

Towards a New Edition of The Ogam Inscriptions

The need of a new edition for the Ogam inscriptions has been felt by Celticists for some forty years now, R.A.S. Macalister's "Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum" not having proved a sufficient treatise of the material.

In the course of four excursions to Ireland, Wales, and Scotland in the years 1978 to 1988, I started my own work in this field, the first results of which I presented in a paper read on the occasion of the congress on "Language and History in Britain, 400 to 600" in Eichstätt, Germany (3.-5. 10. 1988). My main purpose in this paper was to show in which way a new edition must differ from Macalister's and what kind of material and information it should contain. The paper will be published in the proceedings of the Eichstätt congress.

A major point of my paper was that a new edition should not be prepared by a single person (as Macalister's was) but that the peculiar epigraphical problems of the Ogam inscriptions require the cooperation of several experts.

Another major point was the claim that there should be great efforts soon to enhance the state of preservation of the material, especially of the many Ogam stones, mainly in Ireland, that are still standing on their sites and suffering from external influences. In most cases, this could most easily be done by depositing the stones in museums or similar places. There is no justification whatever for the oldest monuments of Irish writing being exposed to wind, weather, water and even thieves! I ask everybody interested in the subject to support me on this behalf.

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