

PHILLIPPS, Sir THOMAS (1792 - 1872), baronet (created 27 July 1821), antiquary, bibliophile, and collector of manuscripts, records, books, etc.

Name: Thomas Phillipps
Date of birth: 1792
Date of death: 1872
Parent: Hannah Judd (née Walton)
Parent: Thomas Phillipps
Gender: Male
Occupation: antiquary, bibliophile, and collector of manuscripts, records, books, etc.
Area of activity: History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Scholarship and Languages
Author: William Llewelyn Davies

Born 2 July 1792 at 32 Cannon Street, Manchester, son of Thomas Phillipps, member of a family long settled at Broadway, Worcestershire, and Hanna Walton.

Educated at Rugby and University College, Oxford (B.A. 1815, M.A. 1820), Thomas Phillipps succeeded, in 1818, to the whole of his father's property, which included the Middle Hill estate, Worcestershire.

A collector from boyhood he developed what can only be described as a voracious appetite for manuscripts and documents, emulating, as he himself says, the examples of **Sir Robert Cotton** and **Sir Robert Harley**.

Details of Sir Thomas Phillipps's career and of his numerous and varied acquisitions, made on the Continent and in Britain (including Ireland) (he also collected printed books), are given in the *D.N.B.*; the present note must confine itself to the Welsh content of what was destined to become the largest private collection (particularly on the manuscripts and records side; the total has been estimated at 60,000) in Britain at the time and, possibly in western Europe also. Periodical auction sales, which began about 1886, continued.

In the 1895 sale a good collection of Welsh manuscripts was acquired by the Cardiff Public Library; for details see **J. Gwenogfryn Evans**, *Repts. on MSS. in the Welsh Language*, Cardiff, and the annual reports of that period of the Cardiff Public Libraries Committee. One of the most famous early Welsh manuscripts, viz., the 'Book of Aneirin' (now in Cardiff), had found its way to the Phillipps collection, via **Thomas Price** (Carnhuanawc) and others (*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, xi, 109-12), this manuscript having 'strayed' from the Hengwrt collection (see **Robert Vaughan**, Hengwrt). The **Sir John Williams** collection of manuscripts in the National Library contains 108 Phillipps manuscripts, this group including the **Edward Jones** (Bardd y Brenin) manuscripts (details in **J. H. Davies**, *Catalogue of Additional MSS. in the Sir John Williams Collection*); at least thirty other Phillipps manuscripts have reached the National Library afterwards.

With a view to making the contents of his manuscripts more generally accessible, Sir Thomas Phillipps established, c. 1822, a private printing press in Broadway Tower on the Middle Hill estate; in 1862 the library and printing press were removed to Thirlestaine House, Cheltenham. From this press issued a large number of publications, including several of Welsh interest - genealogies and visitations, lists of sheriffs and magistrates, charters, rolls, etc. Examples are *Barddoniaeth gan hen awdwyr or Ancient Welsh poetry*; *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in Llannerch Library, taken June 21st 1787*; *a Manuscripts at Porkington, the seat of William Ormsby Gore Esq. near Oswestry, co. Salop*, and *Will of Sir Richard Philipps, Bart., Baron Milford*. It has been said that Sir Thomas Phillipps claimed a connection with some of the Phillippses of Pembrokehire. At one time he wished to house his collections in Wales; he consulted the civic authorities of Swansea on the point, and conceived the notion of roofing Manorbier castle, Pembrokeshire as a library.

Sir Thomas Phillipps died at Thirlestaine House on 6 February 1872, having bequeathed Thirlestaine House and its library, etc., to his third daughter by his first wife. He was buried at the old church, Broadway. See also under **Rowland, John** (Giraldus).

Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and sources cited therein

Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum in Bibliotheca Phillippica D. Thomae Phillipps, bt., impressum Typis Medio-Montanis, 1837-1871 (London 1824), 1824 - Sotheby (London) sale catalogues

Catalogue of Printed Literature in the Welsh Department, Cardiff Free Libraries (1898) and N.L.W. catalogues

English Collectors of Books and Manuscripts (1530-1930) and their marks of ownership

'Preface' to *A Selection of Precious Manuscripts, Historic Documents and Rare Books, the majority from the renowned collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bt., 1792-1872* offered for sale by **William H. Robinson**, etc (London 1950)

To our sources of information on Phillipps may now be added the series of *Phillipps Studies* by A. N. L. Munby, librarian of King's College, Cambridge. Already published are (1) *The Catalogues of MSS. (etc.) of Sir Thomas Phillipps...*, 1951; (2) *The Family Affairs of Sir Thomas Phillipps*, 1952; (3) *The Formation of the Phillipps Library up to the year 1840*, 1954; (4) *The Formation of the Phillipps Library from 1841 to 1872*, 1956. (5) *The Dispersal of the Phillipps Library* (6) indexes and appendices

A. N. L. Munby, *Portrait of an Obsession: The Life of Sir Thomas Phillipps, the World's Greatest Book Collector* (New York 1967)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: **Thomas Phillipps**

Works

Thomas Phillipps, *Manuscripti Codices: Abbatiae Sancti Eligii. Circa Ann. 1778*

Thomas Phillipps, *Catalogus Bibliothecae Monasterii Corbeiensis: codex saeculi XI* (1828?)

Thomas Phillipps, *A catalogue of the manuscripts in the archives at Lille. 1828* (Middle Hill Press 1828?)

Thomas Phillipps, *MSS. in Edward's Sale 1815: With the purchasers names*

Thomas Phillipps, *Index to the inquisitions post mortem, for the reign of Henry VII(Worcestershire c.1856)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Welsh pedigrees Ex Rotulis Walliae, in the Tower of London(Middle Hill Press 1868)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Cartularium S. Johannis Bapt de Caermarthen(Cheltenham 1865)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Cartâ; Baroniâ de Kemeys, in Com. Pembroke(Worcestershire 1841)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Mansell records*

Thomas Phillipps (ed.), *Glamorganshire Pedigrees: From the mss. of Sir Isaac Heard, Knt., Garter King of Arms(Worcester 1845)*

Thomas Phillipps, George Owen, *Pedigree of Wogan of Bouleston, Co. Pembroke (from George Owen's MSS, at Middle Hill, No. 12380, in 1860)(Middle Hill Press c.1867)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Excerpta ex Cartul. Cath. St. David(Worcester c.1840)*

Joseph Ayloffe, Thomas Phillipps, *1489 Cartae Antiquae in the Tower (vide Ayloff's catalogue): Index of those which are printed(Middle Hill Press 1846)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Index to the inquisitions post mortem, for the reign of Henry VIII(Middle Hill Press c.1856)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Index to the inquisitions post mortem, for the reign of Edward VI(Middle Hill Press c.1857)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Index to the inquisitions post mortem, for the reign of Philip & Mary(Middle Hill Press c.1860)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Index to the inquisitions post mortem, for the reign of James I(Middle Hill Press c.1861)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Index to the inquisitions post mortem, for the reign of Elizabeth, part I(Middle Hill Press c.1864)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Index to the inquisitions post mortem, for the reign of Elizabeth, part II(Middle Hill Press c.1864)*

Thomas Phillipps, *Index to the inquisitions post mortem, for the reign of Charles I(Middle Hill Press c.1867)*

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