

The Conquest of The Fir Bolg

From The Book of Invasions

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Now Ireland was desert for the space of two hundred years after the separation of the three groups we have mentioned, till the coming of the race of the chief group into it, that is the Fir Bolg.

Of the Children of Nemed by descent were they, for Semeon son of Erglan son of Beoan son of Starn son of Nemed was chief of one of the three nonads of the Children of Nemed who went from Ireland after the destruction of Conann's Tower, and who landed in Greece. They were there till many and divers were their children and their families. After they increased thus, the Greeks did not allow them to be with their own young men; but they imposed servitude on them. This was its amount, to make clovery plains of the stony rough-headed hills with the clay from elsewhere, after bringing it to the places in which they were ordered and commanded to put it.

Tired, weary, and despondent were they from this; so this is the counsel they discussed among themselves, to escape from the intolerable bondage in which they were. They agreed thereto at length. Then they made canoes and fair vessels of the skins and rope bags for carrying the earth till they were sound and seaworthy. They wnet in them thereafter, in quest of the fatherland from which their ancestors had gone. Their adventures on the sea are not related, save only that they reached Ireland in one week.

Different were their tribe-names at that time as they came, namely, Galeoin, Fir Bolg, and Fir Domnann; nevertheless, though various and dissimilar were their names, their mutual friendship was very close; for they were of one race and one origin. Five chiefs were over them—Slainge, Rudraige, Gann, Genann, and Sengann, the five sons of Dela son of Loch son of Ortech son of Tribuad son of Oturp son of Gosten son of Uirthecht son of Semeon son of Erglan son of Nemed son of Agnoman. Now Galeoin was the name of Galeon with his people; Galeoin truly is gal-fhian, that is, the third who used to surpass the other two-thirds in valor and in equipment; so that from the valor {gal} they took the name. Fir Bolg, again, is the name of Gann and Sengann with their people; to them the name Fir Bolg prperly belongs, for it is they who were carrying the earth in the bags {bolg}. Fir Domnann, from "digging the earth" was it said: that is Fir Dmanfuinn, that is the men who used to deepen {doim-nigim} the earth. To Rudraige and to Genann with their people was the name applied. And it was in Inber Domnann that they took harbor. However, it is correct to call them all Fir Bolg in general, for it is in the bags for carrying the earth they came over sea to Ireland, and they are one immigration and one race and one principality, though they came on different days, and landed in different creeks.

These are the creeks. Slainge, their chief prince and elder, reached the land in Inber Slainge on Saturday on the Calends of August, so far as regards the day of the week; so that from him the creek took its name; a thousand men his number. Sengann and Gann in Inber Dubglaise; a Tuesday they landed, two thousand their number.

They came together afterwards in Usnech of Meath, and they divided Ireland there in five parts. The share of Slainge first, from Inber Colptha to Commair of the Three Waters; of Gann, next, from Commair to Belach Conglais; Sengann from Belach Conglais to Limerick; Genann from Limerick to Drobais; Rudraige from Drobais to the Boyne.