

AP THOMAS, DAFYDD RHYS (1912-2011), Old Testament scholar

Name: Dafydd Rhys ap Thomas
Date of birth: 1912
Date of death: 2011
Spouse: Menna ap Thomas (née Davies)
Child: Marian ap Thomas
Child: Keinion ap Thomas
Parent: Janette Spencer Thomas (née Spencer)
Parent: William Keinion Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: Old Testament scholar
Area of activity: Religion; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Gwilym Henry Jones

Dafydd ap Thomas was born 2 May 1912, in Menai Bridge, Anglesey, the youngest of the five sons of **Reverend W. Keinion Thomas** and his wife Jeanette; Gwyn, Alon, Iwan and Jac were his brothers and they had a younger sister, Truda. He received his early education at home and his secondary education at Beaumaris Grammar School before proceeding to the University College of North Wales, Bangor, where he graduated with honours in Hebrew and Semitic Languages in 1934. He gained his MA in theology from Mansfield College, Oxford and his BD (London). In 1937 he went to Berlin intending to write his doctoral dissertation but he left after a year as the clouds of war gathered and as he felt increasingly appalled by the growth of Nazism.

In 1938 he was appointed lecturer, and later Senior Lecturer, in Hebrew, at his old college where he remained until his retirement in 1977. After his marriage with Menna Davies, the daughter of Reverend George and Mrs Marianne Davies, Bryn Bowydd, Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1940, the couple made their home in Bangor and Menai Bridge. They had two children, Keinion and Marian. Ap Thomas spent short periods away from Bangor - several times as visiting lecturer in Toronto University and a year carrying out archaeological work in Canaan.

Over the years Ap Thomas published articles and studies regularly in scholarly journals. His major contribution was the translations that he provided of works by Otto Eissfeldt, Martin Noth (*The Laws in the Pentateuch and other studies*, 1961), but his greatest achievement was his translation from the Norwegian of Sigmund Mowinckel's great pioneering work, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (2 vols, 1962, and 2004). He published *A primer of Old Testament text criticism* (1947, revised ed. 1961) and with Gwilym H. Jones, *Gramadeg Hebraeg y Beibl* (1976). He was the editor of the series *Beibl a Chrefydd* published by the University of Wales Press, 1976-1990. He was the energetic and enthusiastic secretary of the Society for Old Testament Study from 1961 to 1972 and President in 1974. A *Festschrift* edited by Gwilym H. Jones as volume 2 of *Efrydiau Beiblaidd Bangor* was presented to him in 1977.

He preached regularly on Sundays and served as Lay Minister of Hirael chapel (Welsh Independents) Bangor from 1944 to 1951. He was secretary of Coleg Bala-Bangor from 1947 to 1978. He was President of the Union of Welsh Independents in 1979; his address from the chair was *Yr Hen Destament Newydd* (The New Old Testament). He served on the Old Testament translation panel of the New Welsh Bible and was its chairman for a time.

He was an accomplished tennis player and skier in his student days, and also a very competent handiman, able to work with technical equipment and to service his own car.

Dafydd ap Thomas died 19 May 2011 and his ashes were buried in his wife's grave (she died in August 2004) in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Author

Reverend Gwilym Henry Jones

Sources

Barn, November/December 2011

The Union of Welsh Independents website

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dafydd Rhys ap Thomas](#)

Additional Links

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