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Anthony Kitchin, the 1559 Settlement of Religion, and the Ambiguities of Early Elizabethan Church Politics

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Abstract

Anthony Kitchin, the bishop of Llandaff between 1545 and 1563, is traditionally seen as a self-serving careerist, an unprincipled hypocrite, and a pastoral failure. He was one of only two Marian Catholic bishops to serve under Elizabeth I, and Eamon Duffy memorably jests that he 'would doubtless have become a Hindu if required, providing he was allowed to hold on to the see of Llandaff'. But re-evaluating Kitchin's career uncovers a man with a consistent stance that was not unusual amongst his peers, and reveals that the Elizabethan government retained serious hopes of bringing numerous Marian bishops, not just Kitchin, into conformity. Still more striking, while Kitchin has been reviled as a hypocrite for swearing the 1559 oath of supremacy, there is persuasive evidence that he did not in fact swear that oath, keeping his see only through a contingent and awkward compromise with the Elizabethan state, and that the details of this compromise were conveniently forgotten, perhaps even deliberately suppressed. Re-evaluating Kitchin significantly advances our understanding of the period by contributing to the extensive and developing historiography on Catholic conscience and loyalty to the crown, helping problematize binary distinctions between zealous Catholic resistance and craven conformity.

Anthony Kitchin, who served as bishop of Llandaff from 1545 to his death in 1563, kept his see during the reigns of four monarchs whose religious policies ran the gamut from zealous Protestantism (Edward VI) to Counter-Reformation Catholicism (Mary I). His decision to continue serving under Elizabeth I put him at odds with almost all his peers within the Marian episcopacy, and contributed to an historical view of Kitchin as a careerist, a timeserver, and a rank hypocrite. Kitchin was one of only two out of nineteen English and Welsh bishops in position when Elizabeth acceded to the throne who continued in office. Of the seventeen who were removed, many faced imprisonment, and

eleven died in custody.[1] For their sacrifice, they were mythologized as part of the English Catholic tradition as exemplars of faith and courage. They are commemorated by a plaque in the church of the English College in Rome as having 'died for their confession of the Roman see and Catholic faith, worn out by the miseries of their long imprisonment'.[2] Apart from Kitchin, the only other exception was Thomas Stanley, the elderly bishop of Sodor and Man, who is referenced in a letter to Matthew Parker as an indolent absentee who 'lies here at ease and as merry as Pope Joan'.[3] Kitchin, who has left behind no writings at all, let alone any attempt to justify his decisions in 1559, has usually been bracketed with Stanley, as a mere turncoat. John Gwynfor Jones accused him of an 'almost total subservience to the crown'.[4] Diarmaid MacCulloch called him 'embarrassingly undistinguished' and described his conformity to the Elizabethan settlement as more burden than boon for the queen.[5] Most scathingly of all, Eamon Duffy dismissed Kitchin as a 'classic timeserver, who would doubtless have become a Hindu if required, providing he was allowed to hold on to the see of Llandaff'.[6]

These judgements of Kitchin have two things in common. First, they barely discuss Kitchin's actual career and dismiss him as an uninteresting sidenote and an idiosyncratic exception to the general rule – that the former Marian bishops demonstrated a solid phalanx of opposition to Elizabethan religious reform. Second, they assume that, to have kept his see under Elizabeth, Kitchin must have sworn the 1559 oath of supremacy. This required him to testify that 'no foreign prince, person, prelate, state or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority ecclesiastical or spiritual within this realm',[7] thus decisively repudiating the oath of allegiance he had sworn to the pope a few years earlier. Even Madeleine Grey, who has offered a limited 'rehabilitation' of Kitchin in her 1995 article 'The cloister and the hearth', does not seriously question that Kitchin swore the oath of supremacy.[8]

This article re-evaluates the evidence for that claim. It illustrates how Kitchin's decisions placed him in a challenging position at the start of Elizabeth's reign, and suggests that there are reasons to believe that Kitchin

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[1] G. E. Phillips, *The extinction of the ancient hierarchy: an account of the death in prison of the eleven bishops honoured at Rome amongst the martyrs of the Elizabethan persecution: archbishop Heath of York, Bishops Tunstall, Bonner, and companions* (London, 1905), p. 415.

[2] G. E. Phillips, 'Gilbert Bourne', in C. Herbermann, ed., *Catholic encyclopedia*, II (New York, NY, 1913).

[3] James Pilkington to Matthew Parker, 1564 (precise date unknown), in J. Bruce and T. T. Perowne, eds., *Correspondence of Matthew Parker, D.D., archbishop of Canterbury* (Cambridge, 1853), pp. 222–3.

[4] J. Gwynfor Jones, 'The Reformation bishops of Llandaff, 1558–1601', *Morgannwg*, 32 (1988), pp. 38–9.

[5] D. MacCulloch, *The later Reformation in England, 1547–1603* (2nd edn, Basingstoke, 2001), p. 27.

[6] E. Duffy, *Fires of faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (London, 2009), p. 23.

[7] Original text of the Elizabethan oath of supremacy, 1559. See J. Raithby, ed., *The statutes of the realm*, IV, Part 1 (London, 1819), pp. 350–5.

[8] M. Grey, 'The cloister and the hearth: Anthony Kitchin and Hugh Jones, two Reformation bishops of Llandaff', *Journal of Welsh Religious History*, 3 (1995), pp. 15–34.

did *not* in fact swear the oath. Instead, he kept his see only through a compromise struck with the government for specific political reasons – namely, that Kitchin was involved in the consecration of Matthew Parker, and perhaps that of several other Elizabethan bishops. It also appears that the exact details of this compromise were later conveniently forgotten, as it became a political liability for it to be widely known that the validity of the English episcopacy depended on a figure of such suspect loyalties.

Although the evidence of Kitchin's career is sparse, and he has thus understandably been treated as marginal to the narrative of the early Elizabethan church, this study has unearthed numerous fresh insights, which make important contributions to the historiography of confessionalization and religious hypocrisy in early modern England. This work is situated within the wider recent scholarship on issues of Catholic conformity, conscience, and divided loyalties between crown and church. This has begun to problematize the binary distinction too often made between unprincipled careerists and zealous defenders of the faith. Michael Questier's work on Elizabethan and Jacobean Catholicism has uncovered how an attitude of apparent conformity could conceal opposition behind the scenes, to the extent that Protestants came to regard popery as especially threatening precisely because of its 'malleability, its capacity to adapt, and its readiness to integrate'.[9] Even after 1570, when Elizabeth was excommunicated, it was by no means clear that fervent opposition to her was required of all Catholic believers. Stefania Tutino has delved into the historiography of Catholic oath-making, equivocation, and dissimulation to try to elucidate the 'mental world' of Elizabethan Catholics. Her work demonstrated that the intersections between religious belief and national loyalty were not always simple, and that creative strategies existed by which believers could continue to conceptualize themselves as both loyal and Catholic.[10]

Kitchin's unique career offers a fresh lens into these wider conflicts – between spiritual and temporal authority, and within the hearts and minds of individuals trying to reconcile their allegiance to God with their responsibilities to their sovereign. We can see that Kitchin belonged to a kind of 'middle grouping' within the English episcopacy, neither overtly zealous nor slavishly conformist, willing to accommodate change but possessing clear 'red lines'. Numerous clergymen, whose reputations, unlike Kitchin's, have stood the test of time, made remarkably similar compromises. Indeed, the fact that Kitchin's posthumous reputation diverged so widely from others whose decisions were so similar is an example of the power of historical memory. This contributes to a growing understanding that the Reformation was not a unitary moment of disruption but a lengthy, fractious, ongoing struggle to refashion narratives and impose the ideologies of subsequent decades onto the past.[11] Untangling the

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[9] M. Questier, 'The politics of religious conformity and the accession of James I', *Historical Research*, 71 (1998), p. 30.

[10] S. Tutino, *Law and conscience: Catholicism in early modern England, 1570–1625* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 223.

[11] A. Walsham, B. Wallace, C. Law, and B. Cummings, eds., *Memory and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2020), p. 45.

nuances of the 1559 compromise can aid our understanding of the transition from Marian to Elizabethan church, revealing the shifting and protean nature of confessional positions. Above all, it underlines that the character of the 1559 settlement was not set in stone, and that upon Elizabeth's accession to the throne there were many possible 'Elizabethan reformations'. A world in which former Marian bishops remained in their positions and had extensive influence on the church was not only plausible, but may even have seemed the likeliest outcome.

I

Anthony Kitchin was a Benedictine monk, educated at Gloucester College, Oxford.[12] He was a late entrant to religious life, entering Westminster Abbey in 1511. He seems only to have celebrated his first mass in 1517, aged forty.[13] He was elected prior of his college before leaving to become abbot of Eynsham, a village in north Oxfordshire, in the early 1530s, during which time he was accused of peripheral involvement in the Pilgrimage of Grace.[14] This accusation was founded on hearsay, and it is hard to judge its veracity in the face of wildly differing testimonies. Nevertheless, it would certainly fit the character of a religious conservative disquieted by growing attacks on the monastic way of life, with which, as a 'child of the cloister', he probably closely identified.

Kitchin was seventy-four, already long past the average retirement age, when he was elevated to the see of Llandaff. John Strype, the Protestant curate and chronicler, recorded Kitchin's oath to Henry VIII in 1545:

> I, Anthony Kitchin, Elect Bishop of Landaff, *having now the Vale of Darkness of the Usurped Power, Authority and Jurisdiction of the See and Bishop of Rome, clearly taken away from mine Eyes*, do utterly testify and declare in my Heart, that neither the See, nor the Bishop of Rome, nor any Foreign Potestate hath, or ought to have, &c. as before.[15]

This oath was nearly identical to those sworn by all English bishops to affirm the royal supremacy under Henry. The wording is firm and insistent, accusing the papacy of representing a 'vale of darkness' usurping temporal and spiritual power in England. Additionally, in the late 1540s, Kitchin served on the royal commission to survey the chantries in south Wales, leading up to their final dissolution.[16] Whatever conservative sympathies he previously possessed,

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[12] Now Worcester College.

[13] These biographical notes on Kitchin's early career are taken from Grey, 'The cloister and the hearth', p. 16.

[14] J. Gairdner, ed., *Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, Henry VIII*, XII, Part 1: *January–May 1537* (London, 1890), no. 182.

[15] J. Strype, *Memorials of the most reverend father in God, Thomas Cranmer sometime lord archbishop of Canterbury*, I (London, 1694), p. 138. Emphasis mine.

[16] 'Commissions for the survey of chantries', in J. Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, eds., *Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, Henry VIII*, XXI, Part 1: *January–August 1546* (London, 1908), p. 146.

Kitchin was now actively participating in the government's agenda to dissolve Catholic institutions. A few years later, he performed another apparent volte-face, and enthusiastically took part in the Marian Counter-Reformation, serving on two committees to investigate clerics suspected of Protestant dissent.[17]

This all ostensibly vindicates Kitchin's modern critics, who have dismissed him as a slippery and inconstant careerist. Indeed, some of his contemporaries seem to have viewed him similarly, particularly those Catholics who felt betrayed by his decision to break ranks and agree to serve under Elizabeth I. The Spanish ambassador to England, Álvaro de la Quadra, dismissed Kitchin as a 'greedy old man of little learning'.[18] The Catholic polemicist Nicholas Sanders was keen to disavow Kitchin and emphasize that his conformity did not reflect badly on the cohesion of the Catholic episcopacy. Sanders claimed that John White, the Marian bishop of Winchester, believed Kitchin was 'touched in the head', simply too senile to appreciate how his side-changing had damaged the appearance of English Catholic solidarity against the royal supremacy.[19]

But a scathing judgement of Kitchin based on such scanty evidence is over-hasty. Of all the Marian bishops, he was far from alone in choosing the path of conformity in Henry's and Edward's reigns, merely the only one to continue this policy under Elizabeth. Numerous bishops with Catholic sympathies also found ways to continue serving under these kings, reconciling changes to doctrine, and the imperative to swear to the royal supremacy, with their personal consciences. These bishops gained influence during the conservative reaction towards the end of Henry's reign, as Alec Ryrie has explored. This was a period dominated by ideological caution and a strengthening reluctance to acquiesce to rapid change.[20] A growing traditionalist party, led by Edmund Bonner, was concerned about the spread of sacramentarian heresies, and by the end of Henry's reign, numerous bishops were openly taking a traditionalist line. Important examples were Nicholas Heath (later archbishop of York, then bishop of Worcester) and George Day (bishop of Chichester). According to Thomas Cranmer's secretary Ralph Morice, both men had 'revolted' to the conservative faction after Thomas Cromwell's death, even though Cromwell had promoted them, and Cranmer had assumed them 'to be his friends'. For many young idealists initially captivated by grand reformist promises, the realities of holding episcopal office tempered their youthful zealotry. Heath, for example, wrote to the queen that his experience as a bishop had taught him that 'great mischief' customarily accrued to any initiative, however well meaning, for religious change.[21]

In Lacey Baldwin Smith's estimation, at the beginning of Edward VI's reign there were twelve 'conservatives' amongst the English episcopacy, along with seven reformists and seven whose religious affiliations were indeterminate

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[17] *Calendar of patent rolls; Philip and Mary*, I (London, 1937), p. 175.

[18] M. A. S. Hume, ed., *Calendar of state papers, Spain (Simancas)*, I: *1558–1567* (London, 1892), p. 86.

[19] Vatican archives, Arm. lxiv, vol. 28, fo. 252.

[20] A. Ryrie, *The gospel and Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 214.

[21] Ibid., pp. 219–20.

(into which category Smith places Kitchin).[22] So, twelve Henrician bishops continued to serve under Edward despite possessing conservative sympathies. Most of them are listed alongside Kitchin in the aforementioned list of bishops who served on the chantry commissions, including Cuthbert Tunstall in Durham, Stephen Gardiner in Winchester, George Day in Chichester, John Capon (sometimes given as John Salcot) in Salisbury, and Robert King in Oxford. Tunstall, Gardiner, and Day were all deprived of office during Edward's reign, as efforts at Protestant reform intensified and they chose to oppose anti-Catholic doctrinal and liturgical change. Capon and King, however, like Kitchin, kept their sees throughout this period, choosing not to speak out, and nevertheless almost immediately reverted to Catholicism under Mary. Both men passed away in 1557, still in office. One might be forgiven for wondering whether, had they lived a couple more years, they would have taken the same course as Kitchin, finding a way to square their consciences with the new queen and her settlement of religion.

In this context, the list of bishops who served on the chantry commissions – which Thomas used as evidence of Kitchin's ever-shifting sympathies and unprincipled duplicity – takes on a different complexion.[23] Perhaps it instead indicates just how many bishops, including those such as Gardiner who became mainstays of the Marian Counter-Reformation, were willing to shelve their misgivings when loyalty to their sovereign was at stake and when confessional positions were not yet set in stone. Fred Smith has noted a similar process in his study of Catholic exiles from Tudor England. He discusses how numerous émigrés fled the country suddenly, after having tolerated change in the more ambiguous years of the early Reformation. John Story was commended by the Henrician and early Edwardian governments for his exemplary loyalty to the crown, and paid for official services by the privy council as late as 1548. It was only with the introduction of the Edwardian prayer book that a line was definitively crossed, and he fled to Louvain in 1549.[24] A picture emerges, then, of Kitchin less as a uniquely hypocritical timeserver than as the last of a dying breed. He represented a loyalist mentality within the church – clerics who enthusiastically accepted the Marian Counter-Reformation, who were uneasy with changes wrought by Henrician and Edwardian reformers, but who were willing to make compromises (some more than others).

II

Was Kitchin distinctive only in that he served so long, after his fellow conformists had retired or passed away? Not entirely. There *are* certain respects in which Kitchin genuinely stands out amongst the Marian bishops. First, there is a complaint made in 1548, upon Edward VI's accession, in the Star Chamber, by a Robert Davies against Kitchin's chancellor, William Evans.

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[22] L. B. Smith, *Tudor prelates and politics: 1536–1558* (Princeton, NJ, 1953), pp. 305–7.

[23] L. Thomas, *The Reformation in the old diocese of Llandaff* (Cardiff, 1903), p. 82.

[24] F. Smith, *Transnational Catholicism in Tudor England: mobility, exile, and Counter-Reformation, 1530–1580* (New York, NY, 2022), p. 113.

Davies complained that Kitchin had evaded the official requirement that English and Welsh bishops should seek a royal licence to set out the terms under which they might exercise jurisdiction.[25] Kitchin was perhaps aided in this by the geographical and cultural isolation of the Welsh church, as well as, interestingly, by the fact that Llandaff – the most populous Welsh diocese – seems to have been regarded as a kind of unofficial archbishopric, with archiepiscopal jurisdiction over the other three Welsh dioceses. Matthew Parker certainly regarded Llandaff in this light upon Kitchin's death, referring to Kitchin's successor, Hugh Jones, as archbishop of Llandaff.[26] In practice, this possibly gave Kitchin leeway to operate as if he were not really subject to the wider jurisdiction of Canterbury. The Star Chamber accusation indicates that Kitchin's critics believed that he was trying to evade direct oversight, giving himself flexibility to make his own decisions and disregard authority. There is perhaps some evidence that Kitchin was successful in stalling the progress of the Reformation in Llandaff, although it is hard to know how much to attribute to his personal efforts and how much to the diocese's cultural isolation. The visitation articles of 1559 for the Llandaff diocese show an unusual preoccupation with drawing up inventories of 'vestments and ornaments, jewels, plate and other moveable goods', and (in a clause unique to Llandaff, found nowhere else in English or Welsh visitation articles from that year) a full declaration to be made of all assets held by the cathedral and their monetary value.[27] This may indicate that the commissioners believed that items they considered idolatrous or popish were still in common use, lending weight to the idea that Kitchin had slowed the progress of change.

Second, unlike his conservative peers, Kitchin failed to seek confirmation of his position from the papal legate, Cardinal Reginald Pole, upon Mary I's accession. Although a letter from Pole to Kitchin, offering him absolution from the sin of schism under Edward VI, does exist, this was merely the general form of absolution offered to all the Edwardian bishops.[28] Unlike Capon and King, there is no evidence that Kitchin ever accepted the offer, and a contemporary account testifies that he did not.[29] Indeed, this led to debate in Catholic circles as to whether he could justly still be accounted a bishop at all, having never

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[25] The National Archives, STAC 3/6/54. Note that this document is calendared by The National Archives as dating from 1546, but this makes no sense, as the text explicitly refers to the accession of Edward VI and the issuing of the proclamation requiring bishops to seek a new royal licence.

[26] See W. H. Frere and E. M. Thompson, eds., *Registrum Matthei Parker, Diocesis Cantuariensis A.D. 1559–1575* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 119–22. Regarding Llandaff as an archbishopric is a lengthy and well-attested tradition, not just an isolated mention from Parker: nearly two centuries later, Daniel Defoe makes a passing reference to Llandaff as the archdiocese of Wales during his tour of Welsh counties. See D. Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain: divided into circuits or journeys*, III (London, 1742), p. 453.

[27] National Library of Wales, LLCh/495.

[28] T. F. Mayer, ed., *The correspondence of Reginald Pole*, III (Burlington, VT, 2004), no. 1042 (Pole to Anthony Kitchin, bishop of Llandaff, 26 Jan. 1555).

[29] S. J. Weinreich, ed., *Pedro de Ribadeneyra's 'Ecclesiastical history of the schism of the Kingdom of England': a Spanish Jesuit's history of the English Reformation* (Leiden, 2017), p. 393.

sought absolution from the Apostolic See.[30] Perhaps Kitchin simply did not consider himself a schismatic, and thus, unlike, for example, Tunstall, who had felt deep unease and anxiety surrounding his earlier conformity, he did not believe repentance was necessary. Speculating on his motives is, of course, challenging given the limited evidence. Nevertheless, Kitchin's geographical position in Wales perhaps isolated him from some of the confessionalizing impulses of the Marian Counter-Reformation, making him less keen to pursue a zealous stand. He could justly have argued that he had protected his diocese as much as possible from disruptive change, that he had ensured continuity for his parishioners, and that the decision to compromise had shielded his diocese from a radically Protestant successor. This was a prescient point, given that his eventual replacement in 1566 was Hugh Jones, whom Edmund Grindal considered a zealous Protestant.[31]

Kitchin's decision not to seek absolution for schism arguably hints at a flexible ideological attitude towards the compromises he was asked to make between church and state: he believed that swearing the royal supremacy under Edward had not compromised his fidelity to the Catholic church. Of course, Kitchin was clearly at peace with the Marian Counter-Reformation, and was willing, perhaps enthusiastic, to enforce its edicts. In March 1554, he was appointed to two commissions to investigate abuses amongst the episcopacy: one to investigate bishops suspected of heresy, and one to decide the policy towards bishops who had married during Edward VI's reign.[32] But in his own diocese, he chose a quieter approach – prioritizing keeping the peace, rather than insisting on a dogmatic and inflexible conformity to edicts from above. This, for him, was the best way of discharging his pastoral duties in divided times.

Such an attitude can be seen in Kitchin's treatment of Rawlins White, the only Marian martyr burnt in the diocese of Llandaff. John Foxe describes White as a Cardiff fisherman, inspired by the Protestant gospel, who taught himself to memorize scripture, and preached the word as a 'notable and open professor of the truth' until 'taken by the officers of the town as a man suspected of heresy' in 1554.[33] Foxe reports that the gaolers held White in remarkably loose captivity. Indeed, he might have escaped 'nine times' if so inclined. He was then kept in Cardiff Castle for a year, but again the confinement was loosely enforced. White held prayer meetings 'on the Sundays and other times of leisure, when his friends came to visit him'. Apparently, Kitchin turned a blind eye to White's Protestant co-religionists visiting him in prison and deriving spiritual consolation from his teachings – a singularly lenient attitude towards an obdurate heretic. When White remained obstinate, Kitchin acknowledged that he might be forced to proceed against him as a heretic, but suggested first that they pray together that the Holy Spirit might

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[30] State papers from the Vatican archives, Arm. lxiv, vol. 28, fos. 252–74. Extracts printed in Thomas, *The Reformation in the old diocese of Llandaff*, pp. 83–4.
[31] Grey, 'The cloister and the hearth', p. 23.
[32] *Calendar of patent rolls; Philip and Mary*, I, p. 175.
[33] G. Williams, ed., *Glamorgan county history*, IV: *Early modern Glamorgan* (Cardiff, 1974), pp. 220–1.

'send some spark of grace upon him [i.e. White]', in the hope that White's heart might inwardly be softened to repent of his error. At this point, Foxe relates a touching scene. White, moved by Kitchin's sincere and charitable commitment to allowing him so many opportunities to retreat from a course that would result in his martyrdom, spoke kindly of Kitchin, while nonetheless standing firm:

> Ah my Lord...*now you deal well and like a godly bishop, and I thank you most heartily for your great charity and gentleness.* Now if it be so that your request be godly and lawful...without doubt God will hear you. And therefore my Lord go to, do you pray to your God, and I will pray to my God.[34]

Kitchin's profound reluctance to put a heretic to death is striking. His attitude could hardly contrast more with, for example, Edmund Bonner, especially since White was evidently intransigent and opinionated, and likely determined to die a martyr's death come what may.

This conciliatory approach, prioritizing pastoral care over forcefully extirpating the spread of heresy, and going to great lengths to save obstinate individuals from the pyre, at first seems quite unusual within the febrile atmosphere of the Marian persecutions. But arguably, Kitchin's attitude was not so atypical considered in a larger context. Duffy argues in *Fires of faith* that conciliation and punishment were two points on the same spectrum, both methods by which the authorities sought to reconcile the wayward to the truth.[35] It made sense for a bishop to have deep concern for the spiritual well-being of someone he was also considering sending to their death. As Craig D'Alton has discussed, in Henry VIII's early reign the methods used to suppress initial stirrings of Lutheran heresy were diverse, often prioritizing Kitchin's softer approach. D'Alton borrows a distinction made by Larissa Taylor between the *potestas* approach, approaching heresy with quick and robust punishment, and the *caritas* approach, seeking to meet those tempted by heresy with understanding and care, to engage in disputations with them, to allow them space to discuss their doubts, and to aim towards their full reconciliation with the church.[36] The *caritas* approach characterized Cardinal Wolsey's early response to Lutherans within academia, holding that heretics ought to be dealt with behind closed doors. This policy had obvious appeal to the church and the universities, who were reluctant to condemn intelligent students for youthful flirtations with forbidden ideas.[37] Kitchin, having begun his career in a university setting, was likely well acquainted with these gentler strategies. Perhaps this mindset had resonated with him as the ideal way to balance discipline with charity.

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[34] J. Foxe, *Actes and monuments of these latter and perillous days* (London, 1570 edn), book 11, pp. 1764–5. Accessed from the unabridged Acts and Monuments online (Sheffield, 2011). Emphasis mine.

[35] Duffy, *Fires of faith*, pp. 79–102.

[36] L. Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: preaching in late medieval and Reformation France* (New York, NY, and Oxford, 1992), pp. 212–15.

[37] C. W. D'Alton, 'The suppression of Lutheran heretics in England, 1526–1529', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 54 (2003), pp. 230–1.

III

We can now return to Kitchin's apparent acquiescence to the 1559 oath of supremacy and view it in a new light. We have seen that in 1545, Kitchin swore an oath to Henry VIII requiring him to make an even firmer denunciation of papal authority than in 1559. There were numerous men amongst the Henrician and Edwardian episcopacy who, while holding essentially Catholic beliefs, were willing to compromise with the Protestant church settlement to retain their positions. This is where Kitchin's case-study touches on wider questions of conformity and conscience. Perhaps the question is not why Kitchin struck a compromise allowing him to conform, but why men such as Cuthbert Tunstall and Nicholas Heath chose *not* to follow in Kitchin's footsteps.

Indeed, there is evidence that the Elizabethan government thought about this problem in a similar way. They hoped to win the conformity of numerous bishops, and the fact that only Kitchin acquiesced probably came as a surprise. The Elizabethan settlement of religion was heavily dependent on clerics who had not gone into exile under Mary I, who were considered generally more amenable to Elizabeth's programme of cautious, incremental reform.[38] Zealous Protestants often considered the loyalties of those who stayed dubious compared to the brave souls who chose exile,[39] but this did not stop the queen choosing Matthew Parker, who stayed in England throughout the 1550s, as her first archbishop of Canterbury. Indeed, as Andrew Pettegree has explored, William Cecil, Elizabeth's loyal lieutenant, remained quietly in the country throughout Mary's reign, and even represented the government in some minor diplomatic engagements abroad, which Pettegree suspects were subtle tests of his loyalty.[40] Elizabeth and Cecil likely hoped to carve out a place within the church for Marian bishops willing to reconcile themselves to their duties to crown and country.

Previous scholars have been too willing to accept uncritically the testimonies of contemporaries that the Marian bishops were overwhelmingly and implacably opposed to the Elizabethan settlement. For example, la Quadra insisted that Elizabeth's policy held that the bishops should 'be all deprived at one blow'; and John Parkhurst, the zealously Protestant bishop of Norwich, wrote to Henry Bullinger that the Marian bishops were imminently about to be suspended *en masse*, and quipped darkly that they were 'worthy of being suspended: not only from their office, but from a halter'.[41] But a document in Cecil's handwriting, preserved in the Elizabethan state papers, shows a very different policy. Cecil made two separate lists of dioceses – one of sixteen dioceses with twenty-three potential candidates to become bishops, and a second list of ten dioceses, for eight of which the

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[38] A. Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism: six studies* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 89–91.

[39] J. Wright, 'Marian exiles and the legitimacy of flight from persecution', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 52 (2001), p. 241.

[40] Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism: six studies*, pp. 104–5.

[41] John Parkhurst to Henry Bullinger, 21 May 1559, in H. Robinson, ed., *The Zurich letters* (Cambridge, 1842), pp. 29–30.

incumbent Marian bishop was listed with no prospective replacement. These eight were Kitchin, along with Cuthbert Tunstall in Durham, Gilbert Bourne in Bath and Wells, Henry Morgan of St David's, David Pole of Peterborough, Thomas Thirlby of Ely, James Turberville of Exeter, and, perhaps most strikingly, Nicholas Heath, archbishop of York.[42] These eight bishops were deprived of their sees several weeks, or sometimes even months, later than their colleagues.[43] The government clearly recognized the existence of a category of less zealous clerics who could potentially be persuaded, however reluctantly, into conformity. Furthermore, they considered it both possible and desirable that several of these prelates should retain their sees – judging that because they had been willing to leave the Roman church in the Henrician and Edwardian reigns, they might do so again.

The bishops, of course, generally had other ideas. But significantly, when Kitchin's fellow bishops presented a strong front of parliamentary opposition to the Reformation, in almost every case, Kitchin joined them. On 4 February 1559, when the 'Bill for the restoration of the first fruits' (which reserved ecclesiastical rents to the crown) was read in the House of Lords, Kitchin was one of eight bishops who voted against it.[44] In explicitly dissenting from this bill, he went further than others on Cecil's list of eight. While Heath joined his dissent, Tunstall, Poole, and Bourne were all absent from parliament for these debates, excused from attending by the queen.[45] Perhaps these three men wanted not yet to commit themselves to an explicit and dangerous opposition to the Elizabethan programme of reform, until the eventual shape of the church settlement was firmly set in stone and it became clear whether any form of compromise were possible. A casual observer might have thought that if any of Cecil's 'moderate' grouping would be brought to conformity, it would be one of these three men, with Kitchin a rather unlikelier candidate.

Kitchin's determined attitude towards making his concerns heard continued throughout the parliamentary sessions of March. On 27 February, the 'Bill for restoring of the supremacy of the imperial crown of this realm' over the church was introduced, and the debates ended on 18 March. Once more, Kitchin was among the dissenters. This time, the eight who had opposed the earlier bill were joined by a ninth dissenter, John White of Winchester.[46] So, Kitchin had explicitly opposed in parliament the bill that compelled him to swear the same oath of supremacy that he would later become so notorious for supposedly swearing.[47] Kitchin then spoke during the parliamentary debates on the 'Bill for the uniformity of common prayer', again voting against

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[42] The National Archives, SP 12/4/39.

[43] W. P. Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 41.

[44] S. d'Ewes, 'Journal of the House of Lords: February 1559', in S. d'Ewes, *The journals of all the parliaments during the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (Shannon, 1682), pp. 18–21, *British History Online*, www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/jrnl-parliament-eliz1.

[45] P. Marshall, *Heretics and believers: a history of the English Reformation* (New Haven, CT, 2017), p. 432.

[46] Ibid., pp. 21–6.

[47] Ibid., pp. 49–53.

it, alongside the same eight dissenters.[48] The eighty-eight-year-old Kitchin was taking a fairly active role in parliamentary debates for his age – quite unlike the caricature of him as a borderline senile careerist – and the apparent disparity between him and his peers turns out to be rather lesser than has been made out.

If the Marian bishops were initially all firmly opposed to the Elizabethan settlement in parliament, our next step is to consider when and why Kitchin became the weak link in the chain. On 15 May 1559, slightly more than a fortnight after these parliamentary sessions concluded, fourteen prelates were summoned to the queen's presence and ordered to take the oath of supremacy or lose their sees.[49] But this pressure, it appears, was not sufficient immediately to extract conformity from any of them, Kitchin included. On 20 June, la Quadra records that five bishops were summoned before the council and the oath of supremacy was tendered before each of them with 'great promises and threats', but they uniformly refused to swear.[50]

Although la Quadra does not list the identities of the five bishops, Henry Machyn's diary explicitly states on 21 June 1559 – the day after la Quadra's entry – that 'v bishops [were] deprived, the bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and the bishop of Carley,[51] the bishop of Westchester, *the bishop of Llandaff*, and the bishop of [illegible]'.[52] So, Machyn explicitly states that Kitchin was one of the five. Assuming he is correct, this is a significant challenge to the received wisdom that Kitchin kept his see after swearing the oath of supremacy. It implies he was, at least temporarily, deprived for *refusing* to swear that oath. This theory is further corroborated by reading between the lines of la Quadra's previously cited account of Kitchin as a 'greedy old man of little learning'. The context is that la Quadra had observed that Kitchin had been 'wearing a bishop's garb *again* lately' and that Catholic partisans consequently feared he might break ranks out of a self-serving desire to retain his position.[53] One must surely infer that he had recently *not* been dressing as a bishop, having initially stood firm in refusing to take the oath.

Once more, Kitchin looks less atypical in context – less the conniving hypocrite and more a representative of a consistent attitude within the episcopacy, of those who chose partial compromise to balance their principles with their fidelity to their queen, but who had firm red lines. But if the oath of supremacy, at least initially, *was* one of these red lines for Kitchin, how and why was he allowed to keep his see?

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[48] Ibid., pp. 53–5.

[49] Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation*, p. 37.

[50] Hume, ed., *Calendar of state papers, Spain (Simancas)*, I, pp. 78–81.

[51] I.e. Carlisle.

[52] 21 June 1559, in J. G. Nichols, ed., *The diary of Henry Machyn* (London, 1848), pp. 184–201. Emphasis mine.

[53] Hume, ed., *Calendar of state papers, Spain (Simancas)*, I, p. 86.

IV

An answer to the first part of the question – *how* – is provided by a much-neglected document in the Parker Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in a sixteenth-century manuscript collection of Matthew Parker's correspondence. It consists of an oath written in Parker's hand and signed by Kitchin, dated 18 July 1559, but its contents are quite different from the 1559 oath of supremacy. It reads as follows:

> Whereas the Queen's ma[jesty] of her bountiful grace tendering the quiet of my conscience hath *deferred the rendering of the oath of her Supremacy to my further consideration within myself* in the expending of God's learning, I do assure Her Grace by these presents subscribed by my hand that, as a true and faithful subject to her Authority, *I shall for my own power, cunning, and ability set forth in my own person and cause all other under my jurisdiction to accept and obey* the whole course of religion now approved in the state of Her Grace's Realm, and shall also require the said oath of others Receiving office ecclesiastical or temporal as in the statute thereof provided: In witness thereof I have subscribed with my own hand the xviii day of July in the first year of the Reign of the said Sovereign Lady Elizabeth Queen of England, France and Ireland, defender of the faith etc.
>
> ANTHONY LANDAFF.[54]

This document stands as a written pledge that Kitchin was excused from the duty of taking the oath of supremacy, as long as he would be willing to administer the oath to *others* receiving office in Llandaff. Kitchin states that his 'further consideration' was required as to whether he could reconcile the oath with his personal conscience. So he had not yet sworn it, and, indeed, there is no documentary proof that he ever did. We should also note that according to la Quadra, the crown had offered a similar deal to Nicholas Heath, proposing that he might retain his bishopric without swearing the oath of supremacy, and appointing a kind of locum to carry out tasks he could not square with his conscience.[55] This should make us more willing to accept that Kitchin might have been made a similar offer. Elizabeth and Cecil were more situationally flexible than has usually been assumed, again complicating conventional understandings of the Elizabethan settlement as a 'fresh start' in which the participation of Marian bishops was always unlikely.

Why did the government permit Kitchin to get away with this conditional affirmation, while his peers were deprived of their sees? The probable purpose for the government's flexibility presents itself in Reverend John Lamb's 1829 history of the Thirty-Nine Articles, perhaps the only secondary source to have appreciated that Kitchin almost certainly did not swear the oath of supremacy.

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[54] Parker Library MS 114B, pp. 509–10. Emphasis mine.
[55] Hume, ed., *Calendar of state papers, Spain (Simancas)*, I, p. 77.

Lamb reproduces, in abbreviated form, the text of Kitchin's oath of July 1559, and speculates on the motivations by suggesting that 'it appears so anxious was Her Majesty to retain at least one bishop, that she excused him from taking it on a written pledge'. But why might Elizabeth be so eager to retain a bishop? Lamb goes on to recount that, the day after the document from Kitchin is dated, Elizabeth signed the letters patent to the dean and chapter of Canterbury to begin the process of electing Matthew Parker as the new archbishop.[56] This is confirmed by the state papers, which list Parker as archbishop-elect of Canterbury, and Edmund Grindal as bishop-elect of London, on 19 July 1559.[57] The striking coincidence of these dates surely suggests that Elizabeth was waiting to secure conformity from at least one Marian bishop before she began preparing for Parker's consecration.

It seems likely, then, that the objective was to consecrate Parker in a ceremony recognized as canonically valid, both at home and abroad. To preserve the chain of apostolic succession, it was highly desirable for at least one – ideally more – of the currently serving Marian bishops to officiate at the archbishop's consecration. The Marian bishops could, without doubt, legally consecrate new bishops, and their canonical status was not in question. As Scott Wenig has discussed, many reformers scorned the importance of apostolic succession and hoped to make godly character and holding the correct Protestant opinions into the litmus tests for episcopal office. But the more zealous Protestant bishops met constant resistance in this from Elizabeth herself.[58] In the case of Parker, it seems that the queen would have much preferred the consecration to be above legal reproach.

There is other evidence implying that serving Marian bishops were originally intended to carry out Parker's consecration. The royal assent for the consecration has been lost, but Strype, in his *Life of Matthew Parker*, claims that he saw a draft version in the State Paper Office and that only one name appeared on the document – Cuthbert Tunstall's, in Parker's own handwriting.[59] Parker presumably hoped that Tunstall, an experienced and well-respected churchman and academic, could be cajoled to preside over the consecration. The idea that the government hoped for Tunstall's participation is confirmed by a copy of the royal assent sent in a letter from Sir Nicholas Bacon to Parker on 9 September 1559. This version of the document is addressed to four bishops: 'Cuthberto Dunelmensi, Epo.; Gilberto, Bathoniensi, Epo.; David, Burgi Sancti Petri, Epo.; Antonio Landavensi, Epo.'. Shortly after these four names, with a small gap, is listed 'Willielmo Barlo, Episcopo, et Johannes Scory, Episcopo'.[60] So, four Marian bishops are listed – Kitchin, Tunstall, Bourne, and Pole – all of whom were of unquestionable canonical status, having been consecrated using the Roman Pontifical in the Latin rite. Four was the

[56] J. Lamb, *An historical account of the Thirty-Nine Articles* (Oxford, 1829).

[57] 'Queen Elizabeth – volume 5: July 1559', in R. Lemon, ed., *Calendar of state papers domestic: Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, 1547–80* (London, 1856), pp. 133–5.

[58] S. A. Wenig, 'The ecclesiastical vision of the reformed bishops under Elizabeth I 1559–1570', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 70 (2001), pp. 270–1.

[59] J. Strype, *The life and acts of Matthew Parker*, I (London, 1711), p. 106.

[60] The National Archives, C 66/939.

usual number of bishops required for a consecration under statute law.[61] The original plan was evidently for all four to participate in the consecration. Barlow and Scory, however, were staunch evangelicals and reformers, and Scory had been consecrated in 1551 using the English Ordinal, which Catholics considered defective both in form and intention. It seems likely that Scory and Barlow had been added later as potential replacements for the four Marian bishops should (as did transpire) one or more of them refuse to participate. If the government could not secure the compliance of bishops with firm canonical status, it was determined to press forward anyway, using these Edwardian bishops and ignoring legal objections from opponents.

Most historians investigating Parker's consecration have concluded that this is exactly what happened. If the original plan was for Bourne, Kitchin, Pole, and Tunstall to consecrate Parker, this obviously did not transpire, since all but Kitchin were deprived of their sees. Matthew Parker's *Summaria petitio* – a document usually filed before the confirmation of an archbishop to clarify his experience, character, and suitability for the job, and to list all grants requested to be made to him – does not mention the four Marian bishops.[62] There is no reference to Kitchin being empowered to carry out the consecration, and thus, he has generally been ascribed no role in these events. The official record of Parker's confirmation in the letters patent, at the church of St Mary-le-Bow on 9 December 1559, specifies that the confirmation was carried out by Barlow, Scory, Miles Coverdale (the firmly Calvinist Edwardian bishop of Exeter), and John Hodgkins, a more junior man who was a suffragan rather than a diocesan bishop.[63] Kitchin is nowhere to be seen. It would be easy to conclude that his part in the affair had come to an end – he had declined to participate, so the government had simply moved on to the next four on the list.

But does this make sense? To recap the facts: we can be confident that Kitchin was given special dispensation to avoid swearing the oath of supremacy, and we know from Bacon that Kitchin was one of the bishops originally mooted as a consecrator for Parker. If he had subsequently objected and chosen not to take part, why did he escape the same fate as Tunstall, Bourne, and Pole – deprivation and imprisonment? What reason could there have been to let this notoriously insubordinate priest escape the penalties others faced?

The evidence assembled in this article, taken together, implies Kitchin *was* in fact involved in Parker's consecration, despite historians' previous dismissals of this possibility. First, the letters patent of 9 December do not actually make any mention of a request for consecration, nor does Parker's *Summaria petitio*. The bishops are asked to *confirm* Parker, but not to *consecrate* him, which are two distinct ceremonies. Given that the *Summaria petitio* usually lists all the grants to be made to a bishop (i.e. consecration, investiture, and

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[61] See 25 Hen. VIII c. 20, ss. 1–5, which provided that four bishops, none of whom could be a metropolitan within the monarch's dominions, were necessary to carry out a canonically valid consecration.

[62] E. Denny and T. A. Lacey, *De hierarchia Anglicana: dissertatio apologetica* (London, 1895), p. 192.

[63] Ibid., p. 14.

confirmation), this implies that Parker's consecration had already happened, and thus Kitchin may still have played a part in it. Indeed, there is some evidence that Parker was already acting as a consecrated bishop when he arrived at St Mary-le-Bow on 9 December. Three weeks earlier, on 28 November, a patent was issued to him by the College of Arms allowing him immediately to begin using the archiepiscopal coat of arms.[64]

Second, there has long been speculation of secrecy surrounding Parker's consecration, for example the so-called 'Nag's Head fable'. This Catholic propaganda tale alleged that Parker's consecration occurred clandestinely at the Nag's Head Inn in Cheapside, where John Scory, summoned under cover of night, pressed a Bible to Parker's neck and bound him to preach the word of God.[65] We should not give credence to the details of this tale, which appeared forty-five years after the event and evidently intended to make Parker's consecration appear as sordid as possible. But the popularity of this fable indicates a certain procedural murkiness widely supposed to surround Parker's consecration.

Third, and more explicitly, there exists a letter from Nicholas Sanders to Cardinal Moroni preserved in the Vatican archives, dated to 1561 or 1562 (so, during Kitchin's lifetime). It states:

> It is scarcely something to be wondered at that the bishop of Llandaff, whose position should be accounted dubious on these grounds by Catholics, alone, it is said, did not seek confirmation [of his status] from the Holy See when the kingdom was reconciled [to Rome] under Mary; is it, therefore, any surprise that he should fall into schism *and consecrate pseudo-bishops outside the church*?[66]

So, Sanders stated that Kitchin was actively consecrating bishops (in the plural) in the Church of England. He reiterated this point in an unsigned report to Moroni, dated 1562: 'The bishop of Llandaff has allowed himself to be succoured by the Queen of England into obeying her and *consecrating all the schismatic and heretical bishops* which the Queen appointed by her own authority.'[67] Again we have an explicit testament that Kitchin consecrated more than one Elizabethan bishop, not just Parker, and a suggestion that he may actually have been the source of holy orders for the entire hierarchy of English and Welsh bishops. A final indication of Kitchin's importance in consecrating the first batch of Elizabethan bishops is a brief passage in John Jewel's *Defence of the apology of the Church of England*, which he wrote to shore up his earlier

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[64] Archive of the College of Arms, letters patent granted to Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, to impale the arms of the see, 28 Nov. 1559.

[65] C. Holywood, *De investiganda vera ac visibili Christi ecclesia libellus* (Antwerp, 1604), pp. 17–19.

[66] 'landavensis de quo an episcoppus haberi debeat ideo Catholici dubitant, quia reconciliato sub Maria regno solus dicitur confirmationem a sede Apostolica non postulasse, ut mirum iam noti sit si et schismati cedat et pseudoepiscopi extra ecclesiam consecret'. Vatican archives, Arm. lxiv, vol. 28, fo. 16. Emphasis mine.

[67] Vatican archives, Arm. lxiv, vol. 28, fo. 167. Emphasis mine. Also see J. M. Rigg, ed., *Calendar of state papers relating to English affairs in the Vatican archives*, I: *1558–1571* (London, 1916), p. 70.

Apology against the criticisms of Catholic controversialist Thomas Harding. Harding's tract argues that it is necessary for at least three validly consecrated bishops to preside over a consecration, and he goes on to say that:

> As by Aristotle, a city cannot consist of bastards, no more can the Church of England consist of such bastard bishops as ye be: what number of abbots ye have left in cloisters, such number of true bishops have ye left in churches. *One must I still except, who is a true bishop by consecration (as I understand), though a false man by apostasy*, and going from his faith and his religion.[68]

Only Anthony Kitchin fits the description of Harding's 'false man'. Jewel then attempts to rebut Harding's charges by insisting that three bishops are not necessary, and that a single serving bishop is adequate for a valid consecration: 'for Paul, when he ordered Titus and Timotheus, sought not about for two other bishops'.[69] It appears that Jewel is implicitly acknowledging that he was himself consecrated by the one man Harding considers a 'true bishop by consecration', and that he is appealing to Kitchin to try to convince Harding that Anglican episcopal orders are valid.

 Catholic critics of the Church of England's legitimacy and the veracity of its orders were frequently happy to cite Kitchin as an example of how the Elizabethan church's pretensions to apostolic succession depended on the involvement of unprincipled apostates. Equally, Jewel's allusion to Kitchin's involvement illustrates the political uses of the claim for Protestants – that through Kitchin, the English bishops' orders remained canonically valid. Overall, it appears likely that Kitchin *was* involved in Parker's consecration, and possibly of several other bishops. This exposes the complexities of early Elizabethan ecclesiastical politics. In the chaotic middle decades of the sixteenth century, men such as Kitchin, who belonged to a more flexible 'party' within the church and were later regarded as conniving hypocrites, were nonetheless influential in shaping the eventual direction of the Elizabethan church settlement.

V

If these deductions are correct, it is worth speculating on why Kitchin's involvement was later suppressed – for there are certainly indications that the crown preferred the specific nature of the compromise they had made to escape scrutiny. Although in 1559 Kitchin's involvement in Parker's consecration seems to have been reasonably widely known, it was certainly occluded in later years. Additionally, the reluctance of Jewel to mention Kitchin by name is suggestive, as is the fact that the 1559 compromise oath, although unquestionably a state matter, is preserved not in the state papers but in Matthew

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[68] J. Ayre, ed., *The works of John Jewel, bishop of Salisbury*, IV (Cambridge, 1845), p. 908. Emphasis mine.

[69] J. Ayre, ed., *The works of John Jewel, bishop of Salisbury*, III (Cambridge, 1845), p. 330.

Parker's personal manuscript correspondence. It seems the government became uncertain whether Kitchin's involvement should be publicized widely.

A plausible theory for this evasiveness presents itself. By the 1570s, Matthew Parker, although his beliefs were firmly Protestant, had become considered too indulgent of 'papists' by the developing puritan faction of the Church of England. Parker was not a Marian exile; he was deprived of his ecclesiastical and academic offices under Mary, but remained otherwise unmolested. Strikingly, he described this period of 'internal exile' in *positive* terms, as having afforded him a 'most delightful literary leisure' to pursue academic work in contentment and peace, 'happy before God in my conscience'. His lack of enthusiasm to 'stand up and be counted', and to aid his beleaguered Protestant co-religionists, could easily have left him open to charges of lukewarmness and Nicodemism.[70] Many of the same accusations that were later levied at Kitchin could therefore be construed as applying to Parker too. Indeed, as Parker acknowledged in a letter to Cecil, by 1575 many of his critics had begun to see him as little more than a 'great papist' for his tendency to consider matters such as the wearing of surplices as *adiaphora* and unnecessary to produce a fully reformed church. Worse, the spiritual disunity of the church was such that it shaded into *national* disunity: 'I fear that her Highness's authority is not regarded, so that if they [i.e. zealous puritans] could...they would change her government.'[71]

At this precarious time, with an aging Parker clearly frustrated with the narrowing tightrope necessary to preserve the peace, the true circumstances of his consecration could have proven deeply problematic. If the puritan faction had been aware that Parker had been consecrated by a Catholic, Marian bishop with a poor reputation, who had kept his see only by what could be branded an unprincipled and cynical compromise, this would have added fuel to the fire. By contrast, allowing the reformers to assume that Parker had been consecrated by Barlow, Scory, and Coverdale – the three diocesan bishops named in the Lambeth Register – would have avoided the appearance of scandal. It also distanced Parker and his fellow bishops from the Roman rites of ordination, thus guaranteeing the eternal separation of the English church from Rome, and quashing any possible Catholic claims to ultimate jurisdiction over Canterbury and York.

In 1559, it was still plausible that the Elizabethan Church of England would take a more gradualist path towards Protestantism, with incremental steps towards reform and prominent conservatives continuing to occupy senior positions. If Tunstall and Bourne had followed Kitchin, reached some compromise with the government, and continued to sit in the House of Lords instead of languishing in a gaol cell, perhaps such an approach would have remained tenable. But when this plan foundered, Kitchin had outlived his usefulness. He had ensured that Parker's episcopate could legally be argued to be

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[70] C. Law, 'Compromise refashioned: memory and life-writing in Matthew Parker's roll', in Walsham et al., eds., *Memory and the English Reformation*, p. 263.

[71] Matthew Parker to Lord Burghley, 11 Apr. 1575, in Bruce and Perowne, eds., *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, pp. 478–9.

valid, but the extent to which the English church now relied on zealous Marian exiles and fervent reformers meant that its claim to apostolic succession was increasingly unimportant, perhaps more burden than benefit. The centre ground of ecclesiastical politics was shifting towards a hardline puritanism. As the Vestiarian Controversy and the Admonition Crisis threatened to cleave the church in two, it became essential to argue that the first tranche of Elizabethan bishops had been ordained using an ordinal leaving no possible grounds for the 'godly', respectable puritan faction to question the legitimacy of an archbishop whom they already regarded as suspect. Historical memory had been refashioned to airbrush out the complex and messy compromises of 1559.

Of course, it was not only Kitchin's actions in those few months that were forgotten or mischaracterized. As we have briefly discussed, a misleading narrative of his whole career was fashioned, portraying him as an arch-hypocrite and an indolent and avaricious man. Once more, this is an illustration of historical memory repurposed to fit an agenda, which had more relevance to contemporary political events than to the real facts of Kitchin's career. Accusations of malice, avarice, and double-dealing first became prominent against Kitchin in 1616 in the writings of Francis Godwin, then serving as bishop of Llandaff. Godwin described his predecessor as 'a disaster of our estate' ('fundi nostri calamitas') and claimed that he was 'greatly addicted to the doctrines of the pope' ('pontificiae doctrinae addictissimus'), as well as being acquisitive and corrupt, dividing up the diocese's estates for personal gain.[72] For Godwin, popery and hypocrisy were two sides of the same polemical coin. The reinvention of Kitchin as a hypocrite took place in a wider cultural context of what Peter Lake called 'avant-garde conformity',[73] as bishops such as Lancelot Andrewes became concerned with what they perceived as the poor spiritual health of the puritan clergy,[74] and sought to reform their own diocese and distance themselves from the mistakes of the past. Kitchin, whose long and sometimes inconsistent career invited accusations of shameless side-changing, was an ideal scapegoat.

It remains important not to over-react and portray Kitchin as irreproachable in his principles. Some contemporaries, especially la Quadra, clearly viewed him as over-eager to bend with the times. Nevertheless, what we have found is a far cry from Jones's caricature of a sycophantic hypocrite and 'miserable impoverisher'.[75] In the place of Kitchin the avaricious careerist or the senile wastrel, a picture has emerged of Kitchin as an elderly, conciliatory figure, still bearing the methods and manners of a milder time, before the advent of Lutheran ideas made religion into a contested battleground, and before confessional positions had hardened. Being asked to choose

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[72] F. Godwin, *De praesulibus Angliae commentarius* (London, 1616), pp. 640–1.

[73] P. Lake, 'Lancelot Andrewes, John Buckeridge, and avant-garde conformity at the court of James I', in L. L. Peck, ed., *The mental world of the Jacobean court* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 113–33.

[74] P. McCullough, '"Avant-garde conformity" in the 1590s', in A. Milton, ed., *The Oxford history of Anglicanism*, I: *Reformation and identity, c. 1520-1662* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 380–94.

[75] Jones, 'Reformation bishops of Llandaff', p. 38.

between his loyalties to God and his loyalty to his sovereign must have been an impossible dilemma, and Kitchin dealt with it in large part by refusing to choose – by focusing on quietly administering his diocese, while paying lip-service to whichever monarch commanded his loyalty and dictated religious policy. We have also observed that Kitchin was by no means alone in this position, that numerous others were willing to take the path of limited compliance to edicts with which they might have disagreed. What was in 1548 an atmosphere of reluctant acquiescence to Edwardian reform was, by 1559, a solid front of bishops who closed ranks and stood in resistance to the oath of supremacy, with Kitchin the only holdout. Even then, Kitchin was much less willing to break ranks than has usually been assumed, having kept his see only through an awkward compromise struck with the crown.

One question remains unanswered. It is now clear why the government allowed Kitchin to retain his see, but why did Kitchin himself consent to this arrangement? One explanation is mere self-preservation: the desire to keep his job and end his career in good standing with the crown. It is surely understandable that the then eighty-eight-year-old Kitchin would have striven to avoid the same fate as Tunstall, fallen from favour and suffering in captivity. Alternatively, Kitchin may have believed that, notwithstanding the serious objections to the royal supremacy he had voiced in parliament, his loyalty to queen and country outweighed religious scruple, particularly since the government had shown good faith in trying to broker a compromise that could satisfy his conscience. Or, Kitchin could have been trying to safeguard his diocese for a few more years from the inevitable changes ushered in by a Protestant successor. It is even possible that the traditionalist Kitchin hoped for future reconciliation between Canterbury and Rome, and took the opportunity to ensure that at least the Elizabethan bishops were ordained by a consecrated Catholic priest, using the old Roman pontifical – thus preserving a validly ordained English priesthood ready for future reunion.

It is impossible to know at this historical remove – and with no surviving writings from the man himself – which, if any, of these reasons hold a kernel of truth. What we can say for certain is that the Anthony Kitchin of historical memory bears surprisingly little resemblance to the attested facts surrounding this enigmatic figure. Kitchin certainly possessed idiosyncrasies, but his behaviour was always within the bounds of reasonable decision-making for an English or Welsh priest of the mid-sixteenth century. Apart from the circumstances surrounding the 1559 oath, it is difficult to think of a single instance in which Kitchin's actions were unique, or even particularly controversial. Indeed, his career closely mirrored that of Cuthbert Tunstall, who gained a reputation as a learned and distinguished academic and a man of personal integrity, even though his compromises could likewise be characterized as those of a turncoat.[76]

The fact that Kitchin gained a posthumous reputation as a cautionary tale of avarice and indolence says less about him and more about the complex historiography of the English Reformation. Religious reform was not a singular event,

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[76] M. Thomas, 'Tunstal: trimmer or martyr?', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 24 (1973), pp. 338–40.

but a dynamic and shifting discourse to refashion the past, smooth out unruly nuances, and warp history into an ideological story. This process sometimes involved acts of what Alexandra Walsham has called 'radical erasure'.[77] The events of 1559 were homogenized into a simpler narrative of zealous and dedicated priests versus unprincipled timeservers. Kitchin has been slotted into the latter category, even though he really fits into neither. His career is a fascinating case-study of how an individual chose to reconcile the competing pressures of church, state, and conscience, and it also exposes just how contingent was the outcome of the 1559 church settlement. Had just a few of Kitchin's colleagues amongst the Marian episcopacy joined him in deciding to conform – and it appears that several others were close to taking this step – then, instead of languishing in a jail cell, men such as Cuthbert Tunstall could have been sitting in the House of Lords and openly shaping the direction of the settlement. The doctrinal emphasis of the early Elizabethan church could therefore have looked considerably different, and considerably more Catholic.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

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[77] Walsham et al., eds., *Memory and the English Reformation*, p. 45.