

GWYNNETH, JOHN (1490? - 1562?), Roman Catholic priest and musician

Name: John Gwynneth
Date of birth: 1490?
Date of death: 1562?
Parent: David ap Llewelyn ab Ithel
Gender: Male
Occupation: Roman Catholic priest and musician
Area of activity: Music; Religion
Author: John James Jones

The exact years of his birth and death are not known. He was a Caernarvonshire man, the son of David ap Llewelyn ab Ithel, brother to Robert ap Llewelyn ab Ithel, of Castellmarch, in Llyn, at which place he was probably born, c. 1490. He seems to have been educated at some of the local monastic establishments, whence, with the help of a wealthy patron, he was able to proceed to Oxford. He was ordained, and held livings successively in Cheapside, London, and at Luton. At the same time he held the sinecure rectory of Clynnog-fawr, Caernarfonshire, to which he had been presented by Henry VIII. Although he had difficulty in getting himself instituted and subsequently was a complainant twice in chancery suits and once in the court of star chamber, over questions of tithe and other emoluments of the parish, he seems to have held this living until his death.

His chief claim to fame is his contribution to church music. In 1531 he had successfully supplicated at Oxford for the Mus. Doc. degree, submitting in support a number of compositions of church music. One of his compositions, entitled 'My love mourneth,' had already been included in Wynkyn de Worde's *Bassus* (1530). There is no doubt that he did much by precept and practice to improve the standards of church music, and he holds a high place among Tudor musicians.

But Gwynneth was also active as a controversial writer on behalf of Roman Catholicism. He wrote several books in reply to those of John Frith, the friend and ally of Tyndale, who had been martyred in 1533. These works show wide learning and a good degree of dialectical skill.

Gwynneth lived on into the reign of queen Elizabeth, and may have suffered imprisonment for refusing to accept the act of uniformity of 1559. He died probably about 1562.

Author

John James Jones, (1892 - 1957)

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Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Gwynneth](#)

Additional Links

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