

William Laud and the Exercise of Caroline Ecclesiastical Patronage

by KENNETH FINCHAM

Recent work on the 1630s has challenged the established view of Archbishop Laud's central role in the formulation and enforcement of ecclesiastical policy. Kevin Sharpe and Julian Davies have proposed that Charles I was the initiator of religious change, with his archbishop often trailing in his wake, and finding ways to qualify, if not subvert, royal directives on preaching, the Sabbath and the altar. Davies has also argued that an ideology of 'Carolinism' rather than 'Laudianism' shaped and animated key religious reforms, and to enact them Charles increasingly relied on Bishop Matthew Wren, an unyielding enforcer of royal policy and more 'Laudian' than Laud himself.¹ This view of Laud of course echoes the archbishop's defence at his trial: that he was merely the king's good servant, executing the royal will, which is enough to make one pause, since Laud's objective there was not historical veracity but to save his neck. But other findings have also diminished Laud's political stature: it appears that Lord Treasurer Weston, not Laud, was the royal nominee for the vacant chancellorship of Oxford in April 1630, though by the time the king's letter reached the university Laud had been elected; later, in 1636, it has been suggested that far from securing the appointment

BRL = Birmingham Reference Library; LPL = Lambeth Palace Library; SRO = Staffordshire Record Office; Str P = Strafford papers

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¹ K. Sharpe, *The personal rule of Charles I*, Yale 1992, 279–85, 333–5; and more fully in J. Davies, *The Caroline captivity of the Church: Charles I and the remoulding of Anglicanism, 1625–1641*, Oxford 1992, passim, esp. pp. 295–305.

of his protégé Bishop Juxon as the new Lord Treasurer, Laud may have actually been a defeated rival for the post.²

Such claims about Laud's limited influence and subordinate role in the management of ecclesiastical affairs are here tested in one small but important area, the distribution of extensive crown patronage over the Church – bishoprics, deaneries, canonries, royal chaplaincies and those livings conferred directly by the monarch, through the Signet Office.³ Julian Davies has suggested that 'the issue of preferment provides further evidence that Laud's influence has been exaggerated and that of the king underestimated', and regards Laud as merely one of a number of councillors who might submit names to the king, not always with much success.⁴ Conversely, Amanda Capern sees Laud very much in control of the appointment to Irish bishoprics and to posts at Trinity College, Dublin, from the early 1630s. 'It seems clear', she writes, 'that [Archbishop] Ussher had some power with the king, but rather more if working through Laud, and it also seems clear that Laud believed he could manipulate decisions made by the king without too much difficulty when he wanted to.'⁵ Her claims prompt the thought that what was true for Irish affairs might be true also for preferment in the English Church. Is this actually the case?

The emphasis in Davies's work on Charles I's active role in ecclesiastical patronage is perfectly plausible and matches that of his father, James I, who, I have argued, 'exercised a direct and informed control over the selection of bishops'.⁶ To portray Charles as simply a cipher is not credible. On preferment, as on other matters, Charles could veto Laud's proposals – seen most spectacularly in 1632 when he refused to allow Laud, then bishop of London, to hold the bishoprics of Winchester and London *in commendam*.⁷ Moreover, just as James had promoted some

² K. Fincham, 'Oxford and the early Stuart polity', in N. Tyacke (ed.), *The history of the university of Oxford*, IV: *Seventeenth-century Oxford*, Oxford 1997, 199; B. Quintrell, 'The Church triumphant?: the emergence of a spiritual Lord Treasurer, 1635–1636', in J. Merritt (ed.), *The political world of Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford, 1621–1641*, Cambridge 1996, 81–108.

³ These livings included benefices in the king's gift worth over £20 a year, and presentations to others falling to the crown as a result of simony, wardship (for 1635–41) and the suspension of Bishop Williams of Lincoln (1637–40). The Lord Keeper disposed of crown livings valued under £20 a year, on which see R. O'Day, 'The ecclesiastical patronage of the Lord Keeper, 1558–1642', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. xxiii (1973), 89–109.

⁴ Davies, *Caroline captivity*, 39–43. Sharpe does not examine the issue of ecclesiastical preferment in any detail.

⁵ A. Capern, 'The Caroline Church: James Ussher and the Irish dimension', *HJ* xxxix (1996), 64–9.

⁶ K. Fincham, *Prelate as pastor: the episcopate of James I*, Oxford 1990, 22–34.

⁷ Laud to Thomas Wentworth, 1 Oct. 1632, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments, Sheffield City Archives, Str P, 20/112; John Pory to Viscount Scudamore, 18 Feb., 9 June

bishops without any prompting at all – as with the elevation of James Montagu and Lancelot Andrewes – so too, on occasion, did Charles, most obviously with his appointment of Laud to Canterbury and Wren to Norwich.⁸ But both monarchs usually took counsel before awarding bishoprics and deaneries, and so what is open to dispute is the respective role of Charles I's councillors, advisers and courtiers, as they vied to obtain preferment for their clients and contacts. Was Laud simply one among equals here, competing perhaps with other clerical intimates such as Wren as well as secular politicians, or was his position distinct and unrivalled? This inquiry may also establish more precisely the degree of personal supervision and involvement of the king in the regular exercise of his ecclesiastical patronage.

I

A necessary starting-point is the selection of royal chaplains. At any one time there were forty-eight chaplains 'in ordinary', four of whom attended the court each month on a fixed rota, and an unspecified number of chaplains 'in extraordinary', with no formal duties.⁹ Almost all of the Caroline episcopate was recruited from the more select band of chaplains in ordinary who, on their appointment, relinquished their chaplain's place.¹⁰ In correspondence with Thomas Wentworth and Elizabeth of Bohemia, Laud was quite explicit on this point. It is the king's rule, he wrote, to appoint to bishoprics only men whom he knows 'as having been his own chaplains in ordinary or otherwise'. Laud contrasted this with the position at the Jacobean court, where noblemen's chaplains were advanced at the cost of royal chaplains.¹¹ So if after 1625 a royal

1632, PRO, C 115/M35, nos 8394, 8406. The latter reads: 'I heare that my lord of London shalbee Bishop of Winchester also, and shall enjoye the jurisdictions of both seas, but the revenue onely of Winchester, the incomes of London being to be applyed toward the reparation of Paules.' I hope to treat this curious episode in more detail elsewhere.

⁸ Fincham, *Prelate as pastor*, 25; William Laud, *Works*, ed. J. Bliss and W. Scott, Oxford 1847–60, iii. 218–19; vii. 168.

⁹ By 1641 these chaplains numbered 107: PRO, LC 3/1, fo. 38. For a broad discussion of preferment and the royal chaplaincy see N. W. S. Cranfield, 'Chaplains in ordinary at the early Stuart court: the purple road', in C. Cross (ed.) *Patronage and recruitment in the Tudor and early Stuart Church* (Borthwick Studies in History ii, 1996), 120–37. I am grateful to Nicholas Cranfield for many discussions on this topic.

¹⁰ Davies, *Caroline captivity*, 39, though his statement that 'all those nominated to bishoprics' had been Charles's chaplains in ordinary needs modifying: three exceptions for 1625–40 were George Coke of Bristol, Edmund Griffith of Bangor and Morgan Owen of Llandaff. I also exclude the bishops of Sodor and Man, whose nomination lay in the gift of the earls of Derby.

¹¹ Laud, *Works*, vii. 102, 168, 238. In point of fact, most Jacobean bishops had served as royal chaplains, but Laud's point has some validity if we include appointments to deaneries as well as bishoprics under James I: Fincham, *Prelate as pastor*, 305–6.

chaplaincy was the passport to higher preferment in the Church, we may enquire which individuals or office-holders issued it.

Formally the selection of chaplains was the responsibility of the Lord Chamberlain, head of the royal household 'above stairs', a post filled from 1626 to 1641 by Philip Herbert, earl of Montgomery and Pembroke. At his trial Laud faced accusations from Pembroke's secretary, Michael Oldsworth MP, that he had taken over the recommendation of candidates for vacant chaplaincies, choices which Pembroke was reduced to endorsing. Laud retorted that Oldsworth's claim was malicious, since he had not received the fees he believed due to him, and Laud went on to deny that he was responsible for the selection of five of the six chaplains actually named by Oldsworth.¹² My view is that Laud here (as elsewhere during his trial) was being economical with the truth, minimising his own responsibility and magnifying the role of others, hiding behind the technical procedures of appointment and denying that evidence cited was convincing proof. In fact, Oldsworth's allegation that Pembroke played second string to Laud seems to be broadly true. The Lord Chamberlain's records often list the patrons who secured the selection of chaplains in extraordinary, and it includes a wide range of politicians and courtiers – among them the earls of Holland and Dorset, the countess of Exeter and Richard Steward, Clerk of the Closet after 1636.¹³ For the chaplains in ordinary, however, patrons' names are very rarely recorded. One nominator was Charles I himself, who, like his father, was a connoisseur of sermons and recruited preachers who had impressed him. Thus Richard Marsh was admitted as a chaplain in ordinary on Charles's instructions following his preaching before the king on progress in 1633 and 1634. Occasionally other sponsors can be identified: Laud was probably correct when he stated that Pembroke was responsible for Thomas Lawrence's royal chaplaincy, since Lawrence had served as Pembroke's household chaplain.¹⁴ But the dominant voice evidently belonged to Laud. To him we can confidently attribute the selection of Robert Sanderson and Robert Skinner, future bishop of Bristol, whose close ties with Laud go back to 1629, if not earlier, as well as Thomas Turner, Thomas Walker, William Heywood, Richard Sterne and John Oliver, all household chaplains to Laud. Matthew Wren, once chaplain to Charles as prince of Wales, in July 1628 obtained a regular monthly slot

¹² Laud, *Works*, iv. 85, 294–6. See also Cranfield, 'Chaplains in ordinary', 121–5.

¹³ PRO, LC 5/132, p. 308; 5/134, pp. 10, 117, 203, 232.

¹⁴ Ibid. LC 5/134, p. 87; Laud, *Works*, iv. 295. Charles was also directly responsible for the appointment of Griffin Higgs as chaplain in ordinary, no doubt at the request of his sister Elizabeth of Bohemia, whose chaplain Higgs had been: LC 5/134, pp. 277, 333; *DNB*, s.v. Higgs.

on Laud's recommendation.¹⁵ Another beneficiary was the notorious Caroline controversialist, Peter Heylyn.

At his trial, Laud stated that Heylyn owed his preferment as royal chaplain in 1630 not to him but 'under God to the memory of the earl of Danby, who took care of him in the University'. This was at best a half-truth: Danby was certainly Heylyn's patron in the late 1620s, and had recommended him to Laud in about 1629. Laud, however, had already met Heylyn, following Heylyn's clash with John Prideaux in the divinity schools at Oxford in 1627, and both of Heylyn's biographers attribute his royal chaplaincy to the influence of Laud not Danby. When Heylyn went to thank Danby, they relate, Danby told him 'that those thanks were not in the least due unto himself, but to the lord bishop of London [Laud], unto whose generous and active mind the whole of that dignity was to be ascribed'. Though these accounts were written after the Restoration of Charles II, they receive some confirmation in Heylyn's admission in 1636 that he owed 'the greatest parts of my encouragements' to Laud.¹⁶ Laud's willingness to champion the case of clergymen outside his immediate circle whose abilities he recognised was, as we shall see, quite a common occurrence. Thus Gilbert Sheldon, a long-standing chaplain of Lord Keeper Coventry, may have owed his royal chaplaincy of 1636 to his patron and to Laud, who was probably responsible for his appointment to the wardenship of All Souls College, Oxford, the previous year.¹⁷

¹⁵ PRO, LC 5/132, pp. 38, 145, 241; 5/134, pp. 1, 105, 131, 286, 424; *The works of Robert Sanderson*, ed. W. Jacobson, Oxford 1854, vi. 296, and also iii. 270–2; Laud, *Works*, iv. 295–6, 423, 430 n. a, 444; LPL, MS 943, p. 133.

¹⁶ Laud, *Works*, iv. 294; Peter Heylyn, *Cyprianus anglicus*, London 1668 (Wing H1699), 175; George Vernon, *The life of the learned and reverend Dr Peter Heylyn*, London 1682 (Wing V248), 29–30, 35–6; John Barnard, *Theologo-historicus, or the true life of... Peter Heylyn DD*, London 1683 (Wing B854), 111, 120–1; Heylyn to Thomas Wentworth, 19 Feb. 1636, Str P 15/350. See also Heylyn's poem to Laud of 1633: BL, MS Add. 46885A, fo. 39v. Though Heylyn did not serve as Laud's domestic chaplain, he did preach at an episcopal consecration in 1639, a privilege usually reserved for Lambeth chaplains: Peter Heylyn, *The parable of the tares*, London 1659 (Wing H1729), 311–36.

¹⁷ PRO, LC 5/134, p. 107. In 1639 Laud also collated Sheldon to the living of Newington: PRO, E 331/Canterbury/10 m. 253. See also Laud, *Works*, v. 185–6. There is no direct evidence to indicate who sponsored Sheldon for the wardenship, though in recent elections the archbishop of Canterbury, as Visitor, had the dominant voice. Sheldon's role as Coventry's examining chaplain can be traced in Coventry's papers in the Croome Court Collection deposited in Birmingham Reference Library: see, for example, vols 901/291, 299, 312; 902/326, 332, 345, 350 (Apr.–Nov. 1632). Christopher Potter, another protégé of Coventry, may also have had Laud's backing for his enrolment as a royal chaplain in 1632: though relations between Laud and Potter had been cool in the late 1620s, by September 1632 Laud recommended him to Chillingworth as 'an honest and an able man' who could satisfy his doubts about Protestantism, while Potter, in turn, in a letter to Laud the following year, referred to 'the obligations which I have to you are

Certainly, Laud's key influence was recognised by some contemporaries, such as Bishop Williams, no stranger to the operation of court patronage. In 1631 Williams wrote to Laud, recommending John Pocklington as a prospective royal chaplain. The fact that Pocklington had to wait six years owed more to Laud's suspicion of Williams's motives, and his probable ignorance of Pocklington, than to his inability to have Pocklington sworn in.¹⁸

As for Laud's relations with Pembroke, they were likely to have been frosty, though a veneer of politeness was usually preserved. The only letter we have between them is one from Laud, dated September 1640, recommending John Oliver, one of his chaplains, to fill the place of chaplain in ordinary vacant by the death of Thomas Jackson, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.¹⁹ The fact that the letter was written just four days after Jackson's death indicates that Laud valued these chaplaincies, and perhaps also that he needed to act quickly, given that Pembroke was at that time in the north with Charles I. In the letter Laud asked Pembroke not to appoint Oliver, so much as to name him to the king for his approval.²⁰ Laud concluded with a gentle reminder to Pembroke that, were the court to remain much longer in the north, then some chaplains should be selected to attend the king, a practical detail which suggests that Laud kept a sharp eye over the running of the royal chaplaincy. Indeed Pembroke had acknowledged Laud's interest and expertise earlier that year, by appointing Laud as his deputy to run the chaplaincy while he was away in the north.²¹ Even when in London, Pembroke could be marginalised on occasion. In November 1639 Charles dismissed the dean of Wells from his chaplaincy, and Pembroke had to confess that he was unaware of the reason for this.²² In one respect, however, Pembroke retained an important prerogative. Each year he appointed the Lenten preachers, for which there was fierce competition among bishops and royal chaplains, since a prime way to impress the king was through the pulpit. Pembroke's responsibility for the rota solves the puzzle of the regular appearance on it of Bishop John Davenant, no

such as I can never satisfie': Cranfield, 'Chaplains in ordinary', 125; Laud, *Works*, vi. 294-6; Laud to Chillingworth, 5 Sept. 1632, St John's College, Oxford, ms 327; PRO, SP 16/247/30, 291/47-I.

¹⁸ LPL, ms 1030, fo. 14r; PRO, LC 5/134, p. 180. At his trial, Laud denied that he preferred Pocklington; Hackett tells us it was Pembroke who backed him, at Williams's suit, which cannot be correct, following Pocklington's attack on Williams's writings by 1637: Laud, *Works*, iv. 296; John Hackett, *Scrinia reserata*, London 1693 (Wing H171), ii. 110. By 1640 Laud can be found supporting Pocklington's bid for a benefice: *Works*, vii. 599.

¹⁹ Ibid. vi. 583-4.

²⁰ Oliver was eventually appointed that November to fill another place, Edward Burton having been chosen to succeed Jackson: PRO, LC 5/134, pp. 420, 424.

²¹ Ibid. p. 413.

²² Ibid. p. 346.

Laudian enthusiast, who was his diocesan and near neighbour in Wiltshire, and of other clergy, such as Dean Young of Winchester and John Hacket, chaplain to Bishop Williams, whose careers did not prosper in the 1630s.²³ Pembroke may also have had a major say in the selection of preachers before the king at other times, although on progress this was sometimes left to local bishops.²⁴ Certainly Laud did not possess the control which he would have liked, and he noted that in times past the archbishops of Canterbury had appointed Lenten court preachers, and that the king and queen were regarded as the primate's parishioners.²⁵

II

There is evidence, therefore, to suggest that Laud played a major role in the selection of royal chaplains, from whom the clerical leaders of the Church were recruited. Can we trace a similar influence at work over the choice of bishops, deans, prebendaries and incumbents of royal livings chosen directly by the crown? Here we need to recall the formal process of preferment at the Caroline court. Royal control over ecclesiastical promotions was exercised through the Signet Office, under the direction of the secretary of state. King's bills were submitted to the sovereign for his signature or sign manual, which, once obtained, transformed them into warrants to be acted on under the Privy or Great Seals. The formal register of these grants is contained in the Signet Office docquet books. They contain some clues to the process of lobbying which might precede a grant, since they list the 'procurer' of the grant, as well as the person who either 'signified' the king's wishes to the Signet Office, or else 'ordered' that a bill be drawn up. Laud first appears in these records as both signifier and procurer in March 1628, by which time he had been a privy councillor for nearly a year and was already chosen, though not formally nominated, for the see of London.²⁶ Over the next year, Laud was actively signifying and procuring all types of ecclesiastical patronage, including the elevation or translation of seven bishops – Buckeridge, Montaigne, Howson, Curle, Mawe, Harsnett and White – as well as the

²³ Lenten preachers for 1628–40 are recorded on the flyleaves of *ibid.* LC 5/132, 134. *Pace Davies, Caroline captivity*, 42, it was Pembroke not Dorchester who compiled these lists: PRO, SP 16/182/52, 183/13. Jacobean practice was characteristically more varied: the Clerk of the Closet and Secretaries of State, as well as the Lord Chamberlain, had some say in selecting Lenten preachers: P. McCullough, *Sermons at court: politics and religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean preaching*, Cambridge 1998, 111–12, 115.

²⁴ PRO, LC 5/134, p. 6, printed in Cranfield, 'Chaplains in ordinary', 129–30.

²⁵ PRO, SP 16/383/54.

²⁶ *Ibid.* SO 3/9 (unfoliated: Mar. 1628); Laud, *Works*, iii. 205. PRO, SP 39/18–30 are the king's bills for 1625–40; SP 38/13–18 are extracted docquets, neither class as complete as the SO 3 series.

royal assent to his own promotion to London!²⁷ His name largely disappears from the Signet Office records for almost two years (July 1629 to May 1631). Thereafter Laud acted as the signifier but not procurer of an increasing number of ecclesiastical grants through the Signet Office, so that from 1632 virtually all bishoprics and deaneries, and from 1636 most benefices, were 'signified' or else 'ordered' by Laud, though the procurer was invariably one of the two secretaries of state, Sir Francis Windebanke or Sir John Coke.²⁸ To make sense of the record, we must take a closer look at the respective role and influence of the 'signifier' and 'procurer'.

In formal terms the procurer was the individual who secured the grant, while the signifier could be little more than a messenger-boy, carrying the king's instructions to the Signet Office. This is certainly the interpretation which Laud offered when, at his trial, the king's bills, which recorded Laud as signifier of Charles's wishes, were used as evidence of Laud's leading role in the patronage process. Laud argued that they proved nothing of the sort. When charged with preferring Richard Montagu to the see of Chichester in 1628, Laud denied that he had taken an active part: 'but being a church business', he went on, 'the king commanded me to signify his pleasure to the Signet Office. And the docket (which is all the proof here made) mentions him only by whom the king's pleasure is signified, not him that procures the preferment. So the docket in this case [is] no proof at all'. Time and again, when the king's bills were cited against him, Laud deployed a similar defence – 'the docket can be no proof at all against me' – and significantly, the prosecution appears to have accepted this view.²⁹ So a literal reading of the Signet Office books would be that, for a brief period of 1628–9, Laud was a major ecclesiastical patron; thereafter, from 1631 to his fall, Laud was subordinate to the secretary of state, and, though present when the king conferred ecclesiastical preferment, did no more than notify the Signet Office of royal decisions.

Such an interpretation of the formal record is surely misleading. Other sources, for example, indicate that Laud remained a central player in the patronage game in 1629–31, despite his absence from the Signet Office

²⁷ Ibid. SO 3/9.

²⁸ Ibid. SO 3/10–12. The only exceptions were the appointment of Laud himself to Canterbury, Juxon to the see of London (both 1633), and Samuel Fell to the deanery of Lichfield (1638). Additionally, Laud 'signified' the original grant of Worcester deanery to Roger Mainwaring (May 1633), but not its reissue (Sept. 1633); similarly, though Laud did not 'signify' Richard Steward's selection as dean of Chichester in 1634, he had done so the previous year when Steward was chosen but not elected to the deanery, as part of the planned reshuffle which did not occur on Goodman's renunciation of Hereford. For presentations to livings see p. 84 below.

²⁹ Laud, *Works*, iv. 273, 292, 294, 83. For example, see PRO, SP 39/30, nos 34, 63, 67, 95.

books.³⁰ The timing of his apparent demotion from signifier and procurer to mere signifier may provide an explanation. This change is surely connected with the reorganisation of political life and administrative affairs following the death of the duke of Buckingham in August 1628; in place of the favourite, Charles assembled a team of councillors whose respective jurisdictions he respected and protected. It was an arrangement famously summarised by Secretary Dorchester in December 1628: 'every one walks within the circle of his charge, and his majesty's hand is the chief, and in effect the sole directory'. Linda Levy Peck has noted that the records of the Signet Office, at the heart of the patronage system, reflect these administrative demarcations. The Lord Treasurer or Chancellor of the Exchequer was usually associated with grants of leases; the Master of the Horse and Lord Chamberlain dealt with household appointments; so, similarly, Laud, as chief ecclesiastical adviser, was involved with much if not most church business.³¹ The formal control of procuring grants was resumed by the secretary of state, a reversion to the pre-Buckingham years;³² but in point of fact Laud's influence was not diminished by the changed record of entry. To demonstrate this we need to turn to other sorts of evidence.

Newsletters are little help here. Though they survive in abundance for the 1630s, sometimes written by well-placed informants, such as Sir John Finet, Charles I's Master of Ceremonies, they are singularly opaque on the scramble for preferment.³³ Typically they record the rumoured or actual promotions of bishops, but very rarely identify struggles among rival patrons – a contrast with the gossipy, and invaluable, letters of John Chamberlain about the Jacobean patronage game. This impression of a muted contest for preferment may well reflect the king's dislike of factional intrigue and his insistence on an outwardly ordered and harmonious court. But other correspondence, including his own, suggests that Laud was the principal patronage broker in ecclesiastical affairs, that as 'signifier' he out-gunned the 'procurer'. Three examples must suffice. In 1638 Laud informed Wentworth that he had secured the rich living of Halifax for Richard Marsh, ahead of a rival candidate pushed by the earl of Elgin. In the Signet Office books, Windebanke, not Laud, is recorded as the procurer.³⁴ As revealing is Laud's attempt in February 1634 to find an English benefice for John Dury, the pan-Protestant negotiator for peace and reconciliation. According to Dury, Laud promised him the

³⁰ Laud to Coventry, 21 Nov. 1629, BRL, 892/17; Laud, *Works*, vii. 23, 34; PRO, SO 3/9 (Aug. 1629; Jan. 1630).

³¹ T. Birch, *The court and times of Charles I*, London 1848, ii. 2; L. L. Peck, *Court patronage and corruption in early Stuart England*, London 1990, 44–6.

³² N. Cuddy, 'The revival of the entourage: the bedchamber of James I, 1603–1625', in D. Starkey (ed.), *The English court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, London 1987, 199, 218–19.

³³ See, for example, PRO, C 115/M30–2, M34, M36, N8.

³⁴ Laud, *Works*, vii. 440; PRO, SO 3/11 (Apr. 1638).

crown living of Northlew in Devon, and the next day, having obtained Charles's consent, ordered the Clerk of the Signet to make a draft bill for Secretary Windebanke to sign. Again, the formal record describes Laud as the 'signifier' and Windebanke as the 'procurer' of the grant.³⁵ Finally, there is the remarkable case of Aynho rectory, Northamptonshire, in which Laud's assistance was sought by Richard Cartwright, one of two parties disputing the right to present to the living. After a meeting at Lambeth with Cartwright, Laud obtained the presentation for the crown, and accepted Cartwright's choice of incumbent. In return, Cartwright promised that the incumbent would resign at some future date in favour of one of Laud's half-brothers. Once this deal had been brokered, Laud handed a petition and king's bill to Windebanke, who was dining with Laud that night. The following day Windebanke duly had the bill signed by Charles. So here the procurer is merely the functionary carrying out the signifier's wishes.³⁶

All these three cases concern benefices in the king's gift, but there is little reason to suppose that Laud's role as signifier in the disposal of bishoprics and deaneries was very different. Clerical clients seeking office repeatedly acknowledged Laud's central influence. John Hassall, who had received the deanery of Norwich in 1628 through Laud's good offices, was angling for a bishopric in 1631. One important contact was the secretary of state, Viscount Dorchester, whom Hassall thanked for recommending him to Charles I and Laud. More explicit still is the letter of 1637 from Samuel Fell, a royal chaplain, to Secretary of State Sir John Coke asking him to join with Lord Treasurer Juxon to intercede on Fell's behalf with Laud for the vacant bishopric of Rochester. Fell, a knowledgeable insider, here discloses Laud's pivotal role.³⁷ So too did the marquis of Hamilton when he wrote to Laud, probably in late 1638, to secure the deanery of Durham for Walter Balcanquhall: 'If your grace will moove his majestie in it, I doe beleeeve he will not denye me this favor for him.'³⁸ Successful candidates also acknowledged Laud's influence. George Coke, chosen bishop of Bristol in 1632, owed his elevation to the support of his brother Sir John, secretary of state, but evidently also to the endorsement of Laud, whom he duly visited and thanked. Thomas Dod received the deanery of Ripon in 1635, which he attributed to the mediation of his patroness, Lady Cholmondeley, with Thomas Wentworth who, in turn, had commended him to Laud, and Laud likewise to the

³⁵ Ibid. SP 16/259/66; SO 3/10 (Jan. 1634).

³⁶ Ibid. SP 16/257/87, 274/31, 39.

³⁷ Ibid. SP 16/192/78, 193/52; Laud, *Works*, vii. 167; BL, ms Add. 64915, fo. 115r. For other examples, including canonries and benefices, see Laud, *Works*, vii. 43; Roger Bates to Thomas Wentworth, 1 Apr. 1631, Str P 12/204; BL, ms Add. 64903, fo. 69r; PRO, SP 16/412/30; *The life and letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, ed. L. P. Smith, Oxford 1966, ii. 397–8.

³⁸ *The letters and journals of Robert Baillie*, Edinburgh 1841, i. 478–9.

king. Once again, Laud is entered in the Signet Office books as conveying the king's wishes, but Secretary Coke as the procurer of these grants.³⁹

Another pointer to Laud's power is the fact that among those who received deaneries and bishoprics in the 1630s were many of his intimates. Appointees to deaneries in the 1630s included four heads of house at Oxford who actively backed the Laudian reforms of the university during the 1630s. Between 1631 and 1639 President Frewen of Magdalen, President Baylie of St John's, Provost Potter of Queen's and President Jackson of Corpus received, respectively, the deaneries of Gloucester, Salisbury, Worcester and Peterborough. It must have been a statement of the obvious for his Oxford University audience in June 1636 when Secretary Coke praised Laud by drawing attention to, among other things, 'those preferments which the able men of our university dayly received by his power at the court'.⁴⁰ 'Those preferments' also included the most glittering prizes of all, bishoprics.

At his trial Laud was accused of preferring Matthew Wren to Hereford, William Piers to Bath and Wells and Richard Neile to York, which he did not deny;⁴¹ and he was probably responsible, too, for the choice of John Bancroft, his 'ancient friend' and the Master of University College, Oxford, for the see of Oxford;⁴² while Hereford and London went to his ally Juxon,⁴³ Bristol to his protégé Robert

³⁹ George Coke to John Coke, 25 Nov. 1632 and 18 Aug. 1633, BL, MS Add. 69868, fos 128r, 130r; Laud, *Works*, iv. 297; Dod to Thomas Wentworth, 28 Aug. 1635, Str P 15/204; PRO, SO 3/10 (Oct. 1632), 3/11 (March 1635). For other examples see Thomas Wentworth to Edward Stanhope, 11 Dec. 1631, Str P 21/80; PRO, SO 3/11 (Apr. 1638); SP 16/424/18.

⁴⁰ Francis Cheynell to Gervase Clifton, July 1636, Nottingham University Library, MS Cl. c. 73. Laud successively appointed Baylie, Frewen and Potter as his vice-chancellor; Baylie was also his relative, Potter a willing ally, and Frewen a supporter in the Oxford cancellarial election of 1630. In October 1629 Frewen had approached Endymion Porter to assist his preferment, but the delay of nearly two years before his advancement suggests that Porter may not have been influential here, and that by 1631 Frewen was more closely associated with Laud. The fourth dean, Thomas Jackson, was a client of Archbishop Neile: N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: the rise of English Arminianism c. 1590–1640*, Oxford 1987, 79, 121; Heylyn, *Cyprianus anglicus*, 208; n. 17 above.

⁴¹ Laud, *Works*, iv. 292–3; (5 July 1644), Worcester College, Oxford, MS 71.

⁴² Laud, *Works*, v. 155. For Bancroft's gifts to Laud see PRO, E 101/547/5, fos 1r, 11v, 60r, 89r, 116r, 129r, 144r.

⁴³ Brian Quintrell has suggested that historians may have exaggerated the intimacy between Laud and Juxon, and that after 1632 'the scope for Laud's patronage on Juxon's behalf was circumscribed'. A revealing letter from Juxon to Laud in 1627 suggests that Juxon was seen at that time as Laud's senior lieutenant in Oxford, but also that he was not regarded as as close to Laud as others such as Richard Baylie. Later correspondence shows how Laud relied on Juxon for Oxford affairs, and this trust, as Laud recorded in his diary, accounts for his (successful) backing of Juxon for the Clerkship of the Closet in 1632. We have few details about Juxon's promotion to Hereford, then London, in 1633, beyond the fact that Laud 'signified' Juxon's selection for Hereford, though not for London. As archbishop, Laud needed a dependable bishop of London, and of the

Skinner,⁴⁴ Llandaff to his chaplain Morgan Owen,⁴⁵ and Chichester to his close associate at Oxford, Brian Duppa.⁴⁶ He may have also secured St David's for Roger Mainwaring and Peterborough for John Towers, for both regarded Laud as their patron, as did John Warner, consecrated bishop of Rochester in 1638, whose gifts to Laud before and after his elevation are recorded in Laud's accounts;⁴⁷ Heylyn tells us that Curle owed Winchester to Laud, who was determined to appoint an ally to a see possessing visitatorial rights over five Oxford colleges at the time when Laud was embarked on reforming the university;⁴⁸ and according to Anthony Wood, a late and sometimes unreliable authority, William Roberts owed his elevation to Bangor to Laud. This is an impressive list of bishops who owed their advancement to Laud, and it suggests that his was the dominant voice in ecclesiastical appointments.⁴⁹

Dominant, but not wholly unrivalled. First, Charles I, like James I before him, on occasion selected bishops without prompting from Laud or anyone else. Secondly, a host of leading councillors – among them Portland, Pembroke, Dorchester – periodically were prepared to back clerical candidates, though the only recorded occasion of a tussle for a bishopric between several patrons, including Laud, concerns the choice of John Owen for St Asaph in 1629. The earl of Montgomery, future earl of Pembroke, pushed the claims of his chaplain, Griffith Williams, against

candidates voiced for the post – Juxon, Wren, Piers and Bancroft – Juxon was surely his preferred choice, and it is likely that here, as elsewhere with the crown's ecclesiastical patronage, the king consulted him. This may be the explanation for John Hacket's allegation at the time that Laud had backed Juxon in preference to Wren: Quintrell, 'The Church triumphant?', 91–4, 96 n. 44; PRO, SP 16/87/48, 189/33, 214/38, 49, 244/37, 53; SO 3/10; Laud, *Works*, iii. 215–16; S. Wren, *Parentalia*, London 1750, 49–50.

⁴⁴ LPL, ms 943, p. 133; Fincham, 'Oxford and the early Stuart polity', 210. For Skinner's gifts to Laud see PRO, E 101/547/5, fos 1v, 23r, 95r, 121r.

⁴⁵ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed. P. Bliss, London 1813–20, iv. 803–4; *DNB*, s.v.

⁴⁶ PRO, SP 16/165/28, 247/32; Laud, *Works*, v. 49–50, 75, 84, 100. Laud later chose Duppa as an overseer of his will: *Works*, iv. 450. Duppa's lay patron was the earl of Dorset, and as tutor to Prince Charles from 1635 he also enjoyed some independent standing with the king. ⁴⁷ PRO, SP 16/210/82, 298/43, 254/39; E 101/547/5, fos 1r, 58r, 89r.

⁴⁸ Heylyn, *Cyprianus anglicus*, 227, a reference I owe to Andrew Hegarty. PRO, E 101/547/5 lists innumerable gifts to Laud from Curle; further links are revealed by Curle's own patronage. One of his chaplains at Bath and Wells (1629–32) was Laud's intimate and kinsman, Thomas Walker, while at Winchester he bestowed canonries on John Oliver and Edward Stanley, both chaplains to Laud: BL, ms Add. 39535, fo. 9r; Hampshire Record Office, A1/31, fos 45r, 55r.

⁴⁹ Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ii. 888. Other bishops who may have owed their elevation, in part at least, to Laud were Goodman of Gloucester and Montagu of Chichester. Goodman in 1634 thanked Laud for recommending him to the see of Hereford, to which he had been promoted, but then forced (in his view) to renounce, while Montagu, on the eve of his elevation to Norwich in 1638, expressed gratitude for Laud's 'longe, continued, extraordinary favores' to him: G. Soden, *Godfrey Goodman, bishop of Gloucester 1583–1656*, London 1953, 210–23; PRO, SP 16/386/63.

Dr Theodore Price, backed by Laud and possibly also by Bishop John Williams. The identity of Owen's patron is unknown: indeed, as chaplain to Charles as both prince and king, Owen may not have needed one. Price died in 1631, allegedly as a convert to Roman Catholicism, and his association with Laud was used against the latter by Pembroke at the time and by William Prynne in the 1640s. Laud's response then was that Price 'was more inward with another Bishop, and who laboured his preferment more than I', a reference to Williams, whose support for Price in the early 1620s is well-documented.⁵⁰

This defeat over a minor Welsh bishopric is the only example we have of Laud failing to secure a see for his candidate.⁵¹ There were a few other episcopal promotions which he would not eagerly have endorsed, notably Thomas Morton's move from Coventry and Lichfield in 1632 to the important see of Durham.⁵² Moreover Laud sometimes informed Wentworth that he had struggled to secure crown livings for his nominees, and conspicuously failed to land any benefice for Wentworth's chaplain, William Watts, though in this case he may not have tried too hard.⁵³ But if we conclude that not everything went Laud's way, we should note too that he faced no rival power-blocs in the disposal of crown patronage. The third earl of Pembroke, aided by his brother Montgomery, had constructed an extensive Calvinist and Puritan clientele, and his influence was evident at court in the 1620s, backing figures such as John Preston,

⁵⁰ Pory to Scudamore, 24 Dec. 1631, PRO, C 115/M35, no. 8387; SO 3/7 (Oct. 1621); *The Eagle* [Magazine of St John's College, Cambridge] xvii (1893), 147; Laud, *Works*, iv. 495; Birch, *Court and times of Charles I*, ii. 21; William Prynne, *A quench-coale*, Amsterdam 1637 (RSTC 20474), 42, and *Canterburies doome*, London 1646 (Wing P3917), 355; Hacket, *Scrinia reserata*, i. 107; ii. 97, 207; A. Milton, *Catholic and reformed*, Cambridge 1995, 370 n. 209. It is worth noting that, Laud's remark aside, there is no contemporary evidence that Williams supported Price's bid for St Asaph in 1629.

⁵¹ In 1630 Laud also failed to win the wardenship of Winchester for his chaplain, Edward Stanley, which has been cited as an example of Laud's limited influence with Charles, since 'the king's letters overruled his own'. This is incorrect. Laud wished to avoid excessive interference in the election, but obtained Charles's letter in favour of Stanley when he learnt that a rival group were attempting to procure a royal mandate. Notwithstanding the king's letter, many of the fellowship did not vote for Stanley: Laud, *Works*, vi. 278–9, 288–90; PRO, SP 16/173/14, 17, 19, 22, 47, 59; Davies, *Caroline captivity*, 40–1; C. Carlton, *Archbishop William Laud*, London 1987, 76.

⁵² Morton was no ally of Laud, who on occasion criticised his conduct: see, for example, Laud, *Works*, vii. 61–2. Other unwelcome preferments may have been Hall to Exeter, Potter to Carlisle and possibly Wright to Coventry and Lichfield: in all, not a large number. For Hall and Potter see p. 89 below.

⁵³ In December 1638 Laud informed Wentworth that he had been unable to prevail with the king for a benefice for Watts since 'the suits of his own chaplains in ordinary coming so thick upon him for all those few preferments which are now left in the crown'. In fact, the Signet Office docquet books prove that for the previous six months only two of the twenty-one ministers preferred to crown livings were chaplains in ordinary, the remainder being suitors of Watts's status: Laud, *Works*, vi. 557; PRO, SO 3/11–12.

Henry Leslie and probably Joseph Hall.⁵⁴ This ideological grouping appears not to have survived the death of the third earl in 1630. His successor, the Lord Chamberlain and fourth earl, did land royal chaplaincies for two of his domestic chaplains – Thomas Lawrence and William Brough – but both were fervent Laudians. Lord Keeper Coventry pushed some of his chaplains for higher office – notably Christopher Potter and Gilbert Sheldon – but again both were willing advocates of the new emphasis on order and discipline, and made their mark with Laud.⁵⁵ Laud's active or tacit support is evident behind other bids by leading councillors. If we believe Laud's testimony at his trial, Lord Treasurer Weston secured Augustine Lindsell's elevation to Peterborough in 1633, though Lindsell was a long-standing friend of Laud and client of Archbishop Neile of York. Both Laud and Lindsell had been members of Neile's household in the early 1620s when he was bishop of Durham.⁵⁶ It is also the case that there is little evidence for the influence of Calvinist courtiers and councillors such as Holland, Northumberland and Manchester.

Nor did Laud face any obvious clerical rival. Archbishop Abbot's discomfort at the triumph of Laudianism after Charles I's accession is well-known, and his lack of influence is underlined by his absence from the Signet Office records after 1625. As Abbot complained in 1627–8, 'with bishoprics and deanries, or other church-places, I was no more acquainted than if I had dwelt at Venice, and understood of them but by some gazette'.⁵⁷ In contrast, Laud's fellow metropolitan, and former patron, Richard Neile, had an occasional role in crown patronage, probably being responsible for royal chaplaincies for Benjamin Laney and John Cosin and, possibly, the deanery of Hereford for Jonathan Browne in 1636.⁵⁸ Julian Davies has suggested that Matthew Wren may have been a potential rival whom Laud feared, and there were rumours of friction between the two in 1633. However, it is not the case that Wren 'ousted' Juxon, Laud's ally, as Clerk of the Closet that year, since Juxon vacated

⁵⁴ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 168; R. Cust, *The forced loan and English politics 1626–1628*, Oxford 1987, 74–5; Fincham, *Prelate as pastor*, 31, 215, 259; M. Heinemann, *Puritanism and theatre*, Cambridge 1980, 271–9.

⁵⁵ Laud, *Works*, iv. 295; v. 244–5; Thomas Lawrence, *Two sermons*, Oxford 1635 (RSTC 15328), and *A sermon preached before the kings maiesty*, London 1635 (RSTC 15326); Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, iii. 437; PRO, LC 5/132, pp. 42, 329; *DNB*, s.v. Brough. See also n. 17 above.

⁵⁶ Laud, *Works*, iv. 293; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 107, 118, 123. Another example, as noted above, was when Laud seconded Secretary Coke's successful bid to secure a bishopric for his brother, George.

⁵⁷ *Cobbett's complete collection of state trials*, ii, London 1809, 1476.

⁵⁸ Laud, *Works*, iv. 295; PRO, LC 5/132, pp. 336, 354; 5/134, p. 108; Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms Clarendon 5, fos 103–4, a letter which can be ascribed to Browne on internal evidence. Browne's earlier preferment to St Faith's, London, had been 'signified', most unusually, by Neile: PRO, SO 3/9 (July 1628).

the closet on his promotion to the deanery of the Chapel Royal. Laud, indeed, helped to secure a chaplain's slot and later a bishopric for Wren, though it is significant that Laud backed Juxon rather than Wren for the Clerkship of the Closet in 1632 and probably for the bishopric of London the following year.⁵⁹ Though Wren may have been the more confrontational of the two in his enforcement of religious change, he and Laud evidently co-operated closely, encouraged by a king who sought harmony not division among his trusted servants, both clerical and lay. They were supported by another rising star at court, Richard Steward, who succeeded Wren as Clerk of the Closet in 1636. Though Steward initially rose through the backing of Secretary Dorchester, he appeared to enjoy cordial relations with Laud.⁶⁰ The other major office-holders were White of Norwich and Curle of Winchester, successively Lord Almoners to Charles I, both with personal ties to Laud.⁶¹ In July 1639 Laud was godfather to Matthew Wren's fourth son, named William in his honour; and in his will, dated January 1644, Laud left a bequest to his godson, specified that his sermons should not be printed without the approval of 'my reverend friends' Juxon, Wren and Steward, and appointed Juxon, Wren and Curle, among others, as overseers. Steward for one reciprocated this warmth, recalling in 1646 that Laud had been 'a very excellent friend'.⁶² In any case, there is little evidence to suggest that these court clerics were active patrons or brokers in ecclesiastical appointments during the 1630s; none appears as a signifier or procurer in the Signet Office books, and the selection of a royal chaplain or two seems to be the limit of their influence.⁶³ Laud, indeed, was the only churchman directly involved in ecclesiastical grants under the Signet during the 1630s.⁶⁴

My argument goes beyond depicting Laud as the most significant patron in church preferment in the 1630s. It seems that he was effectively Charles I's ecclesiastical patronage-broker, acting as the king's trusted lieutenant, with a privileged position which was safeguarded and

⁵⁹ Davies, *Caroline captivity*, 44–5; PRO, LC 5/132, pp. 38, 338, 340. See n. 43 above.

⁶⁰ Laud, *Works*, vi. 253; PRO, SP 16/182/52. In 1628 Steward acknowledged Laud's commendation of him to Vossius: Bodl. Lib., Rawlinson letters 84 (b), fo. 121.

⁶¹ White, like Laud, had been a protégé of Richard Neile, and in 1635 publicly acknowledged Laud's 'long continued good affection to my selfe': Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 108; Francis White, *A treatise on the sabbath-day*, London 1635 (RSTC 25383), sig. A3ir. For Curle's links with Laud see p. 80 above.

⁶² Laud, *Works*, iv. 448–50; *The correspondence of John Cosin*, ed. G. Ormsby (Surtees Society lii, lv, 1869–70), i. 228–9. The baptism of William Wren was conducted by Laud's chaplain, Thomas Turner: PRO, E 101/547/5, fo. 106r.

⁶³ Ibid. LC 5/134, pp. 203, 296; Cranfield, 'Chaplains in ordinary', 127 n. 23.

⁶⁴ In 1625–9, besides Laud, Neile (once) and Samuel Harsnett (twice) are listed as involved in presentations to livings: PRO, SO 3/8 (June 1626), 3/9 (July 1628, Mar. 1629). On Laud's imprisonment in 1641, Juxon took over as a signifier, and was involved in the selection of new bishops that autumn: SO 3/12, fos 134, 140v, 148r, 158r; Davies, *Caroline captivity*, 40.

extended. Thus in 1635 Charles ordered that places in cathedral almshouses were not to be settled until Laud had been consulted, and resolved a jurisdictional dispute between Lord Keeper Coventry and the Master of the Court of Wards over which of the two officers had the right to present to vacant livings owned by royal wards, by entrusting Laud with this patronage, through the Signet. About the same time Charles committed to him the disposal of benefices falling into the crown's gift through simony.⁶⁵ The distribution of crown livings, Laud reminded Charles I from the Tower in February 1641, 'in part belongs to the service which your majesty was wont to trust me with'.⁶⁶ For Laud's voice was expected to be heard on the full range of ecclesiastical grants, even on dispensations for pluralities. In 1632, for example, Sir Thomas Aylesbury moved Charles I for a dispensation for Thomas Anian while the king was sitting at dinner in the presence chamber at Greenwich; and that time was taken in regard *my Lord of London was there attending his majesty* and delivered his opinion (being asked) that it might very fitly be done, and according to the canon. Whereupon his majesty gave present order, both for the dispensation, and for the clause of permutation, which my Lord of London named to be 23 miles.⁶⁷

Aylesbury, an intimate of the king, here acknowledged the importance of raising patronage issues in front of Laud, anticipating that Charles would turn to him for advice; and his account demonstrates that such advice was informed, and decisive.

A more detailed look at Laud's role in the allocation of livings through the Signet Office highlights his close supervision of the patronage wheel. Laud's grip over these presentations tightened as the 1630s progressed, so that after 1636 he was involved in 90 per cent of all such grants.⁶⁸ The papers of Lord Keeper Coventry contain hitherto unknown letters of Laud, which show him intervening when ecclesiastical grants under the signet were occasionally stayed at the Great Seal, usually because Coventry was uncertain of their legality. A good example here is the dispensation in 1629 for the eminent Dutch scholar Vossius to hold a prebendal stall at Canterbury, which Coventry questioned since Vossius was not in holy orders. Laud wrote a long letter urging that the dispensation pass the Great Seal and adding, remarkably, that he spoke for the king here: 'I humbly beseech your Lordship to dispatch his business soe soon as may be and to take my word (if your Lordship can soe think

⁶⁵ PRO, SP 16/255/2, 295/59; Laud, *Works*, iii. 409–10; iv. 128. PRO, WARD 9/355 and SO 3/11–12 indicate that between December 1635 and February 1641 the Signet Office handled presentations to livings falling into the crown's gift through wardship.

⁶⁶ Laud, *Works*, vi. 590.

⁶⁷ BRL, 900/230; my italics. For other examples of Laud's involvement in issuing dispensations see 900/231, 235, 500, 510.

⁶⁸ Laud 'signified' or 'ordered' 157 of the 171 presentations made by the crown between March 1636 and December 1640. Other signifiers were the secretaries of state, and, very occasionally, the earl of Arundel: PRO, SO 3/11–12.

it fitt) that it is his majestyes free pleasure that this dispensation should pass.⁶⁹

Laud was also concerned to safeguard the crown's rights of presentation against false or pretended lay patrons. Correspondence with Sir John Lambe and Bishop Bridgeman of Chester shows Laud's concern to learn of imminent vacancies in livings owned or claimed by the crown. 'I am informed', he wrote to Bridgeman in May 1635, 'that Mr Lee Rector of Standish in Lancashire...is dangerously sicke', and that the right of presentation for that turn belonged to the crown, so he urged Bridgeman not to institute a successor to the prejudice of the king's title.⁷⁰ Alongside entering caveats, Laud offered advice on disputed presentations. In 1638, in response to an inquiry from Laud, Bridgeman wrote to tell him that the parson of Hisham had died, and that two patrons claimed the right of presentation, and had sent clergy to Bridgeman for institution. Laud summarised the king's claim – 'as I am informed, the thing is found very cleere for the king' – and suggested that Bridgeman institute the crown's nominee, and allow the patronage to be tested by law. To judge from petitions submitted to the House of Lords in 1640–1, Laud intervened, to the same end, in other dioceses. At Tilehurst in Berkshire, for example, Bishop Davenant of Salisbury was instructed by Laud to ignore rival patrons and institute the king's clerk. In this case, this was to a living worth under £20 a year and therefore in the Lord Keeper's gift – indeed, the beneficiary was Dr Littleton, Coventry's examining chaplain. At Hereford, Bishop Coke told another patron that he dared not institute his candidate since 'the lord archbishopp of Canterbury had taken especial notice of the kings title, and right of presenting to that vicaridge'.⁷¹ Laud was also associated with – indeed he may have encouraged – prosecutions for simoniacal presentations which, if proven, meant the patronage for that turn fell to the crown.⁷² Bridgeman is one of the few Caroline bishops whose correspondence survives in bulk, and it is very likely that similar letters on patronage matters, now lost, were regularly despatched from Lambeth to his fellow bishops.

Laud's unflagging defence of royal patronage suggests that he was primarily responsible for the letter on the usurpation of crown livings which was issued under the Signet in July 1632 to the archbishop of Canterbury, for distribution to the episcopate. Bishops were urged to search their registers before instituting clergy, to ensure that the crown's

⁶⁹ BRL, 892/17.

⁷⁰ Laud, *Works*, vii. 38–9; SRO, D1287/18/2/P/399/125. For other caveats see D1287/18/2/P/399/124, 169, 187.

⁷¹ Ibid. D1287/18/2/P/399/171; House of Lords Record Office, Main papers, H.L., 25 May 1641 (Tilehurst vicarage), 15 Jan. 1641 (Bucknell vicarage, Shropshire). See also J. S. Hart, *Justice upon petition*, London 1991, 85–6.

⁷² Main Papers, H.L., 17 Dec. 1640 (Foston vicarage, Leics); Laud to Lord Keeper Coventry, 14 Aug. 1633, BRL, 902/454.

rights were not infringed, and, more specifically, to return to the Lord Keeper or Attorney-General a list of benefices in the crown's gift since 1588 to which other patrons had subsequently presented. The original draft of this circular appears to be in Windebanke's hand, and was amended by Laud.⁷³ Laud's motivation here is not difficult to fathom. It is well-known that he was intent on rolling back the control and influence of the laity over the jurisdiction and privileges of the clerical estate. Improvements should be restored, the value of tithe contributions increased, and existing rights of patronage protected. As an ordinary, Laud was a vigilant custodian of livings in his gift, and the same care he extended over the far more extensive patronage rights possessed by the crown. Here, as elsewhere, Laud could chip away at the pervasive control that the laity possessed over the ministry and ensure that these livings were filled by clergy who, uninfected by Puritanism, would strengthen Church and State; in the longer term, Laud may have hoped that the crown might hand over to the Church the advowsons of some of these livings, in the same way that Charles had been persuaded to restore impropriations to all crown livings in Ireland.⁷⁴

Laud's counsel was evidently prized by Charles when ecclesiastical patronage was being dispensed but, to come to the heart of the matter, we know little about their semi-private or private discussions when vacancies were to be filled. Certainly, Charles could overrule Laud's advice. As we have seen, the king ignored Laud's candidate for St Asaph in 1629, and refused to give him the see of Winchester in 1632. Laud's account of Wren's preferment to the bishopric of Norwich in 1635 also indicates that Charles reached this decision unaided. But Laud was to recall that Wren was also his choice, which he concealed since he was anticipating Wren's appointment and allowed Charles 'to discover himself'. This points to Laud's self-confidence in his dealings with the king so that, one way or other, his man would be promoted.⁷⁵ Again, Charles seems to have acted alone in 1638 when, on learning of the vacancy of Durham deanery, he immediately contacted the marquis of Hamilton, suggesting that Hamilton's nominee, Walter Balcanquhall, might prefer to wait for another preferment closer to London. However, Hamilton wrote to Laud for assistance and after further consultations Charles was persuaded to grant the deanery to Balcanquhall.⁷⁶ Where Charles was wholly dependent on Laud was over the disposal of benefices to candidates he did not know. Thus in September 1633 Charles I was trying to choose between two

⁷³ PRO, SO 3/10; SP 16/220/36, 79.

⁷⁴ C. Hill, *Economic problems of the Church from Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament*, Oxford 1956, 307–37; Davies, *Caroline captivity*, 83–4.

⁷⁵ Laud's view was that Charles needed 'a man he might trust', as the diocese was infested with Puritans: *Works*, vii. 167–8, 94.

⁷⁶ *Letters and journals of Robert Baillie*, i. 478–9; PRO, SO 3/12, fo. 17r.

nominees, Richard Walcher and Thomas Yates, for the crown living of Middleton Cheyney. The king, Laud and Lord Keeper Coventry (who narrates the incident) met at Denmark House. Laud

declared to his majestie what he conceived of the state of the busines and his opinion of Mr Yates to whom his Majestie had passed a bill for a presentation to this living which I stayed att the greate seale till his majestie declared his pleasure and thereupon his majestie...commanded that...the presentation for Mr Yates should passe.⁷⁷

Even if Charles I had his own views on nominees, Laud could exercise a crucial influence. When the deanery of Peterborough fell vacant in 1640, at Charles's request Laud drew up a shortlist of four royal chaplains, from which Charles picked John Cosin. Laud probably urged this choice, for the previous year he was acknowledging Cosin's merits, and his strong case for higher office. At his trial, Laud recalled that Charles had picked Cosin because his benefices in and around Durham were in the hands of the Scots. Since Cosin had made this precise point to Laud in a letter a month before his selection to Peterborough, it is likely that Laud himself repeated the point to Charles, and earned Cosin his deanery.⁷⁸ At other times Laud may have drawn up similar shortlists for Charles's consideration, a procedure for senior appointments which goes back to late Elizabethan times, which would explain why candidates were so anxious to win Laud's backing.⁷⁹ When offering advice Laud had to heed Charles's rules on preferment, such as his wish to reserve bishoprics for chaplains in ordinary, but he was able to persuade Charles to adopt others, such as barring Irish bishops from holding an English *commendam*. As he told Wentworth, on this issue 'I shall never give way. And the king hath absolutely promised me, he will not do it.'⁸⁰ The king's trust in Laud's judgement evidently gave the archbishop unmatched opportunities to mould royal thinking as well as influence patronage.

III

It remains now to explore the uses to which Laud turned this influence. Was he as partisan a patron as his accusers claimed at his trial, when they suggested that he preferred only Arminians and popishly-inclined clergy? It is helpful here to recall Lord Falkland's distinction of 1641, between 'those who have beene carried away with the streame, and those that

⁷⁷ BRL, 902/470. ⁷⁸ Laud, *Works*, iv. 293–4; vi. 567; PRO, SP 16/467/129.

⁷⁹ HMC, *Salisbury MSS*, vii. 147; xii. 437–8. I am grateful to Brett Usher for discussions on this point.

⁸⁰ Laud, *Works*, vii. 238 (at p. 119 for Charles I's enforcement of this). Similarly, for Ireland, Charles accepted Laud's belief that bishops should not hold deaneries *in commendam* (ibid. vi. 274, 514).

have been the stream that carry'd them', in other words, between those who co-operated with some reluctance with Laudian reforms and alternatively those who championed the renewed emphasis on ritual and uniformity in public worship, and the attack on sermon-centred piety.⁸¹ Most of those we can identify as Laud's protégés fell into this second category. They include bishops such as Wren, Piers, Bancroft, Towers and Skinner, all of whom were vigorous supporters of Laudianism; royal chaplains such as William Heywood, Laud's leading censor of books at Lambeth; and of course Peter Heylyn, the most prolific and aggressive apologist for official action. A sample of the several hundred clergymen who received crown livings under Laud's supervision of the Signet suggests that the majority were committed Laudians. Alongside royal chaplains, deans and impoverished bishops, were writers such as Edward Boughen and Christopher Dow, heads of Oxbridge colleges, country clergy such as John Featley and Aaron Wilson, Richard Mileson, a chaplain to Richard Montagu and future Jesuit, and coming men such as Joseph Henshaw and Guy Carleton, both bishops after the Restoration.⁸² This is in contrast to the far larger number who received crown livings worth under £20 a year from Lord Keeper Coventry, where we find a genuine range of churchmanship, including the celebrated Puritan divine Richard Sibbes, and John Prideaux, high-priest of Oxford Calvinism, as well Laudian divines such as Thomas Walker, Gilbert Sheldon and William Chillingworth.⁸³

So how narrowly-based was Laud's patronage? Did he avoid preferring those Calvinist conformists who had some private misgivings about official policy in the 1630s, those, in Falkland's words, who 'have beene carried away with the streame'? At his trial Laud maintained that his patronage *was* in fact broadly-based, and as proof listed (after considerable thought) the names of a dozen clergymen for whom he had obtained advancement either from the crown or from his own gift.⁸⁴ The twelve were all orthodox Calvinists, several of them evangelicals, with links with Puritan nonconformists, and a few had even become prominent opponents of episcopacy by the time of Laud's trial. However, as an illustration of the breadth of Laud's patronage, the list does not make very convincing

⁸¹ Ibid. iv. 292; Milton, *Catholic and reformed*, 9.

⁸² PRO, SO 3/10 (Feb., Mar., Aug. 1633); SO 3/11 (Mar. 1635; May 1636); SO 3/12, fos 4v, 65r. For Featley see also his *Obedience and submission: a sermon*, London 1636 (RSTC 10742). Both Wilson and Henshaw also received preferment in Laud's gift as archbishop: LPL, Laud's Register, i, fos 310r, 316.

⁸³ BRL, 901/96, 902/482, 496, 728, 734.

⁸⁴ Laud, *Works*, iv. 297–8. Those not discussed below are Thomas Westfield, Richard Heyrick, Francis Taylor, Thomas Jackson and Jackson's son-in-law, John Banks. Laud could have added Francis Cheynell to this list, who, to his considerable surprise, was presented by High Commission to the living of Marston St Lawrence in 1637: his comments are printed in E. S. Cope, *Politics without parliaments 1629–1640*, London 1987, 68.

reading. They included three bishops: George Coke, Joseph Hall and Barnaby Potter. Laud's support for Coke's elevation, as we have seen, is independently documented, and thereafter he remained a benign overseer, though growing slightly exasperated with Coke's dependence on him;⁸⁵ but his role in the appointment of Hall and Potter may have amounted to no more than formally backing well-placed candidates. Potter was an evangelical Calvinist who we find in the 1630s fund-raising in his old haunts in the south-west for preachers to fill his diocese of Carlisle, at a time when Laud was regulating preaching elsewhere. There is no evidence of intimacy between the two before or after Potter's consecration.⁸⁶ As for Hall, he was appointed to Exeter in 1627, and in the 1640s recalled that he secured it only because Buckingham, Laud's patron, was out of the country; moreover Laud and Hall were neither ideologically nor personally close, which is unsurprising when we recall Hall's open letter of 1611 to 'Mr W.L.' publicly rebuking him for dallying with the Romanists. Indeed, during his early years at Exeter, Hall was to feel distinctly at odds with the Laudian regime in London, and suffered the indignity of having his work censored by one of Laud's chaplains as too Calvinist.⁸⁷

Another of the twelve was Griffin Higgs. At his trial Laud claimed that he had secured the deanery of Lichfield for Higgs, a fellow collegian, though he failed to add that Higgs was also preferred at the suit of his patroness, Elizabeth of Bohemia.⁸⁸ A fifth turned out to be a Puritan Nonconformist, so his preferment was evidently a mistake. Laud collated Herbert Palmer to the living of Ashwell in 1632, as a result of the intervention of a powerful patron, probably the earl of Winchelsea. Subsequently Palmer refused to read the Book of Sports and attacked Laudian innovations.⁸⁹ A sixth looked a safe bet at the time. In 1637 Calibut Downing, then a staunch conformist, was preferred by Laud to the crown living of Hackney. Only in 1640 did Downing abandon his support for Laudianism and became a critic of episcopacy, earning him the label of 'a reputed weathercock', according to Anthony Wood.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ See p. 78 above; HMC, *Cowper MSS*, ii. 198–9.

⁸⁶ Devon Record Office, Exeter City Archives L.359; Doctor Williams's Library, RNC 38.35 i, pp. 69, 228; Walter Yonge noted in his diary that Potter was elevated at the king's 'own motion': BL, ms Add. 35331, fo. 26r.

⁸⁷ K. Fincham and P. Lake, 'Popularity, prelacy and Puritanism in the 1630s: Joseph Hall explains himself', *EHR* cxi (1996), 856–81. One reason Laud may have supported Hall's candidature was to take advantage of the offices which Hall would vacate on his elevation: the deanery of Worcester went to William Juxon, the archdeaconry of Nottingham to Richard Baylie, both close associates of Laud: PRO, SO 3/9 (Dec. 1627).

⁸⁸ Laud, *Works*, vii. 590. Higgs regularly sent gifts to Laud, even after the archbishop's fall from power: PRO, E 101/547/5, fos 20r, 55r, 61r, 94r, 121r, 145r.

⁸⁹ Samuel Clarke, *A general martyrologie...whereunto is added the lives of thirty two English divines*, London 1677 (Wing C4546A), 183–99.

⁹⁰ Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, iii. 106; PRO, SP 16/243/75.

However Laud did extend his favour to some Calvinists who shared his anti-Puritanism. Robert Sanderson was one such, as Peter Lake has demonstrated; another may have been Samuel Fell, cited by Laud as another of these twelve non-Laudians whom he had preferred, on this occasion to the deanery of Christ Church in 1638. Fell had been appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford in 1626, probably at the bidding of the Chancellor, the third earl of Pembroke, and had criticised the proclamation of the same year against debating the doctrine of predestination. However, in 1628 Fell can be found co-operating with Laud in opposing a Puritan vestry in Abingdon, an episode which needs further study. So perhaps it was Fell's anti-Puritanism, as well as his subsequent acceptance of the official moratorium on discussing predestination, which accounts for Laud's decision to back him in 1638; though it is possible that the deanery was the price Laud had to pay to ease Fell out of the Lady Margaret chair, which occurred at the same time, for relations between the two men were never warm, and sometimes distinctly chilly.⁹¹ In any case, taken together, this list of these dozen non-Laudians does not seem at all representative of Laud's patronage, either as advisor to the crown or as ordinary, and constitutes not the tip of an iceberg so much as the iceberg itself. In Laud's hands, crown patronage was primarily a tool to reward proven loyalty rather than to win over waverers or former critics.

But who was excluded? Whose advancement was demonstrably delayed by Laud's ascendancy? Among the chaplains in ordinary appointed before 1628, when Laud emerged as a key patronage figure, and who did not then advance, were John Prideaux, John Young and John Hacket. Though Prideaux earned a bishopric in 1641, after the fall of Laud and at a time when Charles was concerned to reassure mainstream Protestant opinion, he had experienced an unhappy decade before 1640 and had been typecast as the champion of doctrinal Calvinism then out of favour; indeed Laud may well have blocked his advancement.⁹² Young, dean of Winchester, was still hopeful of a bishopric in the later 1620s, and though he observed the new ritualism, he was no fervent advocate, and quarrelled with well-connected Laudians in the Winchester chapter.⁹³ John Hacket was chaplain, and future biographer, of Bishop Williams, Laud's *bête-noire*, with whom he was too closely linked to proceed far in the 1630s. In his biography of Williams, written in the 1650s, he bitterly attacked Laud's

⁹¹ P. G. Lake, 'Serving God and the times: the Calvinist conformity of Robert Sanderson', *Journal of British Studies* xxvii (1988), 81–116; P. White, 'The *via media* in the early Stuart Church', in K. Fincham (ed.), *The early Stuart Church*, Basingstoke 1993, 226; Laud, *Works*, v. 48, 178–80, 186 n. s, 220–4; Christ Church, Oxford, MS Estates 145, fo. 247, a reference I owe to Peter Yorke.

⁹² Tyacke, *History of the university of Oxford*, iv. 200, 209–10, 588–9.

⁹³ *DNB: missing persons*, ed. C. S. Nicholls, Oxford 1993, 740.

partisan patronage during the 1630s.⁹⁴ Others such as Samuel Ward, Master of Sidney Sussex, Cambridge, were kept out of the magic circle of chaplains in ordinary. Among those brought in from the cold as a result of the revolution of 1640–1 were Daniel Featley, once chaplain to Archbishop Abbot, whose works had been censored by Laud's chaplain; and Richard Holdsworth and Ralph Browning, both Masters of Cambridge colleges and opponents of some of the novel doctrines circulating in the university during the 1630s.⁹⁵

IV

This study of ecclesiastical patronage at the Caroline court strengthens some existing views and proposes others. Signet Office records, together with other evidence, confirm the growing power of the Laudian interest at court following Charles 1's accession. Rival churchmen, such as Archbishop Abbot and Bishop Williams, were excluded from decisions on preferment from 1625, while Laud's formal entry into Signet Office business can be dated to March 1628. There is a strong case thereafter for claiming that Laud possessed a pre-eminent role in the distribution of crown patronage of royal chaplaincies, benefices, deaneries and bishoprics, a role based on Charles 1's unswerving support and trust in him. Contemporaries acknowledged as much. Clarendon, for example, recalled that Laud 'had been...in great favour with the duke of Buckingham, whose great confidant he was, and by him [was] recommended to the king, as fittest to be trusted in the conferring all ecclesiastical preferments...and from that time he entirely governed that province without a rival'.⁹⁶ Clearly the king set the ground-rules, reserving senior positions for men he knew, usually his chaplains in ordinary, and personally conferring more minor posts such as benefices and canonries; but within this framework, Laud enjoyed considerable discretion and opportunities to sway the king, and shape the clerical elite. His dominant voice in the selection of chaplains in ordinary effectively controlled

⁹⁴ Hacket, *Scrinia reserata*, ii. 42, 86.

⁹⁵ Ward had been appointed a chaplain in extraordinary in February 1629, Brownrig in March 1638 and Featley in January 1639; the latter two became chaplains in ordinary in 1641. There was, of course, no automatic or necessary promotion from one to the other. In March 1641 Holdsworth became a chaplain in extraordinary, and both he and Brownrig were offered bishoprics in the autumn of 1641: PRO, LC 5/132, p. 85; LC 5/134, pp. 307, 435, 440, 442; C. Russell, *The fall of the British monarchies 1637–1642*, Oxford 1991, 271–2, 412.

⁹⁶ Edward Hyde, *History of the rebellion and civil wars in England*, Oxford 1849, i. 127. See also Heylyn's statement that in c. 1625 Laud became 'as it were his majesties secretary for all church concerns' (*Cyprianus anglicus*, 140), while, from the Isle of Wight Sir John Oglander observed that 'all ecclesiastical preferments hung' on Laud: *A Royalist's notebook*, London 1936, 59.

recruitment to higher church office. Laud's views may not have always prevailed with the king, but the suggestion here is that very often they did.

Laud's position as patronage broker is perhaps comparable with that exercised by the duke of Buckingham over ecclesiastical appointments in the early 1620s, with recommendations often supplied by Lord Keeper Williams.⁹⁷ In the 1630s Laud combined Buckingham's dominance with the expertise of Williams to advance the careers of numerous divines, at every level of the Church, committed to the Laudian vision of further reformation, among them the militant figure of Matthew Wren. We await a detailed study of clerical politics at the court of Charles I, but it may be that talk of sustained rivalry between Laud and Wren is dubious. Alongside positive evidence of co-operation between the two is the deafening silence from Laud's diary and private letters, written by a man never able to conceal his anxieties.

Laud's commanding influence in patronage reflected his intimate standing with the king, and has no obvious precedent in the post-Reformation Church. The principal brokers for ecclesiastical patronage at the Elizabethan court had been the Cecils, Leicester and Essex, and even Archbishop Whitgift, the only churchman to become a privy councillor during the reign, remained a subordinate figure, most effective when he co-operated with the Cecils. Episcopal status at court certainly rose after 1603, but until the later 1620s laymen, not clerics, continued to be the most influential patrons and advisers on preferment, notably Salisbury and Buckingham.⁹⁸ Laud's predecessor, George Abbot, had to struggle at the Jacobean court to exercise much influence over patronage. The transformation of central politics and administration under the clericalist Charles I changed the whole operation of ecclesiastical patronage at court, and created one churchman, Laud, as privileged adviser to the king on clerical promotions. By the late 1630s, indeed, Laud was a very powerful patron: alongside his role at court, there was his extensive patronage as archbishop, as well as the considerable influence he wielded as Chancellor of Oxford, where, following the suspension of Bishop Williams, he was Visitor to all but seven of the colleges.

If Laud emerges from this study as a major figure in one crucial aspect of ecclesiastical affairs, it may well be that recent work has underplayed his influence elsewhere. Certainly we should welcome the move away from the traditional view of religious change in the 1630s, where Laud occupied central stage while Charles was treated as a gnomie figure, whose views and actions seemed irrecoverable. However, the case for

⁹⁷ *The Fortescue papers*, ed. S. R. Gardiner (Camden Society n.s. i, 1871), 128, 157–60, 162–3, 174, 179, 187, 204–5; PRO, SO 3/7–8.

⁹⁸ W. B. Richardson, 'The religious policy of the Cecils 1588–1598', unpubl. DPhil. diss. Oxford 1994, ch. v; Fincham, *Prelate as pastor*, 22–34; and the forthcoming work of Brett Usher.

Charles's dynamic role as supreme governor has been advanced primarily by downsizing the contribution and importance of his archbishop. A more fruitful approach may be to reconstruct the evolution and character of that close working relationship between king and archbishop, identifying areas of harmony and points of friction or creative tension, and recognising it as a partnership of prince and prelate unparalleled since the Reformation. The field is ripe for further investigation.