

ROBERTS, MICHAEL (died 1679), principal of Jesus College, Oxford

Name: Michael Roberts
Date of death: 1679
Parent: Alice Roberts
Parent: Evan Roberts
Gender: Male
Occupation: principal of Jesus College, Oxford
Area of activity: Education
Author: Thomas Richards

son of Evan Roberts and Alice his wife, of Llanffinan parish in Anglesey; the date of his birth is uncertain. He spent some time at Caius College, Cambridge, and Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated B.A. in 1620, M.A. in 1623; he was incorporated at Oxford and Cambridge, both in 1624. He became Fellow of Jesus in Oxford in 1625 - there he remained till 1638, when he lost his place because of some irregularity, some breach of rules, in proceeding to the degree of D.D. He is named as holding a living in Anglesey, and that of Llangynwyd, Glamorganshire. During the Civil War, his adherence was very dubious: according to his enemies, he was chaplain to the Roundhead forces besieging Caernarvon castle; according to others, he was of great succour (if not under arms himself) to the Royalist rebels in the insurrection of Anglesey in 1648. However, when the Parliamentary Visitors came to Oxford in that year and turned out the principal of Jesus, Michael Roberts was appointed in his stead, and was made D.D. under the new order (1649). For nine years the college became a hornet's nest. The dormant Royalists among the Fellows looked upon him as a traitor to their cause; the Puritan faction deemed him a hypocrite. Charge after charge was brought against him, some going back to his career before the war, some of injuring college interests by misappropriating money or by bungling transactions with college lands. Appeals were lodged with the 'Visitor' (the earl of Pembroke), with the Puritan 'Visitors,' and with the Protector himself, and it was he (according to the more probable account) as chancellor of the university who finally dismissed Roberts in 1657. He kept on living at Oxford till his death on 3 May 1679, engaged in peevish litigation with the authorities of Jesus, or in bad-tempered quarrels with his relatives in Anglesey, or in unsuccessful bids for promotion in the Church. He was a stiff-necked man, keen on his own way, destitute of high ideals. But this must not make us forget five things about him; he (with one other) acted as corrector of the press to the Welsh *Bible* of 1630; he wrote an encomium to the *Gemma Cambricum* of Richard Jones of Llanfair Caereinion, 1655; he wrote the official Latin imprimatur (24 July 1676) to the second edition of *Hanes y Ffydd* by Charles Edwards; he supplied many notes about Oxford Welshmen to Anthony Wood for his *Athenae Oxonienses*; and he was sharply critical of the 1672 edition of the *New Testament*, because Stephen Hughes and his coadjutors had left out the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Author

Thomas Richards, (1878 - 1962)

Sources

Oxford University registers and *Jesus College Manuscripts*

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Wynne Manuscripts at All Souls College, Oxford (All Souls), 239, 240

Henllys Manuscripts (U.C.N.W.), 482-4

The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1922-3, 1-111

Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society, 1923, 302-13

Hardy *Jesus College* (1899) (see index)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Michael Roberts](#)

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