

JOHNS, DAVID (fl. 1569-1586), cleric and poet

Name: David Johns
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric and poet
Area of activity: Poetry; Religion
Author: Garfield Hopkin Hughes

A native of Merioneth. In a letter to be found in B.M. MS. 9817 he calls himself 'David Johns al's ap John ap Hugh ap Howel,' and 'Howel ap Jenkyn o Ynys y Maengwyn,' in whose praise **Tudur Aled** had written, was his ancestor.

David ap John was ordained deacon on 1 November 1569, and priest (' David ap John, alias Johns ') Christmas Day 1570. He was collated to Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, 22 September 1573 (' David John, clk.'). His successor, John Williams, was collated according to the **NLW MS 1626C** (285), 16 May 1598, but on account of his plurality he was re-appointed to Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd on 3 June 1603; he was S.T.P., i.e. D.D.

His translation of the verses of S. Bernard ('*Cur mundus militat*') has been copied in many of the manuscripts, and so has his translation into Latin sapphic verse of an old poem formerly attributed to **Taliesin**. Both are to be found in his own handwriting in B.M. Add. MS. 14866. Even more interesting are the poems contained in the letter he sent to David Salysbury, 5 February 1587 (B.M. MS. 9817), although he describes them as the 'first beginning of my halting muse.' He also versified some of the psalms - see B.M. MS. 9817 (934) and B.M. Add. MS. 14896 (20).

His principal manuscript is the large volume consisting of six books (B.M. Add. MS. 14866) which he dedicated to John Williams of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, 12 June 1587, who, it will be observed, had the same name as Johns's successor in the living. The dedication is important as an indication of the learning and taste of David Johns, and should be compared with some of the other prefaces of the period, e.g. that of **Siôn Dafydd Rhys** to the grammar he published in 1592. The voluminous notes in the manuscript are also important. Two of his prose translations from Latin are to be found in **Peniarth MS 159** under the titles 'Gweddi Saint Awgustin' and 'Dengran gwahaniaeth kristnogion y byd.'

Some writers have confused him with 'Syr' **Thomas Jones**.

Author

Garfield Hopkin Hughes, (1912 - 1969)

Sources

G. J. Williams, *Llythyrâu at Ddafydd Jones o Drefriw*, 28

Robert Williams, *Enwogion Cymru. A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen* (1852)

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (under Jones, D.)

NLW Archives: **NLW MS 1626C**

H. Blackwell, **NLW MSS 9251-9277A: A Dictionary of Welsh Biography**

H. B. Thomas, *A History of the Diocese of St. Asaph* (1874), ii, 100

B.M. Add. MS. 14866 (468)

A. Ivor Pryce, *The Diocese of Bangor in the sixteenth century being a digest of the registers of the bishops, A.D. 1512-1646*(1923)

additional information provided by E.D.J.

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