Aubrey’s studies of stone circles were only a small part of his vast Monumenta Britannica, a wide-ranging study of ancient archaeological sites and artefacts across Britain. This chapter discusses the remainder of the Monumenta, exploring the circumstances of its composition and examining Aubrey’s engagement with burial mounds, hill forts, ancient fortifications, and roads, as well as contemporary theories of cataclysmic geological change. Throughout, Aubrey deployed his comparative methods to understand new objects through the lens of known ones, for example likening Offa’s Dyke to the Great Wall of China. Less nationalist in its tone, the remainder of the Monumenta sees Aubrey moving towards theories of a universal ancient culture which would reach full fruition in the Remaines of Gentilisme. The chapter concludes with a discussion of his unsuccessful attempts to publish the Monumenta in the 1690s.

Keywords: ancient culture, archaeological sites, Monumenta Britannica, comparatism, scholarly publishing
In 1663, when the debate over Stonehenge was still at its height, the future James VII and II had asked Aubrey to ‘give an account of the old Camps and Barrows on the Plaines’ near Bath.\(^1\) It was not until five years later, after the first draft of the *Templa Druidum* had been composed, that Aubrey began to fulfil the Duke of York’s request. As he began to compose the new manuscript, he emphasized his unique qualifications. Francis Bacon, he wrote, wished in *The Advancement of Learning* that active men ‘would or could become writers’ and Aubrey’s frequent journeys to and from his estates in Wiltshire and South Wales eminently qualified him as an active man, while his ‘ingenious’, scholarly turn of mind meant that he ‘could not but make somewhat a deeper inspection into [ancient monuments] than one of the Vulgar’.\(^2\) In short, he was the perfect gentleman for the job.

This essay would eventually form the nucleus of the second part of the *Monumenta Britannica*, of which the *Templa Druidum* was the first. The extent and focus of the work changed dramatically over the course of Aubrey’s life. In 1673 John Locke encouraged him to publish the *Templa*, going so far as to promise the Earl of Shaftesbury’s financial assistance, but Aubrey held fire.\(^3\) At the time he was involved with John Ogilby’s abortive endeavour to produce a major new antiquarian history of Britain and thought that the *Templa* might make up a \((p.47)\) portion of it.\(^4\) When that project failed, he continued adding to the manuscript and by 22 May 1680 was writing to Anthony Wood that he had decided to rename the entire work ‘*Monumenta Britannica* for reasons I will tell you hereafter. So Olaus Wormius called his Monumenta Danica. The next thing I goe about shall be to transcribe it faire, & print it.’\(^5\) Once again publication was delayed, however, and he did not make a complete transcript of the manuscript until 1689, by which time ‘[t]he first draught was worn-out with time & handling: and now, me thinks, after many years lying dormant, I come abroad like the Ghost of one of those Druids’\(^6\) It is this version of the *Monumenta* which survives as the two impressive folio volumes of Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 24–5.
In its final form Aubrey divided the *Monumenta* into three parts. The *Templa Druidum* was the first. The second consisted of six chapters on camps, castles, military architecture, Roman towns, pits, and horns. The third was a similarly miscellaneous collection of eight chapters on barrows, urns, sepulchres, ditches, highways, Roman pavements, coins, and embanking and draining. Behind this chaotic, Borgesian encyclopaedia of antiquarian materials lay an inexhaustible curiosity and a series of novel methodologies for thinking about the physical remains of the ancient past. By choosing to study camps and barrows rather than cameos and bas-reliefs, Aubrey moved away from the main stream of antiquarian thought and its tendency to focus on artefacts in isolation or, at most, as one facet of a site. Instead he firmly located his subjects in their wider contexts, justifying his claims to the Baconian role of active scholar, and using the landscape as a way of thinking his way into the creation and use of the sites he studied. His method was analogical, reaching an understanding of novel or strange sites—whether Offa’s Dyke or Silbury Hill—by relating them back to more familiar monuments and using those perceived relationships as a way of reconstructing the cultures which had produced them. This necessarily entailed recourse to texts, but over the decades during which the *Monumenta* was composed, Aubrey became increasingly willing to move outside textual histories, drawing upon current literature for accounts of the Great Wall of China or Homeric burial practices, but going beyond his initial determination to locate discoveries within the familiar frameworks of classical works such as Caesar’s *Commentaries.*
The remainder of the *Monumenta* was less spectacular in its conclusions than the *Templa Druidum* and has attracted correspondingly less attention as a result. In many ways, however, it provides a clearer, more sophisticated view of Aubrey’s methods than the *Templa* and demonstrates how his understanding of the ancient past gained in nuance over the course of his life. While maintaining his focus on Romano-British culture, Aubrey was becoming increasingly open to comparisons which linked it with other ancient civilizations, a tendency which saw its fullest expression in his genealogies of architecture and folklore in the 1670s and 1680s. The portions of the *Monumenta* discussed in this chapter represent a midpoint between the focused nationalist arguments of the *Templa*, and the claims for a pan-European, if not global, ancient culture made in his later writings. They also demonstrate with particular clarity Aubrey’s comparative methods; analogy, for Aubrey, was a tool which could naturalize and explain otherwise baffling evidence and, in the process, make legible worlds far outside of the humanist textual tradition.

**Reading the Landscape**

Meric Casaubon’s characterization of antiquaries as those for whom ‘visible superviving evidences of antiquitie represent unto their minds former times, with as strong an impression, as if they were actually present, and in sight’ struck a chord with Aubrey. The quotation and its surrounding context appear twice in the *Monumenta* and a similar act of antiquarian visualization lay behind the lyrical passage with which Aubrey opened his study of camps and fortifications:

*(p.49)* The prodigious graffes and rampires [i.e., trenches and ramparts] of the old Encampings seemed justly to claim Admiration in the beholder. The greatnesse, and numerousness of the Barrowes (the Beds of Honour where now so many Heroes lie buried in Oblivion) doe speake plainly to us, that Death & Slaughter once rag’d there, and that here were the Scenes, where terrible Battles were fought: wherein fell so many thousands, mentioned by the Historians. By the burying places it might be presumed where about the Engagement began and which way the Victor made his persuit: and by the Imperial Camps (where now Sheep feed, and the Plough goes) one may trace out which way the victorious Roman Eagle tooke her Course.10
Aubrey was describing an act of imaginative reconstruction which balanced simultaneous visions of the present landscape and its ancient past conjured up by those ‘visible superviving evidences’ of the camps and barrows. Here he was moving beyond an antiquarian approach which surveyed a site—as at Stonehenge or Avebury—to one which took in a panoramic view of an entire landscape and all the human activity that had taken place within it. He also drew out the tensions between the recovery of the past, the ‘presumptions’ which followed from a close examination of the landscape, and the impossibility of complete knowledge, the oblivion in which the British heroes lay buried. This tension, and the discomfort of partial knowledge, were all the more acute in a historical context largely devoid of the comfort of textual sources. This delicate balancing act between observation and imagination, present only in the background in the *Templa Druidum*, became a guiding principle in the remainder of the *Monumenta*.\(^{11}\)

Under the rubric of ‘camps’ Aubrey included not only Roman encampments but other sites of varying ages, including many now known to be prehistoric hill forts. In identifying and describing Roman camps, Aubrey already had an extensive literature to rely upon. At the beginning of the chapter he directed his readers to pseudo-Hyginus’s *De castris Romanis* and to the discussion of military encampment in the surviving fragment of book six of Polybius’s *Histories*, both conveniently collected in a new edition edited by R. H. Schellius and published in Amsterdam in 1660.\(^{12}\) To this he appended Edward Grimston’s English translation of the fragment of Polybius in its entirety and subsequently added a draft of a model Roman camp taken from Sir Henry Savile’s dissertation on Roman \(^{(p.50)}\) warfare in the notes to his 1591 edition of Tacitus.\(^{13}\) Drawing upon previous antiquaries’ fascination with the practicalities of Roman warfare as well as from two standard classical sources on the subject, Aubrey was able to develop a rule for identifying Roman remains: a Roman encampment should be square or rectangular, thus, the remains of a square or rectangular encampment in the British landscape could reasonably be supposed to be Roman.
Aubrey’s difficulty lay in relating the sites he had identified as Roman back to the history of ancient Britain in so far as it could be recovered from classical authors. The first pages of the chapter, which probably date from its initial composition in 1668, are replete with extracts from Caesar’s *Commentaries* describing the invasion of Britain by the Romans.\(^{14}\) Aubrey originally imagined that the camps he had discovered in Kent, Surrey, and Middlesex could be equated with those constructed by Caesar during his invasion and, at least to begin with, seems to have been unfazed by the long duration of Roman occupation and the possibility that sites could be Roman but could also date from hundreds of years apart. He was, however, prepared to consider that camps in different parts of the country might represent later waves of Roman invasion or settlement and wondered whether subsequent invading generals would have learnt from Caesar’s mistakes and landed farther west, ‘perhaps in Sussex as did William the Conqueror’.\(^{15}\)

If square camps were Roman, the problem of round camps remained. In the recension of 1668, Aubrey drew a map of south-western Britain as it would have appeared in Roman times but with modern towns superimposed on the Roman landscape (see Figure 2.1).\(^{16}\) On this he reiterated that ‘the Roman Campes are allwayes Square, or at least squarish’ (he had observed elsewhere that natural features sometimes meant that camps had (p.51)
to be built around obstacles, distorting their shape), but added that ‘the British Campes [are] Round, or roundish’.\textsuperscript{17} At a subsequent point in the composition of the \textit{Monumenta}, however, he altered his ideas and began to identify circular hill forts with double or treble ramparts as ‘Danish’, that is, built by Viking invaders at some point in the Middle Ages. That this—like his later theories concerning megalithic sites—may be connected with a reception of Scandinavian antiquarianism is suggested by his discussions of Yarnbury Castle, Wiltshire, and Fripsbury, Hampshire.\textsuperscript{18} In these cases, etymologies identifying the sites as Danish had been provided to Aubrey by Petrus Zitzscher, ‘a learned Danish Gent’, in 1681.\textsuperscript{19} Any attempt to locate this in the context of the Scandinavian scholarly connections explored in chapter 1 is frustrated, however, by a lack of evidence. Zitzscher’s own intellectual contacts and even the reason for his presence in England are unclear; he does not seem to have had Royal Society connections.\textsuperscript{20} Nonetheless, it is notable that it was around this time that Aubrey began to take greater account of Scandinavian antiquities than before.

\textbf{Figure 2.1} Aubrey’s 1668 ‘Map of the Roman and British Campes, & highwayes’ in south-western England (Bodleian MS Top. Gen. c. 24, fols. 250v–251r).
Aubrey was proud of his classification of hill fort forms, expressing disbelief that William Camden had been unable to tell the difference between Roman and Danish camps (in spite of having access to Savile’s Tacitus, one of Aubrey’s major sources for Roman fortification) and noting smugly that Robert Plot ‘knew not how to distinguish’ between the two ‘till I told him’. Plot, in his 1677 Natural History of Oxford-Shire had commented on ‘the large square Entrenchments’ and the ‘small Fortification[s]’ in the county, that ‘in general ’tis like they were works of the Saxons, these being all square, though the last [Beaumont Castle, near Mixbury in Oxfordshire] by its name should indeed be Norman’. Of two other fortifications he opined that ‘’tis most probable they were made by the Danes (they being both round)’. Aubrey, in his own copy of the Natural History, made short work of Plot, noting of ‘works of the Saxons’, (p.53) ‘’tis false’, and against ‘made by the Danes (they being both round)’, ‘This note the Dr [i.e., Plot] had from J. Aubrey.’

Aubrey’s determination to create a fixed typology of fortifications is of a piece with his concern to use analogy as a method of pattern-building. As with megalithic sites, he could proceed from known to unknown quantities by comparing their visual appearance. However, his determination that square camps were Roman and round camps were British or Danish leaves a gaping hole in his history of Britain’s military occupation. Here, as elsewhere, the Anglo-Saxons have no place in his narrative, leaving the dichotomy of Roman–Briton at centre stage, with a little later support from the Scandinavians.
The two subsequent chapters, discussing castles and the remnants of ancient military architecture, were complementary to that on camps. Camps were only identifiable by their earthworks, but Aubrey distinguished castles as those sites which had remnants of stonework remaining, if not entire structures, and were thus, in theory, more easily identifiable as the product of a specific era. Despite this, Aubrey was more enthusiastic than precise in his identification of Roman structures, failing to transfer his post-Conquest methodologies into a pre-Conquest context. He identified the Norman ruins of Old Sarum as Roman—having eliminated the Saxons as possible candidates by quoting William of Malmesbury that they did not build with stone. In this he was probably influenced by William Camden, who mentioned the ‘ruins yet remaining’ at ‘Old Sorbiodunum’ in a Roman or immediately post-Roman context in his Britannia. A similar Camdenian influence, augmented by Aubrey’s own observations, can be seen in his conviction that the thirteenth-century Caerphilly Castle was Roman on the basis that there were ‘several Busts, scilicet Roman heads and bodies to the wast, in the Roman habit’ in the hall there; Camden had written that it ‘hath beene of so huge a bignesse, and such a wonderfull piece of worke beside, that all men wel nere say, it was a garison-fort of the Romans’. His identification of these sites as Roman may seem all the more surprising since, in the following chapter, he gave detailed sketches and descriptions of genuine Roman fortified architecture at Colchester, Silchester, London, and elsewhere, but it is worth remembering that his own comparative architectural methods were the first of their kind and reliant upon the presence of specific architectural forms, particularly windows. The absence of those forms, combined with existing antiquarian interpretations, made a watertight case not just for Aubrey but also for his younger contemporary Edward Lhuyd. Lhuyd, writing his additions to the 1695 Britannia, still argued that it was ‘highly probable’ Caerphilly had been built by the Romans, despite finding no evidence of Roman textual remains there except for two puzzling coins with Latin inscriptions, communicated to him by Aubrey’s cousin Sir John Aubrey of Llantrithyd. Without surviving Roman architecture of the sort that could still be found in Italy or elsewhere on the continent, British antiquaries lacked a comparative framework which would have cast doubt on the traditional origins of these structures.
Aubrey began his chapter on Roman towns and cities with a short survey of the Roman occupation of Britain. He found an origin for fortified Roman settlements in the need to have walled defences against the native Britons, comparing their incursions upon the Roman province to ‘the Descent which the Indians A.D. 16 … , lately made on the New-England-men for want of walled Townes’. This comparison between the Roman occupiers of Britain and the English settlers in North America gains additional depth when measured against Aubrey’s attempts at asserting cultural continuity between the two in his *Remaines of Gentilisme*. The majority of the chapter, however, is more concerned with the specifics of uncovering Roman settlements than in the appropriation of Roman culture for the English so in evidence in the *Remaines*. Following on from this comparison, Aubrey paraphrased from John Milton’s 1670 *History of Great Britain* to establish a *terminus post quem* for Roman building in Britain: ‘In Constantine’s time here were great store of Workmen and excellent Builders … Theodosius (tempore Valentiniani) rayesed on the confines many strong Holds, nunc infestabatur Britannia Scotis, Saxonics, Pictis.’ In other words, Roman architecture was being erected in England well into the fifth century CE.

This passage shows a noticeable growth in Aubrey’s understanding of Roman Britain from his earlier determination to see in every Roman camp one of Caesar’s way stations. Now he was at pains to emphasize the continuity of active Roman rule and building into the late antique period instead of reducing all Roman traces in Britain to a blueprint from which Caesar’s invasion could be recovered. In doing so he anticipated John (p.55) Horsley’s history of Roman Britain, which, following Ammianus Marcellinus, emphasized the Emperor Theodosius’s (379–95) role in ‘recover[ing] the provincial cities and forts, which had been very much damaged by the enemy’. In 1668 Aubrey’s beliefs about Romano-British culture had not yet been expressed, or perhaps even developed, but by the time this passage was composed he had begun to formulate the ideas which appeared in the *Remaines of Gentilisme*. If later English culture was the product of a long-term fusion between Roman and native British civilizations, it only stood to reason that Roman architecture would have gradually settled across the British landscape during a period of several hundred years.
Taking a wide view of the ancient landscape also led Aubrey to entertain new methodological possibilities, even if he did not systematically put them to use. In a ‘Philosophicall Corollary’ to his description of Roman Silchester he noted that Seth Ward and John Wilkins had told him that, when viewing the ruins there in 1658, ‘one might discerne in the Corne-ground (‘twas about April) the signe of the Streets, passages, and also of the Hearths. quod NB. That expression of Ovid is applicable here, “Iam seges est ubi Troia fuit”.’ Ward and Wilkins’s anecdote must have made an impression on Aubrey, for he quoted the same line from Ovid as the epigraph to part two of the Monumenta, but he does not seem to have followed up his own nota bene. What the two future bishops had described were negative cropmarks caused by the subterranean remains of Roman buildings, a phenomenon which was later noticed by Stephen Hales in 1733 and Gilbert White in 1789, but which only entered the archaeological toolbox in the twentieth century. However, it tells us less about Aubrey’s friends’ bright idea than about the way in which he conceptualized and naturalized ideas. By linking the observation with the line from Ovid—‘now corn grows where Troy stood’—Aubrey was bringing it into his own mental world, built upon a corpus of classical texts whose tags and images could serve as hooks on which to hang new and unfamiliar material. Here, Ovid’s Troy was not only anchoring a new idea, but naturalizing the still foreign, because unknown, landscape of Roman Britain into the textual world of humanism. For all that Aubrey read the landscape with a precision and perspicacity uncommon for his era, this more stable, better-known textual landscape was his native home.

Burial Mounds in Homeric Britain
From the moment of the Duke of York’s request, Aubrey had tended to see fortifications and burial sites as linked; the latter being, one might say, the inevitable product of the former in so far as battles inevitably generate burials. Interpreting barrows and other tombs posed different questions from his work on camps, however. At the inception of his project, Aubrey had no doubt that barrows were ‘the Beds of Honour where now so many Heroes lie buried in Oblivion’, but in the course of the Monumenta he proposed two separate theories explaining their origin.
At first, he had believed that the ancient Britons were buried where they fell in battle and that ‘[b]y the burying places it might be presumed where about the Engagement began and which way the Victor made his pursuit’. That this might have been somewhat impractical seems not to have fazed Aubrey, who not only referred to it in his introduction to the chapter on camps, but returned to the theory as a hermeneutic tool when discussing a series of prehistoric barrow cemeteries in Dorset:

At Woodyates ... hath been a terrible fight. there are, but a little within the line, nineteen barrowes and some of them very great: here are also 2 or 3 circular trenches with a little tump or two viz: [bird’s-eye views of two tumuli] which in probability were the places for combustione cadaverum [burning of bodies] ... one may plainly see here that the Chace of the Victory runs westwards ... This great fight by Woodyates I take to be \perhaps was/ that between the Romans and Boadicea: it agrees so well with the Description of Cornelius Tacitus. where the entrance (as a throate) was narrow but grew broader ...

Aubrey was suggesting that the warriors slain in this supposed battle were subsequently cremated and buried in the places where they had fallen.

Aubrey’s emphasis on the crematory tumuli probably derived from readings of Ole Worm and Sir Thomas Browne—the latter’s *Hydriotaphia, Urne Buriall, or a Discourse of the Sepulchral Urnes Lately Found in Norfolk* (1658) is quoted extensively in the subsequent chapter—though it (p.57) may also owe something to the theories of his friend James Long.

Indeed, discussing the barrows on the Downs in another context he proposed a radically different interpretation of their presence which seems to have been based on a hypothesis by Long:

On the Downes are Barrowes almost everywhere on high ground: for they affected to have their Ashes lie drie. It is to be noted that where Barrows are, there is alwaies for the most part one circular Trench, or more without any Barrow: which Colonel James Long, ingeniously ghesses to be the place for the Combustion of the dead bodies, and for performing the Ceremonies, within which circle, every body was not permitted to enter
—— procul ô, procul ite profani.39

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

My conceit is that the Seaven Barrowes &c: (where are severall together) were not tumuli, or barrowes erected upon the account of any great person slain there in Battle: but in those times they chose to lye drye upon such hilly ground: and those of the same familie would desire to be neer one another; as the Kings at Westminster abbey, and at St Dionyse in France.40

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

Investigation of barrows led naturally to an investigation of their contents. Aubrey’s chapter on urns related them back to their physical contexts and used them and their analogies to enrich his reconstruction of ancient British society. It opened with a long series of excerpts from Sir Thomas Browne’s Hydriotaphia that served to contextualize Aubrey’s own more focused case studies.41 Browne famously began Hydriotaphia with a history of the practice of cremation across all cultures, and the first lines Aubrey chose to quote in the Monumenta are of particular importance:
The practice of Burning was also of great Antiquity, and of no slender extent. For (not to derive the same from Hercules) noble descriptions there are hereof in the Grecian Funerals of Homer, in the formall Obsequies of Patroclus, and Achilles; and somewhat elder in the Theban warre, and solemn combustion of Meneceus, and Archemorus, contemporary unto Jair the Eighth Judge of Israel. Confirmable also among the Trojans, from the Funerall Pyre of Hector, burnt before the gates of Troy.42

Aubrey, if he did not take this passage immediately to heart, certainly came to the same conclusion. As we have seen earlier in this section, he theorized that barrows were part of larger ritual complexes which also included crematorial areas, and in finding analogies for these supposed practices, he turned immediately to the passage from Homer cited by Browne. Following the excerpts from Hydriotaphia are quotations from the funeral of Patroclus, the funeral of Elpenor, and the burial of Achilles, amongst other Homeric fragments.43 Much as hill forts and megaliths could be domesticated and understood through reference to classical and biblical antiquities, so the British warriors and their obsequies could be understood through comparison with Homeric heroes. In thinking about the rituals that would have surrounded burial in barrows, Aubrey turned first to Homer, noting that, 'I shall first set downe Homer's descriptions of burying and raysing Tumuli: and then subjoine those of Virgil.'44
For Aubrey, then, pre-Roman British culture was essentially comparable to that of archaic Greece as seen in classical texts, and a close reading of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* could serve as a means of explicating the otherwise unrecoverable culture of the prehistoric Britons. This was not quite the same thing as the exclusively textual antiquarianism which existed alongside Aubrey’s more visual approach. He was certainly using texts to understand what he had found, but not in lieu of artefacts. Instead he was using them as something supplementary, a way of siting those artefacts within a known universe, of domesticating them and making them intelligible. In this respect, he was engaging in an antiquarian technique that can be seen in the writings of early travellers to the eastern Mediterranean. David Constantine has discussed Edmund Chishull’s attempts to find continuity in the Turkish landscape through quotations of Homer or other ancient poets apposite to what he himself observed, in other words domesticating and interpreting a profoundly foreign space. Chishull, in a journal entry for 29 April 1698, contrasted the emptiness of the Caystrian plain in Lydia, on which could only be observed, ‘a stone bridge of three considerable arches, built directly along the bank of the river; and therefore now serving to no other purpose, but only to witness that the stream had changed its chanel’, with ‘the sweetness of that immortal verse’, ‘The Asian mead by the streams of Caystrius’. He and Aubrey both took texts familiar to them and used them as lenses through which to understand otherwise foreign and perplexing environments, whether they were temporally distant (ancient Britain) or spatially and culturally so (the modern Ottoman Empire).

Urn burials were the sites of most early attempts at excavation and, as such, Aubrey’s chapter on urns reads somewhat differently from the remainder of the *Monumenta*. Rather than measuring and describing sites, Aubrey recorded excavations, detailing their dates, their finds, and their instigators. The original impetus for excavating urns seems to have been the assumption that they would contain buried treasure, but Aubrey also recorded a number of instances where a less pecuniarily informed antiquarian curiosity led to impressively thorough excavation. Amongst this latter category was the dig conducted by Sir Edward Harley (and unnamed local labourers) at a barrow near Leintwardine, Herefordshire, in 1662:

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Sr Edward Harley Knight of the Bath Governour of Dunkirk and my ever honoured friend ... caused one of these Barrowes to be digged Aº 1662, and found therein a great deale of coales, and some pieces of burnt bones: but in the middle he found an Urne about two foot and a half high, full of coales and ashes and some pieces of burnt bones: I had a little piece of the Urne it is of a kind of darke muske colour (umbre) a quarter of an Inch thick and the middle of it is as black as a coale.48

(p.60) Unlike Browne, Aubrey refrained from attempting to identify the burial as Roman, or, indeed, as anything specific, contenting himself with a careful description of what was discovered (he included a drawing of the urn itself in the margin).

The excavation of burial mounds was also of interest from a scientific point of view as they were believed to sometimes contain the so-called ‘ever-burning lamps’ referred to in numerous classical texts. That lamps were sometimes found in Roman burials was well established, but legends of such lamps being discovered still lit were more difficult to verify.49 One of the standard sources amongst early modern scholars for evidence of the legend was a report that such a lamp had been discovered in the supposed tomb of Cicero’s daughter, Tullia, but whatever element of truth the story contained was quickly submerged in a sea of imprecise citation and conjecture.50 By the mid-seventeenth century, it was generally assumed that if such lamps had existed, they would have been fuelled with naphtha and it was with this assumption in mind that Robert Plot gave a paper to the Philosophical Society of Oxford concerning their possible construction in 1684.51

Aubrey came up against this legend twice in his research for the Monumenta. The first instance was in a letter from William Sydenham to his uncle, Thomas Sydenham, dated 1675, detailing a barrow excavation much like Harley’s.52 Having previously noted that the centre of the (p.61) barrow was ‘perfectly like an Oven curiously clayed round’, Sydenham wrote that:
I must not omit the chiefest thing that at the first opening this Oven one of my Servants thrust in his hand and pulling it quickly back again I demanding the reason of him, hee told me it was very hott: I did also putt in my hand and it was warme enough to have baked bread: severall other persons did the like, who can all testify the trueth of it ... I thinke it would puzzle the Royall Societie to give a reason of the heate of the Oven being fifteen hundred yeares old.\footnote{53}

Sydenham offered no explanation for the natural phenomenon he had encountered. Aubrey, however, saw it as corollary evidence for the existence of eternal lamps and commented in the margin that it could be related to a passage in 2 Maccabees describing burning petroleum (its first identification as ‘naptha’) and also, allegedly, to Pliny’s description ‘of Tullia’s Urne’.\footnote{54} He was, however, mistaken in his second citation: Pliny made no mention of any such object.

Aubrey’s interest in ever-burning lamps throws some light on an unusual printed item bound into the \textit{Monumenta’s} chapter on Roman pavements. It is a single sheet, dated 1685 and headed ‘A Strange and Wonderful Discovery Newly made of Houses Under Ground, At Colton’s-Field in Gloucester-Shire’.\footnote{55} The short narrative that followed purported to relate the story of two labourers, engaged in digging a gravel pit, who came by chance upon the entrance to a series of subterranean rooms, at the end of which stood an automaton dressed as a Roman soldier. When they approached it, the figure struck out three times, at the third blow breaking the glass in which an ever-burning lamp was suspended and plunging them into darkness. Further investigation was prevented by ‘a hollow Noise like a deep Sigh or Groan’, which augured the collapse of the entire complex, ‘our Adventurers’ only narrowly escaping.\footnote{56}
Stuart Piggott has identified this as a hoax and pointed towards several common medieval and early modern mythological tropes which appear in the narrative, but it is worth investigating its more immediate sources in an attempt to explain Aubrey’s interest in this lampoon of antiquarianism (p.62) and natural science.\(^57\) Leaving aside the vague descriptive passages of the various rooms—‘they went into a Parlour, furnish’d according to the fashion of those Times’, and so on—the central point in the narrative is the figure and actions of the ancient automaton. This closely followed John Wilkins’s discussion of eternal lamps in his *Mathematicall Magick*:

There is another relation of a certain man, who upon occasion digging somewhat deep in the ground ... discovered a fair Vault, and towards the further side of it, the statue of a man in Armour, sitting by a table, leaning upon his left arm, and holding a scepter in his right hand, with a lamp burning before him; the floor of this Vault being so contrived, that upon the first step into it, the statue would erect itself from its leaning posture; upon the second step it did lift up the scepter to strike, and before man could approach near enough to take hold of the lamp, the statue did strike and break it to peeces: such care was there taken that it might not be stoln away, or discovered.\(^58\)
Wilkins’s account places more emphasis on the eternal lamp, whilst the broadsheet was concerned with the ‘Medals and Coyns’ elsewhere in the vault and reduced the lamp to a decorative role. Nonetheless, it is sufficiently close to the language of the broadsheet to clearly indicate that the latter depended upon it for its description of the automaton. It is significant, also, that the source for this story should derive from a work that has multiple points of contact with members of the Royal Society and their writings. The broadsheet claimed to have been printed in 1685, a date that suggests a potential allusion to Plot’s experiments on eternal lamps the previous year. A third connection with the Royal Society comes in the form of a reference at the beginning of the broadsheet to ‘that Island near Ireland, which is described in the Maps, but cannot now be found’, a reference to the Irish myth of Hy Brasil, which had exercised Robert Hooke’s ingenuity in 1679. The final clue is Aubrey’s own annotation on the verso of the sheet, ‘This Paper I had from Mr Thomas Pigot M.A. Fellow of Wadham college Oxon. who went to see it. Quaere Mr Edw. Stephens of Cheriton.’

According to Aubrey, Thomas Pigot ‘went to see’ this mythical excavation and Stuart Piggott has suggested that the broadsheet may have been an elaborate joke by him, either for the ‘private amusement’ of the Royal Society or perhaps at their, or Aubrey’s, expense. In either case its amusement value, whether for author or reader, rests upon a tension inherent in the antiquarianism of the period: while ancient artefacts were eagerly discussed and sought after, very few scholars actually obtained them through excavation and even fewer actively participated in any excavations which they might have sponsored. Even Aubrey, describing the contents of a barrow tomb, wrote that, ‘I never was so sacralegious as to disturb, or rob his urne: let his Ashes rest in peace’, and there is no indication that he conducted a single excavation himself. In this atmosphere, the moment of excavation could easily assume a quasi-mythical quality, as in the broadsheet, and the possibility of discovering an eternal lamp was not so distant as it afterwards became.

Fortifications and Floods: Human Intervention and Geological Change
In the final sections of the *Monumenta* Aubrey turned to two other prominent features of the ancient landscape: fortifications and roads. In these chapters he was chiefly concerned with identifying the routes of the Roman roads and ancient ramparts that criss-crossed early modern Britain, but in the process of doing so he reached larger conclusions about how the landscape interacted with society and how both had changed since antiquity.

Writing ‘of Ditches’, Aubrey began by defining the term. ‘[T]he word *ditch*,’ he observed, ‘did anciently signifie a Bank, or Rampire … the same as *dyke*’, whereas by the time he wrote it had also taken on the opposite meaning, that of a ‘*fossa* [i.e., a dug-out channel], which the Dutchmen call, the *graff*’. To avoid confusion, Aubrey only referred—counterintuitively to modern ears—to the former dykes as ditches, and it was with these earthworks that the chapter was concerned. It covered Offa’s Dyke, Wansdyke, and other examples of man-made defences, included remarks by William Dugdale on Hadrian’s Wall in which Dugdale corrected Camden, and saw Aubrey making interpretative arguments from physical evidence similar to those made during his study of hill forts.

Aubrey mapped these large-scale earthworks through a combination of personal observation, mobilization of local contacts, and text-based research. In one of his more complete surveys, that of Offa’s Dyke, he (p. 64) began with the conventional theory of its origin, ultimately derived from Asser’s *Life of Alfred*, that it ‘was made by Offa King of the Mercians (his seat was at *Sutton-wall* in Herefordshire) It was to separate the Britons from the Saxons, and who (of either partie) was found on the other side of this Dyke armed, was to loose his right hand’. He then gave a description of its course:

> It is to be seen on the top of *Bachy-hill*, and on *Stocky-hill* both neer Morhampton-park in Herefordshire: in some places above a mile together. The *Graffe* is on the Welsh side: viz. Westwards, and the *Rampire* towards the English side: which evidences that it was made by the Saxons … (Memorandum the range of Hills lyeing north and south are the first that terminate the fair *plain* level of Herefordshire toward Wales).  

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His distinction between the ‘Graffe’, or excavated ditch, on the western side and the raised earthworks on the eastern was comparatively elementary, but had not been made before and was the more impressive in Aubrey’s case, given his resistance elsewhere to crediting the Anglo-Saxons with architectural talent. In this case, the conclusion he had drawn only confirmed something which was already known from written sources—that it had been built by the Mercians against incursions from Wales—but he later applied the same principle to the less well-documented Wansdyke, noting that there ‘the Rampire is to the Southward, and the graffe is to the northward’; in doing so he revealed something about the intent behind its construction which was not otherwise known.

This chorographical and physical account of Offa’s Dyke was, Aubrey noted in the margin, not based on his observations alone, but also derived from reports by his friend John Hoskins—who’s Herefordshire estate, Morehampton Park, lay close to the dyke—and a detailed description of its course which he had received from ‘Henry Milbourn Esq Recorder of Monmouth: and a good Antiquarie’. Below this he noted that the Domesday Book might, potentially, contain a reference to the dyke, and left himself a memorandum that ‘Mr William Guillim of Langston (Hereff.) can tell me’. Finally, he placed the dyke within a larger landscape, noting how it filled the level of western Herefordshire between ranges of hills which made artificial defences less necessary. Throughout, Aubrey deployed a broad range of sources and hermeneutic tools to recover the extent, purpose, and larger significance of the earthworks.

Elsewhere, speaking of earthworks which he believed to be British rather than Saxon, he engaged in the same imaginative reconstruction which he had brought to bear on camps and burial mounds:

I beleive that there were several Reguli [petty kings], which often made wars upon one another; & the great Ditches which run on our plains & elsewhere so many miles, were (not unlikely) their boundaries; & with all served for defense against the incursion of their Enemies, as the Picts wall, & that in China; to compare things small to great.
In this passage from the *Description of the North Division of Wiltshire*, Aubrey reached an understanding of the place and function of an object in the British landscape through analogy with other objects or sites from the ancient world. His ‘Picts wall’ was Hadrian’s Wall, extensively studied by Camden, which provided a natural point of comparison elsewhere in Britain, but his reference to the Great Wall was more geographically adventurous. It reappeared elsewhere in the *Monumenta*, again in the context of Hadrian’s Wall:

The Division of Territories and Kingdomes is of great Antiquity. The Chinese walle every one has heard of: which is their defence against the Incursion of the Tartars. ‘According to the Chinese account that famous Wall, built against the irruptions of the Tartars was begun a hundred yeares before the Incarnation.’

The quoted passage was from Sir Thomas Browne’s interpretation of a ‘prophetic’ poem referencing the incursion into China of the Tartars, but it seems likely that Aubrey was only citing Browne for the date of the wall’s construction and had other, more sophisticated sources to draw on for its history and cultural contexts. He was well aware of the wall which ‘every one has heard of’ and it would appear that, despite its vast geographical distance, it was a better-known point of reference for a seventeenth-century English scholar than the native earthworks only a few days’ ride from London, an instance that serves to confirm just how novel Aubrey’s examination of these local, British remains was. Ironically, Aubrey was able to find analogies well known enough to explain these local monuments to his readers by turning to another piece of defensive architecture half a world away.

Aubrey was not content solely with identifying and describing these previously neglected sites; he also made several tentative forays into explaining the changes that had come about in the landscape since the Roman occupation. Discussing the abandonment of the Roman ways, he quoted conversations with Christopher Wren and Elias Ashmole:
Sr Christopher Wren saies to me, that Roman waies lost in process of time, by the building of Religious Houses; to which places Pilgrims resorted, and so found-out newer and neerer wayes. quod NB. For example Stanstreet causey (in Sussex) is disused; and so are several others, and Elias Ashmole Esq demonstrates it who by riding often from Wedon to Lichfield by the Watling street way & finding it four miles neerer than by Coventrey, began to guesse that the Watling-street-way began to be neglected for the advantage of Travellers who had better accommodation at Coventrey, after it became a Religious place.\textsuperscript{74}

The abandonment of the Roman ways was one of the many dramatic changes in the landscape which Aubrey identified as having taken place since antiquity. On the opening page of the chapter ‘Of Embankeing and Dreyning & Currents’, he copied out a long passage from Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses}:

I have myself seen what once was solid land changed into sea; and again I have seen land made from the sea. Sea-shells have been seen lying far from the ocean, and an ancient anchor has been found on a mountain-top. What once was a level plain, down-flowing waters have made into a valley; and hills by the force of floods have been washed into the sea.\textsuperscript{75}
(p.67) Around this passage, Aubrey noted relevant examples. The solid earth becoming sea was ‘as in Cheshire’, the land created out of ocean was ‘as in the Sea not far from the Barbados about 1666’, and the valley caused by sudden flooding was referred back to ‘Gassendum de hoc’. This passage and its paratexts echo Robert Hooke’s theories of earthquakes and the alteration of the earth with which Aubrey engaged in his *Natural History of Wiltshire*. Aubrey, like Hooke, recognized the possibility that considerable alterations of the earth’s surface could occur within a relatively short period of time, and it is within this context that he understood reports such as one by Sir Jonas Moore, surveyor of the fens during the Earl of Bedford’s drainage attempts, which he copied into the *Monumenta*: Moore ‘told me that in the Fennes in Lincolnshire they found a Roman Causey fourtie foot under the Low-water-mark at Sea. *Matthew Paris* saieth that in his time it was the Paradise of England.’ In this chapter, however, he was intent on distinguishing between natural changes, such as the inundation of the Roman causeway in Lincolnshire, and significant man-made alterations. He began with a categorical statement that, ‘the Saxons were barbarous & ignorant’—in keeping with his general low estimation of their culture—so that the Romans must be the builders of all the ancient embankments and drains now known in England, ‘though I doe not remember it expressly mentioned in any Historian of any particular place’. He provided a few examples, mostly from the area in and around London, to support his argument and quoted several pages from Dugdale’s more comprehensive *History of Imbanking and Drayning*, but the chapter is sparse by Aubrey’s standards and does not suggest a significant amount of research on his part.
Instead, the majority of the chapter consists of an essay ‘Of St Vincents Rocks, and Bristow’, which is dated 1668 and was probably originally (p.68) written as a separate work before later being incorporated into the Monumenta. It does, however, address the same issues. Aubrey, noting the absence of any place that could plausibly be identified with Bristol in the Antonine Itinerary, proposed that, ‘[I]n those daies, this now illustrious Place (together with the great Flat of Somersetshire), was under water, that is to say by the over-flowing of the River of Avon, which was pluggd-up, or barred by the botomme of these Vincentian Rocks.’ In support of this he quoted a local tradition from Thomas Axe of Orchard, Somerset, that anchors had been ‘digged-up in the Meers’ nearby. At the foot of St Vincent’s Rock lay a series of smaller rocks called the Lidde, which interfered with navigation and which he supposed were the remnants of a larger barrier that had been partially removed by Roman engineers ‘at the Declension of their Government’. He then laid out the gradual evolution of the landscape around Bristol, from prehistoric times to the present. It was first underwater, but an earthquake cut the river channel below the rocks—seemingly, unless he was contradicting himself, in Roman times—and it became a marsh. Subsequently, after the Roman engineering works, it had settled into its present state. Aubrey was here combining his historicization of landscape with current theories of geological change. His unstable earth, replete with violent earthquakes and sudden inundations, was derived directly from Hooke’s attempts to make sense of the geological evidence while still hanging onto the concept of an earth which was older than the Bible dictated but still comparatively young.

Publishing the Monumenta
During his intellectual stocktaking of the early 1690s Aubrey determined to finally publish the *Monumenta Britannica*. His ultimately unsuccessful (p.69) attempt to do so highlights the easily saturable market for antiquarianism at a time when polite writing was already doing battle with old-fashioned erudition. It also tells us something about the nature of Aubrey’s scholarship. Drawing upon a network of friends and acquaintances, both for information and for subscriptions, was one thing, but Aubrey never possessed the backing of a scholarly juggernaut like the university presses of Oxford or Uppsala. While John Fell’s editions and polemics could issue regularly from the Clarendon Building and Henrik Curio could laboriously produce the four volumes of Rudbeck’s *Atlantica*, Aubrey was an individual scholar limited by his own resources and the vagaries of the book trade, conditions which in the end led to the *Monumenta* remaining in manuscript for another three hundred years.

Aubrey did, however, make the attempt. In the latter part of 1692 he had sounded out several London booksellers concerning the possibility of publication, including Samuel Smith, publisher of the Royal Society’s *Philosophical Transactions* and of works by several friends and acquaintances including William Dugdale, John Ray, and Robert Boyle. However, the cost of paper was high and Smith told him that the three- or four-volume work he imagined would be far too expensive to safely publish in the present market. Instead, Smith and some of the other booksellers he approached advised him to obtain subscriptions and publish in Oxford, where a work like the *Monumenta* could apparently be expected to sell more quickly than in London.
Aubrey wrote to Edward Lhuyd on 4 February 1693 that he would have advertisements for subscriptions printed by the following Monday and would send one or two hundred to Oxford, but Anthony Wood’s copy of the advertisement is dated 10 April, suggesting it may have taken slightly longer than Aubrey had hoped in its gestation. When it did appear, Aubrey’s proposal was to print the entirety of the Monumenta together with the Stromata (for which see Chapter 3) in 160 folio sheets, ‘with abundance of Cuts’. This would have made for a substantial book, 640 pages in length, with the equally substantial subscription price of 18 shillings, 9 up front and 9 upon delivery. The expense of producing such a monumental work was underlined by the slightly nervous caveat that ‘there are so few Printed, that care will be taken that none shall be under-sold’.

 Nonetheless, it seems likely that, despite the expense, this scheme could have gone ahead. Edmund Gibson encouraged the project, while warning Aubrey against printing in Oxford due to the probability of a delay of four or five years, reminding him that ‘the poor Saxon Chronicle could not be finish’d in less time than a year’. Thomas Tanner seconded Gibson’s encouragement and promised to solicit Arthur Charlett, master of University College, to seek subscriptions. Charlett must have proved amenable, for by 4 April Aubrey reported to Wood that he was sending him copies of the proposal that week, noting also, with evident satisfaction, that Dryden had attempted to place the Monumenta with his own bookseller, ‘but he will print only plays and romances’. In the following days, Aubrey drew upon his network of friends and acquaintances in Oxford, sending four quires of the proposal to Tanner for disposal by him and Lhuyd. Some were to go to subsidiary distributors and some directly to known interested parties, as described in Aubrey’s letter to Lhuyd of 6 April, where he wrote that,

 I would entreat you to doe me the favour to deliver about 12 [copies of the proposal] to my cosen Levet fellow of Exeter coll: and some to Dr Gregory at Mistress —— and to send 2 or 3 to Mr Lud (or a name like) of Baliol [sic] coll: he was Proctor about 2 yeares since. a very civill Gent.

(p.70)
Gibson was also involved in their distribution, promising to ‘send them into the North and to Worcester’. By 4 May, Aubrey reported to Tanner that he had been advised by Samuel Smith that Henry Clements in Oxford was the best choice for a printer and thought if subscriptions continued to flow in, he would be able to commence printing by Michaelmas of that year. Aubrey seems to have asked Tanner to act as an intermediary between himself and Clements, and Tanner reported on 16 May that while he had not seen Clements himself, he knew the printer planned to subscribe for fourteen copies in any case and that Aubrey ought to see him in London.

This optimistic state of affairs did not last. By 19 July Aubrey had obtained only 112 subscriptions, evidently too few to fund the publication without further assistance, and he thought instead of asking the university to subsidize the printing. Initial responses were positive, with Ralph Bathurst, president of Trinity College and his old friend, writing that Charlett was very ready to assist in the Monumenta’s publication, but on 24 May 1694 Aubrey wrote sulkily to Lhuyd that, ‘Mr Gibson saith, that the University will not print my MSS: but let them lie among the Rubbish.’ A few days later, Lhuyd wrote back gently, implying that Gibson was being needlessly pessimistic (‘I presume the curators of the Presse have not as yet had any perusal of your works’), but proceeded to reprimand him for apparently spreading a false rumour that he had the support of Jonathan Edwards, principal of Lhuyd’s own Jesus College, for the printing of the Monumenta in a passage which Aubrey later heavily crossed out. By the summer of 1694, the initially auspicious project seemed to be dead in the water.
Michael Hunter has proposed that the failure of the subscription campaign was due in large part to the simultaneous publication of Gibson’s edition of Camden’s *Britannia*, proposals for which were dated 20 April 1693, just as Aubrey’s own campaign was getting underway.\(^{104}\) Aubrey certainly felt this was the case and that the *Britannia* was attempting to swallow up his own work without giving him sufficient credit. Tanner was forced to write on 26 December 1693 insisting that his desire to read the *Monumenta* was entirely above board and regretting Aubrey’s unwillingness to show him the manuscript after learning that he was amongst the antiquaries drafted by Gibson to prepare the new *Britannia*.\(^{105}\) Both Tanner and Lhuyd grappled with Aubrey’s disinclination to (p.72) allow material from the *Monumenta* to be used in their chapters on Wiltshire and Wales respectively, eventually prevailing, so that when the new edition came out in 1695, the pith of Aubrey’s Druidic theories was ensconced within treatments by his two friends of individual megalithic sites.\(^{106}\)

The booksellers who handled Gibson’s edition of the *Britannia* were Abel Swale and Awnsham Churchill. Churchill was John Locke’s publisher and agent and would go on to publish a number of substantial folios, including the famous *Collection of Voyages*, Rymer’s *Foedera*, and the English translation of Bayle’s *Dictionary*; although these were still in the future, he was already an obvious candidate for the job.\(^{107}\) It may be through his connections with Locke, Tanner, or Lhuyd that Aubrey proposed the *Monumenta* to Churchill in the summer of 1695.\(^{108}\) Churchill had accepted it by 31 August of that year and initially planned to print it almost immediately.\(^{109}\) This seems to suggest that Aubrey may have been overreacting in his response to the new *Britannia*; certainly its publication had not completely dried up the market for antiquarian texts. For unknown reasons, however, work at the printers’ end stalled and, on 12 November 1696, Aubrey wrote to Lhuyd, complaining of Churchill’s tardiness and planning to ask Locke and Gibson to speak to him.\(^{110}\) Before any further progress could be made, Aubrey died in June 1697 and the manuscript of the *Monumenta* remained, unprinted, in Churchill’s hands.\(^{111}\)
It is tempting to speculate what influence the *Monumenta* might have had if it had been published. Alain Schnapp has described Aubrey as flying the phrase ‘comparative antiquitie ... like a banner’ and it is undoubtedly true that the comparative methodologies Aubrey brought to bear throughout his work were exceptional in the antiquarian scholarship of the time. Whether naturalizing megaliths into world history, reasoning out the cultures behind burial mounds and hill forts, tracing ancient fortifications and roads across the landscape, or looking to Ovid and Robert Hooke to explain cataclysmic geological change, Aubrey’s analogical reasoning broke new ground in the study of the ancient physical past. Placed in a wider context, however, it was not as unusual as it seemed but rather derived from a rich seventeenth-century tradition of comparative thought: a tradition better known for its approaches to the study of religion. Aubrey’s innovation was to apply this existing method to artefacts which had more often been looked at in isolation. Through the emotive reconstruction of the past which Meric Casaubon had described, he took items as distinct as ‘a (coarse) gold coyne of Arviragus’ with a rude horse stamped on its reverse and ‘the white Horse cutt in the hill called White-horse hill in Berkshire’, recognized their similarity, and concluded something new about the ancient landscape of Britain.

Notes:


(5) Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 340r.

(6) Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 26. For his completion of a transcript of the *Monumenta* by October 1689 see Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 402r.
(7) As he prepared it for publication in the 1690s, Aubrey also added a series of other smaller tracts to the third section which had not previously formed a part of the Monumenta (see Chapter 3).

(8) See Chapters 3 and 5 respectively.


(10) Aubrey, Monumenta, i. 237–9.

(11) Aubrey’s privileging of imagination in the scholarly process has also been discussed by Alain Schnapp, The Discovery of the Past, trans. Ian Kinnes and Gillian Varndell (London, 1996), 191.

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

(13) Monumenta Sir Henry Savile, ‘A view of certaine militar matters, for the better vnderstanding of the ancient Roman stories’, in The End of Nero and Beginning of Galba: Fower Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus ... (Oxford, 1591), sep. pag. 49–75. Commentarius de militia Romana Monumenta The History of Polybius the Megalopolitan ... Also the Manner of the Romane Encamping

(14) Aubrey, Monumenta, i. 265–9, 278. Locating the actions described in the Commentaries within a contemporary British landscape was an approach also taken by Aubrey’s friend Edmond Halley in the latter’s ‘Discourse Tending to Prove at What Time and Place, Julius Cesar [sic] Made his First Descent upon Britain’, Philosophical Transactions 16 (1686–92): 495–501. Halley, however, focused on the coastline rather than on inland fortifications.

(15) Aubrey, Monumenta, i. 281.

(16) Aubrey, Monumenta, i. 594–5.

(17) Aubrey, Monumenta, i. 595.

(18) Aubrey, Monumenta, i. 287, 289.


(23) This copy is now Bodleian Ashmole 1722.


(29) Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 437. Aubrey was here presumably referring to King Philip’s War and the raids made by the Native American coalition on New England towns in 1675–6.


(32) Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 441. The quotation (‘now corn grows where Troy stood’) is from Ovid, *Heroides*, 1.53.

(33) Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 231.
(34) The phenomenon of cropmarks—in this instance based on observation of snow thawing more slowly above concealed drains—was observed by Stephen Hales in his *Haemastatics* (1733) and its potential application to Roman archaeology was noted by the naturalist Gilbert White in his *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* ... (London, 1789), 15-16. See Hunter, Aubrey, 193.

(35) Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 239.

(36) Aubrey, *Monumenta*, i. 239.


(39) Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 705. The quotation is a slight variation on Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6.258 (‘procul o procul este, profani’, ‘away, o away, you profane ones!’), and is the exclamation of the Sybil warning away the uninitiated from the grove through which Aeneas will reach the Underworld.


(43) Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 758–9 (funeral of Patroclus); 761 (funeral of Elpenor); 763 (Nestor’s directions on the burial of the dead); 765 (burial of Achilles).


(47) Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2007), 121,
(48) Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 765.

(49) John Wilkins, Mathematicall Magick ... (London, 1648), 232–56.

(50) Aubrey would have known the story from Sir Thomas Browne, Pseudodoxia epidemica ... (London, 1646), 161, and perhaps elsewhere. An early and oft-quoted reference to the opening of Tullia’s tomb was that by Guido Panciroli (1523–1599), who wrote that it had been opened and the lamp seen ‘in the time of Paul III’ (i.e., 1534–49), cf. Guido Panciroli, The History of Many Memorable Things Lost, Which Were in Use Among the Ancients, 2 vols. (London, 1715), i. 115–16. A collection of translated contemporary documents relating to the opening in 1485 of the tomb which first gave rise to this legend is in Rodolfo Lanciani, Pagan and Christian Rome (Boston, MA, and New York, 1896), 295–301, which suggests that the identification with Tullia was not universally accepted during the initial excavation.


(52) Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 769–71 (the letter is also published in Kenneth Dewhurst, Dr. Thomas Sydenham (1624–1689): His Life and Original Writings [London, 1966], 166–7). William Sydenham was the son of the parliamentarian officer of the same name, lost his estate in suspicious circumstances, and died in jail in 1718 (G. G. Meynell, Materials for a Biography of Dr. Thomas Sydenham (1624–1689): A New Survey of Public and Private Archives [Folkestone, 1988], 76, 97–8), while his uncle Thomas (1624–1689) was the well-known physician, author of Methodus curandi febres (1666), and friend of John Locke (ODNB, s.n.; Dewhurst, Dr. Thomas Sydenham, passim; Meynell, Materials for a Biography of Dr. Thomas Sydenham, passim). It may have been Sydenham’s acquaintance with Locke which first brought this letter to Aubrey’s notice.

(53) Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 769–71.

(54) Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 769, citing 2 Maccabees 1:32–6.
Cf. the discussion of this item in Kate Loveman, Reading Fictions, 1660-1740: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture (Aldershot, 2008), 80–1.

Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 947–9.


Wilkins, Mathematicall Magick, 237.


Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 949. Edward Stephens of Cherington and Alderley, Gloucestershire, had married the daughter of Judge Matthew Hale and had been noted by Aubrey as a potential source for Hales’s life (Aubrey, Lives, ii. 784). Aubrey presumably planned to turn to him as a local Gloucestershire informant.

Piggott, Ruins in a Landscape, 94–5.

Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 711.

Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 881.

MonumentaPolicraticusBritainAylett Sammes, Britannia antiqua illustrata (London, 1676), 558, Monumenta

Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 885.

Edward Lhuyd identifies its course in more detail but does not discuss its structure in Camden, Camden’s Britannia, 587.

Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 889.

Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 885. Before he could contact Guillim, however, Thomas Gale had read through the Monumenta and written ‘noe mention’ next to Aubrey’s note.

Bodleian MS Aubrey 3, fol. 10r.

Camden, Britain, 789–95.

Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 901.
(72) Sir Thomas Browne, *Certain Miscellany Tracts* (London, 1683), 189. At the very least he was also aware of one of the works of the earlier seventeenth-century Jesuit scholar Martino Martini, whose *Bellum Tartaricum, or the Conquest of China by the Tartars* (London, 1654), Aubrey possessed in English translation. It is now Bodleian 8º A 7 Art and is inscribed on sig. A3r ‘John Aubrey, 1655’. See William Poole, ‘John Aubrey, the Two George Ents, and the “Paduan” Laureae Apollinari’, *Bodleian Library Record* 27 (2014), 88-104.


(78) Aubrey, *Monumenta*, ii. 923. Aubrey’s citation of Matthew Paris may be due to the influence of his friend Thomas Gale who had made notes towards a new edition of Paris (see Chapter 6).

(80) Monumenta William Dugdale which derive from his History of Imbanking and Drayning ... (London, 1662), 104, 111.

(81) Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 1029–51, with ‘now [1668]’ at ii. 1037. Other sections of the chapter were certainly written no earlier than 1675 (cf. ii. 1023).

(82) Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 1031.


(84) Aubrey, Monumenta, ii. 1033.

(85) Edward Browne, Travels ... (London, 1677), 62, Monumenta

(86) Poole, The World Makers, 111–12.

(87) This account is indebted to Michael Hunter’s archival groundwork on the same subject, see Hunter, Aubrey, 89–90.

(88) ODNB, s.n.

(89) Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 102r.

(90) Aubrey’s letter to Lhuyd is Bodleian MS Ashmole 1814, fol. 102r. For Wood’s dated copy of the subscription advertisement see Bodleian Wood 780.

(91) John Aubrey, Proposals for Printing Monumenta Britannica ([London, 1693]).

(92) The price was considerable, but not exorbitant. The Proposals for Printing by Subscription Cambden’s Britannia, English issued in the same year gave its price as 26s., 12d. to be paid in hand and the rest upon delivery. By the time the New Proposals for the same, dated 20 April 1693, were printed the cost of the Britannia had risen to a princely 32s. in sheets, 40s. for non-subscribers.

(93) Gibson’s Chronicon Saxonicum (Oxford, 1692), Monumenta

(94) Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 198r.
(95) Bodleian MS Wood F 51, fol. 5r. It is unclear who is meant by this, whether Jacob Tonson, Henry Herringman, or another.

(96) Bodleian MS Tanner 25, fol. 6r.


(98) Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 195r.


(100) Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 199r.

(101) Bodleian MS Tanner 25, fol. 66r.

(102) Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fols. 23–4; Ashmole 1814, fol. 113r.

(103) Bodleian MS Aubrey 12, fol. 257r.


(105) Bodleian MS Aubrey 13, fol. 204r. Aubrey’s fears would seem not to have been entirely fantastical, as Tanner admits in the letter that he concealed his involvement with the Britannia from Aubrey until he was sure that project would go ahead (or, perhaps, that the Monumenta would not).


(107) ODNB, s.n.

(108) Churchill also provided Aubrey with bibliographical details of Locke’s publications sold by him in a letter of 15 July 1695 when inviting him to Paternoster Row to discuss the Monumenta (Bodleian MS Wood F 39, fol. 451r).

(110) Bodleian MS Ashmole 1829, fol. 78r.


(112) Schnapp, Discovery, 191.
