

The Stone of Ireland



The **Lia Fáil** is one of two stones named the **Stone of Destiny**. The other, sometimes known as the Stone of Scone, has recently been removed from the coronation chair of the British monarchs in Westminster Abbey and returned on loan to Scotland. The Lia Fáil, which stands at the Inauguration Mound (Irish: *an Forrad*) at the Hill of Tara, is an obelisk-stone, unlike the slab-shaped *Stone of Scone*.

In Celtic mythology, the Lia Fáil is said to have been brought to Ireland in antiquity by the semi-divine race known as the Tuatha Dé Danann although it has been found that the stone from which it is carved is actually native to Ireland. It is found on the Hill of Tara, in County Meath, approximately 25 miles north of the city of Dublin. The Tuatha Dé Danann had travelled to the Northern Isles where they learned many skills and magic in its four cities Fáilias, Gorias, Murias and Finias. From there they proceeded to the north of Scotland, spending seven years at Dobhar and at Iardobhar and bringing with them a treasure from each city - from Fáilias came the Stone of Fal (Gaelic: *Lia Fáil*), the Stone of Destiny (Latin: *Saxum fatale*). It is from this stone that the Dé Danann named Ireland 'Inis Fáil', and from this 'Fál' was therefore an ancient name for Ireland. In this respect, therefore, 'Lia Fáil' came to mean 'Stone of Ireland'.

The Lia Fáil was thought to be magical: when the rightful King of Ireland put his feet on it, the stone was said to roar in joy. All of the kings of Ireland were crowned on the Stone, right up to Muircheartach (Murdoch) son of Earc. Cúchulainn split it with his sword when it failed to cry out under his protégé, Lugaid Riab nDerg, and from then on it never roared again, except under Conn of the Hundred Battles and Brian Boru.

The stone is also credited with the power to rejuvenate the sovereign and also to endow him with a long reign. It is one of the four legendary treasures of Ireland (the others being the Cláíomh Solais, the Spear of Lugh and The Dagda's Cauldron).