Introduction: addressing, petitioning and the public

Why on earth is this a 'humble address' in this age? Are the royal family superior beings to the rest of us? Are we inferior beings to them? This was the feeling of the House seven centuries ago when we accepted [the] rule under which we speak now. We live in an egalitarian time where we recognise the universality of the human condition, in which royals and commoners share the same strengths and frailties ... If these occasions are to be greatly valued, it should be possible for members to utter the odd syllable that might be critical. The sycophancy described by the Prime Minister ... is something that must sicken the royal family when they have an excess of praise of this type.

Paul Flynn MP (8 June 2011).[1]

The avowedly republican Labour MP Paul Flynn made this intervention in a Commons debate on delivering a humble address to Prince Philip on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday. Flynn's comments were markedly out of step with the sentiments of his parliamentary colleagues on both sides of the House: the opposition leader Ed Miliband had instead celebrated the Duke's 'unique turn of phrase' while the then Prime Minister David Cameron spoke of the royal consort's 'down-to-earth, no-nonsense approach' which endeared him to the British public.[2] A year later, another royal celebration, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, prompted a further round of loyal addresses, with twenty-seven 'Privileged Bodies' (religious organisations, universities and civic corporations) sending their congratulations to Elizabeth II. Again, in among the general chorus of praise for the Queen, a few dissonant voices could be heard. The British Quakers were one of the groups invited to produce an address honouring the Jubilee but the acceptance of the invitation prompted consternation and criticism from some Friends. Central to this was the perceived clash between the Quaker ideal of equality and the celebration of the rule of a hereditary monarch. The form of an address itself pushed Quakers into employing the Queen's title when Friends generally employ only the given names of individuals. Some Quakers wondered how celebrating the

rule of a monarch who was also Commander-in-Chief of the British armed forces could be squared with the Society of Friends' commitment to pacifism. In spite of this controversy, British Quakers did deliver an address congratulating the Queen on her sixty-year reign but they used the text of the address to raise issues of current concern to the Society of Friends (environmental sustainability and marriage equality). It was also reported that Jocelyn Dawes who read the address to the Queen did not curtsey before Elizabeth II but only bowed her head.[3]

As the British Monarchy's own website explained, though loyal addressing was now essentially 'ceremonial in nature' and used only on 'very special Royal occasions', it had once been a 'valuable and important privilege' which had provided a means of 'letting the authorities know what people at large, or at any rate an organised section of them, thought and felt about current political questions, or the conduct of Government'.[4] The responses of Paul Flynn MP and later the Quakers seemed to hark back to this previous role – both Flynn and the Society of Friends sought to use these texts to convey criticisms or demands to the Crown. In both instances, they chose to debate the address publicly, in Parliament or through the press. In the case of the Quakers' address, the presentation of the text itself was arguably an extension of this political argument with Dawes breaching normal royal etiquette by instead honouring Quaker traditions of 'social testimony'.

In the context of the summers of 2011 and 2012, dominated by the public celebration of Britain's monarchy, these critical voices were rare indeed. The majority of addresses, which saw the Queen's Jubilee as no more than an occasion for national celebration, were nonetheless connected to that earlier tradition of loyal addressing. The very process of addressing, with the presentation of the text followed by the delivery of royal thanks and acknowledgement, resonated with the historic role of this form as a 'point of contact' between the centre and the localities; and while the addresses were reported online, in the press and on television, they were also publicised in the same fashion as they would have been three centuries ago – in the pages of the *London Gazette*.[5]

Paul Flynn's attack on the Commons' 'Humble Address' as nauseating flattery represented another continuity between the addresses of 2011–12 and those of the seventeenth century. This book, however, will demonstrate that these addresses were much more than a mechanism for showering sycophantic praise upon authority: they were an integral part of what the historian Karin Bowie has termed the 'opinion politics' of the early modern period.[6] This book focuses on mass loyal addressing, from its emergence as a form of political communication towards the end of the Cromwellian Protectorate to its zenith as a vehicle for controversy at the turn of the eighteenth century. Public opinion, as represented in loyal addresses, was utilised to legitimate the actions and ideals of the political centre. The processes, rituals and ceremonies that surrounded addressing, however, suggested a reciprocal

relationship between addresser and addressee, and addresses frequently voiced criticism of, and placed demands upon authority. Likewise, the exploitation of popular political participation to support government ultimately gave power to the judgement of 'the public' in political affairs. Addressing consequently raised major questions about representation, sovereignty and the nature and extent of public involvement in the political process.

In these respects, addressing shared many features with a related and more extensively researched political activity: petitioning. While not denying the important role of petitions as vehicles for articulating and representing public opinion, it will be argued here that particular features of the address encouraged a developing awareness of a political public. In contrast to often localised petitioning activity, addressing campaigns were typically national (and sometimes international) in scope. Connected to royal accessions, the waging of war and the securing of peace, addresses connected local communities to a broader national narrative. This facilitated the growth of a persistent public memory of addressing activity, providing a record of both corporate and individual political action. Although the language of loyal addressing was often highly emotional and the controversies articulated through these texts fiercely contested, this memory enabled these texts to be used critically to guide political action and to hold people and communities to account. Consequently, a political form ostensibly designed to flatter authority paradoxically played an integral role in the emergence of a critical, political public.

This book contributes to recent research that has identified forms of political communication closely related to addressing – petitioning – as facilitating the growth of the early modern public sphere. Petitioning, after a period of neglect, has become a vogue topic again, exemplified by recent work from (among others) Peter Lake, David Zaret, John Walter, James Daybell, Beat Kümin and, for the later period, Mark Knights.[7] However, in contrast to petitioning, loyal addresses have received relatively little attention, even though in the later seventeenth century they unquestionably overtook the petition as a mode of mass political communication. The exceptions have been the work of Knights, both in his first monograph, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis* and in his more recent *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart England*, and for Scotland the work of Karin Bowie.[8] Recently, Scott Sowerby has explored the use of loyal addresses to build political coalitions in support of James II's tolerationist policies.[9]

One reason for this relative lack of research is simply that in contrast to petitioning, already well established as a political practice by the late medieval period, addresses were of a more recent vintage. John Oldmixon, in his *History of Addresses* (1709), identified the practice of offering humble addresses to the Crown as originating in the Cromwellian era.[10] As Mark Knights has noted, large numbers of addresses were issued congratulating Richard Cromwell on succeeding his father as Lord Protector (discussed in more detail in Chapter two).[11] In contrast to petitions, that is communications

which made a request or entreaty to authority, addresses were ostensibly only an expression of feeling, delivering the congratulations or thanks of a particular community. The two forms nonetheless remained closely related. In an important recent article, Derek Hirst has observed that groups petitioning the Protectorate developed the ploy of attaching their petitions to humble addresses as a means of ensuring that their grievances were heard.[12]

Given their apparent novelty, it is perhaps unsurprising that fewer formal rules (if any) seem to have been developed with reference to addressing. As with petitions, no address should be presented that deals with matters currently before Parliament. A humble address has now also become the standard response to the Queen's speech.[13] During the Exclusion Crisis, however, addresses from Parliament to the monarch were less formulaic and more explicitly confrontational, calling for the removal of royal ministers deemed to be obstructing exclusion bills and even for the removal from the Court of members of the royal household – specifically Catherine of Braganza and her Catholic attendants. (This more contentious use of parliamentary humble addresses has recently been revived as an opposition strategy. In November 2017, the Labour party issued a 'motion for return', an order for the production of papers, traditionally framed as a humble address, in a bid to force the government into releasing details of its Brexit impact case studies.)[14] As we will see, addresses from counties and boroughs could also make assertive demands, whether it was to bind MPs to particular election promises or to call for frequent parliaments or the protection of the Church of England. In fact, there appears to have been little official protocol about how addresses should be produced (Steven Poole has suggested that formal procedures for presenting addresses to the Crown only developed in the wake of deluge of addresses sent to William IV during the 'May Days' of 1832) and in this sense, their format and content appears to be less proscribed in principle than that of petitions.[15]

There were significant differences, though, in terms of the supposed catalysts for petitions as opposed to addresses. To put it simply, addresses were normally meant to be initiated from the top down, petitions from the bottom up. Josef Redlich defined an address as the traditional form of response to 'solemn messages from the Crown'.[16] So it might be argued that petitions were inherently more 'popular' in nature. They were at least supposed to emerge from communities and communicate grievances to the political centre (although we know that many petitions were produced at the centre to give the impression of local support for national causes). In contrast, the issuing of loyal addresses was often a product of prompting by the Court itself – as in the case of those in the wake of the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament, after the Rye House Plot, in response to James II's second Declaration of Indulgence and following the assassination plot of 1696.[17]

Even so, one surprising feature of these addresses is the fact that wholescale plagiarism of texts was relatively uncommon. This supports the

impression that, though often prompted by the Crown, loyal addresses were actually local productions. This in turn fits with Karin Bowie's observation of Scottish addressing campaigns, that, in order for them to be influential, 'elite-sponsored messages still had to resonate with local grievances, attitudes and loyalties'.[18] Moreover, it was not the case that addresses were only drawn up at the instigation of the Court. Oldmixon's *History* was written in response to a Tory/High Church addressing campaign warning of 'the Church in danger'. That campaign, essentially sympathising with the clergyman Henry Sacheverell, impeached for his inflammatory sermon *The Perils of False Brethren*, was certainly not initiated by the Crown or the governing Whig ministry.[19] The similarities between petitioning and addressing in this period were testified to by the extent to which they were deemed synonyms of one another. The 1661 act that attempted to prohibit mass petitions had the full title of 'An Act Against Tumults and Disorders upon Pretence of Preparing or Presenting Public Petitions or other **Addresses** to His Majesty or the Parliament' and referred to the problems posed by 'petitions, complaints, remonstrances and declarations, and other **addresses** to the King'.[20]

PETITIONING, ADDRESSING AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

It is worth noting here that the Restoration monarchy was attempting to regulate petitioning and addressing, rather than suppress it altogether. Even that proved impossible in the crisis decade of the 1680s, as it had before in the 1640s. The development of mass printed petitions as a permanent feature of the political landscape has been seen by some historians as indicative of wider changes in communicative practice. David Zaret argues that during the English Revolution, petitions 'simultaneously constituted and invoked public opinion'.[21] Examples of 'parrot petitions' (petitions from the localities which aped the substance of London petitions), petitions that were printed and sent out for subscription and then issued in a second printing with all the names attached, but most importantly the impact of mass printing of these petitions, led to the imposition of what Zaret calls 'dialogic order'. For Zaret, cheap print, through the ability to swiftly reproduce texts in massive numbers, to refer to other texts, excerpt chunks from them and comment upon them, created an ordered but rapidly evolving public political debate. According to Zaret, petitioning effectively constituted a public sphere as framers of petitions 'produced texts for an anonymous audience of readers, a public presumed not only to be capable of rational thought but also to possess moral competency for resolving rival political claims'.[22]

Mark Knights, whose work follows chronologically on from Zaret's investigation of petitioning in the 1640s, also sees petitioning and addressing as enabling greater political participation; however, he is more cautious about the degree to which these changes were sustained over time and the extent to which they altered normative assumptions about the role of the public

in political debate.[23] Knights notes that while the addressing campaigns of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century were truly national in scale and often invoked the idea of having captured the 'sense' or 'voice' of the kingdom, the authenticity of these addresses as representative of public opinion was highly contested. As Knights sees it, though the fact of greater popular participation was indisputable, the value of that involvement remained uncertain. Many feared that what these addressing campaigns really demonstrated was the ease with which the public could be swayed, not by reason, but by 'partisan polemic'.[24]

Knights' and Zaret's reading of petitioning and addressing reflects a wider scholarly engagement over the last twenty years with Jürgen Habermas' idea of a 'public sphere'. Since the publication in 1989 of an English translation of his 1962 work, a plethora of books have examined his claim that a 'public sphere that functioned in the political realm arose first in Great Britain at the turn of the eighteenth century'.[25] The responses of early modern scholars have ranged from enthusiastic adoption of the concept to outright rejection.[26] In a major recent article, Peter Lake and Steven Pincus have suggested that the appeal of the concept of the public sphere has been in no small part because it appears to offer a historiographical 'third way' between revisionism and older, 'Whiggish' interpretations.[27] They see the concept as not only allowing authors to employ a broader palette of primary sources (moving away from revisionist insistence on the primacy of manuscript evidence) but also encouraging historians to tackle longer-term historical development.[28] In the case of the subject of this study, the emphasis on cheap print (in the form of published petitions and addresses) and its role in fostering a more 'democratic' political culture could be seen as supporting Lake and Pincus' characterisation of the recent historiography.

Lake and Pincus' reading of the early modern public sphere does not represent a 'rigid application' of Habermas' scheme but rather offers 'variations on and applications of some [of his] basic themes and categories'.[29] The work of Knights and Zaret can also be seen as operating in a dialogue between Habermas and the empirical evidence of communicative practice in early modern England. Zaret, for example, defined his mission as attempting to find a 'viable compromise' between 'revisionist historiography' urging that historians must return to the sources, free of any theoretical preconceptions, and 'sweeping theories of the public sphere that simply cannot be squared with individual-level observations offered by meticulous, revisionist scholarship'.[30]

The idea of offering a re-reading of Habermas, informed by empirical studies of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England, however, is not without its problems. As J. A. Downie has rightly noted, these approaches often tend to present Habermas' 'bourgeois public sphere' as if it were an ideal type rather than something that was particular to a specific time (the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century) and a specific place (England).[31]

Overlooking this fact has allowed historians to claim that a public sphere also existed in Elizabethan and early Stuart England as well.[32] As one historian has joked, on the basis of the discovery of a Tudor public sphere, it will not be long before an equivalent is found for the Palaeolithic era too.[33] More important, the ability to see the public sphere as a moveable feast has arguably been a symptom of the tendency of historians to treat it as description of communicative practice and to reify it, collapsing an intellectual concept into concrete arenas for debate (coffeehouses) and particular forms of expression (pamphlets, petitions). Such treatments assume that 'public opinion' can be identified in the conglomeration of individual viewpoints found in the historical record.[34] This view has long been challenged by philosophical and sociological treatments of the concept which suggest that it is futile to attempt to disaggregate the process of identifying 'public opinion' with the construction or representation it.[35] Other studies seek to limit their focus to shifts in political practice. For example, although Lake and Pincus acknowledge ideological/intellectual change, their account of the public sphere largely remains a 'depiction of communication' and not primarily a discussion of changing understandings of the 'public' or 'public opinion'.[36] Although they discuss the emergence of new fields of public enquiry – notably political economy – their analysis is mainly devoted to charting the growth and increased reach of forms of political communication.[37]

The difficulty with such an approach, at least as far as they seek to remain in dialogue with the Habermasian public sphere, is that Habermas' concept is not represented by a particular social group, form of political communication or type of real discursive space. Rather, as Michael Warner has eloquently put it, the Habermasian public sphere is,

> an imaginary convergence point that is the backdrop of critical discourse in each of these contexts and publics – an implied but abstract point that is often referred to as 'the public' or 'public opinion' and by virtue of that fact endowed with legitimacy and the ability to dissolve power. A 'public' in this context is a special kind of virtual social object, enabling a special mode of address.[38]

This study consequently follows the approach of Geoff Kemp in seeing an analysis of the emergence/existence of an early modern public sphere as requiring the investigation of changes in beliefs and ideas as well as practices.[39] The approaches of Knights and Zaret also acknowledge this, viewing addresses and petitions, in Zaret's words as 'devices that mediate between nominal and real moments of public opinion'.[40]

As Jason Peacey's recent work demonstrates, however, this does not mean that an investigation of the emergence of public opinion must be an exercise in intellectual history: the experience of popular political activity could itself generate radical thought.[41] Moreover, Kemp's study of the Tory propagandist and censor Roger L'Estrange demonstrates that the development of the idea of public opinion could be the product of seemingly conflicting impulses and

beliefs – L'Estrange's drive to suppress the popular voice simultaneously gave acknowledgement to the judgement of the public in political and religious debate.[42] Popular addressing and petitioning had formed part of L'Estrange's attack on courting the multitude, his *Observator* complaining of the practice of getting 'half a dozen Schismaticall Hands to a Petition, or Address in a corner, and then call[ing] it, the sense of the Nation'.[43] L'Estrange's comments here support Knights' observation regarding growing concerns about the reliability of petitions and addresses as guides to public opinion. Knights' interpretation follows Habermas' own reading of the role of these devices in the early eighteenth century. Habermas noted that in this period:

> it became usual to distinguish what was then called 'the sense of the people' from the official election results. The average results of the county elections were taken to provide an approximate measure of the former. The 'sense of the people', 'the common voice', 'the general cry of the people', and finally 'the public spirit' denoted from this time onward an entity to which the opposition could appeal – with whose help, in fact, it more than once forced Walpole and his parliamentary majority to concessions.

However, Habermas was clear that the identification of 'the sense of the people',

> must not be construed prematurely as a sign of a kind of rule of public opinion. The true power constellation is more reliably gauged by the ineffectiveness of the numerous mass petitions organized since 1680. To be sure, in 1701 as well as in 1710, the dissolution of Parliament actually followed upon corresponding petitions; but these were basically mere acclamations of which the King made use.[44]

A number of features of loyal addresses do seem to make them a poor fit with the idea of a public sphere. As Habermas conceived it, the public sphere was essentially a critical space, separate from and in opposition to the monarchical State.[45] As already noted above, however, addressing activity was frequently initiated from the centre, by the Crown and/or its ministers. This was clearly a form of political communication in which the State was an active participant, not merely the passive object of public criticism. Though Habermas saw education and wealth as dictating that those who participated in the public sphere of critical debate would primarily be bourgeois men, crucially the normative values of this space held that social status was, in itself, no barrier to participation.[46] Addresses, on the other hand, were often keen to demonstrate their social credentials, marketing themselves as coming from the nobility, gentry and freeholders.[47] Conversely, those who sought to undermine the credibility of addresses would often claim that they were texts that had simply been foisted upon an ignorant rabble. Consequently, addresses also seem irreconcilable with another characteristic of Habermas' public sphere – the public's critical use of reason as the arbiter of debate.[48] Addresses instead could appear either insufficiently critical, reflecting their ostensible purpose as acclamations, overly emotional, conveying public

feeling rather than rational thought, or dependent upon either the social clout of subscribers and/or sheer weight of numbers.

This study will show, nonetheless, that in a number of important respects, loyal addresses assisted the development of features of political debate that Habermas saw as integral to the emergence of the early modern public sphere. While it is true that they frequently remained indebted to notions of social hierarchy, it will show that addresses were, in practical terms, often very inclusive, incorporating adult males across the social scale. Equally, though they often may have been prompted by the initiative of the State, addressing activity, mirroring as it frequently did major political events, repeatedly commented upon such '*arcana imperii*' as the succession of the Crown, the status of Parliament and the conduct of foreign policy.[49] Following on from this, addresses demonstrated another quality – reflexivity – that Habermas and other scholars, notably Michael Warner, have felt is integral to the public sphere. For Habermas, the public that read and debated coffeehouse periodicals such as the *Spectator* 'read and debated about itself'.[50] For Warner, the emergence of 'temporally structured' publications was critical to the development of a public sphere, encouraging a self-awareness of the flow of debate and creating the sense of discussion 'currently unfolding in a sphere of activity'.[51] As mentioned above, the role of major events in prompting the issue of addresses ensured that a sense of timeliness was built into this form of political communication. Yet, these were more than ephemeral publications. As we will see, addressing activity quickly developed a consciousness of its own past through collections and histories of addressing which collated and commented upon these texts.

Most important, addressing activity directly engaged with and helped transform the role of the public in political affairs. This study will not dispute Knights' point that concerns were often raised about the reliability not only of addresses as quantitative indicators of public opinion but also as indicative in qualitative terms of the public's views. It will suggest, however, that these concerns need to be treated with caution and recognised not, perhaps, as the appeal of reasoned debate against the verdict of a majority swayed by partisan polemic, but instead as (in J. A. Downie's words) 'the sort of *ex post facto* rationalization which seeks to obscure party prejudice or self-interest'.[52] Ultimately, even the severest critics of 'Modern Addresses' (Daniel Defoe, John Oldmixon) held back from condemning addressing *tout court*. The reason, as we will see, was twofold. First, although the change was gradual, the increasing role of public opinion in politics did lead to a shift in the normative values surrounding 'popular' involvement in politics. This study argues that the reign of James II did not represent a potential turning-point in which this process might have unfolded differently: in place of the 'culture of incessant public adulation coupled with a sophisticated print-based propaganda regime' which Lake and Pincus see as indicative of

his reign, this study will show that the practices of the 1680s were, in many ways, simply developments from and elaborations upon the tactics of the 1650s and 1660s.[53] While, to a certain degree, addressing campaigns might be stage-managed from the centre, the role of the public extended beyond simply shoring up authority. The implicit acknowledgement of the public involved in these exercises ultimately had a significant ideological impact. Popularity shifted from being a negative political value to one that was largely accepted and seen as a positive reflection of the nature of English government as founded on public consent. As Defoe remarked to Robert Harley in a letter of 1704:

> A Man Can Never be Great That is Not Popular, Especially in England. Tis Absolutely Necessary in the Very Nature of Our Constitution, where the People have So Great a Share in the Govornment.[54]

Acknowledging that government was fundamentally 'popular' was not, though, as we will see, the same thing as legitimising mass participation in political life. Indeed, one of the arguments of this book is that by the end of the seventeenth century, a substantial consensus had developed around limiting popular engagement in subscriptional activity.

Second, from the earliest use of loyal addresses at the end of the Cromwellian Protectorate, the State became actively involved in the promotion of these devices. This helps explain the continued expansion of media and spaces for public discussion in the post-Restoration era. As Lake and Pincus have described it, the State 'could not put the genie back in the bottle'.[55] One reason for this was that the Stuart monarchy had recognised the 'genie' of public opinion could be very useful. Yet addressing could never be employed solely to legitimise power. As Lex Heerma Van Voss has noted, petitioning activity authorised the intervention of the centre in the administration of the periphery.[56] At the same time, however, as James Scott has observed, languages of legitimation could also place obligations on authority, while subordinate groups could exploit the deferential discourse of the 'public transcript' to achieve certain goals or concessions.[57] The reciprocal nature of addresses, demonstrated through their issue and response, and the giving and acknowledgement of thanks, meant that they could simultaneously be used to place demands upon authority and reap rewards from it.[58] Equally, the language deployed in addresses, frequently presented loyalty as constituting bonds of mutual love between subject and sovereign. As Defoe elaborated in the same letter to Harley, a truly 'popular' government was that which gained 'General Esteem Founded upon Good Actions, Truly Meriting the Love of the People'.[59] This reciprocal, affective understanding of loyalty was a consequence of the fundamentally emotional nature of addresses: while petitions were ultimately requests that authority *do* something, addresses were ostensibly expressions of feeling (gratitude, hope, love).

This study consequently complements the Habermasian theory of the public sphere in seeing the normative acceptance of the critical role of public opinion as fundamental. It also follows Habermas in locating the key moment of ideological change as coming in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century. It supports Lake and Pincus' revised treatment of the early modern public sphere, however, in seeing this change as being in part facilitated by the participation of the State in public debate. It also sees the political 'public' that developed as both far more socially inclusive than envisaged by Habermas (including those on the margins of early modern society) and, at the same time, rhetorically more exclusive (often defined by status, gender, political affiliation and confessional identity). In this sense, though, as Geoff Kemp has noted, the early modern public was no different from its modern equivalent: it conceived of its 'audience as both the mass of the population and a coterie of discerning judges, a compound replicated in the imagined community of the modern political public'.[60] Critically, though, the question had shifted from being whether public opinion mattered to identifying who belonged to that discerning political public.

SOURCES, METHODS AND STRUCTURE

In making these claims, this book utilises a range of both printed and manuscript sources. The approach taken in this book is not to privilege either manuscript or printed evidence but to recognise the important role that both print and manuscript played in addressing activity, the former being critical to representing public opinion, the latter to the authenticating of texts as the genuine production of the communities they purported to come from. From the late 1650s onwards, loyal addresses were reproduced in great number in contemporary newsbooks, as well as being printed as separate broadsheets and collated into collections or compendia of texts. The value of this printed material is considerable. It provides us with a clear sense of the scale of these addressing campaigns, both in terms of the number of texts produced and also through reports of the numbers of individuals subscribing to these addresses. Analysis of these printed texts also provides us with an opportunity to see how addresses were used as vehicles for political and religious controversy. As well as preserving the content of addresses, print provides us with evidence of how these texts were produced and presented to authority, and often provides commentary on the disputes that sometimes arose in communities over issuing addresses. Cross- and counter-addresses provided clear evidence of partisan divisions, and print also played its part in fashioning political identity, attaching labels to different texts and assigning them to particular political or religious groupings ('Whig' or 'Tory', 'High Church' or 'Low Church').

Of course, this evidence needs to be treated with care. Addresses were most commonly reproduced in 'authorised' newsbooks – under the

Protectorate, *Mercurius Politicus*, after 1660 in the *London Gazette*. There is some evidence of under-reporting of particularly critical texts, with these addresses either omitted entirely or given only cursory notice. Addresses were unquestionably employed as a form of propaganda. Nonetheless, texts do not appear to have been simply fabricated. Comparison with manuscript addresses, for example, shows that the numbers of individuals reported to have subscribed to texts usually bore close relation to the actual number of subscribers. Instead, printed newsbooks, broadsheets and collections sought to 'spin' texts to demonstrate that public opinion was behind them. The repacking and editorialising of texts, as we will see, at times may have misrepresented the content of addresses. Yet, it also provides us with an indication of the importance of showing where the weight of public opinion lay. More than this, the process of identifying different addresses (and addressers) with particular positions, and recording this in print, embedded addressing activity in public memory. As will be shown later, printed addresses in newsbooks provided critical source material for collections and histories of addressing material which sought to provide a national and historical perspective on this activity. These texts in turn helped develop an awareness of shifts in public opinion over time, heightening a sense of the public as an independent, critical force.

Printed evidence is limited, however, in a number of respects. It offers us at best partial evidence of the actual process of production and subscription. This study employs manuscript returns and correspondence to shed light on how texts were prepared and then tendered to the public. Combined with other sources, such as parochial and tax records, this evidence also enables us to identify the social, religious and political background of subscribers. While this provides important proof of the social breadth of addressing activity and of the potential for addresses to be employed in the construction of political coalitions, the records of subscription in manuscript addresses can be deceptive. 'Fair copies' of addresses, for example, can give a misleading impression regarding the timing of subscription, conveying the sense that a document was subscribed in one sitting whereas sometimes a number of names were added at a later date. In addition, records of subscription, whether in originals or fair copies, provide very little evidence either about the motivations of subscribers or how individuals experienced addressing activity. For this reason, the book also makes use of 'ego texts' (diaries, memoirs and personal letters) to explore how contemporaries viewed addresses. Given the status of a number of these texts as private 'histories' or 'remembrances', such evidence also gives us a further insight into the relationship between addresses, memory and history.

The book begins by placing the loyal address in the context of other 'subscriptional genres' (to use Mark Knights' phrase), specifically petitions and oaths.[61] Reviewing the extensive historiography relating to both oath-taking

and petitioning, Chapter one notes similarities between the impact of this activity and addressing. As with oaths and petitions, addresses could also be used to mobilise popular support and to represent that support publicly. In addition, addressing campaigns, as in the case of oath-taking and petitioning activity, could be employed to broadcast political and religious arguments from the centre to the localities. Finally, addressing campaigns, as in the case of petitioning and oath-taking, could include those normally excluded from the political process. This expansion of the political nation, while temporarily expedient, could also encourage a sense of popular agency. Without denying the importance of either oath-taking or petitioning to popular politics in early modern England, the chapter points towards some distinctive features of addressing activity. In particular, the inherently public and national nature of addressing campaigns distinguishes them from petitioning. These aspects of addresses, it is argued, made them peculiarly mnemonic texts, facilitating the connection of local with national history. While mass subscription was also a feature of addressing, the 'acclamatory' nature of addresses appeared to confer less political agency upon individual subscribers. Moreover, while there is good evidence of the social breadth of addressing as well as petitioning activity, addresses, unlike oaths and petitions, do not appear to have been subscribed by women. This particular feature of addresses would become more important in the eighteenth century.

The next three chapters of the book explore chronologically several key addressing campaigns. Chapter two focuses on the addresses issued to Richard Cromwell on his accession as Lord Protector in September 1658, a moment often identified as critical to the development of the loyal address as a political form. The chapter supports Mark Knights' observation that addresses operated as both 'accession' and 'succession' literature: that is that they both acknowledged and also debated the legitimacy of the new ruler.[62] In the case of the addresses to Richard Cromwell, the texts sent to him also engaged in broader debates around the Protectoral settlement, particularly concerning religious policy. Together, these texts point towards a late Cromwellian 'succession crisis', national in scope and, through instances of mass subscription, reaching down the social scale. Though Richard's Protectorate was notoriously short, the value of addresses as vehicles for political coalition building appears to have been recognised in the campaigns for a 'free Parliament'. The value of these devices as legitimating tools was also acknowledged by the restored Stuart monarchy which encouraged and welcomed congratulatory addresses from many English counties. The final, critical legacy of the Cromwellian period was to establish the public memory of addressing activity: the Cromwellian addresses were swiftly collected and critiqued in a number of largely hostile texts. The story of Richard Cromwell's trunks, in which he reputedly preserved the original addresses sent to him, would long stand as an example of the unreliability of these texts as evidence of genuine popular affection.

The impact of the memory of addressing activity in the Cromwellian period is explored in greater detail in Chapter three. The 1680s represented the most intensive decade of addressing activity during the period covered by this book. These campaigns frequently engaged with the history of popular subscriptional activity, both petitioning and oath-taking, identifying it as a prime cause of the civil wars and revolution. Loyal addressing was presented as an antidote to 'tumultuous' petitioning and conspiratorial oaths and covenants. The addressing activity of the 1650s provided Whigs in particular with an alternative historical narrative that could be deployed not only to attack individuals, such as the press censor and propagandist Sir Roger L'Estrange, but also to question the legitimacy of loyal addresses as expressions of public opinion. The politics of memory were also critical to the difficulties experienced by James II in deploying addresses to support his tolerationist policies. In seeking to emancipate Roman Catholics and dissenters, James' strategy of forming alliances with these groups cut against the now well-established connection between sedition, Popery and nonconformity. These controversial addressing campaigns would generate their own persistent memory which would be redeployed after the revolution of 1688 to humiliate, undermine and criticise individuals and communities for their former readiness to proclaim loyalty to the exiled Catholic Stuart dynasty.

As Chapter four demonstrates, the successive waves of addresses in support of very different royal policies was also used to question the value of addresses as indicators of authentic public opinion, just as the repeated tendering of oaths of allegiance during the civil wars had been used to criticise the worth of these devices. Addressing activity, nonetheless, continued after 1688 and arguably increased its political influence as it came to be directly tied to electioneering. These campaigns, however, were successfully employed by the government's opponents as well as its supporters, mirroring the use of these texts in contemporary Scotland. The success of opposition campaigns led the government's supporters to again use the past history of addressing activity, especially its more notorious moments during the rule of Richard Cromwell and the reign of James II, to attempt to discredit the practice. While the criticisms of addresses were far-reaching, they did, however, stop short of calling for an end to the activity. Indeed, though addresses acted as vehicles for the heated partisan rhetoric of the 'Rage of Party', the tone of these campaigns concealed a broader consensus on the legitimacy of petitioning and addressing, as well as the necessity of maintaining legal restrictions on popular political activity.

The subsequent chapters then examine different facets of addressing activity thematically. Chapter five explores the evidence of subscription to loyal addresses to uncover how these texts were circulated and who subscribed to them. Focusing in particular on one manuscript text, the address of

the 'well-affected' inhabitants of Leicestershire to Richard Cromwell, the chapter demonstrates how subscription patterns mapped onto the geography of political allegiance and religious affiliation. The Leicestershire address also provides us with an unusual example of a cross- or counter-text existing within the same return and its very survival (within the papers of Cromwell's Secretary of State John Thurloe) may be explained as a consequence of the political suspicions the more equivocal text may have raised. It certainly demonstrates the social depth of addressing activity. Through a comparison of this manuscript with Hearth Tax records, the chapter shows that many of those subscribing to the Cromwellian address probably came from a significant but marginal section of society: those too poor to pay taxes but wealthy enough that they were not recipients of local relief or formal tax exemption. While addresses were occasionally very inclusive in terms of social status, in contrast to petitions and oaths, they appear to have been distinctively exclusive in terms of gender: female subscribers have been identified on only one manuscript address. Addresses issued immediately post-Restoration reacted to the petitions and addresses of the civil wars and interregnum by emphasising social exclusivity and hierarchy. This emphasis, however, was not maintained in the 1680s as popular petitioning and addressing was once again utilised to mobilise support. Even so, no serious attempt was made to remove the statutory limitations on mass petitioning and addressing of Parliament. After 1688, these legal restrictions on petitioning and addressing Parliament remained in place and the popularity of addresses was also usually presented in clearly qualified terms with subscribers identified as exclusively the freeholders of a particular area. Subscriptional activity was thereby accommodated within an environment in which government was accepted as being founded on public consent but in which that political public was often clearly circumscribed so as to exclude women and plebeian men.

Chapter six further explores the surviving manuscript evidence to examine the performance of addressing in drafting, delivering and presenting these texts. It shows that producing an address involved making a number of potentially fraught political choices, not only about the content of the text but also concerning who were the appropriate people from the locality to deliver this text to authority and who should be approached to introduce these texts at Court. The last question involved some understanding of politics at the centre as well as in the locality. Addressing was also potentially costly in financial as well as political terms: there were fewer opportunities for cost-cutting in comparison with petitioning, especially immediately after the Restoration, when addresses were also frequently accompanied with cash gifts. Such expenditure did not necessarily signal ideological commitment: the chapter employs the case study of the Hallamshire Cutlers to demonstrate that groups employed addressing as a strategy to buy political

access and influence (in their case in a bid to secure tax exemption for their forges). There remained benefits for authority in securing such addresses, even if the communities had been motivated by pragmatic concerns rather than heartfelt loyalty. Addressing required a public performance of loyalty which could then be publicised through 'official' media such as the *Gazette*. More than this, the ceremonial itself, especially during the reign of Charles II, provided opportunities to control and manage public opinion through the careful filtering of political access. These strategies were employed less sensitively during the reign of James II but the difficulties that James experienced also demonstrate the degree to which successful addressing campaigns were dependent on cooperation with local elites.

The final chapter of the book looks at the changing language of loyalty over the period under consideration. It follows recent philosophical and historical work on loyalty to see this value as being consistently articulated in emotional terms. Chapter seven employs corpus analysis software to explore the language of addresses as contained in printed compendia of texts produced over the period 1659 to 1756. This analysis demonstrates that the affective register of loyalty remained although the objects of loyalty shifted after 1688. In the post-revolutionary era, loyalty was more frequently identified with ideas (liberty) and institutions (the State). The tendency of addressing campaigns to generate new political vocabularies was noted by critical observers who suggested that the fluidity of the political lexicon threatened the credibility of addresses. Authors such as Daniel Defoe, John Oldmixon and Benjamin Hoadly, however, stepped back from either discrediting loyal addresses or the emotional language in which they were frequently framed. Indeed, Oldmixon suggested that addresses needed to be evaluated in terms of the authenticity of the feelings expressed within them. The chapter demonstrates that the emotional understanding of loyalty was, if anything, heightened by the post-revolutionary context in which sincerity was prized over correctness of belief and legitimate political organisation was seen as being founded on voluntary association.

As the conclusion to this volume demonstrates, addressing adapted not only to the post-revolutionary political context, but also to the emergence of mass (male) democracy in the nineteenth century. The survival of loyal addressing demonstrates its particular suitability for a democratic nation in which public life, nonetheless, remains centred on a hereditary monarchy. The greatest paradox, of course, is that this enduring means of demonstrating public loyalty to the Crown had its origins in the papers kept in Richard Cromwell's trunks.

NOTES

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7 B. Kümin and A. Würgler, 'Petitions, gravamina and the early modern state: local influence on central legislation in England and Germany (Hesse)', *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, 15 (1995), 39–60; J. Walter, 'The English people and the English Revolution revisited', *History Workshop Journal*, 61 (2006), 171–82; J. Walter, 'Confessional politics in pre-civil war Essex: prayer books, profanations and petitions', *Historical Journal*, 44 (2001), 677–701. J. Daybell (ed.), 'Introduction: rethinking women and politics in early modern England', *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450–1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), ch. 1; M. Knights, 'London's "Monster" Petition of 1680', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 39–67; David Zaret, 'Petitions and the "invention" of public opinion in the English revolution', *American Journal of Sociology*, 101 (1996), 1497–555; Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

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9 S. Sowerby, 'Forgetting the repealers: religious toleration and historical amnesia in later Stuart England', *Past and Present*, 215 (2011), 85–123; Sowerby, *Making Toleration: The Repealers and the Glorious Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

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11 Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, p. 149.

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15 S. Poole, *The Politics of Regicide in England 1760–1850: Troublesome Subjects* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 31.

16 J. Redlich, *The Procedure of the House of Commons* (3 vols, London, 1908), ii, pp. 246 and 244–8 more generally for addresses to the Crown.

17 Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, p. 117 features a useful table indicating the major occasions on which addresses were created and see also Knights, 'Participation and representation before democracy: petitions and addresses in

pre-modern Britain', in I. Shapiro, S. C. Stokes, E. J. Wood, and A. S. Kirshner (eds), *Political Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 35–57 at pp. 45–8.

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22 Ibid., 1532.

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24 Ibid., pp. 162–3.

25 J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 57.

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27 Lake and Pincus, 'Rethinking the public sphere in early modern England', in Lake and Pincus (eds), *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 1–31; p. 2.

28 Ibid., p. 3.

29 Ibid.

30 Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, p. 11.

31 Ibid., p. 59.

32 See here the important work of Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

33 B. C. Cowan, 'What was masculine about the public sphere? Gender and the coffee-house milieu in post-Restoration England', *History Workshop Journal*, 51 (2001), 127–57 at 128.

34 See for an example of this Bob Harris' review article, 'Historians, public opinion and the "public sphere"', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 1 (1997), 368–77 at 377 where public opinion is described as 'articulated by real people whose perceptions and languages cannot be encapsulated in any general sociological model'.

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36 Lake and Pincus, 'Public sphere', p. 3.

37 Ibid., pp. 13–14 for political economy, pp. 18–19 for scale and scope of public sphere.

38 Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), p. 55.

39 Geoff Kemp, 'L'Estrange and the publishing sphere', in J. McElligott (ed.), *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 67–91, at p. 69. For another approach from a history of ideas

perspective see Geoff Baldwin, 'The "public" as a rhetorical community in early modern England', in A. Shepard and P. Withington (eds), *Communities In Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 199–215.

40 Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, p. 220; Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, p. 160.

41 J. Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

42 Kemp, 'L'Estrange and the publishing sphere', p. 89.

43 *Observator*, 13 April 1681, no. 1. On L'Estrange and petitioning see M. Knights, 'Roger L'Estrange, printed petitions and the problem of intentionality', in J. Morrow and J. Scott (eds), *Liberty, Authority, Formality, Political Ideas and Culture, 1600–1900, Essays in Honour of Colin Davis* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2008), ch. 6.

44 Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, pp. 64–5. Of course, Habermas here forgets that the 'King' in 1710 was a queen.

45 Ibid., p. 51 he describes it as a 'sphere of criticism of public authority'.

46 Ibid., p. 54.

47 The social make-up of Scottish addresses is tabulated in Karin Bowie, 'Scottish Public Opinion and the Making of Union' (PhD dissertation, Glasgow University, 2004), vol. 2, appendix I.

48 Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 54.

49 Ibid., pp. 52–3.

50 Ibid., p. 43.

51 Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, pp. 95–6.

52 Downie, 'Public and private', p. 73.

53 Lake and Pincus, 'Rethinking the public sphere', p. 12, perhaps, again, influenced by Habermas' reference to 'plebiscitarily manipulated assent', *Structural Transformation*, pp. 67–8.

54 *The Letters of Daniel Defoe*, ed. G. H. Healey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 33. Contrast this with earlier treatments of 'popularity' as a threat to the State: P. Lake, 'The politics of "popularity" and the public sphere: the "monarchical republic" of Elizabeth I defends itself'; and P. Hammer, 'The smiling crocodile: the earl of Essex and late Elizabethan "popularity"', both in Lake and Pincus (eds), *The Politics of the Public Sphere*, chs 3 & 4.

55 Lake and Pincus, 'Rethinking the public sphere', p. 18.

56 L. Heerma Van Voss, 'Supplications between politics and justice: the northern and central Italian states in the early modern age', in Heerma van Voss (ed.), *Petitions in Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 35–56, at p. 55.

57 J. C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990) and for an important collection applying Scott's ideas to the context of early modern England, see M. J. Braddick and J. Walter (eds), *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

58 On this aspect of legitimation see M. J. Braddick and J. Walter (eds), 'Introduction. Grids of power: order, hierarchy and subordination in early modern society', *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society*, pp. 1–42, esp. pp. 9–12.

59 *Letters of Defoe*, ed. Healey, p. 41.
60 Kemp, 'L'Estrange', p. 87; See on this Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, p. 106.
61 Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, p. 109.
62 M. Knights, 'The loyal address: prose panegyric 1658–1715', in A. McRae and P. Kewes (eds), *Stuart Succession Literature: Moments and Transformations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2018), ch. 16, p. 326. I am grateful to Mark Knights for letting me see a copy of his chapter prior to publication.