

**WOLFGANG MEID**  
**THE CELTS**



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## Foreword

This introduction to “the Celts” was first published in 2007 in German as a volume of Reclam’s renowned *Universalbibliothek*. The positive reception and success of this little volume has encouraged me to produce an English version also. In preparing this the original text was revised and slightly expanded, mainly in the form of footnotes providing additional information and references. The translation into English is in large measure my own, but I was initially assisted in this task by Flora and Ulrike Roider (Innsbruck) and finally by Patricia Kelly (Dublin), who completely revised the whole text. To them I express my most sincere thanks. For any remaining errors or infelicities I am of course solely responsible. Thanks are also due to the team of *Archaeolingua* (Budapest) for editing the book and seeing it through the press.

Let me add, finally, a few words on the subject of this book and its exposition. There are many introductions to “the Celts” or to specific matters which may be labelled “Celtic”. Most of them, written by archaeologists and often superbly illustrated, have an archaeological bias concentrating on material culture. The present introduction, written by a linguist and philologist, rather stresses the non-material aspects, relying more on historical sources and, above all, on the authentic testimony of the literary tradition embodied in the extant insular Celtic languages. It is the author’s opinion that material culture, by itself, is insufficient to define Celticity (which explains the Celto-scepticism virulent among archaeologists); it needs to be combined with, and backed up by, the linguistic evidence which is the primary indicator.

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