intervention in the war in the autumn with the expedition to Le Havre and the subsequent attempt to use the city as a bargaining chip for Calais were at the forefront of de Foix's concerns into the following year.

Elizabeth I's relations with her cousin Mary Queen of Scots and her own marriage negotiations with France and the Habsburgs also occupied a good deal of his time in 1564–6. Items of this correspondence have been noted before, most recently by Estelle Paranque in her study of Elizabeth's relations with the Valois (*Elizabeth I of England Through Valois Eyes: Power, Representation and Diplomacy in the Reign of the Queen, 1558–1588* [2019]), and by Susan Doran in her studies of Elizabeth's relations with Catherine de' Medici and of the English queen's marriage negotiations (see 'Elizabeth I and Catherine de' Medici', in *The Contending Kingdoms: France and England 1420–1700*, ed. Glenn Richardson [2008], 117–32). Yet, as Potter notes, read together in the full sequence presented here for 1565, they indicate that the general view of these proposals as a distraction to the concurrent ones with the Habsburgs may be misplaced. Judging by the detailed instructions sent to de Foix and his frequent responses to them, the French at least were serious about the prospects of a marriage treaty —or at least serious about being seen to be serious about them. The material from 1565 is the fullest of any one year during de Foix's embassy, comprising very detailed reports of frequent, complex and, one imagines, wearying encounters with Elizabeth, with Cecil and/or the council. De Foix was confronted with a seemingly endless array of conversational gambits, queries, qualifications, obfuscations, requests for clarification, genuine offers, and disingenuous requests or accusations. These meetings often lasted for hours at a time, sometimes into the night, and on at least one occasion, Cecil called on the ambassador as early as 8.00am when Elizabeth demanded an answer to some point in the discussions. De Foix himself may have had little time for saints, but he must frequently have needed the patience of one. The tone of his many letters to Cecil is usually friendly and what we might today call cordially "professional" amidst the array of events with which both men had to deal. Each evidently had a high regard for the other as the representative of his sovereign. De Foix usually signed himself in letters to Cecil as "votre bon," or "votre Meilleur" and "plus affectioné amy."

The letters and memoranda also contain a wealth of incidental information about prominent, although not always leading, members of the regimes of England, France, and Scotland. De Foix was observant but judicious in his remarks, and the correspondence gives a good sense of the varied roles and personal qualities required of a successful sixteenth- century ambassador. His subsequent career in royal service was grounded on the experience of this mission. This volume's Introduction, helpful references, and Appendices all help to make it another important contribution by David Potter to making available French primary sources. It is one made to the same high standards of historical and editorial expertise for which he has long rightly been renowned.

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Brynley F. Roberts. *Edward Lhwyd c.1660–1709, Naturalist, Antiquary, Philologist*. Scientists of Wales Series. Cardiff: University Press of Wales, 2022. Pp. 304. $21.00 (paper).
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Brynley F. Roberts's *Edward Lhwyd* exemplifies what a career-long fascination with an historical subject can accomplish. Roberts, emeritus professor of Welsh at Swansea University and

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former Librarian of the National Library of Wales, delivers a satisfying new biography of the Welsh polymath Edward Lhwyd (c.1660–1709). Richard Ellis, R. T. Gunther, J.L. Campbell, and Frank Emory pioneered the study of Lhwyd's scientific work, antiquarian investigations, and researches in comparative linguistics. Roberts's command of the existing scholarship and unrivalled familiarity with the archives yields a study that is fresh, comprehensive, and constantly insightful. He identifies Lhwyd as a naturalist, antiquary, and philologist, but establishing the logical evolution and essential connectedness of these and complementary pursuits is one of Roberts's analytical strengths.

Lhwyd was the illegitimate son of Bridget Pryse and Edward Lloyd, a father much happier to criticize his son's "arrogance" than embrace paternity. Ironically, Lhwyd profited from his father's connections to naturalists like the botanist Edward Morgan and being sent to Oswestry School. The Lloyds never recovered from Parliament's sequestration of their Llandforda estate in the 1640s. Lhwyd was skint throughout his time at Jesus College, Oxford, but he pushed open lucrative doors by exploiting his talent for fieldwork, collecting, and precise physical description. Laboring to turn Elias Ashmole's huge benefaction into something other than a monument to personal vanity, Robert Plot, the first Keeper, hired Lhwyd to classify and catalogue the collections c.1683–4. An irksome apprenticeship, perhaps, but Lhwyd laid the foundations for his career as he mastered an unrivalled natural history collection. He joined vital networks of scholars and collectors encompassing the Royal Society, Martin Lister, John Ray, Tancred Robinson, and the Molyneux brothers in Dublin. Lhwyd thus made a name for himself and rose to the Keepership upon Plot's retirement in 1690—despite all too characteristically assuming that Plot was working against him. The position gave Lhwyd remarkable freedom, even with its predictable administrative irritations (paperwork, courting idiosyncratic benefactors, and weak assistants).

Roberts charts the accretion and evolution of Lhwyd's mature interests—botany, fossils, antiquarianism, ethno-cultural studies, linguistics, and etymology—via successive literary projects. The *Lithophylacii Britannici Ichnographia* (1699) aimed to do for fossils what had been done for botanical specimens: create a comprehensive, illustrated, and accessible record of Britain's fossil remains. Lhwyd became embroiled in angry debates over fossil origins: were they abiotic (capable of self-generation) or organic (petrified remains of extinct creatures and plants)? Lhwyd's deep empiricism led toward an organic explanation. He only just held off savaging his nemesis John Woodward over an explanation that involved God's temporary suspension of gravity during the Great Flood, the dissolution of matter into slurry, and its coalescence into fossils upon gravity's resumption. Unsurprisingly, Lhwyd never suffered fools and could be, in Roberts's words, "a good hater" (PAGE). The costly and technical *Ichnographia* proved more popular than expected. Its limited print run of one hundred copies inspired a pirated edition out of Leipzig to satisfy European demand.

As Lhwyd's literary ambitions grew, so did the need to craft ever larger teams of local researchers, activate scholarly networks, and organize funding. Lhwyd made exemplary contributions to Edmund Gibson's new, revised edition (1695) of William Camden's century-old *Britannia*. Lhwyd's Welsh travels and pioneering use of parochial questionnaires explain part of his achievement. But it was his team of eager Welsh antiquarians whose investigations made theirs the finest additions to Camden's original—as contemporary readers acknowledged. Here Roberts recreates the fascinating work of Lhwyd's collaborators, like William Rowlands, who supplied Lhwyd with a Latin account of Snowdonia along with church inscriptions, details of snake stones, and samples of Alpine flora. Short-tempered he could be, but Lhwyd had a genuine talent for recruiting and retaining collaborators who fed off his energy and ambition.

One's admiration for Lhwyd's formidable intellect and industry rises right along with Roberts's splendid history of what became the *Archæologia Britannica*. This monumental project consumed Lhwyd until his death of pleurisy in 1709. Originally conceived as a natural and antiquarian history of Wales, Lhwyd's growing fascination with Britain's ethno-cultural

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complexity drove him to the most significant ethno-linguistic investigation of Celtic languages hitherto undertaken. He completed intense journeys through Wales, Ireland, western Scotland, Cornwall, and Brittany over four years (1697–1701). He tracked the migrations of peoples across these regions and the linguistic and cultural exchanges that shaped their respective languages. Roberts's reconstruction of these journeys is a masterclass in stitching together disparate archival fragments to substantiate and illustrate Lhwyd's multifaceted interests with ground-level immediacy. For example, we witness Lhwyd comb Ireland, Scotland, and Cornwall for authentic speakers or bards, scramble to preserve Gaelic manuscripts, transit the Giant's Causeway and identify its basalt columns with the like atop Cader Idris, compose the first "modern" description of New Grange, and everywhere indulge his curiosity for customs and manners. Sadly, Lhwyd lived only long enough to publish the first volume of the *Archæologia*, the *Glossography* (1707). It contained Breton, Cornish, and Irish grammars, packed with innovative etymological analysis. It gave analytical order to the linguistic relationships and parallels Lhwyd's investigations uncovered. Roberts neatly tracks the afterlives of the unfinished project but leaves us in no doubt that the dispersal of Lhwyd's collections and papers robbed posterity of much.

Lhwyd resolutely committed his life to "careful observation, preferably in person or by a reliable witness; meticulous description; systemic organisation of evidence; separation where possible of description and explanation"; and rejection of supernatural, non-empirical causation (5). The uncommon industry of Lhwyd and so many partners in pursuing this ideal—beset by obstacles, dead-ends, angry disputations, and perplexing discoveries—offers a timely lesson in the long, difficult, and fragile history of establishing evidence-based realities. Roberts's learned and readable account belongs everywhere from undergraduate history of science courses to methods seminars and the desks of specialists. In Roberts's hands, Edward Lhwyd is simply too important and interesting a figure to ignore.

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DONNA SEGER. *The Practical Renaissance: Information Culture and the Quest for Knowledge in Early Modern England, 1500–1640*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Pp. 231. $100 (cloth).
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The how-to literature of early modern England has long been an essential source for scholars of the period's culture, though more often scavenged for evidence of practice rather than considered in its own right. Donna Seger offers a powerful corrective to this history, showing with ample and lively evidence the significance of "useful books" to the history of early modern England. Powered by humanist paradigms of usefulness and continental traditions of books of secrets, the "practical Renaissance" identified by Seger's title played out in handbooks on agriculture, mathematics, mechanics, medicine, navigation, and myriad other dimensions of everyday life. Part of what Seger calls the period's "information culture," how-to books reflected early modern readers' valuation of practical knowledge and appetite for improvement—whether of self, farm, household, or commonwealth. Embedded in the period's social and economic transformations, these books also drove those developments, as—by the end of the century and a half under investigation—they posited useful knowledge as something itself merchandisable in a growing English empire and global economy. Among the monograph's important contributions is Seger's persuasive presentation of the period's

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