

GRIFFITH, ALEXANDER (died 1676), cleric and controversialist

Name: Alexander Griffith
Date of death: 1676
Child: Godfrey Griffith
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric and controversialist
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Thomas Richards

Born about 1601 at Llysfaen in Caernarfonshire. Educated at Oxford, he was promoted to livings in the diocese of Bangor - Trefglwys in 1622, Llanwnnog in 1633 - and that of S. Davids, Glasbury, in 1639. He was ejected from Llanwnnog under the act for the propagation of the gospel (1650-3), and from the vicarage of Glasbury, where particularly odious charges were laid against him. Naturally he was in high indignation against the whole propagation policy and especially against [Vavasor Powell](#), who to him was not only the 'metropolitan of the itinerants' but also responsible for the drastic treatment of the Anglican clergy of lower Montgomery and the county of Radnor. In 1652 he organized a petition against the working of the act and published a pamphlet in support; in 1654 he supplied a *True and Perfect Relation* of the whole transaction of 1652, and addressed it to the new Protector; in the same year he brought forth *Strena Vavasoriensis*, a tract of twenty-eight pages in which [Vavasor](#)'s whole course of life, his doctrines (with skilful distortions of them), and his opposition to the Protectorate were described in a style of unbridled vituperation (it was soon answered by the *Vavasoris Examen et Purgamen*). [There is not much doubt that Griffith was present at Blackfriars to hear [Powell](#)'s denunciation of the Protectorate in December 1653; it is certain that he supplied secretary Thurloe with letters incriminating some of the anti-Protectorate leaders in Wales (dated 1654, mainly).] The evidence of his virulent pamphlets was accepted by most Anglican critics of the Puritan dispensation, notably by Dr. John Walker in his *Sufferings* (see especially pp. 147-170). Such a fiery, unpeaceable character was not likely to receive the 'fifths' allowed to ejected clergymen by the Act; but the Puritan authorities relented so far as to allow him to keep school at Hay from 1658 onwards. The Restoration restored him to the vicarage of Glasbury; before 1665 he was rector of Llyswen as well; when his son Godfrey was appointed to the latter, Alexander Griffith was given (but not before 1670) the living of Llanelieu; for some years after 1662 he sat as one of the surrogates in the consistory court of Brecon. He died at Glasbury 21 April 1676, just at the juncture when replies were expected to be sent up for archbishop Sheldon's religious census of that year; that, presumably, is the reason why no return has been preserved from the parish of Glasbury.

Author

Thomas Richards, (1878 - 1962)

Sources

T. Richards, *Religious Developments in Wales, 1654-1662* (1923), 297-8 (family connections)

Rawlinson Manuscript at the Bodlean Library, Oxford 261 (78) (Cymdeithas Llên Cymru reprint) and *John Walker manuscripts in Bodleian Library, Oxford*, 7th ed., (214)

T. Richards, *A History of the Puritan Movement in Wales* (1920), 280-1 (analysis of two tracts)

Strena Vavasoriensis a New Years gift for the Welsh itinerants or a hue and cry after Mr. Vavasor Powell (1654, 1915) in Cymdeithas Llên Cymru reprints, red series, 3

Lambeth Manuscripts 987/54, 639/335

Salt MS. 2112 in the William Salt Library, Stafford (393-6)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Alexander Griffith](#)

Additional Links

VIAF: [33440749](#)

Wikidata: [Q4719014](#)

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