

O'Hedian, Richard (Risdeárd Ó hÉidigheáin)

by Emmett O'Byrne

O'Hedian, Richard (Risdeárd Ó hÉidigheáin) (d. 1440), archbishop of Cashel, belonged to a prominent ecclesiastical family. He seems to have served as archdeacon of Cashel before 1406. Sometime before 6 April 1406 he was appointed by Pope Innocent VII to the archbishopric of Cashel, vacant by the death (c.1405) of its previous incumbent, Peter Hackett. Two months later (a.17 June) Richard was consecrated as archbishop of Cashel, but was instructed by Pope Gregory XII in March 1407 to send him his sealed oath of loyalty. In return Gregory acceded to Richard's request that he be granted his pallium, giving it to the archbishop's envoy at Rome, John Bury. In 1413 William Meyler, clerk of the diocese of Cloyne, complained to Rome that that the archbishop had deprived him of his office of precentor of Cloyne; this resulted in Meyler's restoration. During 1414–15 Richard removed John Carrat as vicar of Kinsale, Co. Cork, installing Richard Pellyne in his place. However, Carrat defied Richard's authority and denied Pellyne access to the vicarage, prompting papal intervention in support of the archbishop. The most remembered event of Richard's career occurred in the parliamentary sessions of 1421 before James Butler (qv) (d. 1452), 4th earl of Ormond and justiciar of Ireland. There the bishop of Waterford and Lismore (John Geese, an English Carmelite) presented a series of charges against him, accusing him of hating the English and of loving the Irish. He was also accused of never appointing Englishmen to positions within his province; of counterfeiting the king's seal and letters patent; of wishing to make himself king of Munster; and of giving a ring (belonging to a statue of St Patrick) to his own concubine. In the event, these charges did not adversely affect his career. O'Hedian's political adherence to the Butlers was further shown by his attendance as archbishop of Cashel when Ormond issued a series of ordinances at Fethard, Co. Tipperary, between 1428 and 1433, concerning the governance of the Butler lordship in Kilkenny and Tipperary. O'Hedian also formed close personal bonds with Ormond, fostering the earl's nephew and later deputy, Edmund MacRichard Butler (qv).

As before, O'Hedian as archbishop after 1421 found it difficult to have his authority recognised. On the death (1431) of Eugenius O'Falen (Ó Faoláin), bishop of Killaloe, O'Hedian and his suffragan elected James O'Lonergan (Séamus Ó Lonnghargáin) as his successor; but the nobility of Thomond, led by the O'Briens, thwarted his efforts by supporting Thady MacGrath (Thaddaeus Mág Raith) as bishop of Killaloe, resulting in appeals to Rome in 1439. The controversial O'Hedian died on 21 July 1440 and was succeeded by John Cantwell (qv), archdeacon of Ossory.

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*Cal. pap. letters, 1404–15*, 83, 105, 106, 174; 1431–1447, 51; Anne and William O'Sullivan, 'Three notes on Laud Misc. 610', *Celtica*, ix (1971), 137–8; C. A. Empey and Katharine Simms, 'The ordinances of the White Earl and the problem of coign in the middle ages', *RIA Proc.*, lxxv C (1975), 185–6; *NHI*, ix, 291; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *A history of medieval Ireland* (1993 ed.), 361

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