

ELLIS, THOMAS (c. 1819 - 1856), Orientalist

Name: Thomas Ellis
Date of birth: c. 1819
Date of death: 1856
Gender: Male
Occupation: Orientalist
Area of activity: Scholarship and Languages
Author: Bleddyn Jones Roberts

Born at Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire, about 1819 (as the parish register contains no reference to him, he may have been christened in the Calvinistic Methodist chapel there). He attended the school kept by **Morris Davies** (1796 - 1876), but was a backward pupil, and ultimately followed his father's trade of shoemaker. Later he wandered to Liverpool, and there became interested in Oriental languages. From 1848 to 1850 he is stated to have helped Samuel Bagster in the preparation of his major Hebrew publications, including an *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* and *Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon*, but it is also known that he travelled in the East during this same period. From December 1850 until his death in December 1856 he was employed as a supernumerary at the British Museum, cataloguing Syriac manuscripts, but it is doubtful whether his work was of any special merit, for Wright's *Catalogue* ignores his contribution whilst acclaiming that of his predecessor, Cureton. On the other hand, Layard, in the preface to *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, 1853, refers to valuable help received from Ellis.

Author

Reverend Professor **Bleddyn Jones Roberts**, (1906 - 1977)

Sources

R. Williams, *Montgomeryshire Worthies* (1894)

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

Letter from J. Levean, Department of Oriental Books and MSS., the British Museum, 20 May 1949

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