

WILLIAMS, MOSES (1685 - 1742), cleric and scholar

Name: Moses Williams
Date of birth: 1685
Date of death: 1742
Spouse: Margaret Williams (née Davies)
Parent: Margaret Williams (née John)
Parent: Samuel Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric and scholar
Area of activity: History and Culture; Religion; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Geraint Bowen

son of [Samuel Williams](#) of Llandyfriog. Born 2 March 1685 at Glaslwyn, Cellan, Cardiganshire. He was educated at Carmarthen grammar school and University College, Oxford (B.A. 1708). He became M.A. (Cantab.) ten years later. He was one of [Edward Lhuyd](#)'s assistants in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and was subsequently on the staff of the Bodleian Library. He was ordained deacon 2 March 1709 and became curate of Chiddingstone, Kent. After serving for a year as chaplain to lady Denbigh, he was ordained priest 31 May 1714 at Fulham. He was given the living of Llanwenog in 1715 and became vicar of Devynock in 1716 where, 10 November 1718, he married Margaret Davies of Cwm Wysg; by 1730 he had lost his wife and only daughter and had married again. In 1719 he was elected F.R.S., and in 1722 officiated for a time as secretary of that society. In 1732 he received the living of Bridgwater, where he died. He was buried 2 March 1742 in Bridgwater churchyard.

His publications are very numerous. He published the following works which were translated by him from the English originals: *Ymarferol-Waith i'r Elusen Ysgolion, yn egluro Natur Confirmasiwn mewn ffordd o Gwestiwn ac Atteb. Gyda nifer o Weddiau cyfaddas i'r Achos arbennig hwnnw*, 1711, and *Boreol a Phrydnawnol Weddi i Deulu*, 1711 (both by Robert Nelson); *Llawlyfr y Llafurwr* (Edward Welchman), 1711; and *Cydymmaith i'r Allor* (William Viccars); while in *Archaeologia Britannica* ([Edward Lhuyd](#)) will be found 'An Armoric Grammar and Vocabulary by Julian Manoir English'd out of French by M. Williams.' He edited the S.P.C.K. *Bible* together with the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1718, and a second impression of both in 1727, and in 1730 edited *Cyfreithjeu Hywel Dda ac eraill, seu Leges Wallicae Ecclesiasticae & Civiles Hoeli Boni et aliorum Walliae Princium ... Notis & Glossaris illustravit Gulielmus Wottonus*. He edited and published [William Baxter](#) of Llanllugan's *Glossarium Antiquitatum Britannicarum*, 1711; *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 1726, and a second impression of this work in 1731 under the title *Glossarium Antiquitatum Romanarum; The Breviary of Britain*, [Humphrey Lhuyd](#), 1723; and *Britannicae Descriptionis Commentariolum*, [Humphrey Lhuyd](#), 1731. He also published *Y Namyn un deugain Articlau Crefydd*, 1710; *Cofrestr o'r Holl Lyfrau Printjedig*, 1717; *Proposals for Printing by Subscription a Collection of Writings in the Welsh Tongue to the beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, 1719; *Repertorium Poeticum*, 1726; and *Orders relating to the Almshouses ... of Devynog*, 1731. He intended publishing a new edition with additions of *The Historie of Cambria* ([David Powel](#)), an edition of Juvenal's satires, and of [Edward James](#)'s *Llyfr yr Homiliau*. He did not achieve his ambition of producing an enlarged edition of [John Davies](#) of Mallwyd's dictionary and grammar although, as his manuscripts show, he had begun the work of collecting the material and editing it. His collection of 'Triads,' prepared for the press in 1717, remains in manuscript, and so does his dissertation 'A Chronological Account of the Several Editions of the Scriptures in Welsh,' his catalogue of the contents of the Bodleian library, and his 'Llech o'r Holl Brydyddion Cymreig.' The response to his 'Proposals,' published in 1719, was disappointing and he had to abandon his ambitious and praiseworthy intention.

He rescued scarce books. He travelled all over Wales, visiting the mansions of the great in order to inspect their libraries and to copy or take extracts from their manuscripts. The Llanstephan manuscripts and the Shirburn printed books, now in the National Library, are ample proof of his industry and that of his father, [Samuel Williams](#). He was a worthy disciple of [Edward Lhuyd](#), for he was, and still is, acknowledged to have been one of the greatest of Welsh scholars. It is not, therefore, surprising that he won the friendship and esteem of the greatest English scholars of his day, men like William Wotton, John Hudson, Thomas Hearne, and Humphrey Wanley.

Author

Dr Geraint Bowen

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

J. Davies, *Bywyd a Gwaith Moses Williams, (1685-1742)* (1937) (1937)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Moses Williams](#)

Additional Links

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Published date: 1959

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