

Payne, John

by David Beresford

Payne, John (c.1430–1507), bishop of Meath and master of the rolls, was an Anglo-Irish Dominican who studied theology at Oxford, where his doctorate in theology was incorporated in 1473. Elected as the prior of the English province of his order (27 March 1474), he was provided to the diocese of Meath (17 March 1483), received the temporalities (16 July), and was consecrated (a. 4 August). Payne was an active supporter of the house of York and openly supported the pretender Lambert Simnel (qv). He attended Simnel's coronation as 'Edward VI', and preached the sermon. Threatened with excommunication for his support, he was pardoned in 1488 after he contrived to be the first person to meet the king's messenger Sir Richard Edgecombe, who landed at Malahide on 5 July 1488. He was chosen by Edgecombe to proclaim the king's pardon for those who returned to obedience, and acted as a messenger between Edgecombe and Gerald FitzGerald (qv), 8th earl of Kildare. He acted as one of the arbiters of conflicting claims to the see of Clogher in 1489. Payne's relations with his metropolitan, Octavian de Palatio (qv), archbishop of Armagh, were strained, and at a provincial council in 1492 he openly accused Octavian of tyranny and was condemned by the archbishop for disobedience. Payne did not support the pretender Perkin Warbeck (qv), but was forced to give pledges for his good behaviour. By 1496 he had fallen out with Kildare and had travelled to England, where he is said to have told the king that 'all Ireland could not rule that man [Kildare]'. He soon came to terms with Kildare and served as master of the rolls from October 1496 to his death on 6 May 1507. He was buried at St Saviour's, Dublin.

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*Cal. Carew MSS; Bk Howth; Cotton, Fasti; Ball, Judges; Gwynn, Med. province Armagh; A. B. Emden, Biographical register of the university of Oxford to A.D. 1500 (3 vols, 1957–9)*