

MORRIS, DAVID (1630 - 1703), Roman Catholic priest and informer

Name: David Morris
Date of birth: 1630
Date of death: 1703
Gender: Male
Occupation: Roman Catholic priest and informer
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements; Religion
Author: John Martin Cleary

The son of Walter Morris of Llantilio, Monmouth, and Elizabeth Woodward of Worcestershire. He had a brother who died at S. Omer College, and one of his sisters was a nun at Ghent. He lived for three years in the hostel for Welsh students at Ghent, and entered the English College, Rome, on 16 October 1648, on the same day as **Fr. William Morgan, S.J.** He was ordained priest in S. John Lateran, 4 April 1654, and went to England on 1 May 1655. Little is known of his career for the next twenty years. He was a member of the Chapter of secular priests in 1677, and in spite of his activities still belonged to it in 1684, when he was said to be archdeacon of Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, and Cambridgeshire. In 1680, at the time of the Popish Plot, Morris was brought over from Flanders through the agency of Israel Tonge, Oates's fellow-informer, to substantiate the charges brought against the Jesuits by another Roman Catholic priest, Dr. John Sergeant. He became known as Sergeant's *fidus Achates*. They swore false evidence against the Jesuits before the Privy Council, 18 February 1680, and their informations were ordered to be printed by the House of Commons on 26 March 1681. For his services Morris received a pension from the secret service funds of £900 between 1680 and 1685. Hay says 'it would be interesting to discover what Morris was doing in England from 1680 to 1685, or what he had done, perhaps at an earlier date, to earn this pension of over two hundred pounds a year', and concludes that Sergeant and Morris were 'involved from the very beginning in the schemes of Titus Oates' and Shaftesbury. In fact, Sergeant and Morris received more money than Oates and Tonge, who were credited with being the inventors of the Popish Plot.

Author

John Martin Cleary

Sources

Foley, *Records of the English province of the Society of Jesus (1570-1800)*, v, 465 n.

M. V. Hay, *The Jesuits and the Popish Plot* (London 1934), 164-5, 173

Catholic Record Society, xl, 42, xlvii, 125 and n

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