JONES (or JOHNS), ' Syr ' THOMAS (died 1622?), cleric and poet

Name: Thomas Jones
Date of death: 1622?
Child: Walter Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric and poet
Area of activity: Poetry; Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

The older biographical dictionaries have wrongly associated him with Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd - perhaps confusing him with David Johns, who was vicar of that parish in 1573 and until c. 1598 - no other Johns or Jones appears in D.R. Thomas's list (*A History of the Diocese of St. Asaph*, ii, 100) of Llanfair D.C. incumbents during the relevant period. Every allusion to the cleric who is the subject of the present note connects him with Monmouthshire.

B.M. Add. MS. 14878, written c. 1692, contains an *awdl-gywydd* on the deliverance from the Armada, by ' Thomas Jones, parson of Llanfair, Monmouth '; this was printed by J. H. Davies in *Hen Gerddi Gwleidyddol*, 1901. The parish is that of Llanfair Kilgedin near Llanover; a Thomas Jones was rector there in 1590 (Bradney, iv, 258-9), and as his son Walter succeeded him there in September 1622 it looks as if he had died in 1622 or 1621.

We have also an *awdl-gywydd* of thanks for the *Welsh Bible*, ascribed to ' Sir Tho: Johns ' in Llanstephan MS 41 (a contemporary manuscript), ' Syr Thomas Johns, circa 1600 ' in Panton 41 (18th century), 'Syr Thomas Jones' in Cwrtmawr MS 12B (18th century) - see also Cwrtmawr MS 454B , and 'Syr Tomas Jones, parson of Llandeilo Bertholeu' in Iolo MS. 40. This was printed in *Cymru Fydd*, 1889, 404-6, in *Hen Gwndidau*, 187-92 (ed. Hopkin-James and T. C. Evans), and in Parry-Williams 's *Canu Rhydd Cynnar*, 367-72. It will be noticed that the Iolo MS. alone connects the poet with the parish which is today oddly called ' Llantilio Pertholey ' (near Abergavenny); and Iolo Morganwg has a note on the poet (quoted in *Hen Gwndidau*, 282), taken he alleges, ' from the book of Harri Siôn of Pontypool ' - how truthfully we cannot tell, any more than we can check W. O. Pughe's statement in *Cambrian Biography* (but derived in all probability from Iolo) that Thomas Jones took part in an eisteddfod at Llandaff in 1588. It is, however, certain that a Thomas Johns was vicar of Llandeilo Bertholeu (and in residence there) in 1560 (Browne Willis, *Llandaff*, 205), and that he had left it at an uncertain date before the end of the century (Bradney, ii, 208 - ' Thomas ap John '). It is generally held (see G. J. Williams, *Traddodiad Llenyddol Morgannwg*, 129) that this is the same man - incumbent successively of Llandeilo and of Llanfair, in that case - and it will be seen that the established dates are consistent with this belief. It is also believed that he was the author of the *cwndid* in Llanover MS. 23 which was printed in *Hen Gwndidau*, 281 - its author describes himself as 'a priest, son of an old prelate,' whatever that may mean. But the ascription is uncertain, for there was yet another contemporary Thomas Jones, in the neighbouring vicarage of Llanarth (in June 1589 according to Foster's 'Index to Institutions,' NLW MS 1626C ; in 1602 says Bradney, i, 310). Then again, NLW MS 1553A has a solitary *englyn* by 'Syr T. Johns,' and NLW MS 13068B a series of *englynion* addressed by 'Syr T. Jones' to ' Syr William' - the latter, as is clear from the verses, was no cleric, but a knight, possibly Sir William Herbert (died 1593) of S. Julians.

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