

**LEABHAR IMUINN: THE
BOOK OF HYMNS OF THE
ANCIENT CHURCH OF
IRELAND, FASCICULUS I**

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Leabhar Imuinn: The Book of Hymns of the Ancient Church of Ireland, Fasciculus I by James Henthorn Todd

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JAMES HENTHORN TODD

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Gabhar Imuinn. *The Book
of Hymns of the Ancient Church
of Ireland.*

FASCICULUS I.

Containing

- I. The Hymn of St. Sechnall in Praise of St. Patrick.
- II. The Hymn of St. Ultan in Praise of St. Brigid.
- III. The Hymn of St. Cummain Fota in Praise of the Apostles.
- IV. The Hymn of St. Mugint.

EDITED,

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT IN THE LIBRARY OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN,

With Translation and Notes,

BY JAMES HENTHORN TODD, D.D., M.R.I.A., F.S.A.,

Senior Fellow of Trinity College, and Treasurer of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.



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1855.

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DUBLIN:
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BY M. H. GILL.

THE
IRISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND CELTIC SOCIETY.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

THIS Volume being only the first Part or Fasciculus of a larger work, the names of Members are not printed on the back of the title-page, which will be replaced by a permanent title-page when the book is completed.

The Editor is indebted to Mr. O'Neill for the drawing from which the Irish heading, in the ancient character of the Book of Kells, has been engraved; also for the Vignette, representing the Hand of God, restored from the south-east Cross of Monasterboice (erected at the close of the ninth or early in the tenth century), where it occurs at the lower angle of the right arm, as if sustaining or supporting the Cross.—(See O'Neill's "Crosses of Ireland," Plate 15.) An excellent cast of this Cross was exhibited in the Dublin Exhibition, in 1853, and is now in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham.

The hand issuing from the Clouds, and surrounded by a nimbus or glory, is one of the most ancient emblems of Deity, and especially of the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. Several examples of it will be found in the *Iconographie Chrétienne*, and *Annales Archéologiques* of Didron. Speaking of one instance, which occurs in a *Liber Primus*, a MS. of the ninth century, in the Bibliothèque Royale, this learned author says—" Ces mains sont la plus ancienne représentation du Père. Par respect, par une sorte de digne religieux, . . . on ne montra de Père qu'une main bénissante, sans nimbe d'abord, avec un nimbe crucifère ensuite."—*Icon. Chrét. (Hist. de Dieu)*, p. 68; *Ann. Arch.* tom i. p. 16.

The Hand is especially introduced in the ancient representations of our Saviour's sufferings and passion; and frequently also in pictures of the martyrs and confessors, to denote the divine grace and support given to them in their sufferings. " Au Jardin des oliviers" (says the author just quoted) " lorsque le Sauveur, abattu par une tristesse surhumaine, s'écria, *Mon Père détourné de moi ce calice, une main sort du ciel, la main du Père, qui bénit son fils, et le console. Lorsque sur la croix Jésus, prêt à mourir, jette sa Père ces paroles désespérées, Mon Dieu, Mon Dieu, pourquoi m'as-tu abandonné!* on aperçoit se dessiner, sur le sommet de la croix, une main qui bénit, et qui est la main du Père. Enfin lorsque Jésus remonte au ciel, après sa passion, et tenant en main sa croix de résurrection, son Père lui tend la main droite, et l'aide en quelque sorte à s'élever. Ce dernier sujet . . . est expliqué par ces deux vers d'Alcuin, placés précédemment sous une Ascension peinte,

DEXTERA QUE PATRIS INANIMUM DILEXIT GUBERNAT
ET NATUM CULCE PROPRIAM TRANSVEXIT IN ALICE."
—*Icon. Chrét.*, pp. 212, 214.

And compare the woodcuts on pp. 210, 212, 214, &c. of the same work.

This explanation accounts for the occurrence of this ancient emblem on the Cross of Monasterboice and other similar monuments in Ireland: and it may also serve as an apology for the introduction of it as a Vignette, on the title-page of the present work.

February, 1855.

J. H. T.

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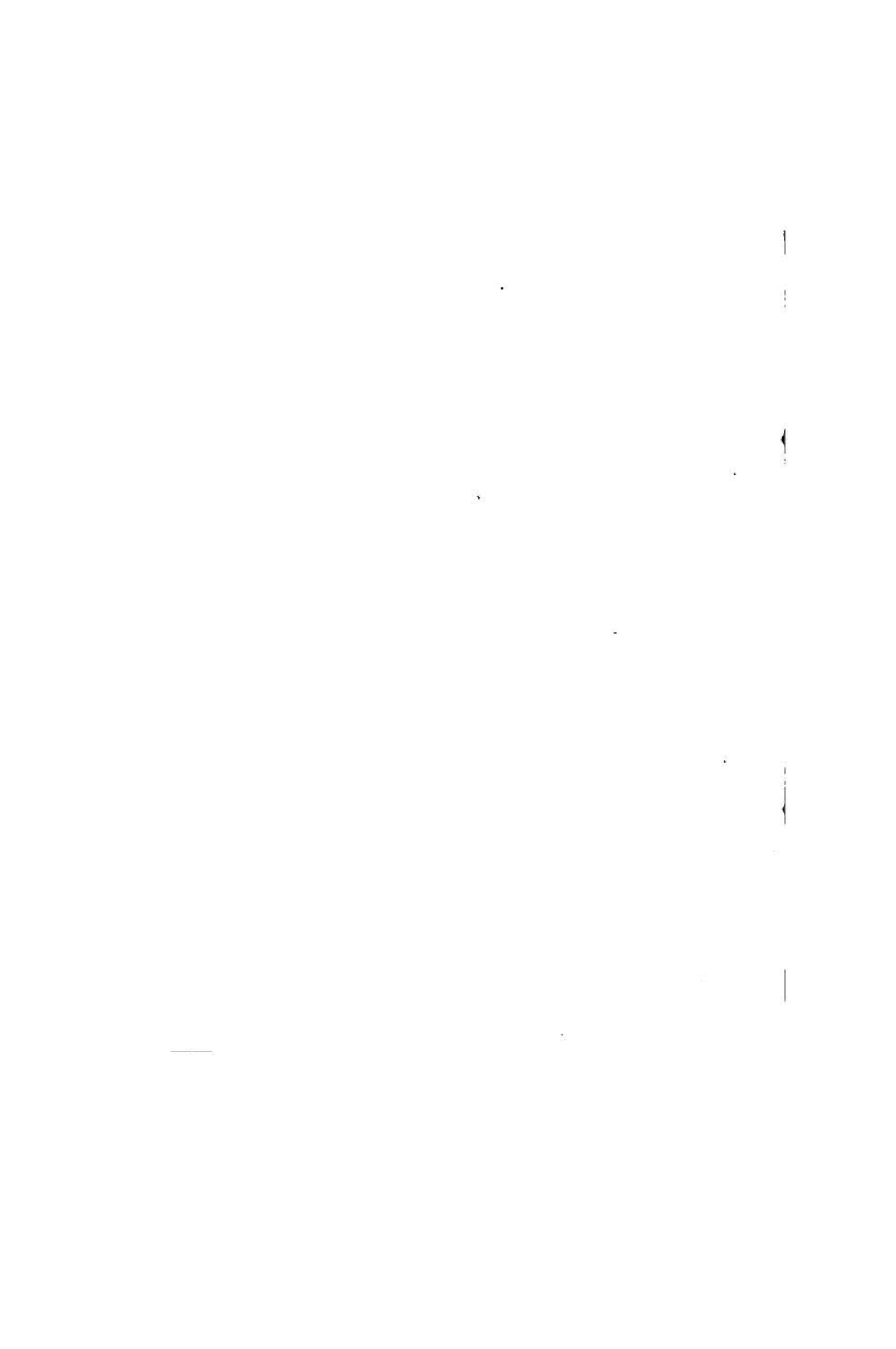
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SOME years ago the Editor of the present volume proposed to the Council of the IRISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY to print, with the assistance of his learned friend, Dr. Reeves, the celebrated *Liber Hymnorum*, now preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin.

This beautiful MS., which cannot be assigned to a later date than the ninth or tenth century, may safely be pronounced one of the most venerable monuments of Christian antiquity now remaining in Europe. It preserves to us a considerable portion of the ritual of the Church of Ireland, as it existed before the English Conquest, and before the attempt to establish uniformity with the Church of England by the introduction of the Salisbury use into Ireland, in the twelfth century.

A large number of the Hymns which it contains have never been published, and are wholly unknown to the learned. The Latin Hymns are accompanied throughout by a gloss, partly Latin and partly Irish, and scholia, very interesting in a philological point of view; whilst those of them which are written in the Irish language are, setting aside their historical importance, most valuable, from their great antiquity, to the student of Celtic literature.

But the inherent difficulties of the work, as well as its expense, have hitherto deterred the Editor and the Society from proceeding with the publication. It was ascertained also, that an ancient copy of it, which had formerly belonged to the Franciscan Monastery at Donegal, is preserved in the Library of St. Isidore's College at Rome, and as a second copy would necessarily be of essential service in supplying the defects, and correcting the obscurities or the errors, of the Dublin MS., it was thought desirable to wait until an attempt had been made to get access to the MS. at St. Isidore's.

Time, however, is going on, and every year's delay is fraught with danger. The death of any one of the eminent Irish scholars, who have been so long engaged in the study of our ancient records, would render it impossible to bring out the work, at least the Irish portion of it, with the same fulness of illustration and accuracy which may now be attained. It seems desirable, therefore, to delay no longer the publication of this most important monument of our ecclesiastical history. Although the possession of another copy would, no doubt, be an immense advantage, yet it is better that the work should be edited from a single manuscript than not at all; and if at any future time we should be permitted to examine the copy now at Rome, it will be easy to give the results of the collation in an Appendix.

Influenced by these considerations, the Editor took occasion, from the union of the Archaeological and Celtic Societies, to propose to the Council the immediate publication of this important work; and, to meet the objection on the score of expense, he suggested the expedient of printing it in parts or fasciculi, to be brought out from time to time, as the funds at the disposal of the Society may permit.

The volume now presented to the Society is the first instalment, issued in pursuance of this design. It contains the text of the Hymns exactly as it stands in the *Liber Hymnorum*, without any attempt at emendation, even where there is a manifest error of the scribe; and