OLD TRUAGH

Bunting collection



OLD TRUAGH

A harp tune (also known as "Old Triugha") collected by Bunting at the 1792 Belfast harpers' meeting from the County Leitrim harper Charles Byrne (1712 - c.1810). The actual composer seems to be unknown although O'Carolan is naturally a candidate.

According to the entry for the tune in the "Fiddler's Companion", it had previously been published as "Ye Trugh" (?) by Neal in 1724, and harpist Ann Haymann (1992) says it was quite popular, with many instrumental and vocal variants.

Byrne was Bunting's source for several Carolan tunes, and had a wealth of stories. Arthur O'Neill (1734-1818), a blind harper who also played at the Belfast Harp Festival and who was one of the last of the old itinerant harpers, mentions the tune in his memoirs.

"Truaigh" (or a variant spelling), meaning a division of land, is the name of several places in Ireland. Lyrics beginning with the words "Arise from thy slumbers, oh, fairest of maids!" were composed to the tune by a Miss Balfour, but I have never heard the song performed.