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Genre, authorship and authenticity in the petitions of Civil War veterans and widows from north Wales and the Marches

Lloyd Bowen

This chapter considers the petitions of maimed soldiers (and, to a lesser degree, military widows) from north Wales and the Marches who requested relief from local authorities during and after the Civil Wars of the mid-seventeenth century. I use this material to engage with the emerging scholarship on genre, authorship and authenticity in early modern petitioning.¹ The chapter explores the generic conventions attending early modern petitioning and their implications for understanding the ‘authorship’ of these documents.² Considering questions of authorship in such petitions brings us up against historiographically contested terrain concerning ‘truth’ and ‘authenticity’ in such narrative legal evidence. While a good deal of scholarship in this field has centred on depositional testimony, petitioning local sessions courts has received much less attention, and this discussion aims to help address this omission.³ This chapter contends that anxieties about the truthfulness and veracity of these petitions are not merely concerns of modern scholarship but were concerns shared by legal officials in the seventeenth century. Moreover, it argues that efforts of authentication and corroboration, of tying the petitioner to their petition, were features of county-based military relief which, while not revealing a single petitionary ‘author’, nevertheless allow us to connect our archival remains with real historical subjects.

Questions of authorship, truth and its relations in early modern texts have been the subject of a brilliant and stimulating intervention by the literary critic Frances Dolan in her 2013 book, *True Relations*.⁴

One of the book's chapters tackles legal depositions, a form of narrative evidence which is often found alongside petitions in quarter sessions archives.⁵ Dolan is critical of historians who maintain that they can locate the 'authentic voices' of ordinary people in such material. She argues that historians acknowledge the problematic nature of depositional evidence, shaped as it was by court procedure, examining officials' questions (or 'interrogatories') and the conventions surrounding court evidence, but that they then carry on regardless, claiming to have found a kind of direct access to early modern realities. Dolan is keen to bring the tools of literary criticism to bear on such evidence by emphasising its literary nature. In foregrounding the constructed nature of this material, Dolan challenges historians' impulses to identify the individuals in whose name these legal testimonies were given as 'authors' possessing agency and identifiable subject positions.

Dolan's work provides many invigorating arguments for thinking more critically about early modern narrative legal sources and the complexities of their authorship, some of which are developed here. This chapter, however, suggests that we should be wary of the risk of effectively erasing the historical subjectivities of those in whose names legal representations such as petitions were made.

While Dolan's work is a timely reminder that we cannot recapture some kind of originary and unmediated evidence of historical reality, it is fair to say that historians have long recognised the problems of working with narrative legal evidence and have adapted and modified their methodologies and conclusions accordingly.⁶ For decades the historiography of this area has been cognisant of the complex and constructed nature of such evidence, and most historians dealing with this material are not as methodologically naive as Dolan seems to suggest.⁷ While they might invoke the 'voices' of historical subjects, they rarely claim to have heard the authentic personalities of historical actors. Indeed, the question of 'truth' in these sources is rarely one that troubles historians who know better than to deal in certainties in such problematic terrain. Dolan maintains that we cannot 'reanchor' this legal evidence to 'what we might call the real historical subject' or the 'I who speaks'.⁸ Although this may be true in the most dogmatic sense that we will not find some verbatim oral testimony expressing the unmediated expressions of non-elite witnesses,⁹ historians have long recognised that our documents are not the same as the people who wrote them, or, indeed, those in whose names they were written.¹⁰ The historian's job of connecting documentary remains to the lived experiences of long-dead individuals is not an attempt to resuscitate authentic personalities but, within the limits of our sources, to recover

the fragments of lives once lived and to form generalisations about the worlds they inhabited, while recognising that this is always a partial and incomplete process.

Despite these criticisms, Dolan's work provides a fruitful set of ideas and arguments for approaching materials such as the petitions of Civil War soldiers and widows, and for thinking more deeply about questions of genre, authorship and authenticity. Particularly intriguing is her suggestion that, when examining materials presenting us with the subject positions of non-elite and illiterate actors as rendered by a scribe or amanuensis, we do not think simply in terms of 'mediation' but rather about 'collaboration', about processes in which several 'authors' contribute to a text's production.¹¹ Her emphasis on the processes and the personnel producing the documents that reside in our archives is an important element of the discussion that follows. Also significant for this analysis is Dolan's claim that this was a period when contemporaries confronted a hermeneutic crisis of truth, when uncertainty 'was a crucial part of how the seventeenth-century understood itself'.¹² The chapter pursues this idea, exploring contemporary efforts to establish certainty when faced with claimants for military welfare. These efforts will return us to the ways in which seventeenth-century officials sought to anchor petitions to the individuals before them: to authenticate the historical subject.

Military welfare during the Civil Wars and Restoration

The material under scrutiny in this chapter arose out of the welfare systems established respectively by the Parliamentarian and Royalist authorities during and after the Civil Wars of the 1640s and 1650s. Individuals who had been injured in military service on behalf of the state and rendered incapable of earning a living had been able to claim a pension from local authorities since the 1590s.¹³ This system was overhauled and expanded enormously, however, in the mid-seventeenth century when a politicised form of welfare was instituted to help deal with the human cost of the Civil Wars.¹⁴ An important initiative was the passing of a parliamentary ordinance in October 1642, immediately after the Battle of Edgehill, which provided for the maintenance not only of individuals who were maimed fighting against the king, but also for their widows and orphans should the soldier be killed 'in the service of the Church and Commonwealth'.¹⁵ The welfare provision established by this ordinance underwent several changes in the coming years, most notably in May 1647, but was essentially in place down to the Restoration.

Royalist local governors quickly reversed this partisan welfare provision to eject Parliamentarians and support wounded and bereaved loyalists, and in June 1662 the Cavalier Parliament passed an act to provide relief for 'Poore and Maimed Officers and Souldiers' who had served King Charles I and his father in the conflict.¹⁶ This legislation established the framework within which military veterans and widows operated for the remainder of the century.

These systems functioned at both national and local levels: individuals could petition for relief to military commanders, central authorities (such as Parliament, the Lord Protector, or, later, the king or Privy Council) or to the county quarter sessions. It was the local authorities, the justices of the peace sitting on the local county benches, which received the majority of applications for aid and which were most involved in the consideration and adjudication of veterans' and widows' requests for relief. The aim for most petitioners was the granting of an annual pension, a reliable annuity to support them. A major AHRC project, 'Welfare, Conflict and Memory during and after the English Civil Wars, 1642–1700', on which I was a co-investigator, has collected together and digitised these petitions (as well as accompanying certificates, on which see more below) from local and national archives and made them available through a fully searchable online database.¹⁷ The petitionary material gathered from north Wales (Denbighshire and Caernarvonshire) and the Marches (especially Cheshire) forms the evidentiary basis for this chapter.

The generic conventions of welfare petitions

When approaching these petitions with a view to addressing questions of authorship and authenticity, we need to give due weight to Dolan's reminder that we must consider the issue of genre. The petition was long established by the mid-seventeenth century and its form was thus shaped by generic conventions and expectations which had grown up over centuries.¹⁸ These conventions structured the physical form and rhetorical structure of petitions to the county bench. The petitionary genre, then, circumscribed the scope for individual expression and creative experimentation within these texts. Drawing on classical rhetorical models, petitions adopted a set of formal generic categories and such a structure was expected by the governors who considered them.¹⁹

There was thus a script to be followed in these petitions which served to constrain and to suppress individualised authorial presence.

Like legal depositions and examinations, petitions presented their subjects in the third person as 'your poor petitioner', or similar; it is unusual to find a petition framed as a first-person narrative although, as discussed below, these do exist. There were particular formats which were often adopted in welfare appeals from military veterans and widows, a system which, we should recall, had been in place for half a century by the time of Civil War. Moreover, there was a degree of shared cultural literacy surrounding such petitions which provided a repertoire of images and ideas for articulating problems and seeking redress, and these were mobilised reflexively and repeatedly to conform to the genre's expected norms. None of the petitions under review, for example, offered suggestions of cowardice or disloyalty in their subjects, all of whom displayed qualities of faithfulness and fidelity to their respective masters. All petitions rehearsed the worthiness of their subject and the necessity of their relief. A number of the Royalist petitions appropriated the language of the 1662 act establishing the Royalist pension scheme. Petitioners described their conduct in the service of 'King Charles the first of ever blessed memory', a phrase lifted from the text of the act, and there clearly emerged a common scribal understanding about how to do this.²⁰ Petitions followed a script of service although there were many variations on this theme and much diversity in detail and presentation, issues which will be addressed shortly. This petitionary script also possessed a narrative form: a beginning, middle and end.²¹ For a soldier, the beginning was his enlistment in the army and being taken away from his family and home. The middle rehearsed his military service and commitment to the cause. Here too was to be found a kind of climax to the tale with the debilitating injury or injuries which laid the individual low and often ended his capacity to fight. The ending was a pitiable *denouement* in which the soldier, often elderly and incapable, pleaded his necessitous state and claimed his just reward. The petitions of widows followed a similar narrative arc, although here it was the enlistment, service and death (not always easy to prove) of the departed soldier which provided the document's substance, while the pathetic final image was the bereft single woman struggling to raise small children without support.²²

As Dolan and others have noted in their studies of depositional sources, there is a kind of literary artifice to these petitions which emerges from their generic conventions and their framing towards an ultimate goal: to be effective, a petition needed to adopt certain rhetorical formulae and subject positions. These texts, then, have significant debts to genre as well as to the events they describe, and we must modulate our understandings (and our expectations) of authenticity and authorship

in these documents accordingly. As Mark Stoyly has noted with regard to Royalist veterans' petitions in Devonshire, these are 'by no means uncomplicated reproductions of the veterans' own memories, but rather artful pastiches, mixing genuine recollections of the 1640s with the approved terminology of the 1660s'.²³ These were thus not freewheeling descriptions of a soldier's experiences or of a widow's sufferings, but were rather codified narratives shaped to meet the expectations of a long-established form and of a particular audience. As is discussed below, however, these generic elements do not overwhelm the individual nature of many petitions and their capacity for narrativising specific episodes and relating distinctive life stories.

In thinking about genre and authorship, however, we should be careful of reading these petitions simply in the same mode as legal depositions, as some historians have tended to: petitions were a distinct genre and had elements which allowed the individual's subject position to assert itself differently, and perhaps more readily, than in depositional evidence. One significant difference between petitions and depositions, of course, was that the document was normally initiated and co-produced by the petitioner; he or she was not an unenthusiastic witness in a legal case as was often the case with depositions (aside perhaps from those initiating prosecutions), but was rather a willing collaborator in telling their own story.²⁴ Although there were clear generic requirements for the petition's formulation, the material included was proffered voluntarily by the petitioner who would have had a significant degree of control over the final text. Unlike depositions and examinations, then, these were not the products of a dialogue with court officials who asked (sometimes lengthy) interrogatories, based around points of law, which fundamentally shaped their evidence and which were then silently erased by court scribes.²⁵ While there were required elements for a successful welfare petition (a history of political loyalty and military involvement, for example), they were not bound by considerations of legal relevance as was the case with witness statements. It is also the case that, as Tim Stretton has argued, legal pleadings and depositions were not centrally concerned with historical truths but rather with the resolution of conflict.²⁶ Petitions differed, then, in that they *were* ostensibly making claims about historical truths rather than navigating conflicting versions of events between opposed parties. These claims were doubtless subject to exaggeration, distortion and sometimes outright fabrication but, as is discussed further below, there were processes to assist with the verification and corroboration of material contained in the petition. Although we might gain from thinking about petitions in the discursive field of other kinds of narrative

legal sources, then, we should also remain cognisant of their generic, authorial and procedural distinctiveness.

It is also the case that, while petitions entered into the same legal-bureaucratic world as depositions and examinations, the justices before whom they were presented had different attitudes and expectations towards petitions than they did towards other types of narrative legal evidence. When considering depositions dealing with theft, affray and trespass, and so on, magistrates were supposed to be impartial arbiters of the merits and demerits of the witnesses and of the cases before them. When it came to Civil War petitions, however, these same justices were very likely disposed by the shifting political allegiances of the time to be sympathetic towards many of the petitioners. Indeed, in many cases individuals from the magistracy had commanded and fought alongside those now petitioning for relief. In Cheshire, for example, George Booth appended a note to a widow's petition in October 1651, informing the justices that 'I know the petitioner to bee a poore woman & both shee & her children are obiects of pittye'.²⁷ In Denbighshire, Francis Manley, a Royalist major, Restoration justice and treasurer of the maimed soldiers' money, provided statements supporting a number of petitioners in the 1660s and 1670s.²⁸ Similarly, in Devonshire, Mark Stoye has recently traced the career of a Restoration justice and ex-Royalist officer, Captain Bartholomew Gidley, who was an assiduous supporter of his ex-soldiers' petitions while on the bench.²⁹ For many of these justices, then, the petitioners before them were not simply anonymous 'authors' whose identities were subsumed beneath a veneer of scribal rhetoric. Rather, they were ex-colleagues whose petitionary personalities needed to match up with personal and local knowledge about their service and suffering.

Petitions, scribes and 'authors'

The adoption of generic language and a common format in our petitions was the result of the fact that the vast majority of these documents were drawn up by professional and semi-professional scribes. Acknowledging the input of clerks and scribes in the production of narrative legal evidence has been important to the recent literature on early modern secular and ecclesiastical depositions,³⁰ and was crucial to Dolan's arguments about the futility of pursuing an 'authentic voice' in such records. Emerging from similar historiographical contexts to those scholars who have examined depositions, academics have also begun to explore the processes by which early modern petitions were produced.³¹ The semi-professional

'scriberate' of the provinces were the shadowy intermediaries between petitioners and their petitions. Unnamed scribes were part of a collaborative authorial process, although they have left hardly any record of their identities let alone the processes of their work: the declaration by one Abraham Hilton of Lancashire on the 1649 petition of Mary Peake that he was 'the wryter, her neigbor', is a very unusual exception.³² We can identify common hands writing petitions (and also often their supporting certificates) in individual counties, which demonstrates the presence of a single scribe working across 'clients'. For example, the petitions of Edmund Wynne, David Lloyd and John Williams to the Caernarvonshire bench in 1660 were all written by one individual and they adopt a very similar format, layout and phraseology, down to the idiosyncratic spelling of the word 'mayhemed' for 'maimed'.³³

Our petitions, then, while physically written by a single hand, do not have single 'authors'. These are mediated accounts that, in the words of Jonathan Healey, 'should be seen as speaking with a hybrid voice'.³⁴ We cannot know with certainty where the input of the petitioner ended and the shaping hand of the amanuensis began. It is likely that many of our petitioners were illiterates who could not read the evidence that was being submitted in their name. Indeed, there is a further compounding element which distances the petitioner from their petition in one part of our sample: the likelihood that many, if not most, of the Welsh petitioners did not even understand the language in which their petition was written. The overwhelming majority of ordinary individuals in the counties for which we have most evidence, Denbighshire and Caernarvonshire, perhaps of the order of 90 to 95 per cent, were monoglot Welsh speakers.³⁵ An individual such as Rydderch ap Edward of Creuddyn in western Caernarvonshire, who served the king under the north Walian commander (and Welsh speaker) Colonel Roger Mostyn, receiving 'bruises and infirmities', was almost certainly unable to understand the text of the petition submitted in his name to the Caernarvonshire bench in 1660.³⁶ In such instances, the scribal intervention was not just that of amanuensis but of translator too.³⁷ We should acknowledge, however, that this was normal procedure in these courts, where depositions and examinations were given in Welsh but were written entirely in English, and where Welsh only had a presence in the record when the words spoken were under review, as in cases of libel or sedition.

There are other instances where the petitioner's authorial role seems even more removed from the document than normal. We would expect this to be the case, of course, with young children, such as the orphan Frances Hughson of Macclesfield in Cheshire, who petitioned the

bench for assistance in 1655.³⁸ Her mother was dead and her father, a trooper, had been killed at Marston Moor, since which time she had been cared for by a grandmother whose recent demise was the occasion for her petition. Frances also suffered from scrofula and smallpox, so 'her eies are become so tender and dimme of sight, yt she is altogether unable to do any thing towards her livelihood'.³⁹ Although Frances must have been at least 11 years old by the time this petition was submitted, she had no legal competency to produce it, and her physical disabilities likely prevented her from seeing let alone reading the submission. The document was probably composed partly by the Macclesfield authorities, who submitted a certificate with a series of signatories supporting the petition, headed by the town's mayor, Lancelot Bostock.⁴⁰ There were many other petitioners, of course, who had become blind with age, such as John Thomas of Hereford, the 'poore blind man whoe, when he had his sight, was a souldier for his late majestie',⁴¹ or who were blinded by gunpowder or shot during the wars themselves, such as Captain Richard Vaughan of Llanrwst in Denbighshire.⁴² One presumes that their petitions were composed orally and read back to them, but such individuals were particularly reliant on intermediaries to 'author' their petitions.

Similar considerations of competency apply to those who suffered from mental illnesses following the wars, such as Rowland Hughes of Rhiw in Caernarvonshire, who petitioned the county bench as a faithful ex-Royalist, intimating that he was wounded in the head 'to the brackeing and crushing of his scull=bone whereby he is ... very prone ... to scowle, rayle and rave'.⁴³ Recently, Hughes continued, he was 'suprizid with that lunacy or phrenzy [and] hath abused and rayled at the justices of the peace of this county, not then knowing or perceaving what he did'. His petition apologised for his 'weaknes, absurdities and deboystnes'. Having been harangued by Hughes, the justices had removed him from the county's pensioners, and his petition was begging for readmittance. Hughes' petition might be offering cover for a simple outburst of anger against justices who were reviewing burdensome pension payments. However, we should ask whether he had the capacity to 'author' the petition when he was, by his own reckoning, 'a lunaticke, insensible of reasoning or understanding', probably because of some form of post-traumatic stress disorder or brain injury. Such problems are reminiscent of bills brought before law courts in this period in the name of those with a form of mental incapacity and, indeed, also of minors.⁴⁴ Although individual authorship of the petition is as doubtful as those written in another's hand, nonetheless, we should acknowledge Hughes' representation as a robust form of personal narrative. It describes events

which Hughes' audience would have witnessed and remembered: these were the same justices whom he had abused and who had barred him from his allowance. It is also noteworthy that Hughes was readmitted to his pension: in other words, his petition was understood to be an accurate and reasonable account by those well positioned to adjudicate. The Caernarvonshire justices accepted that the petition represented the man before them: he was its 'author', even if he had not set pen to paper.

Uncovering the 'petitioning subject'

Acknowledging the scribal presence in these texts is thus critical to understanding their provenance and establishing the interpretative boundaries of our evidence. It remains the case, however, that there was a 'petitioning subject', an individual whose experiences were being acknowledged and rehearsed in these petitions, and it is the historian's job to explore, examine and contextualise them within the limits of our sources.⁴⁵ On occasion this identity, this petitioning subject, can surface more readily through idiosyncratic forms which stand out from the general run of petitions and which are sometimes indicative of authorship without the assistance of a scribe (something which is not found in legal depositions). Often such examples demonstrate a falling away in the quality of the spelling, penmanship and paper, which are suggestions that the petitioner had taken the initiative in writing their own representation.

One such example can be found in the case of Corporal John Barret, who petitioned his commanding officer, Governor Edward Massey, around 1644, following an engagement at Painswick in Gloucestershire.⁴⁶ His petition is a vivid and expressive account of his travails, as Barret was 'left for dead ... having received tenne wounds [and] stript ... starck nacked to the very skine'. He was petitioning for clothes and wood so that he would not 'perish for want therof'. Having finished the petition with the usual prayer for its recipient, Barret then deleted the line and added some graphic details of his wounds, which he presumably thought would strengthen his case: 'your peticioner receved 7 wounds in the head, 5 of them therow the scull, 1 cut in the backe (to the bons) with a pole axe, his elbow cut off bons and all: his hand slitt downe betwine the fingers, as Mr Caradine the cyerrugion afermeth'. This level of detail was unusual, as was Barret's characterisation of the surgeon: 'never the man that asked us a farthing'. It is also telling that Barret's petition, although sometimes expressed in the standard third person ('your peticioner'), was mostly penned in the first person: 'I beseech your honer that you would be

pleased to take order that I may have some cloths (both linin and woolin) speedily'. It seems likely that Barret was indeed the sole 'author' of this petition: the script is clear and assured but is not the kind of secretary hand found in most petitions, while the spelling is also distinctive and suggests a hand other than that of a scribe.

Another example suggestive of an individually penned petition is the 1652 representation of Roger Royland of Cheshire.⁴⁷ In his submission Royland described himself as 'a poore racker' (presumably one who lives on a rack rent) who had served Parliament at the Battle of Worcester in September 1651, and who had since fallen sick and become impoverished. Royland's petition shows little of the spatial organisation familiar from scribally produced petitions and, like Barret, he readily lapsed into the first person: 'my humble petition is ... I humbly begg'. Interestingly, Royland also signed his petition, which was unusual for quarter sessions submissions and is again suggestive of a lack of familiarity with formal scribal protocols.

The unstable pronouns found in Barret and Royland's petitions can be seen in a number of other veterans' submissions and are suggestive of the subjects' close involvement in the production of their petitions. However, we can also sometimes catch glimpses of the procedural and generic conventions which sought to detect and amend such 'intrusions' of the petitioner into their texts. For example, the address of Thomas Lloyd of Llanrhaeadr in October 1667 described his five years' service for the king under local commanders and the wounds and imprisonments he suffered, but also referred to a certificate previously submitted to the bench 'certiefieinge my loyaltie', a phrase which has been caught by the scribe and changed with an interlineation to 'his loyaltie', the expected third-person formula.⁴⁸ Another fascinating example from Denbighshire is the petition of Reece Ithel of Holt to the January 1668 sessions.⁴⁹ Ithel informed the justices about his service as a Royalist soldier 'dureing all the time for most of the late unhappy warrs', in which he had been wounded, thrice imprisoned, had his house burned and his goods stolen. The petition then lapses into the first person: 'I was brought very poore & hath soe continued ever since and still am'. The text has been amended before presentation to the magistrates, however, to read 'hee was very poore & hath soe continued ever since & still is'. Similar transformations are found elsewhere in the petition with 'my' shifting to 'his' and, in one instance, the word 'myselfe' being changed to 'himsel', with the tell-tale descender of the 'y' hanging, pendulous and incongruous, under the revised text.

Petitions like those of Barret and Royland appear to have been written by individuals who were not entirely familiar with the strict

formulae and structure expected in such submissions. There are many other petitions in which we find particularist elements that speak forcefully to the directing hand of the petitioner (albeit they might not have held the pen) in the production of their representations.⁵⁰ Such documents often contain distinctive narratives and included details not found in more formulaic submissions (although even 'formulaic' petitions always had distinctive details of service and suffering). Unlike legal depositions where extraneous material was supposed to be excised by the clerk, such evidence was not necessarily ungermane to the business at hand. Potentially all details of war service, injury and statements of fidelity were relevant in considerations of worthiness. One such petition was presented by Ellis Evans of Penmorfa in Caernarvonshire shortly after the Restoration.⁵¹ The physical appearance of this petition is somewhat unusual. It is slightly larger than most and does not possess the neatness of hand and layout of typical scribal productions. Its phraseology also deviates from standard forms in several incidental details. Ellis recounted being pressed twice into the king's service, first for the Bishops' Wars in 1639–40, after which he 'came home to his countrie', a detail which most scribes would likely have omitted. He was once again pressed into the king's army after the outbreak of Civil War and served there (as a 'true solider', again an unusual phrase) for four years. In this service Evans recounted that he had received 'nyne severall greate wounds in severall parts of his bodie', including being 'shott through his yard [i.e. penis] & bullets remayneing still in his bodie, the markes of which woundes your petitioner is readie to shew if your worships soe please'. He recounted that he was forced to beg to support his wife and children, 'for that the wound in your petitioners yard doth greivously trouble your petitioner in the nature of a stone collick'. We cannot be certain whether Ellis physically 'wrote' this petition, of course, but such details point to his critical role in authoring this document and, as we shall see, he would also attest physically to the veracity of his service record. It is perhaps worth noting also that in the petition's conclusion, the text originally requested assistance for supporting 'his wife & children', but an insertion ensured that this read 'his wife & *small* children', the standard petitionary script for characterising such dependants.⁵² This indicates that an adviser with some experience was also involved in the production of the document, providing guidance about normative phraseology, and assuming the role of collaborative author with Evans.

We can point to many other instances where petitions introduce individual tone and detail (dare one say 'voice?') to the petitionary script.

Personal favourites include the 1663 petition of Robert Mathew of Vivod in Denbighshire who opened his representation with a blistering description of his service: 'whereas upon the enemyes approach to inviron & besiege the capitall mansion of that famous hall Hyarcoll [High Ercall in Shropshire] by those hiberbolicall & well knowen traitors the Oliveriant Crewe'.⁵³ Mathew was projecting back into the mid-1640s the regicidal spectre of Oliver Cromwell (who had nothing to do with the siege of High Ercall), presumably to emphasise his loyalty throughout the period, but also to dramatise the threat of the engagement in which he had been involved. It is also worth noting that 'Oliverian crew' was an unusual phrase, but also one which Mathew may have encountered in the popular Royalist astrologer George Wharton's 1663 almanac, *Calendarium Carolinum*.⁵⁴ This may thus be an example of topical print culture worming its way into the discourse of provincial petitioning: Wharton was as good a source as any for what we might describe as a popular Royalist lexicon at this time.

Arresting phrases such as those employed by Mathew, which capture something of the individual character of many petitions, are to be found throughout our sample. On Parliament's side, Dennis Brayne of Nantwich in Cheshire petitioned the sessions in the summer of 1650 describing himself as 'a maymed soldier in the service of Ireland against those monsters the rebels of Ireland'.⁵⁵ For the Royalists, meanwhile, Hugh Prescott of Worcester petitioned the king in 1660 recalling his loyal service at the Battle of Worcester, but also describing how 'the barbarous soldiers of that grand rebell Cromwell did hang your petitioner in a tree till death (as they conveaved)', a story supported by a certificate signed by nine witnesses.⁵⁶ In this context, we might also point to the distinctive descriptions of wounds and injuries in petitions such as that of Michell Powell of Wrexham who, in July 1660, referred to being shot in the right arm at Edgehill which 'in the process of tyme festered agayne & soe corrupted yt it gew to be a woolfe or gangren'. He continued that, even after receiving surgery, he remained 'in a lamentable condycion through deadnes of flesh, havinge his veynes & nerves shranke & knotted through the dolor therof'.⁵⁷ John Stringer of Barthomley in Cheshire, meanwhile, gave a graphic account of his being a victim of a massacre by Royalists in the parish church, when he was among a group 'stript naked [and] driven into the church porch like sheepe to the slaughter'. Here Stringer was wounded, 'fallinge downe for dead ... smeared with his one [own] blood ... [and] was clove through the scull of the head with a pollaxe insoemuch that his braines appeared to the viewe of many'.⁵⁸

Collaborative authorship

Elements such as the striking phraseology of Robert Mathew's petition are exceptions to the norm but raise the important question of who 'spoke' in these petitions, who 'authored' them? Were these the words of Mathew or of the scribe who penned his petition? We can never truly know, of course, but this does not necessarily mean that we should rob petitioners like Mathew of their agency or simply dispose with the idea of the petitioner as historical subject and deal with the petition as an anchorless text. Part of the issue with exploring 'authorship' in the context of these petitions is, as Dolan has pointed out, that we are overly reliant on modern conceptions of 'authorship' as constituting individual and unmediated expression. By bringing petitions within models of collaborative authorship, such as those which have flourished in the exploration of early modern epistolary culture and literary production, however, we can liberate ourselves somewhat from our reliance on the notion of the individual authorial 'voice' in such works.⁵⁹ Such a move helps in understanding petitions as multi-authored texts which nonetheless script individual lives and over which petitioners had a critical degree of control and agency.

The dynamics of petitionary collaboration are more difficult to unpick than in the case of correspondence (where letters sometimes explicitly refer to the involvement of scribes) or drama (where linguistic and computational analysis can help identify distinct authorial contributions across lengthy texts). Nevertheless, we can sometimes discern traces of the plural participants who authored these petitions. For example, the modification of first-person to third-person narratives, as we saw in Reece Ithel's petition, helps disclose what must have been the common process of a scribe taking down oral narratives from the petitioner and neglecting to transform them into the standard format until a process of revision was undertaken. It is also the case, of course, that while the scribe would understand the generic protocols of constructing a petition, rudimentary details of service, battles, wounds, residence, family members and so on had to be provided by the petitioners themselves. Consider, for example, the petition of William Humffrey to the Caernarvonshire sessions in the early Restoration which provided a detailed narrative of his military service.⁶⁰ He had been 'an apprentice' in Shrewsbury when the king visited in 1642, and 'listed himself a volunteere' under Colonel Thomas Blagge ('Black'), who became governor of Wallingford Castle in Oxfordshire. He was then present at the attack on Chichester under Prince Rupert before being taken prisoner at Bridgwater and held for

19 weeks. Humffrey then served in Ireland under Colonel John Booter before travelling to France, the Isles of Scilly and then to Scotland under Prince Charles (now Charles II), before finally serving in Ulster where he was again taken prisoner and incarcerated in London for 21 weeks. He concluded that 'by reason of all which service' he 'is become very unable & quite lost & benumbed of his limbs & his backe boane quite broake as by inspeccion appeareth'. It is doubtful that Humffrey would have penned the petition (although his Shrewsbury apprenticeship suggests he would have understood its English), but he was clearly its 'author' in terms of providing the background, detail and descriptive elements which constitute its narrative. Such petitions are thus simultaneously evidence of both collaborative authorship and a degree of vigorous individuality.

An intriguing stray document among the Cheshire archive is also suggestive of the collaborative dynamics at play in authoring these petitions. It concerns the onetime soldier Richard Aulcol of Wybunbury who had served the king under Colonel Charles Gerard, Lord Brandon. A scrap of poorly written paper filed next to Aulcol's petition reads: 'you mouste remember for to set doune where you reseed youre woundes in youre petishon[.] The firste in Gloster shire at Sisiter [Cirencester] I remember in the hed[,] and at a fight at Barton House taken prisner and cut in the hed and reseed a cut in the arme'; the text is witnessed by one Thomas Corser.⁶¹ These details found their way into Aulcol's petition in the order and essentially as laid out in this paper.⁶² Corser was not the writer of Aulcol's petition which is in another, much more professional, hand, and perhaps this was akin to a certificate supporting the petition (given Corser's signature as witness). But Corser was clearly also offering Aulcol advice and guidance, perhaps from a shared past in military service, and was evidently involved at some level in the 'writing' of the final document, although he was neither the scribe nor the petitioner.

The observations of James Daybell with reference to early modern female letter writers are relevant to our analysis of the petitions. He notes that it 'is important to remember that the rudimentary act of putting ink on a page was only one of a range of skills associated with authorship, including composition, communication, memory, imagination ... and attention to detail', adding that if a woman dictated a letter, 'the fact that she did not pen her own words does not mean that she was not responsible for them'.⁶³ We can marry these observations with Cordelia Beattie's concept of 'the petitioning subject', elaborated in her analysis of petitions to the late medieval Court of Chancery.⁶⁴ Beattie suggests that the 'petitioning subject' is not a fictive persona or an *a priori* self revealed through 'authentic' self-expression, but rather the textual product of

an engagement with systems of law and bureaucracy. She rejects the imperative to choose between the ‘textual’ and the ‘social’ approaches to petitions, noting that the subject positions delineated within a petition needed, ultimately, to be adopted and inhabited by the petitioner. Critically, moreover, this ‘petitioning subject’ had to withstand scrutiny and processes of authentication by the court as the personality behind the petition attested to the text’s veracity and key claims. The textual subject thus *became* a social personality before the magistrate’s critical gaze. This chapter now considers such efforts by the quarter sessions courts of north Wales and the Marches to reconcile the textual and embodied personalities of our Civil War petitioners.

Welfare petitioners and systems of verification

Although we must acknowledge the co-authored and mediated nature of our petitions, this does not mean that we end up, as Dolan seems to suggest we must, in a world of stories bereft of identifiable authors and real historical actors. In developing our understanding of the relationship between Civil War petitioners and their petitions, it seems useful to pursue another of Dolan’s insights: that our seventeenth-century subjects were characterised in no small measure by their search for truth, but also by their unease at its persistent elusiveness. This is not to say that local justices considering veterans’ and widows’ petitions were looking to uncover ‘authentic’ historical subjects in all their intimate complexity, but rather that they sought to reveal a true *political* subject whose narratives were sufficiently convincing and authentic to merit a pension. *This* was the ‘petitioning subject’ conjured in our documents, and it was this personality which needed to materialise before the bench and be reconciled with the documents they had submitted. Contemporaries met the challenges of evaluating petitioners’ authenticity by paying close attention to documentation and systems of verification.

Vitally important with respect to the maimed soldiers and widows, and with many other supplicants to the bench too,⁶⁵ was the fact that petitioners were expected to attend the court where they would be visible before the tribunal of the local community.⁶⁶ We can find numerous petitions within the Cheshire archive, for example, which were endorsed by the county clerk ‘absent’, indicating that the petitioner did not attend the court, and some possess additional endorsements, such as ‘attend at next sessions & informe [of] his estate & condicion’.⁶⁷ As we saw in the case of Rowland Hughes, his problems stemmed from the fact that he

personally had abused the Caernarvonshire justices, presumably while they were adjudicating upon his case.⁶⁸ There were also recurring inspections and assessments of maimed soldiers and widows, particularly when money was tight in the county coffers.⁶⁹ On these occasions in jurisdictions like Denbighshire, pensioners were required to bring in supporting certificates to help verify their claims.⁷⁰ In October 1672, Francis Manley wrote to the clerk of the sessions, Thomas Prichard, noting that ‘if any of our poore maymed soldiers faile to appeare this foule season, let them not suffer for it’.⁷¹ He asked that local justices review the veterans locally and report to the following sessions. It appears, then, that in such counties pensioners were expected not just to attend the sessions to present their petitions, but were also periodically required to attend to receive their monies. The Breconshire authorities in July 1673 demanded that maimed soldiers attend the first day of the next sessions to ‘bee examined and allso inspected in order to their services, manners and condicions’, and in 1677 demanded another inspection to ensure that none was in receipt of a pension save those who ‘by reason of theyre wounds (received in the warrs) shall well deserve the same’.⁷² Similarly, in Shropshire, a directive was issued in 1662 that justices examine maimed soldiers in their respective divisions and ‘carefully distingwishe who are maimed [and] ... who have faythfully & constantly continued in the servis of his late majestie or of his majestie that now is’.⁷³

For veterans, attendance at court also meant that their wounds and injuries were on public display as verifying marks of their petition’s narrative. Indeed, several petitions referred to this fact, such as that of Mawrice Parry who appeared before the Denbighshire bench in July 1660 with a petition describing how he was ‘greevouslye wounded in his wrist’ at Nantwich and had thus lost the use of his right hand ‘as may appeare’.⁷⁴ In Cheshire at the 1663 Epiphany sessions, George Yearsley submitted a petition which described his service under Sir Thomas Aston in Dorset where he was ‘sore wounded as I shall make it to appeare’, the telling first-person reference being later deleted. Yearsley went on to describe how his injuries had forced him to use crutches and that he was impoverished ‘through his wounds, which hee can shew unto your worships’.⁷⁵ A certificate supporting the claims of one Caernarvonshire petitioner from January 1661 informed the justices that he had been wounded in the king’s service ‘as is yet to be seene by the markes hee beares’, while in 1673 Oliver Moris ap Hugh was removed from the Denbighshire lists on the basis of what he called ‘bare allegacons’, but testified that he was ‘bearing the marke of a faithfull soldier’ upon his body and demanded to be reinstated.⁷⁶ Visual inspection and matching

scars to stories was evidently an important part of the verification process that accompanied petitioning.

A remarkable document survives among the Caernarvonshire quarter sessions records from the early Restoration. It emerged from an order that three justices (including a former Royalist major) call all petitioners and maimed soldiers before them and 'look who are most deserving of relief by their maims and wounds'.⁷⁷ The resulting Foucauldian certificate thus described how our 'lunatick' Rowland Hughes was 'wounded in the head, necke & shoulder'; how John Williams of Beddgelert was wounded at the Battle of Naseby, suffering 'a great wound in the legge & in the thighe'; and even how Ellis Evans, discussed above, was 'shott in his privie members & in other places of the body very dangerous & is quite spoiled in manie places'. In such documents we can see magistrates' efforts to verify the details and the narratives contained in veteran's petitions and also their desire to marry up the document with the individual behind it. The slipperiness of the 'truth' in these circumstances, however, is nicely illustrated by the case of William Morris of Llanarmon. In his January 1661 petition to the bench, Morris described his two years' faithful service for the king where 'hee was shott in his right hand, whereby hee became maymed and not able to earne for his livinge'.⁷⁸ However, turning to the justices' certificate we find a description of him as 'quite maymed & hath lost his right hand beinge shott with a canon bullett'. His petition is 'true', then, but it is not the entire truth of the figure that stood before the justices; the slippage between being shot in the hand and losing a hand might well point to the elisions of a scribe adopting standard formulae in the production of Morris's petition.

Contemporaries were as exercised as historians by the fact that they were often in pursuit of the unknowable, living in an age of epistemic crisis in which 'truth' was frustratingly elusive. In determining political worthiness, individuals were called upon to describe ineffable qualities of loyalty and allegiance.⁷⁹ What did it mean, for example, for a petitioner to say that he served King Charles I 'with all the eagernes of his seale & fidelity'?⁸⁰ How could such qualities be measured or authenticated? Sometimes service could be established with marks and wounds on the body (although who was to say that these were not obtained by fighting for the other side?), but in most cases additional supporting material, often in the form of witnesses, was required to sustain a petitioner's claims. A group of Cheshire soldiers who petitioned the bench in October 1651 maintained that 'for there fidellity and vallour dare [?doe] referr them selves unto any officers that knew us to approve of'.⁸¹ In 1669, when Captain John Rogers petitioned the Herefordshire bench for

relief, the magistrates reviewed his petition, his certificates ‘& attestacions & other manifest demonstracions & p[r]o[o]ffs’, before declaring themselves satisfied that ‘he hath constantly & faithfully served his late Majestie’.⁸² Here, then, the petition sat as one component within a nexus of interlinked authenticating processes and proofs, and its narrative needed to reflect and endorse other documents, oral testimony and physical inspection.

In addition to this formal assessment of petitioner and paperwork by the justices, applicants must also have fashioned their submissions in the knowledge that they were entering a world of informal policing and surveillance by their communities, and this fact must have helped ensure that their petitions stayed within the bounds of local awareness of their personal histories. In 1663 in Denbighshire, Susan Garrett and two others testified that John Owens of Wrexham, a tailor who was in receipt of a pension, ‘hath been for severall monthes in the servise of the late rebels & under the comand of Captain Anderson as a privat soldier’.⁸³ As a result of this testimony, Owens was suspended from the pensions list and another man was placed in his stead.⁸⁴ After this example, the local bench incentivised such informing, noting that if any in receipt of a pension could be shown to be physically healthy or insufficiently loyal ‘in the tyme of the late troubles’, then their informer would receive the individual’s pension.⁸⁵ By contrast, such local knowledge could be used as a potential source of support and authentication. John Humphrey of Ruthin, for example, supported his application for a pension in 1678 by affirming that he was ‘true & faithfull to the hazard of life & fortune, as som of my fellow souldiers that now are pensioners can justifie’.⁸⁶ It was surely the case that the community of pensioners conjured in Humphrey’s submission, groups of whom must have encountered one another at periodic reviews of veterans and widows, constituted a check against petitioners making egregiously false claims in their representations to the bench.

In considering these issues of external assessment and contemporaries’ desire for supporting evidence to help evaluate the petitioners’ reliability, we encounter another important part of the archive: the certificates and testimonials from former military commanders, surgeons and neighbours who supported and endorsed many representations to the local sessions.⁸⁷ These documents help disclose the penumbra of social networks and patronage connections which were often necessary to move a petition forward successfully. In a recent discussion of one of the elusive scribes who produced early modern petitions, Faramerz Dabhoiwala observed that such supporting papers were considered by contemporaries to be more important than the petitions themselves,

even though they are now 'largely invisible to us'.⁸⁸ Fortunately, they are not invisible in the case of many widows and maimed soldiers. Unlike the petitions, these papers possessed marks of specificity and authenticity: they were signed (the petitions, usually, were not); they were dated (the petitions were not); they often carried seals (petitions did not); and many were written personally by the certifier (as we have seen, most petitions were not). These documents were vital proofs of the authenticity of the petitioner and his or her story. The Herefordshire bench in 1674, for example, refused the petitioner John Stannage a pension 'for want of a certificate to make good the substance of his petition'.⁸⁹ Clearly such certificates could be a crucial component for magistrates' efforts to arbitrate the petitioner's truth claims, but they also served to concretise and authenticate the historical subject behind the petition.

Many of these certificates came from former officers, and petitioners had to mobilise wartime connections to obtain sometimes crucial endorsements. A cadre of old Royalist commanders from north Wales who were still alive in the 1660s and 1670s, including John Robinson, William Salesbury, Hugh Hookes, Francis Manley and William Wynne, validated many addresses to the Denbighshire sessions. When considering these supporting documents, however, we once more encounter generic protocols, as certificates had their own forms and conventions, including stock phrases that the petitioner had been a faithful soldier who merited a pension.⁹⁰ Not infrequently, however, more individual knowledge of the petitioner comes through in certificates and also some surviving personal letters to justices. The Royalist lieutenant colonel Hugh Hookes, for example, provided the Caernarvonshire magistrates with a certificate for the 'lunaticke' Rowland Hughes in January 1661, confirming his 'many sore and grievous wounds', but also testifying that he had been 'very faythfull' and, critically, that he was '*still* royally affected'.⁹¹

Although petitioners were meant to obtain certificates from their ex-commanders, often these individuals were dead or lived many miles away.⁹² As a result, many petitioners turned to neighbours and friends to endorse their accounts. Numerous petitions contain impressive lists of parishioners who testified to the loyalty and sufferings of the petitioner, and often also to their straightened circumstances. We can see this in the 1668 certificate accompanying the petition of Evan Jeffrey of Gyffylliog in Denbighshire, which was supported by 28 parishioners who described him as a loyal soldier who 'by reason of his wounds received in that service [is] become unable to worke for his living to maintaine himselfe & two smale children', and so should be considered 'a great object of charity'.⁹³ In his petition Jeffrey referred to the certificate 'hereunto

annexed [demonstrating] that his petition is truth [sic].⁹⁴ Frequently such lists were headed by the local clergyman (and often the churchwardens too), who gave authority to these endorsements, as well acting as the natural voice of the parish community.⁹⁵ To strengthen his claim, Jeffrey had also obtained a certificate from local worthies (presumably he had visited these gentlemen or approached them at the sessions itself) who subscribed the statement on the dorse of his petition: 'I have inquired into the truth of ye petition & certificate, & I beleeve the contents to be true; & desire that the poore mans case may be considered.' The pension was granted and the order book noted that this was 'upon the certificate of Bevis Lloyd, esquire and others for Evan Jeffrey'.⁹⁶

These certificates are often circumspect documents in which certifiers offer up their knowledge of a petitioner's service and qualities but are careful not to stray beyond the bounds of their knowledge. For example, Ellis Sutton's 1664 certificate for Thomas ap Richard noted that he was a Royalist soldier under Sutton's command and had received several wounds and was also taken prisoner at Naseby. Sutton concluded that 'to the best of my knowledge, or what ever I have heard, he hath continued loyall in the worst of tymes and that he is poore & not able to subsist without releef'.⁹⁷ The parishioners of Llanelidan testified to the service of Evan Foulke as a Royalist soldier, but they also carefully measured their support, noting that 'of his faithfullnesse in that service, the attestation of his officers and the scarres he bears seeme to us a good testimony, and incite us humbly to recommend him to your worshipp'.⁹⁸ At Cheshire's Nantwich sessions in July 1656, nine signatories endorsed the petition of John Handley who had been shot fighting against the invading Scottish army at Warrington Bridge in 1651. They testified that they had 'seene & perused' Handley's body and supported the account he provided in his petition, 'all of us beeing neighbours & souldiers under they [sic] same command, & weare & are ey witnesses both of the wound & the impoverishment of his person & estate', concluding that they would testify to the same on oath.⁹⁹

Like later historians, then, even those who endorsed and supported the soldiers' accounts did not deal in unequivocal assertions of truth but rather of belief based on evidence. Handley's supporters, for example, maintained that they 'doe know and *beleeve* the contents [of his petition] to be true'. One certifier, perhaps the Royalist commander Sir Geoffrey Shakerley of Hulme, nicely captured the kinds of assessments which contemporaries made about the petitionary archive in his assessment of his former trooper Richard Palyn's certificate in 1668 (which Palyn himself carried before the sessions): 'I doe verily believe this certificate is

true & desire you to looke upon the person as he is represented.’¹⁰⁰ Like Shakerley, historians recognise that narrative legal sources like petitions do not give us unproblematic access to any ‘authentic’ past. Rather, we look upon our subjects as they are represented and, weighing the strategic nature of those representations, assess their claims, link them to other forms of evidence, and generate broader interpretations about their lives and the societies they inhabited.

The act of petitioning, then, could be a demanding one. One needed not only to get someone to write your petition and frame it correctly; if you were disabled you might also need assistance to get to the sessions. You also needed to animate networks of support and assistance within the army which might have been long dormant, or among friends and neighbours. Soldiers needed to relive the shattering experiences of war, dislocation and injury, while widows had to revisit their experiences of abandonment and bereavement. The documents resulting from this process might not have been physically penned by the petitioner, but their accounts needed to be sufficiently robust to stand up to several forms of scrutiny. They had not just to be believable but *verifiable*. And we can chart many of the outcomes of this petitioning through the extant financial evidence: whether pensions or gratuities were granted. One of the issues with legal evidence is that we rarely know the outcomes of the cases whose narratives survive in depositions. With the petitionary material from the Civil Wars, however, we can, sometimes at least, indicate that these petitions were sufficiently credible to convince the justices who held the purse strings. This is a not inconsiderable test of the capacity of these petitions to represent faithfully the individuals in whose name they were presented.

Conclusion

While Dolan is right to stress the co-authored and fictive elements of narrative legal texts like petitions, we should remain cognisant that contemporaries as well as historians and literary critics also struggled with questions of authenticity and authorship. They tried to put measures in place to fix the unfixable, to find concrete evidence of internal allegiance through testimony of outward action. They measured biography against evidence. Moreover, Civil War petitioners were, in fact, well aware of the problems of presenting themselves as ‘authors’ of their accounts. The people they portrayed were gone although the wounds and the hardships they endured remained. Their petitions are Janus-faced: looking

back to the vigorous partisan from the standpoint of the ruined veteran. Their dilemma was conveyed powerfully by John Edwards of Ruthin, a Parliamentary trooper under Colonel Thomas Mytton, who approached the Denbighshire bench in January 1650 with an account of his service. He described his ‘integer and reall affectiants to the Parliamentary party’ before being wounded and disabled at the siege of Denbigh.¹⁰¹ Painfully aware that the author of the petition was not the man who had stood ready before those ancient walls, he asked that the justices

will not looke upon his weake & ymbecyle parts as they appeare, but as they were, & to judge of his faithfullnes according to which his desires have exprest, & his hands acted, which being done he onely craves that subsistancy or allowance from you which the sence of the premises & the petitioners may ymprint upon yow.

While we should applaud Dolan’s efforts to render more complex ideas of authorship and subjectivity in the legal archive, we should be careful of surrendering too readily the agency and subjectivity of figures like John Edwards. While I recognise Edwards was not unproblematically the sole ‘author’ of this petition, his experiences were nonetheless calibrated and assessed by contemporaries as well as shaped by generic conventions and legal discourses. The words presented in his account were not separate to his historical existence but constitutive of it. His self-presentation may have been strategic, but it was also anchored in verifiable and authenticated experience. If the Denbighshire justices thought it sufficiently true to award the petitioner before them a substantial pension of £4 per annum,¹⁰² scholars should also be willing to register, record and honour what he asked for: that his sacrifice make some ‘ymprint’ in the minds of those reading his petition.

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Notes

1. Innes, 'Legislation', p. 112; Hart, *Justice*, pp. 66, 198. For the emphasis on 'public' petitioning by historians of modern Britain, as opposed to the 'private' and 'sectional' petitioning that characterised the early modern period, see: Miller, *Nation*.
2. An important cognate discussion of petitioning mechanics and narratives is to be found in Chapter 3 of this volume.
3. The literature on depositions before church and secular courts is enormous, but crucial contributions include Ingram, *Church Courts*; Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*; Churches, "The Most Unconvincing Testimony"; Stretton, *Women*; Gaskill, *Crime*; Walker, *Gender*; Shepard, *Accounting*.
4. Dolan, *True Relations*.
5. Although Dolan's principal focus is on church court depositions rather than those from quarter sessions.
6. O'Brien, 'Engagement'.
7. In a 2003 article, for example, Mark Stoye recognised that Civil War petitions passed through a 'whole series of distorting filters' and in some respects were 'fictions': Stoye, "Memories", p. 209. Cf. Taylor, 'Price of the Poor's Words', p. 844.
8. Dolan, *True Relations*, pp. 143–4.
9. See the problems inherent in dealing with a source that *seems* to offer such access in Harvey, 'Mary Toft', pp. 33–51.
10. For something of a shift away from a focus on texts, performativity and rhetorical conventions to materiality, social practice and lived experience, see Sbaraini, 'Materiality'.
11. Dolan, *True Relations*, p. 118.
12. Dolan, *True Relations*, p. 5.
13. For an outline of the relevant legislation, see Beale, 'Timeline'. For the Elizabethan scheme, see McGurk, 'Casualties'.
14. The literature on this subject is now extensive, but see Hudson, 'Negotiating'; Appleby, 'Unnecessary Persons?'; Stoye, 'Memories'; Worthen, 'Supplicants'; Peck, 'Great Unknown'; Appleby and Hopper, *Battle-Scarred*; Beale, 'Military Welfare'; Hopper, 'Yorkshire'.
15. Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances*, I, pp. 36–7.
16. Raithby, *Statutes of the Realm*, V, pp. 389–90.
17. This can be accessed at www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk.
18. Dodd, *Justice and Grace*; Smith and Killick, *Petitions and Strategies of Persuasion*.
19. For these formal rhetorical elements in petitions, see Daybell, 'Scripting', p. 5; Dodd, *Justice and Grace*, pp. 281–2; Houston, *Peasant Petitions*, pp. 73–5; Beattie, "Your Oratrice", p. 20.
20. See, for example, National Library of Wales (NLW), Chirk Castle MSS B23a/9; B86/81; Caernarfon Record Office (CRO), XQS/1660/122; Herefordshire Archives and Record Centre (HARC), BG11/17/5/47; Worcester Archive and Archaeology Service, 110/1/185/13; Cheshire Archives and Local Studies (CALS), QJF 90/2, fo. 168.
21. Stoye, 'Memories', p. 211.
22. For further discussion of widows' petitions, see Hudson, 'Negotiating'; Worthen, 'Supplicants'; Peck, 'Great Unknown'; Beale, 'War Widows'; Beale, "Unpittied by Any?"
23. Stoye, "Memories", pp. 209–10.
24. For this critical contrast with depositions, see Taylor, 'Price of the Poor's Words'.
25. For this, see Stretton, 'Women', pp. 690–4.
26. Stretton, 'Women', p. 688.
27. CALS, QJF 79/3, fo. 96.
28. For three examples from a larger sample, see NLW, Chirk Castle MSS B25b/16; B86/35; B86/137.
29. Stoye, "Extreme Trials".
30. Bailey, 'Voices'; Falvey, 'Depositions'; Stretton, 'Women'; Collins, 'Narratives'.
31. Dabhoiwala, 'Writing Petitions'; Houston, *Peasant Petitions*; Healey, *First Century*, p. 93. Killick, 'Scribes of Petitions'.
32. Lancashire Archives, QSP 24/17.
33. CRO, XQS/1660/122, 123, 129.
34. Healey, 'Kin Support'; Healey, *First Century*, p. 93.
35. Jenkins, Suggett and White, 'Welsh Language', p. 46.

36. CRO, XQS/1660/75.
37. For bilingualism and petitioning in early modern Scotland, see Houston, *Peasant Petitions*, p. 82.
38. Although for evidence of children's initiatives in petitioning and for a fuller discussion of orphans and military welfare, see [Chapter 6](#) in this volume.
39. CALS, QJF 83/1, fo. 148.
40. CALS, QJF 83/1, fo. 149.
41. HARC, BG 11/5/38, 1660–1 bundle, 1661 folder, no. 7. Cf. *ibid.*, 1661–2 folder, first bundle, no. 35.
42. CRO, XQS/1660/126. On Vaughan, see Bowen, 'Face to Face'.
43. CRO, XQS/1671, unfol. For corroborative evidence that Hughes was indeed 'wounded in the head, necke & shoulder', see *ibid.*, XQS/1660/121.
44. Rushton, 'Lunatics'.
45. The notion of the 'petitioning subject can be found in Beattie, "'Your Oratrice"'.
46. TNA, SP 28/228, pt. 2, fo. 361.
47. CALS, QJF 79/4, fo. 107. For further examples from this county, see *ibid.*, QJF 85/2, fo. 173; QJF 91/3, fo. 119.
48. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B23d/5.
49. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B24a/24/1.
50. See also the discussion of non-standard petitions in [Chapter 3](#) of this volume.
51. CRO, XQS/1660/139.
52. The same modification was also made in the body of the text.
53. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B86/19.
54. Wharton, *Calendarium*, sig. B.
55. CALS, QJF 78/2, fo. 29.
56. TNA, SP 29/9, fos. 212–13.
57. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B16c/44.
58. CALS, QJF, 78/4, fo. 49. His petition was endorsed by 22 local men 'some being eye witnesses thereof'.
59. Daybell, 'Women's Letters'; Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, pp. 61–90; Coolahan, *Women, Writing and Language*, pp. 102–38; Love, *Scribal Publication*; Masten, *Textual Intercourse*; Hirschfeld, 'Collaboration'.
60. CRO, XQS/1660/132.
61. CALS, QJF 92/2, fo. 160. A Thomas Corser lived at Acton-near-Nantwich in this period: CALS, P331/8212/1.
62. CALS, QJF 92/2, fo. 161.
63. Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, p. 84.
64. Beattie, "'Your Oratrice"'.
65. Healey *First Century*, pp. 92–3.
66. Hudson, 'Negotiating', p. 156; Jones and King, 'Petition to Pauper Letter', p. 62; [Chapter 3](#), this volume.
67. CALS, QJF 80/3, fo. 106.
68. Similarly, in Sussex, the pension of Jeremy (or Jeremiah) Clark(e) was suspended in July 1652 'for his misbehaviour and insolent carriage and speeches towards the justices of peace at this present sessions': East Sussex Record Office, QO1/5/2, fo. 34.
69. CALS, QJF 93/1, fo. 130; QJF 94/3, fo. 239.
70. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B1, pp. 151, 155, 165; British Library, Additional MS 40,175, fos. 3v, 5v, 28v. See also CALS, QJB 3/1, fos. 18, 33v, 104, 178; QJB3/3, unfol. (11 Jul. 1676); QJF 95/4, fo. 102; HARC, Q/SO/1, fos. 117, 144r–v, 147r–v; Shropshire Archives, QS/2/2, unfol. (8 Jan. 1655/6; 7 Apr. 1657).
71. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B28d/42.
72. Powys Archives, B/Q/SO/1, fos. 11v, 27r–v.
73. Shropshire Archives, QS/2/3, unfol. (Michaelmas 1662).
74. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B16c/53.
75. CALS, QLF 90/4, fo. 134.
76. CRO, XQS/1660/104b; NLW, Chirk Castle MS B29d/12.
77. CRO, XQS/1660/121.
78. CRO, XQS/1660/135.
79. Weil, 'Allegiance'.
80. CRO, XQS/1660/196.

81. CALS, QJF 79/3, fo. 127.
82. HARC, Q/SO/1, fo. 143v.
83. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B19b/18.
84. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B2, p. 12.
85. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B2, p. 23.
86. NLW, Chirk Castle MS 34a/16.
87. Although in some jurisdictions, especially in Cheshire, these testimonials were often included on the petitions themselves.
88. Dabhoiwala, 'Writing Petitions', p. 138. Their importance can be seen, for example in the endorsement of one petition: 'I doe conceive yt the petitioner, *according to ye annexed certificate*, is a fitt person to be admitted a pensioner': CALS, QJF 99/1, fos. 177–8, emphasis added.
89. HARC, Q/SO/2, fo. 13v.
90. Some certificates from counties like Middlesex were even produced as printed forms with spaces for the details of the soldiers to be filled in: CALS, QJF 90/3, fo. 184.
91. CRO, XQS/1660/108, emphasis added.
92. See, for example, CALS, QJF 90/4, fo. 139.
93. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B25c/11.
94. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B25c/10.
95. See [Chapter 8](#) in this volume.
96. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B2, p. 96.
97. NLW, Chirk Castle MSS B86/68, 69; B2, p. 32.
98. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B86/126. Cf. *ibid.*, MSS B86/127–8.
99. CALS, QJF 84/2, fo. 251.
100. CALS, QJF 96/4, fo. 106.
101. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B9a/26.
102. NLW, Chirk Castle MS B1, p. 18. Edwards' pension was removed for an undisclosed reason in Oct. 1653 before being restored in Jan. 1656: *ibid.*, pp. 58, 79.

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