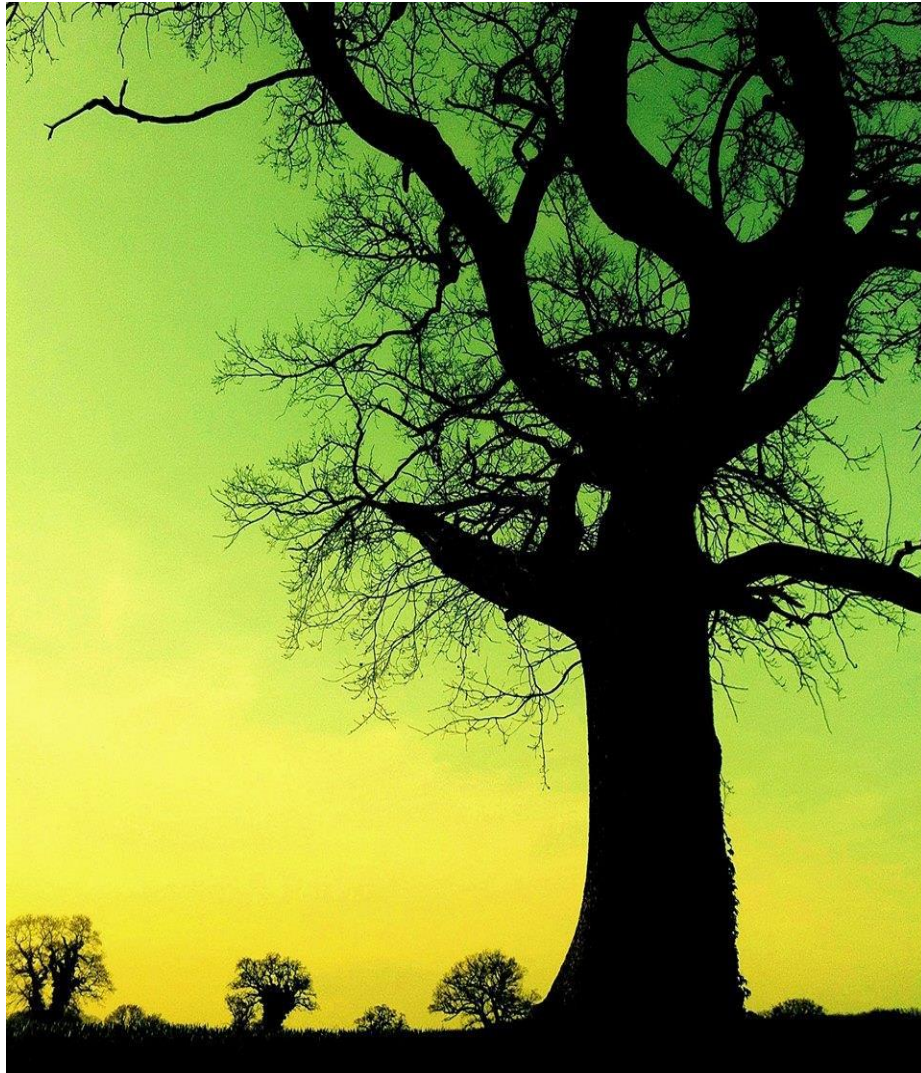


**ABSTRACT:**

Interpretation of and challenging notions of cultural exchange in the "Atlantica" zone from Celtic to Post-Roman Britain, through examining Ogham Tracts, Ireland and Britain drawing from work presented by Anthropological and Archaeological sources.

Aidan Devlin 1301456

AUTHORITY OF THE WRITTEN WORD

Representing & Reconstructing Druidic influences through the presence of Ogham Tracts.

CUIMHE



MEMORY

Introduction



Interpreting Ogham?

Historically Ogham is an archaic form of the Irish Language (Gaeilge)¹ and a topographical alphabet used primarily by the peoples of Britain and Ireland in the time ranging from 4bcce, and the 10cce. Despite multiple schools of thought presented in (MacNeill, 1931 and McManus 1991). There's a failure to establish a cohesive interpretation for orthodox Ogham in a historical narrative, and often revolve around magical uses such as divination by Robert graves², or local legends and histories but often ignore the complex social networking present when

examining the placement of Ogam stones in relation to the environment and relation to identity in Britain and Ireland today "Assembly of the people and their territory which, like the earlier túath³, emphasizes the indivisibility of people and place in the Gaelic tradition" Fitzpatrick (2015:53).

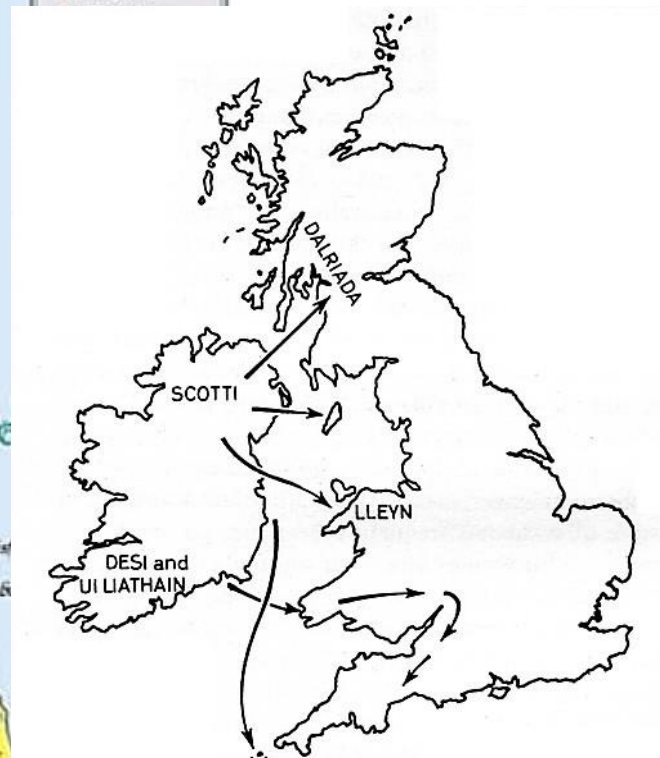
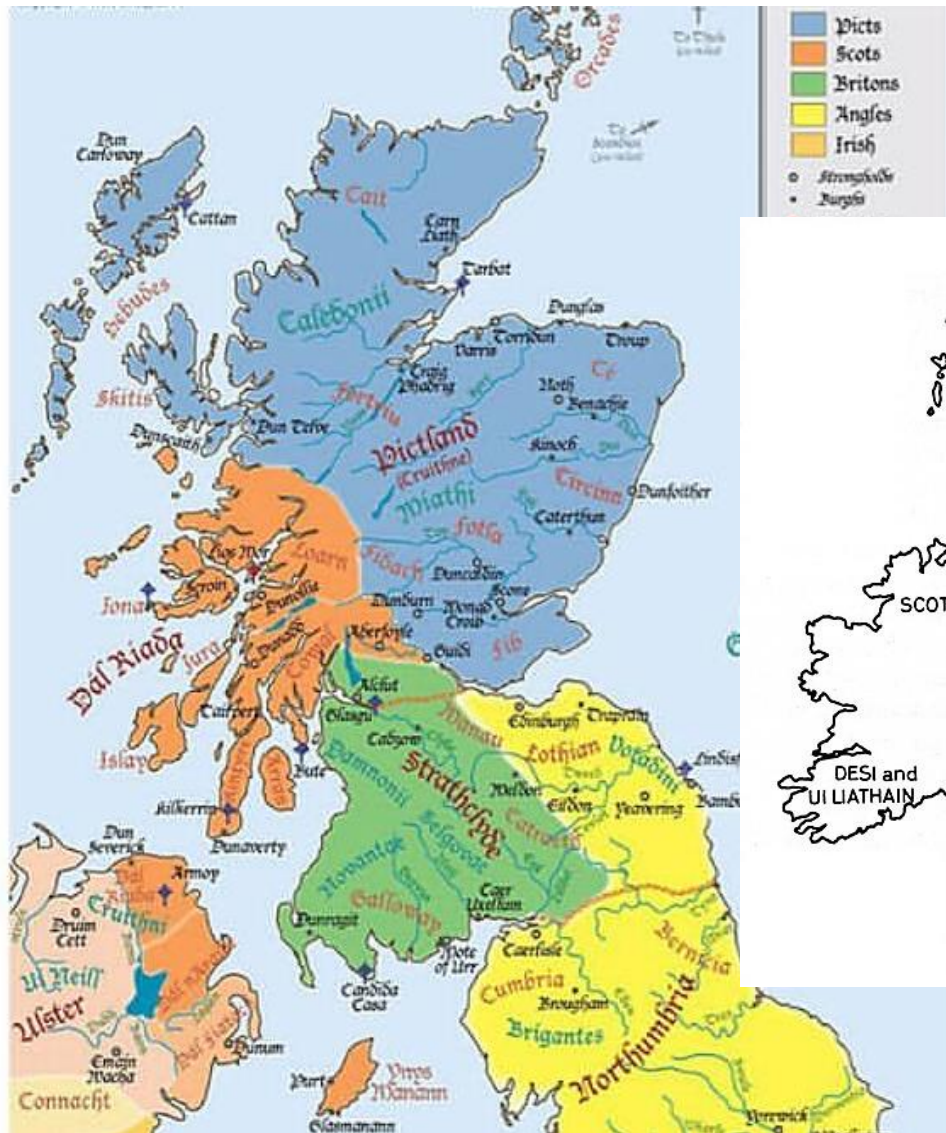
However, where the difficulty lies interpreting social interaction of the uses of a historical codex, is that none today were alive back then, and they appear before our contemporary view of historical records begins. Relying heavily on inference as limited interpretations other than Auraceipt na Eces exist. What we can do is directly reference Lebor Ogham in Auraceipt na Eces (Calder, 1917) as well as folkloric stories for its historical use and everyday application. We now are in a unique position to view History and to look retrospectively with a broad encompassing perspective on the placements of all ogam monuments in cohesion with multiple schools of thought and interpret what the

¹ Alphabet consisted on 25 notches, on stone and wood carvings, following 20 sacred trees (MacAnnaidh, 2007:27)

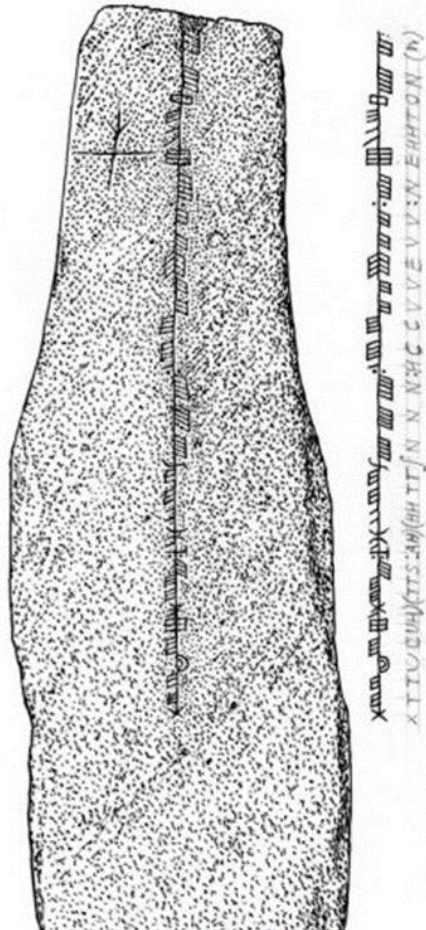
² neo-pagan spiritual association through his book The White Goddess (1948) largely refuted by historians and scholars.

³ Túath Irish Gaelic for kingdom but also of an ogam stone (Fitzpatrick 2015: 54)

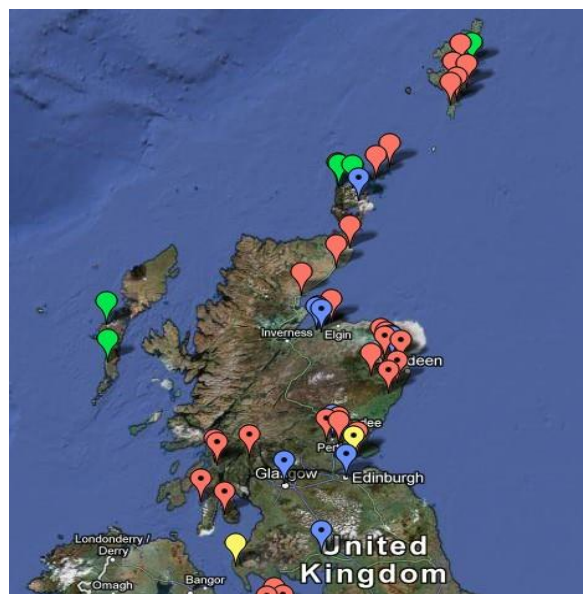
authority of ogham is and is not. Ogam is something which is not up for interpretation outside of the realms of context, in that they are not 1:1 Exchangeable with Greek or Latin alphabets as the meanings behind each sign has been explained since the original use and the scholastic use of the medieval period to be not an audible sound or singular letter but acts representatively. They also come from a time when entirely different nations existed in Britain and Ireland. Testimony to the inference of a gaelo-sphere of influence represented by ogam stone presence is the mapping of migrations out of ireland into Britain approximately 5th AD (see below Methuen, 1975:18)



The Ogam tract is a Language with hundreds of individual forms such as SOW ogam, Fortress Ogam, river Ogam and Blind Mans' Ogam(Matthews And Matthews 1994:55 the list goes on), and shows that despite presence of hegemony or hierarchy, the practice of ogam use was common.



The Lunnastig stone: Follows a Bind ogam dialect, dated to approximately 8th century shows signs of scholastic ogam, and is unorthodox in script as the Notching is done on the flat face as opposed to the droim or 'edge'⁴



There were hundreds of “dialects” in use at the time. In saying this It’s often these styles of monuments are mistaken for Art (Heynd, 1999:155) and while they are operating symbolically and representative of other environments and signifiers they also retain legal authority and embody the Brehon Law⁵ which will be elaborated upon shortly, they are more than just artwork, they appear present wherever the specifically irish “celts”settled between 400 AD and 1200 AD(Lloyd Laing, 2006) and very likely according to(Donaghue 2015:55) that Niall of the Nine Hostages was responsible for placing, after victorious in battle and conquest. Ian G Scott 2003 *“The Ogham stones of Scotland are more typologically diverse and linguistically intriguing than those of any other part of Britain and Ireland. There are about 34 confirmed Ogham inscriptions on pillar stones, symbol stones, cross slabs, and natural rock faces, as well as five Ogham inscriptions that have been found on*

⁴ Location Shetland Ahehhtannn and Nehhtonn names carved, pictish names. Forsyth 2005

⁵ Higgins 2011 Also cited in Devlin AHSK2018

portable artefacts". Interestingly, Shetland has never been perceived or attributed as being celtic or having celtic influence and yet the presence of ogam stones confirms it. Hybridisation of culture seems to be happening. They have been also used as grave sites, land boundaries and ritualistic places and judicial spaces (McMannus 1991, Flanagan, 2016 Coombes Conference, and Fitzpatrick, 2015) in what can be described as topographical mnemonic system(Sassure 1916, "Language is a system of expression") or even a 'Heterotopia'(Foucault 1986:23 "Santification of space and relation to other spaces") the problem lies therein, in that we have a limited way of telling, how available the language was commonly used which leaves us with a somewhat hegemonic interpretation by druids on language pertained to in Gellner (2006.11) "*the tendency for liturgical languages to become distinct is very strong. It is as if literacy alone did not create enough of a barrier between cleric and layman...it as if the chasm between them had to be deepened by making the language not merely recorded in an inaccessible script but also incomprehensible when articulated.*" When interpreting Ogam it is impossible to ignore the study of Druidic practices, with ogam stones to this day retaining their druidic implications. The "Druidic" Identity is often prescribed a certain amount of suspicious contempt. In that it's an identity associated with or exists as an antiquated and abstract nation⁶, deriving its legitimacy from an almost mythological age of Tribes & Heroes, sacrifice and animistic beliefs, showing a sheer contrast between indigenous notions (Devlin 2018, AHSK6003:8) of "nation-hood" in contrast to an industrialised "modern" nation-state⁷ (Hobsbawn 1994:14) or an imperial one. Nobody was above these laws, regardless of status, status may have affected the outcome of a trial, as such as a character witness, but to be above the land would be inherently treasonous if not blasphemous to the culture from which you had descended and even the druids were subject to the authority of these sanctified spaces, I also allude to the animistic ontology permeated and represented within indigenous Irish language and ogam monuments due to their topographical representations within The Politicisation of the Irish Language(Devlin 2018:AHSK2018). However, as Cunliffe 2012, presents, in a new way of thinking of celtic, is that the celtic identity is 'from everywhere and nowhere' as if one created it as a mode of categorisation for a variety of different peoples.(cunliffe 2012:61). When the separate characteristics of "celtic" identity are examined by Koch et al 2007 in Cunliffe 2012:60, we come to a very unique perspective on celtic and thus Irish and welsh and Scottish situational identity and how we have all come to be an amalgamation of several cultural groups, with cultural exchange and cohesion across abstracted historical peoples with no real singular label or origin. However what we can pertain to and infer based on Hawkes 1954 'Ladder of inference' and through the concentration of ogam stones in Britain and Ireland.

⁶ See Hugh Seton-Watson, in Nations & States 1977 "*thus I am driven to the conclusion that there can be no scientific definition of the nation devised yet the phenomenon has existed and exists*" furthermore on Pg 5 he adds "*all I can find to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation*".

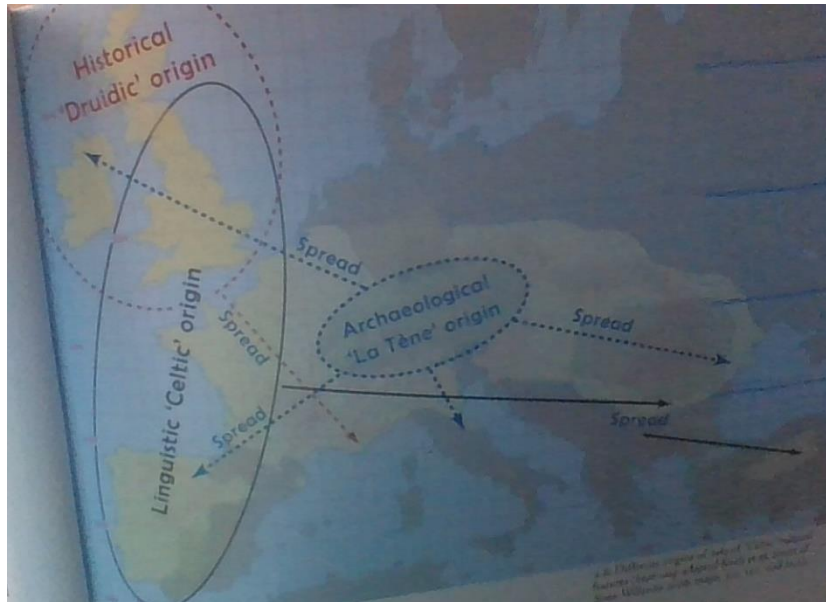
⁷ "*primarily a political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent*" Gellner (2006:1)

(Note-ably Ogam inscriptions being primarily of closer linguistic link to early Irish, McMannus 1991 with hybridisation with examples such as the Lunnastig stone, in Shetland having possible Pictish inscriptions however no knowledge of Pictish language survives thus impossible to cross reference). Thus the Druidic Identity and association retained within Ogam is one of indigenous origins to these islands whatever they may be called, but pre-dates notions of Celtic, but perseveres into late Celtic notions of nationhood such as "Irish". In summary, interpretation of these abstract notions of cultural groups would always be subject to a loaded dice. However, the variety of dialects and spaces in which they are recorded⁸ and the expression inherent within suggests that there was a very broad and encompassing and common use ranging from "Tree lore" (Matthews 1997:55) to Land boundaries and historical signifiers (McManus 1991:3) *"Unlike their Greek and Latin counterparts these names were meaningful words in the language though some eventually lost currency as such and became semantically redundant, operating solely as letter name"* the existence of such places retain authority through the presence of Ogam and are yet only retained within the Gaelic cultural sphere, it was from the Ogam and the environment from which medieval legal judiciary authority in Brehon Law Ireland was derived *"prior to the implementation of common law in Ireland, a native legal system, known as Brehon law, had applied throughout the country. This legal system dated from Celtic times and was passed down orally from generation to generation."* Higgins (2011:1). As a result of association, Celtic Nationalism (always seeing itself as indigenous) has always been somewhat let's say incompatible with an Anglo-centric and Latinised world view (Ellis, 1985:201). Historically set at odds, from imperial and colonial forces from the Roman times until the late industrial era (arguably also today (Macsoimoin 2014)). Invaders have always de-legitimized the indigenous. As an example when we think Irish, in association we also probably think "shamrocks".."leprechauns" and "St Patrick", and "Celtic" what we don't think in the word association game is "Empire", this is as much as a product of stereotypes and language (Sapir Whorf 1945) as it is result of colonialism (MacSoimoin 2014:42). The Irish identity being a "Celtic" identity is also inherently linked with conquest and descent as well as revolving largely around the geographic principles and largely linguistic categorisation⁹. However the shared experience of all nations dubbed "Celtic" is their shared experiences with colonialism, oppression and suppression. *"the fundamental principle of Celtic nationalism is concern for the welfare of the individual against cultural, political and economic exploitation"* Ellis P 1985. Lhuyd's attention on language (1707), failed to establish a focus on that which was universally present in all the "Celtic nations", and pre-existed colonial

⁸ Matthews and Matthews pg 55-58 at least 26 individual Types of Ogam recorded also available at: <http://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/ogham.html> accessed 12/4/2018

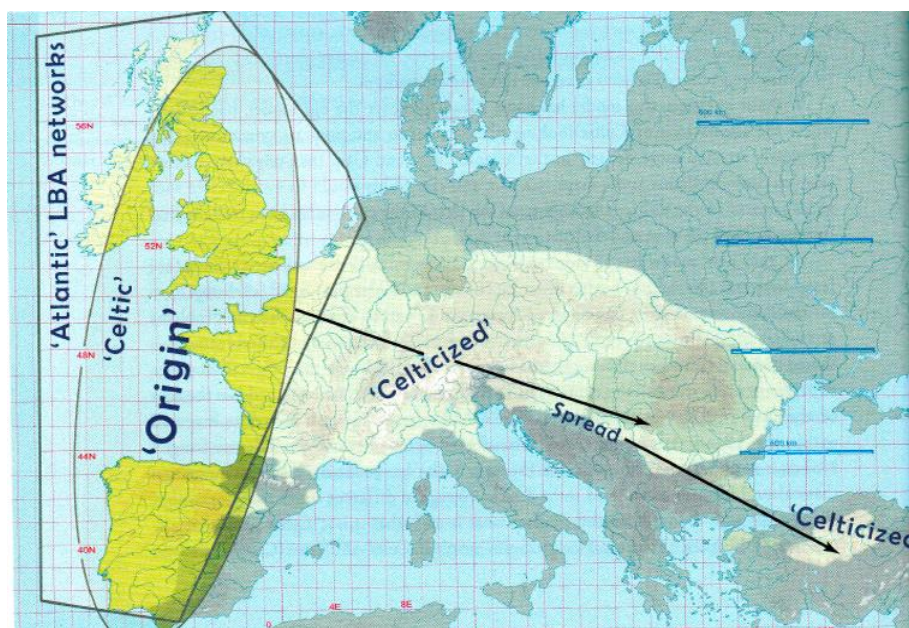
⁹ first inferred by Edward Lhuyd in 1707, with 'Glossography', identifying the distinct P+Q Celtic languages (commonly understood as Brezhon (Brittany), Manau (isle of Man), Gymraeg (Wales), Gaeilge (Ireland), Kernow (Cornwall) and Gàidhlig (Scotland)).

representations of “Celtic” identity. Ogam. However our contemporary influence of anthropology requires us to include the cultural and material artefacts of all the celtic linguistic groups, in this case, a special attention is paid to Ogam. Cunliffe (2012:61) as Ogam represents the spread of indigenous Druidic culture, the time reference for which is during 4th and 5th Century.



Through the demonstration and comparison of archaeological interpretations ‘CELTIC FROM THE WEST’ (Cunliffe 2012) and analysis of materials, I aim to establish with aid of maps a territorial reconstruction of what could

be describe as ‘The Celtic Empire’ based on the presence of Ogam stones, and that all Ogam stones have in some rite act as a signifier of druidic presence and yet most are also in Irish Gaelic(Kerry Dialect to be exact, McMannus 1991:52-53) and to show a common material identity and cultural descent amongst the Celtic nations. *“communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity or genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.”* Anderson (2006:6).



An interpretative view of Ogam was for me to consider what if these were all done by people of the same sense of nation-hood “authentically” (if possible through subjective and post-modern understandings) I have contrasted the area in which ogam is placed through comparative analysis of maps to detect where the area of research could be held see maps. Furthermore, An example of such a ritualistic site in Ireland of ‘Heterotopias of ritual’ (Foucault 1986:23). While many sites such as holy wells and sacred groves and stones continued in use into the Christian period as spiritual hangovers from paganism in Ireland (MacSoimoin 2014:81¹⁰). The religious centre of ‘pagan Ireland’ Uisneach, may be the best purely indigenous example in relation to a heteropia. Ail na Meireann is the geographical centre around the grave site of the matriarchal goddess name of Ireland, Ériu. The site under the cat stone (Aill na mÉireann) is said to be the Goddess Ériu’s resting place (of whom Ireland is named after). Uisneach has had religious significance for well over 2000 years (Schot, 2006:39-71) with perceived continual usage from the Neolithic to today¹¹



With authentic use dwindling with the continuous influx of the catholic churches influence and the shunning of traditional Irish custom through colonialism (Síomóin, 2014: 46-60). This site operates as a holy site place for contemporary bards, poets druids, operating as a hub and anchor to their indigenous culture. Note ably these cultural connections seem to have an ontological as well as cosmological binding *Eadhmonn Ua Cuinn*(2003), “I found out that an ancient trackway or *slíghe* led to the stone - and it was the correct ritual approach to this ancient sacred site. An ancient *geasa* or curse was

attached to approaching it from the wrong direction...” these sites all bound by the geographical alignments, notably that the Hill of Tara, Meath (ancient seat of the high king of O’Neill) and Cashel, Tipperary (The religious centre of the southern half of Ireland in the medieval and Seat of O’Brians) as well as 20 other counties in Ireland are viewable from Uisneach. The geographical centre of Ireland inadvertently or intentionally (who can say) became the geopolitical centre of Ireland for it’s

¹⁰ Holy wells of Christian Ireland comparable to pagan water rituals, associated with the mother of god, in Christianity Mary in Paganism the mother of Ériu was Ogmá, Which is also the name sake of Ogam “disguised pagan rituals. Mainstream Gaelic Catholicism was thus effectively abolished by the discouragement by the clergy” pg 81

¹¹ Uisneach Fire Festival allegedly pertaining to authentic fire and pagan rituals at the holy pagan site of uisneach <http://uisneach.ie/fire-festival/> also the geographical centre of Ireland! Someone took a lot of time to measure that! Back in early pagan Ireland.

strategic position and that it split the north half of the island from the south half, these were significant political forces until The flight of The Earls 1508. It can be inferred thus that political land boundaries from an Gaelo-centric perspective was cosmologically bound to the authority of Uisneach and Ogham monuments acted as a topographical signifier of the unique an indigenous code of ogam, representing the gaelic influence out which it stretched¹².

Establishing an Area of Research

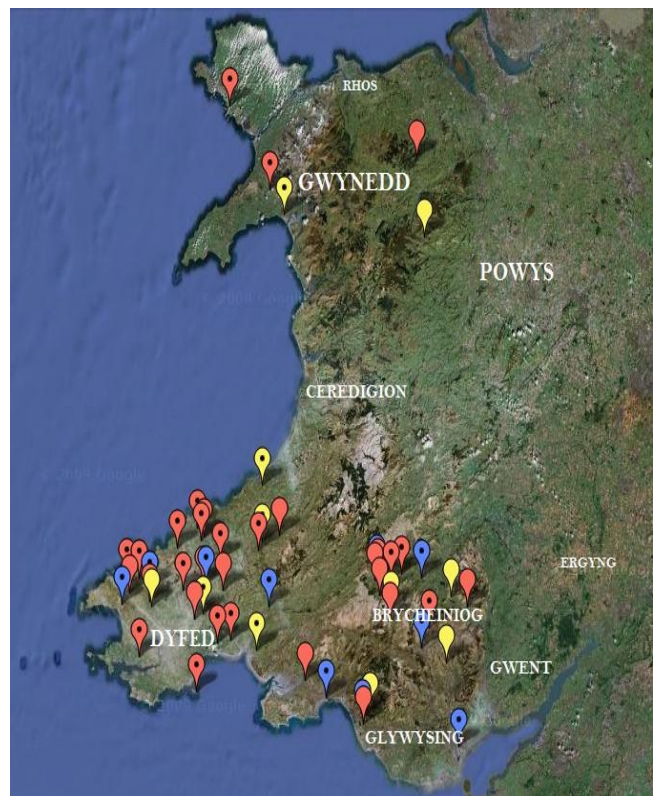
This original project was intended to provide a justification for establishing an original idea to present ogam resources digitalised in a single area online, ideally, an interactive and 3d navigational world consisting of the celtic nations presented with cultural ontology, in the form of ogam monuments in Britain and Éire and Uisneach to operate as the centre in reference to Barry Cunliffe Celtic from the west(2012: 54) however the aim was at Establishing an area of Research¹³ and internal cultural boundaries with specific reference to overlaying ogam locations (by Ian G. Scott 2013 and <https://ogham.celt.dias.ie/search.php>) on maps provided by Cunliffe (2012: 40), to create a more focussed image and context of the former druidic and arguably Hiberno-centric celtic empire in the 5th century AD. However in my initial research I found a similar project was underway (see ogham.celts). I found this incredibly frustrating as, they initially already showed me the problem with a project such as this in that many ogam stones are no longer in situ, and to understand the stones and messages correctly, they have to be in situ and preserved. Furthermore proving resource are resources incredibly limited, in that the monuments are often hard to decipher due to their incredible remote placements and subject to weathering conditions. I believe ultimately I have failed in my initial approach but have provided a document capable of guiding any reader through the sources withheld through a digitalised format, and provided a justification simply for the preservation of monuments that are yet to be truly understood, as re-opening theorising and “pontification” inadvertently opens up grounds for research and inevitably preserve and record the hetertopias in question *“conservation and preservation of historic sites, research and application is increasingly aided by and dependent on digital media. Documentation tools have undergone a major transformation over the past 20 years, primarily due to the advent of the PC and advances in solid-state electronics. In fact, when dealing with documentation, it is important to represent materials, colors, decorations, physical and chemical decay and other phenomena”*¹⁴ the hope is by providing

¹² As the umbilical centre of Ireland and meeting place for the ancient provinces the hill is also variously depicted as the residence or burial place of several mythical figures, such as the Dagda and Lugh; as the site of a sacred tree (Bile Uisnig); and as a place of assembly” Schot 2006:40

¹³ *The program used for editing and creations of maps and images original to this project is GNU Image Manipulation Program.2.0(available at: www.gimp.org/)

¹⁴ (Haddad, 2011)

additional perspective into the sources, that shows how important it is for preservation of material in order to offer context and substance to the reader if you've interacted with the document, it will have taken you to the sites in question (Ctrl+click should take you to more informations about the source in question). However Using modern technology, eg, Google maps, The internet, , Rhinoceros 3D software? (Nayling and Jones 2013) and which would allow further dissemination of data regarding ogam through comparative physical surveys that we can compare the presence of ogam stones from past ordnance surveys until now, this is a major help for the researcher and the benefits of technology are evident with examples like Barille et al 2016¹⁵). Not all the data is complete in regards to surveys of ogham stones and even through see the record, I can some have been lost in as little as 50 years see figure Wales below.



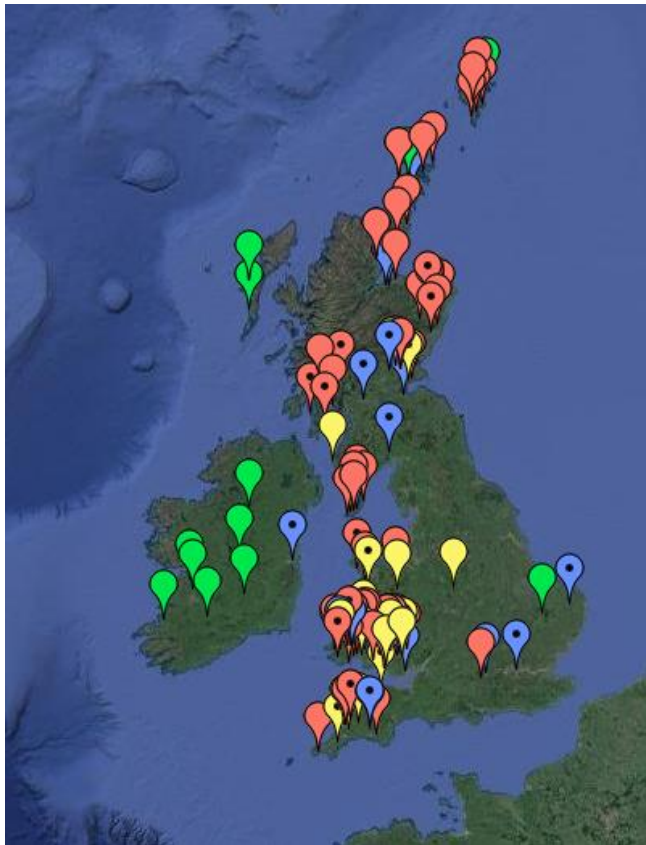
¹⁵ "Laser scanner for the architectural and cultural heritage and applications for the 3D model"

So in effect, the maps in question are locations pertaining to known Ogam locations. Showing flows of migration and a cultural oligarchy of celtic ideals present in Britain and Ireland and indicative of the cultural ontologies and society earlier mentioned. It's clear that cultural identity at that time is inherent within placemet and meaning of ogam stones, whether that is lost on ignorance or not is up to us. Through the ogam placements, as seen by the grounding of the authority and political legitimacy of ogam in Ireland based is cosmology the 'authority of ogam', acts to anchor and bridge the gap between then and now, to do so would also the replacement order to move away from an anglo-spheric industrialised influence creates a more indigenous perspective¹⁶ or gaelo-sphere.

*Boleycarrigeen Stone and digitalisation available at ogham.celt.dias.ie



¹⁶ Indigenous is applied here, as inherited descent from pre-colonial kinship and cultural group, either as an imagined community" Anderson 2006:7, see also Seton Watson 1977 or "Historics and relatedness" ingold 2000 ALSO cited in Devlin AHSK2018



The druidic or even Irish “empire” is the archaeological and material remnants from a bygone age, with a rich if not varied cultural history, comparison of historical maps showing locations to ogham stones show an interesting contrast with contemporary maps, noted that there is usually less, in contemporary maps than there is Historical, while geo-positioning usually isn’t accurate in historical maps (see uisneach for when it’s accurate) the inaccuracy of placement can’t account for missing stones alone See Image above Ordnance Survey 1966¹⁷ comparable with West 2011 on Google Maps) counting the lack of stones from image left, we can see

at least 50 have gone missing in 50 years. This isn’t surprising as we can see from Such examples as The Maglocunnos Stone et al¹⁸. These Monument stones have often been removed as right of conquest i.e Pitt rivers¹⁹, or church and later religious authorities have incorporated them into their churches for reign over former legitimacy in the site. Museums have had stones often removed and placed out of fear of vandalization or loss. The very presence is Representative of history on a social level, relating to the history of the migration of “celtic” nations, and from stories to place names, and our identity is bound up with it. It should be axiomatic the cultural importance and political importance to Highlight the shared cultural artefacts in history of a the nations in these northernly isles. (Red tags mark the sites of certain Ogham stone inscriptions (a dot indicates that the stone is in situ) Yellow tags mark the sites of dubious or unconfirmed Ogham stone inscriptions Green tags mark sites where an Ogham-inscribed portable artefact was found Blue tags mark museums or other sites where Ogham stones are held.)

¹⁷ Ordnance survey 1966 Key: ⊥ = Memorial stones (5th–6th centuries) ⊥ = Memorial stones (5th–6th centuries) with ogham

¹⁸ McAlister #446-450 1945 available at <http://babelstone.blogspot.co.uk/2010/03/ogham-stones-of-wales.html>

¹⁹ <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/rpr/index.php/object-biography-index/3-prother/852-ogham-stones.html>

Notice the lack of markers for the ogam stones in Ireland in comparison to west 2011.



West Revised 2011-06-21) Analytical map of the repartition of Ogam inscriptions in Ireland. [Black circles: single stone; crosses: group of 2-5 stones; white circles: group of 5 stones, Highest concentration of ogam stones south west Kerry. And shows work still needed to be done.

<http://www.irishmegaliths.org.uk/westmeath.htm>

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Oak tree at dusk Picture courtesy of Mark werner 15/4/2018

Laser Scanner for the Architectural and Cultural Heritage and Applications for the Dissemination of the 3D Model

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<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042816304220>

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.342>

From ground surveying to 3D laser scanner: A review of techniques
used for spatial documentation of historic sites

Author links open overlay panel[Naif AdelHaddad](#)

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jksues.2011.03.001>

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