

**Gold Foil Covered Lead Bulla**  
**Bog of Allen, Co. Kildare.**  
**Late Bronze Age, 800-700 BC.**

**Ground Floor**  
**Ór - Ireland's Gold Exhibition**

- **Bullae** are rare objects. This one, found in a bog, is the largest one found to date.

**Size**-Length 6.4cm; weight 146.9 grams.

**Material**

- Gold foil.



**Form**

- It is a small, heart shaped, convex structure with rounded corners and bold decorative markings on both sides.
- The **bullae** may have been worn as a neck pendent with a string put through an internal, cylindrical opening running across the top.

**Decoration**

- The upper area of the front and back of the **bullae** are linked by decorative rows of **oblique** and parallel lines and **hatched** triangles.
- The front decoration has a series of repeated **concentric** circles and triangles formed with **oblique** lines, **punched** dots and an large central u-shaped **motif** which could represent a fertility symbol.
- The decoration on the back is **abstract** and **geometric**; parallel lines are creatively ordered in **oblique** triangular shapes of vertical and horizontal lines.

**Technique**

- The heart shape core is made from metal and is covered with thin, gold foil which gives the illusion of a solid gold object.
- The technique of **repoussé** was used to apply the **motifs** to the thin gold sheet.
- Dots were **punched** into the surface of the gold from the front.

**Function**

- **Bullae** are so-called after similar objects well known from classical Europe.
- Like the classical examples, it may have been intended as an **amulet** or magical **talisman** providing fertility or protective powers.
- Its form suggests that it may have originally been suspended from a string, perhaps of perishable leather or a wire of bronze or gold.



**Bullae from the National Museum's collection, including the Bog of Allen bulla.**