

## JONES, ROWLAND (1722-1774), philologist

**Name:** Rowland Jones  
**Date of birth:** 1722  
**Date of death:** 1774  
**Child:** Rowland Jones  
**Parent:** John Williams  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** philologist  
**Area of activity:** Scholarship and Languages  
**Author:** William Rowlands

christened at Llannor in 1722, son of John Williams, Bachellyn, Llanbedrog, Caernarfonshire, a prosperous farmer and an able lawyer, with his office at Bachellyn. The son was educated at Llannor school and afterwards at Botwnnog Grammar School, and was trained in law at his father's office. Early in life he moved to London, where he practised as a solicitor for some years but on 26 October 1751 he was admitted a member of the Inner Temple. There he married a rich woman, and they had three children, two daughters and one son. By inheriting his father's estate and by marriage, Rowland Jones became a very rich man and acquired an estate known as Y Weirglodd Fawr (Broom Hall) in the parish of Aber-erch, Caernarfonshire. His son, Rowland Jones, died without issue 2 December 1856, and the estate was inherited by his nephew, William Jones, Ysgubor Hen, Eifionydd. In 1859 there was a lawsuit in Chancery contesting the claim of the family of William Jones to the estate of Broom Hall; an attempt was made to prove that Rowland Jones was the son of William Jones, Crugan, near Llanbedrog, and not the son of John Williams, Bachellyn.

In his day, Rowland Jones was regarded as an eminent scholar and philologist. He was well versed in languages, especially Latin and Greek, and he wrote several books on philology. In *The Origin of Language and Nations*, 1764, he propounded a theory that all words could be derived from monosyllabic roots, and that the primeval language was Celtic; in his lexical works he derives English, Latin, Greek, and Welsh words from one common Celtic source. He exercised a great influence on the linguistic theories of [William Owen Pughe](#), especially on his dictionary.

He published the following books: (1) *The Origin of Languages and Nations, Hieroglyphically, Etymologically, and Topographically defined and fixed, after the Method of an English, Celtic, Greek, and Latin English Lexicon*, 1764; (2) *Hieroglyphic, or a Grammatical Introduction to an Universal Hieroglyphic Language, consisting of English signs and voices*, 1768; (3) *The Philosophy of words in two dialogues between the Author and Crito*, 1769; (4) *The Circles of Gomer, or, an Essay towards an Investigation and Introduction of the English as an Universal Language*, 1771; (5) *The 10 Triads; or the Tenth Muse, wherein the origin, nature, and connection of the Sacred Symbols, Sounds, Words, Ideas are discovered*, 1773.

[Mr. P.H. Lawson queries 1722 as Jones's birth-year. He points out that Jones was admitted as attorney (from Symonds Inn) on 27 November 1741, and that he must have been then more than 19. Further, his grandfather's will (15 October 1724) includes him in a sequence of four grandsons, William, Rowland, John, and Owen - William was christened in April 1715, and John in August 1720; a sister of theirs was christened in September 1718, and the fourth brother, Owen, in June 1722. Mr. Lawson conjectures that Rowland Jones was born about December 1716. It may be added that [Myrddin Fardd](#) (*Enwogion*, p. 209) makes Jones 57 (not 52, as in *D.N.B.*) at the time of his death - the date is variously given as 'early' and 'late' in that year.]

### Author

William Rowlands

### Sources

*Enwogion Sir Gaernarfon* (1922), 207-9

T. R. Roberts, *Eminent Welshmen: a short biographical dictionary of Welshmen... from the earliest times to the present* (1908)

*Y Brython*, I, i, 20

*Cambrian Bibliography*

*Bye-Gones, relating to Wales and the Border Counties*, 1897, 68

*Y Drych*, 23 May 1857

*Yr Herald Cymraeg*, 1856-7

*Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 1 April 1857

J. E. Griffith, *Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families* (1914), 331

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

*Y Cymmrodor*, 1951, 103-4

**Published date:** 1959

**Article Copyright:** <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/> 

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is provided by The National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. It is free to use and does not receive grant support. A donation would help us maintain and improve the site so that we can continue to acknowledge Welsh men and women who have made notable contributions to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).

