

BOOK REVIEWS

LEARNING, LAW AND RELIGION: Higher Education and Welsh Society, c.1540–1640, W. P. GRIFFITH, University of Wales Press, *Studies in Welsh History Series, 10*, 1996, xvii+486 pp. (hardback £40) ISBN 0 7083 1314 0.

A Review by the Ven T. Hughie Jones

The splendid University of Wales series of *Studies in Welsh History* has added to its worth and prestige with this work by the Director of the School of Welsh Medium Studies at the University of Wales, Bangor, where he is also a lecturer in Welsh History. Bilingual in Welsh and English, Dr Griffith is well-equipped to pursue a study which has taken him to records of the Inns of Court and Chancery, Oxbridge colleges, national and local libraries, and countless other private sources (there are 31 closely-printed pages of bibliography in Welsh, English, Latin and French). Well-known members and friends of the ELS are laid under tribute, including John Baker and Felicity Heal. Incidentally, what a boon to researchers the computer in general, and LEXIS in particular, have been. Could this account have been possible otherwise, with the citation of more than thirty unpublished theses, from all quarters of the globe? Certainly, the scholarship is formidable, and devoted to a formidable task—nothing less than the examination of Welsh membership of institutions of higher learning, both legal, general and theological, together with Welsh contributions to the church and the law, during the century broadly from the Reformation to the Interregnum.

‘With no focal point for higher learning within Wales itself, it seems obvious that the Welsh should have sought [it] at Oxford, relatively nearby, and London and Cambridge.’ An interesting post-Reformation development, though numerically small, was the emigration of Welsh scholars to the Continent in pursuit of Catholic education. Twenty Welsh admissions into the English College at Rome, for instance, were recorded in 1575–94, nineteen in 1601–42 and seven in 1645–50. Griffith points the interested enquirer towards sources for further exploration of this side-track from his major exploration. It is the Welsh take-up of places at the two universities and the Inns which is his concern, and he documents exhaustively the few colleges of major attraction (Jesus, Oxford, St. John’s, Cambridge) and the Inns (Gray’s, Middle Temple and Lincoln’s) to which Welshmen moved. Several sub-themes run in and out of the study.

One is the influence of family status and wealth on admissions. The ability to purchase chambers, for example, carried the right to pre-empt, dictate, or veto occupation of the chambers, and Welsh squires, existing lawyers and judges were not behind their English counterparts in (ab)using the system. Griffith’s chapter on ‘Forging links with the Inns and Universities: a pattern of gifts, grants, benefactions and patronage’ is equally revealing of the network of friends and relations whose influence was sought, not always successfully, for the placement of sons, nephews and other dependants. Richard Vaughan, Bishop of Chester, appealed to Owen Gwyn at St John’s, Cambridge, for a scholar’s place for his son John, in order that the young man, through supervision and discipline, ‘the marrow of all good learninge and piety’, ‘may prove fit for civill companie and for some purpose in the commonweale’. The appeal succeeded. No less able was Sir Eubule Thelwall, Bencher of Gray’s Inn, benefactor not only of that institution but of Jesus College, Oxford. He assigned the chamber and studies at Gray’s over which he had control to his nephew Daniel Thelwall and to his cousins John Thelwall and John Wynne. There were many Welsh benefactors of their Inns, including William Ravenscroft of Lincoln’s Inn, who contributed generously to the building of both the library and the

chapel, for which generosity he was excused the duty of performing readings—a rare privilege.

Though of less interest to the non-Welsh readers of this Journal, Griffith's chapters on 'University Learning', 'Religion and Ideology', 'The Welsh Church' and 'The relation between higher education and Welsh culture and public administration' are all well worth reading. More directly to the taste of lawyers will be an excellent survey of 'The Welsh legal profession' [*sic* the contents page; the chapter is headed 'Wales and the legal profession', a wider brief]. There is a useful introduction to the courts of Great Sessions and the court of the Council of the Marches,¹ while a section on Welsh civil lawyers reveals fascinating material on Doctors' Commons, beloved of the ELS, and the Court of the Arches—equally beloved, it is hoped. No less than four Welshmen advanced from advocacy in the latter court to its deanery—Richard Gwent, Griffith Leyson, Richard Trevor and Thomas Yale. The tradition lives on!

Perhaps it is inevitable that Griffith's final chapter, 'Conclusion and Epilogue', should be the least satisfying. It is not that he has been unable to handle the enormous mass of evidence so painstakingly unearthed, though at times it is near-indigestible, at least to your reviewer; it is rather that so many questions arise (some are raised by the author himself) to which answers are not (cannot be?) given. Why is there such a preponderance of north Wales over south Wales students in the three centres of higher learning? How, if at all, does this relate to the seemingly anomalous fact that it was the north, rather than the south, with the exception of Dyfed, which had the larger proportion of monoglot Welsh speakers? Why did this not militate against their taking up an English education? How did the trend, still with us, of Welsh students in England staying there after completion of their studies, contribute to the 'new' Wales? And when, most fervently, may we expect Griffith's next offering in acceptance of the thesis stated in his final sentence—'. . . while the Welsh experience in higher learning, law and religion after 1660 bore some similarities with that found before 1640, it also proceeded out of different arrangements and under different rhythms which deserve their own detailed examination'?

¹To Griffith's own footnote on the Welsh Marches has recently been added a useful article (in English!) on the term itself—'The March of Wales: A Question of Terminology', *The Welsh History Review/Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru*, Vol. 18, June 1996, No. 1, pp. 1–13.

A HANDBOOK FOR CHURCHWARDENS AND PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILLORS, KENNETH M. MACMORRAN and TIMOTHY J. BRIDEN, 1996 edition, Mowbray, London, x+148 pp. (paperback £8.99) ISBN 0 264 67411 1.

A Review by James Behrens

This is a new edition of a book first published in 1921, the previous edition being that of 1989. The new edition reflects changes in the law since 1989, in particular those brought about by recent Measures, including the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991, which gives churchwardens new responsibilities, the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993, which allows parishes a choice to opt out, or to opt back in again, the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) (Amendment) Measure 1993, the Team and Group Ministries Measure 1995, and the Church Representation Rules, which have undergone extensive revision and new numbering.

The overall structure of the book has not changed from the 1989 edition. The chapter titles are: the constitution of the church, the courts of the church, faculties, the parish, the parochial clergy, the patron and patronage, the office of churchwarden,