectual ingenuity and methodological innovation with certain nationalist goals and assumptions, never explicitly expressed but ever-present in his work. In Rudbeck’s case such goals were obvious: a desire to aggrandize contemporary Sweden and justify its new role as a major power by finding for it a suitably illustrious ancient past. Aubrey was no different, only subtler. Rather than building an Atlantean monument to national (p.43) aspirations, he took pride in his Welsh ancestry, identified himself as Welsh despite his birth and education in Wiltshire, and firmly believed that his adopted people were descended from a sophisticated Romano-British culture which had been largely destroyed by the brutish Anglo-Saxons.98

Aubrey was immensely proud of his Welsh forebears.99 At one stage he had attempted to insert his pedigree into Edmund Gibson’s 1695 edition of Camden’s Britannia and throughout his life he made frequent 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 Sir John Aubrey of Llantrithyd.100 This self-identification was strengthened by an early acquaintance with the Welsh lawyer and antiquary Meredith Lloyd, who served as a conduit through which Aubrey came into contact with seventeenth-century Welsh antiquarian scholarship, whether in the form of linguistic data on the Celtic languages or reports concerning Welsh monuments such as the Eliseg Pillar and the Bedd Rhita Gawr cairn.101 Likewise, towards the end of his life Aubrey’s friendship with (p.44) Edward Lhuyd also brought him into contact with a group of young Welsh scholars at Oxford, chiefly based in Jesus College, who regularly begged to be remembered to him at the end of Lhuyd’s letters.102
These associations either reinforced or helped to define Aubrey’s own perception of his cultural identity and his relationship to the British past. He identified the Welsh as direct descendants of Romano-British culture and had little time for the savage Anglo-Saxons and Danes, whose contribution to British civilization is regularly denied throughout his works. By a bold act of historical revision the English also became descendants of the same Romano-British culture in Aubrey’s writings and he developed a *longue durée* narrative of Britain’s history which effectively both Celticized and Romanized British culture at the expense of German and Scandinavian influences. While not so flagrant as the antiquarian imperialism of Rudbeck or Verelius, Aubrey’s interpretation of British history was essentially conditioned by his own cultural and national loyalties. This does not detract from his scholarship, but to ignore it is to ignore one of the essential presuppositions which informed so much of early modern antiquarianism: a commitment to the centrality and significance of the antiquary’s own perceived ancestral nation or culture.

Aubrey has been praised by both historians and archaeologists for his perceptive conclusion that megalithic monuments such as Stonehenge and Avebury pre-dated recorded British history and were built by an indigenous people rather than Romans, Danes, or other interlopers. However, the genesis of the arguments in the *Templa Druidum* was far more complex and equivocal than such praise would suggest. As well as developing or adapting new methodologies and bringing to the study of prehistoric monuments a new emphasis on comparatism and contextualization, Aubrey also deployed older mythical histories and conjectural philologies to support his Druidical theories, and ultimately founded his interpretation upon his own emotive identification with what he saw as a Romano-British Welsh culture. As comparisons between the Stonehenge debate in England, Worm’s hunt for ancient monuments in Denmark, and the Uppsala controversy in Sweden show, understanding the ancient past in seventeenth-century Europe was a project situated within a shifting web of national, cultural, and local loyalties which could both motivate and at least partially determine the conclusions of antiquarian scholarship.
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(2) Aubrey, Monumenta, 21.

(3) Thomas Birch, The History of the Royal Society of London for Improving of Natural Knowledge, 4 vols. (London, 1756–7), i. 272. ODNBs. n. Monumenta

(4) Aubrey, Monumenta, 22.

(5) Aubrey’s final revision of the Monumenta Britannica survives as Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 24–5. It has never been edited, but a partial facsimile has been published as Aubrey, Monumenta, and has been cited in the present work in an effort to make references to the original manuscript more accessible.


Edmund Bolton, *Nero Caesar, or Monarchie Depraved* (London, 1624), 181–4; 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 antiquaries 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, *Nero Caesar*, 181–2).


(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 been proposed by Charleton on 24 December 1662 and admitted 21 January 1663 (Birch, History of the Royal Society, 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.


(22) Charleton, Chorea Gigantum, 36ff., esp. 53–4 (for variation between Stonehenge and Danish sites).

(23) 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).

(24) Charleton, Chorea Gigantum, sig. [a]v.

(25) Charleton, Chorea Gigantum, sig. b2v.


Worm, *Epistolae*, i. 426 (= Worm, *Breve*, i. 170–1). 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): 184–90. 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).


Sir Henry Spelman, *Glossarium Archaiologicum* (London, 1664), 493–4; *Literary RelationsGlossarium*


Britannia


(37) 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.


(39) He was also mentioned in several letters between Worm and Erasmus Bartholin, see Worm, *Epistolae*, ii. 985–90 (= Worm, *Breve*, iii. 424–8, 434–6).


Literary Relations

(41) Thomas Bartholin, *Antiquitatum Danicarum de causis contemptae a Danis adhuc gentilibus mortis libri tres ex vetustis codiciis & monumentis hactenus ineditis congesti* (Copenhagen, 1689), 139–40.
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(42) 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*. 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*. Aubrey’s evident concern to check Charleton against Ole Worm’s *Monumentorum Danicorum libri sex* (Copenhagen, 1643) may indicate that the manuscript 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.


(44) Aubrey, *Monumenta* 24–6 (for comments on the debate and its publications and a summary of his own hypothesis).


Aubrey, Monumenta, 24.


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.

Aubrey, Monumenta, 25.


Chronicles of Scotlandprisca theologiaronald hutton,Blood and Mistletoe: The History of the Druids in Britain [New Haven, CT, and London, 2009], 54
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(56) Jones and Webb 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).


(60) 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).

(61) 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.


(63) A survey of many of the principal texts on the subject can be found in Hutton, *Blood and Mistletoe*, 49-85.


(65) Selden, *English Janus*, 16.
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(67) Drayton, Poly-Olbion, 152, citing Joseph Justus Scaliger, Ausonianarum lectionum libri duo (Lyon, 1574), 28, and Camden, Britain, 770–1, for two Roman inscriptions which he believed were dedications to the Druidic deity.


(70) Thomas Smith, Syntagma de Druidum Moribus ac Institutis (London, 1664). Monumenta

(71) Smith, Syntagma, 7–8.

(72) Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 10v; Bodleian MS Aubrey 11, fol. 10v.


(74) Aubrey, Monumenta, 147.


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

(89) Rudbeck, *Atlantica*, i. 125–44 (‘in quo gentis Sveonicae vetustas ex antiquorum tumulis seu collibus sepulcralibus colligitur’).


(91) Rudbeck, *Atlantica*, i. 560; English translation from Eriksson, *Atlantic Vision*, 45. Rudbeck refers to the vision of the stone at Daniel 2.34–5 (‘the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth’).


(96) Aubrey's copy of the Prodomus is Bodleian Ashmole C. 10. For these notes see the back flyleaf. Aubrey's reception of Steno's theories was somewhat complicated by his belief that they had been stolen by Oldenburg from Robert Hooke. On the front pastedown of his copy of the Prodomus he wrote, 'Memorandum, Mr H. Oldenburgh by stealth sent a copie of Mr Hookes Lectures of Solids in Solids read about 1664, to Mr Steno; to be printed Mr Hookes excellent Notions in Italie & Mr H. Oldenburg translated them [i.e., Steno's Prodomus, which Aubrey took to be Hooke's lectures] into English' (Bodleian Ashmole C. 10).

(97) He noted, 'In Rudbeckii Monumenta Suecica are excellent Remarques concerning the growing of Earth, which 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. stratum super stratum haec autem omnia ab oriente versus occidentem jactata fuisse apparet." cap. VI.' (MS Aubrey 1, fol. 66r). For the ground level of London see Aubrey, Monumenta, 505.


Aubrey, *Monumenta*, 118, 794–5, 914–15 (for etymology), 550–1 (Eliseg Pillar), 808–9 (Bedd Rita Gawr). For Lloyd see *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, 585–6; Richard Williams, *Montgomeryshire Worthies*, 2nd edn. (Newtown, 1894), 176. Lloyd was living near Aubrey at a girdler’s shop under the King’s Head Tavern in Fleet Street, 5 February 1655, when he addressed a letter from there to his cousin, the antiquary Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (‘A Catalogue of Curious and Valuable MSS. in Hengwrt Library, A.D. 1658’, *Cambrian Register* 3 [1818]: 302–3). He and Aubrey likely first met in the London legal community of the mid-century. As well as antiquarianism, Lloyd was also interested in natural philosophy, was cited by Aubrey as a source for several alchemical statements (cf. Hunter, *Aubrey*, 22), and gave him a copy of Henricus Regius’s Cartesian *Philosophia naturalis*, 2nd edn. (Amsterdam, 1654). Aubrey’s copy is now Bodleian Ashmole F 22 and is inscribed on the flyleaf ‘Sum Johannis Aubrii R.S.S. | The Gift of my worthy Friend | Mr Meredith Lloyd’.


At least some of his Welsh friends accepted Aubrey’s self-identification. Lhuyd wrote on 2 March 1693 that the bearer of the letter was ‘Mr. Thomas, a countryman of ours’ (Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 241r, emphasis added).

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).