its origin. The marvels of this part of the coast of Ireland had frequently been brought to the notice of the learned, from the latter part of the seventeenth century onward.[1] But here as elsewhere, it was rather the symmetrical structure of the rock than the mode of its formation that engaged the attention of the older observers. Even as far back as the year 1756, one of these writers pointed out the remarkable resemblance of certain rocks in Nassau and in the district of Trèves and Cologne to the Giant's Causeway, which by that time had become famous.[2]

The Western Islands of Scotland, which far surpass the Irish coast in the extent and magnificence of their basalt cliffs, were still unknown to the scientific world. The first report about their wonders seems to have reached London in the spring of 1761, when the Bishop of Ossory sent to the Royal Society a letter he had received from E. Mendez da Costa telling him that "in Cana Island to the southward of Skye and near the island of Rum the rocks rise into polygon pillars . . . jointed exactly like those of the Giant's Causeway."[3] But it was reserved for Sir Joseph Banks to give the first detailed account of the cliffs of Staffa and Fingal's Cave, which from that time shared with the Giant's Causeway in the

[1] See Sir R. B., *Phil. Trans.* xvii. (1693) p. 708; S. Foley, xviii. (1694) p. 170, with a map and bird's-eye view. T. Molyneux, *Ibid.* p. 181 and xix. (1698) p. 209, with drawings of the columns. R. Pocock, xlv. (1748) p. 124, and xlviii. part i. (1754), with further figures illustrating the jointing of the columns.

[2] A. Trembly, *Phil. Trans.* xlix. (1756) p. 581.

[3] *Phil. Trans.* lii. (1761) p. 163.