Department of History and Civilization

National Museums and the Mobilization of History: Commemorative Exhibitions of Anglo-Irish Conflicts in Ireland and Northern Ireland (1921-2006)

Thomas Cauvin

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of History and Civilization of the European University Institute

Florence, September 2012

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE
Department of History and Civilization

National Museums and the Mobilization of History: Commemorative Exhibitions of Anglo-Irish Conflicts in Ireland and Northern Ireland (1921-2006)

Thomas Cauvin

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of History and Civilization of the European University Institute

Examining Board:

Professor Stephen Smith, European University Institute (Supervisor)
Professor Laura LeeDowns, European University Institute
Professor Mary Daly, University College Dublin (External Supervisor)
Professor Simon Knell, University of Leicester

Acknowledgments

Looking back over the last five years, I can see that the dissertation submitted to the members of my jury is merely the tip of an iceberg of reading, research in archives, meetings and collaborations. The European University Institute (EUI) is much more than a centre of research. The EUI is an international crossroads for people, projects, and ways of thinking. Although it is impossible to thank and acknowledge everyone who has contributed to this adventure, I wish to highlight some of them.

Among them, I first would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Stephen Smith. His guidance has helped me to avoid many false moves and to adopt a more critical position. It should be said that Professor Smith generously agreed to supervise my work at a time when my thesis was already in progress. Professor Smith accepted the challenge of supervising a research project he had not initially followed, and I could not be more thankful.

I am also grateful to Professor Mary E. Daly, from University College Dublin who, from the outset, accepted the position of external supervisor. Her broad expertise in Irish history and the crucial contacts she shared made her the perfect embodiment of an external supervisor. Her patient and scrupulous reading of my dissertation has been of indescribable help.

In addition to them, other professors have played a noticeable role in my research. I would like to thank Professor Laura Lee Downs (EUI), Professor Simon Knell (Leicester University), and Dr. James Gardner (National Archives, Washington D.C.) for agreeing to examine this thesis. Other members of the EUI's History Department must be thanked. Professor Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, has been, from the beginning, very supportive of my research, and provided many useful comments. I cannot count the occasions Professor Antonella Romano and I have discussed research and academic issues. She has always been available even though I was not her supervisee. Her efficiency and her foresight have often saved me from unfortunate situations. Likewise, due to his vibrant and broad skills, Professor Dirk Moses has made me aware of the rules in the academic world. We often met outside the EUI, in New York, in Chicago, and he never missed the opportunity to introduce my work. Finally, I am obliged to Professor Philipp Ther who supervised my work when I first arrived at the EUI.

As said before, the dissertation results from a long process which goes beyond Florence. Thus, I would like to thank researchers and historians who have accompanied me

Abstract

Through the study of commemorative exhibitions arranged at the National Museum of Ireland (Ireland) and at the Ulster Museum (Northern Ireland), this thesis compares the changing representations of three historical conflicts (the 1690 Battle of the Boyne, the 1798 Rebellion, and the 1916 Easter Rising). Beginning with Partition and ending with new permanent military exhibitions in the twenty-first century, the research explores the ways in which the changing representations of these conflicts staged by the two museums have correlated with broader processes of mobilization of history designed to fit the needs of the present. In doing so, the complex relationships between museums and national identity are explored in the two parts of the island. The dissertation reveals how, at first, the two national museums participated in the construction of opposed official narratives, based on Nationalist and Unionist interpretations of the past in Ireland and Northern Ireland. It demonstrates how these initial interpretations of the three conflicts were gradually reassessed in response to changes in Anglo-Irish relations, especially in connection with the Northern Irish conflict and the politics of reconciliation. But the dissertation also explores how the new remit attributed to the two national museums has been shaped by the demands of cultural tourism, marketing strategy, and the new links with audiences, in a way that has served to detach the representations of the three conflicts from the political relations between the island of Ireland and Britain in the narrow sense. The dissertation explores the role of state actors, but is equally concerned with role played by curators, historians, educationalists, community relations personnel, tourism promoters, and audiences in advancing a more 'bottom up' view of the relationships between past and present. It ends by showing how the limited rapprochement of historical narratives that has taken place in recent decades results, in part, from the increasing need of the museums to attend to their audiences (international tourists in Dublin, community groups in Belfast), as well as from wider shifts in the relations between the governments in Belfast, Dublin and London.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Museums derive their name from the ancient Greek Temple (the *Mouseion*) devoted to the Muses, goddesses of inspiration of literature, science, and arts. A sacred space, the *Mouseion* was an educational institution and a source of knowledge.[1] Space and education were connected through the presence of objects and it was this that distinguished the museum from other sites of knowledge. Until the 1980s museums were seen "as neutral, authoritative and trustworthy; an accurate rendition of the world as it ought to be understood".[2] The study of museums changed in the 1980s in response partly to the developments in the theory of representation. This encouraged scholars to move from a fixed analysis of images and signs to consideration of how images and signs were generated and mediated by social relations.[3] What is represented, how and why, what is ignored or taken for granted and not questioned, came to be seen as central questions in cultural analysis. Applied to the study of museums, the concept of representation allows for the analysis of the links between past and present.

History, Memory, and Representations of the Past

Among the nine muses to whom the *museion* was devoted, Kleio was the muse of history. However, the nine muses were daughter of Zeus and Mnemosyne who was the personification of memory. The relationship between museums, history, and memory has been at the centre of important debates on the relations between past and present. The social definition of memory emerged in the 1920s in opposition to conceptions of individual memory. The sociologist Maurice Halbwachs asserted that memory was fundamentally collective and was linked to social groups.[4] Memory has since become one of the main analytical tools through which relations between past and present are construed. Memory has come to be used in many different versions, from collective, cultural, social, or public memory.[5] Kervin Lee Klein goes

---

[1] Marie Bourke, *The Story of Irish museums, 1790-2000 : Culture, Identity and Education* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011), p. 5.

[2] Simon J. Knell, 'National Museums and the National Imagination', in Simon Knell, Peter Aronsson, and Arne Amundsen, eds. *National Museums : New Studies from Around the World* (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 4.

[3] Roger Chartier 'Le monde comme representation', *Annales, Economies, Sociétes, Civilisations*, vol. 44/6, 1989, pp. 1505-1520.

[4] Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire,* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1925).

[5] According to the field of study, scholars focused on "collective memory", "realm of memory", "cultural memory", "social memory" or "public memory". See Maurice. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory.* Trans. F. J. and V. Y. Ditter. (London: Harper Colophon Books, 1950) ; Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past.* 3 Vols. English ed., Arthur Goldhammer, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) ; Mieke

so far as to state that "Where we once spoke of folk history or popular history or oral history or public history or even myth, we now employ memory as a metahistorical category that subsumes all these various terms."[6] From this perspective, museums may be seen as a critical site of memory production, since by their collections and displays they serve to produce memories of the past among visitors.[7]

Nevertheless, contrary to Klein, some have insisted on maintaining a strong distinction between memory and history. Pierre Nora, whose research about the *lieux de mémoire* proved to be a turning point for memory studies, argues that history is inherently in conflict with memory since "at the heart of history is a criticism destructive of spontaneous memory … Memory is always suspect in the eyes of history, whose true mission is to demolish it, to repress it".[8] He underlined in the introduction to *Les lieux de mémoire* that unlike memory, which is linked to particular groups, history has a universal dimension.[9] Objective and universal, then, history was counterpoised to the multiplicity of subjective memories that were deeply connected to processes of self-identification. In distinguishing memory from history, this approach has the merit of establishing memory as an object of historical investigation. Stories, monuments and other cultural artefacts can be investigated as *lieux de mémoire* within specific collectivities. In this conception, museums received attention as agents of the creation of memory.[10] Works on the relationship between museums and memory have analyzed how "exhibitions … provoke memories".[11]

Museums, however, cannot be unequivocally aligned with memory rather than history. Museums preserve historical collections and seek to promote historical understanding, even though the history they display differs considerably from academic historical writing. Exhibitions of artefacts and historical writing conform to different rules. Museums produce history through the selection and display of artefacts. The critical analysis of sources, which is one of the fundamental bases of historical writing, is not typical of museums where texts

Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer, eds. *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present.* (Hanover, N.H., London, University Press of New England [for] Dartmouth College, 1999) ; John Fentress and Cris Wickham, *Social Memory.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) ; Greg Dickinson, Carol Blair, and Brian L. Ott, eds., *Places of Public Memory. The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, (Tucsaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 2010).

[6] Klee L. Klein, 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse', *Representations*, 69, 2000, p. 128.

[7] Susan Crane 'Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum', *History and Theory*, Vol. 36, No. 4, (Dec., 1997), pp. 44-63.

[8] Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History', in Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory*. pp. 3-4. ; Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol.1, 2, 3, Paris, Gallimard, 1984-1992.

[9] Pierre Nora 'Entre mémoire et histoire: la problématique des lieux', in Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*.

[10] Although few museums – apart the Louvre – were directly analyzed within Nora's edition of the *Lieux de Mémoire*. Susan A Crane, *Museums and Memory* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

[11] John Urry 'How societies remember the past', in Sharon Macdonald et Gordon Fyfe, *Theorizing Museums : Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), p. 50.

were, for a long time, absent. Unlike books, museums are spaces where history is performed and this depends on the way the spaces are designed.[12] Museums, in other words, force us to think more broadly about the ways in which history is produce.

This research is premised on the idea that memory and history cannot easily be delineated from one another. Challenged by post-modern theories, historians' commitment to objectivity has come under fire. For instance, Hayden White has promoted historical relativism by stressing the decisive role of language and literary codes.[13] Even though White goes too far in his assertion of the purely discursive dimension of historical writing, it remains true that the all-too-neat distinction between past and present in historical narratives must be redefined. Thus, Patrick Hutton points out that "history seeks to reconstruct the past, but it is prompted to do so by understandings that are rooted in oft-repeated habits of mind".[14] Although based on traces of the past – archives – historical writing remains a construction whose links with present should not be under-estimated. Theorists of the mutual influence between history and memory point out the existence of a space between memory and history, labelled diversely according to the field of study, *historical consciousness* by Amos Funkenstein, *mnemohistory* by Jan Assmann, *historical remembrance* by Jay Winter, mythistory by William McNeill, or history-making by Jorma Kalela.[15] The common point of these terms is to challenge the all-too-neat distinction between history and memory, and to consider the production of historical knowledge outside academia. Writing about history-making, Jorma Kalela stresses that "the knowledge conveyed is not the only perspective from which to reflect on everyday history – the functions of the various traditions, commemorations and rituals cherished must also be taken into account" and rightly reminds us that "History making is a much more complicated matter than just the disciplinary practices".[16] Museums appear as major spaces for history-making, and their study can help to understand how historical knowledge is produced outside – but not necessarily isolated from – academic circles.

---

[12] Knell, 'National Museums and the National Imagination', p. 9.

[13] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe,* 1973 and *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, (Baltimore: John Hopkin's University Press, 1978).

[14] Patrick Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, (University Press of Vermont, 1993), p. xxiii.

[15] Amos Funkenstein, 'Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness', *History and Memory*, 1989, I, n°1, p. 11 ; Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian : The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1997) ; Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 9. ; William McNeill, 'Mythistory, or Truth, Myth, History, and Historians', *American Historical Review*, 91/1, 1986, pp. 1-10 ; Jorma Kalela, *Making History : the Historian and Uses of the Past* (Basingstoke, UK; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[16] Kalela, *Making History,* p. 9, p. 11.

Much recent work has concerned itself with the uses of the past.[17] Such work does not distinguish sharply between scientific or academic history and popular memory. An analytical focus on 'uses' allows for a richer consideration of the links between history-making and memory. Yet there are problems raised by the idea of the past as 'usable'. The formulation implies a direct access to a past that can be constantly reshaped. In the present work I prefer to speak of "uses of history" since this points to how history-making, rather than the past as such, is deployed in the present. This usage has been especially associated with scholars concerned with the practice of history outside the academy. Thus Roy Rozenzweig and David Thelen published *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* in 1998.[18] Yet though the expression "use of history" fits better my own approach, it still has certain weaknesses. First, the term does not pay enough attention to the different actors "using" history. It is crucial to understand "what lies behind the different uses",[19] and the issues at stake when history is used in the present. Second, while studying the uses of the past/history, scholars have tended to limit their analysis to political uses. In their introduction to *The Political Uses of the Past*, François Hartog and Jacques Revel underline that "The political uses of the past have been a classic, even a common, theme in reflections of historians ever since they first took up this paradoxical activity in producing a true discourse about what time conceals from human observation."[20] Nonetheless, the use of history has consequences that go beyond politics. One of the most important uses of history in the present, for example, relates to tourism and popular entertainment.[21] Because of this, I prefer to focus on what I call the process of mobilization of history.

The term mobilization is usually understood as part of a military process. Initially applied to the mobilization of soldiers, the term has been extended in studies of the First

---

[17] For instance: Gordon S. Wood, *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Uses of History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008); Kalela, *Making History*; Richard Joseph Morris and Peter Charles Ehrenhaus, *Cultural Legacies of Vietnam : Uses of the Past in the Present* (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Pub. Corp., 1990); Jacques Revel and Giovanni Levi, *Political Uses of the Past: the Recent Mediterranean Experience* (London; Portland, OR: F. Cass, 2002); Roy Rosenzweig and David P Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
[18] Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*.
[19] Kalela, *Making History*, p. x.
[20] François Hartog and Jacques Revel "Historians and the Present Conjoncture", *in* Revel and Levi, *Political Uses of the Past*. p. 1.
[21] Kalela, *Making History*, p. 154.

World War to refer to political, economic, and cultural processes of mobilization.[22] During the war, societies were culturally mobilized through the construction and diffusion of images of heroes, enemies, and victims.[23] The idea of mobilization allows us to focus on the mechanisms and agencies which make history usable in the present; generalised talk of the 'uses of the past' often occludes these. Mobilization draws attention to the fact that, as Hartog and Revel point out, "not only powers or authorities and institutions but also individuals are constantly tempted to mobilize the cognitive, argumentative, and symbolic resources of the past".[24] Similarly, John Coakley argues in a 2004 article, entitled *Mobilizing the Past: Nationalist Images of History*, that mobilization shifts analytical attention to the agencies, mechanisms, and purposes of the use of history.[25] In his analysis, Coakley insists that it is crucial to identify "guardianship over the past", namely "what agencies determine the way in which the past is perceived, and what media are used to propagate this image through society".[26] A further advantage is that much of the work relating to the mobilization of history deals with history teaching and public history, and thus connects to the work done by museums.

In studying the mobilization of history, it is necessary to investigate what history is mobilized for. Since the mid-1990s, there has been particular interest in the relationship of museums to political power. This relationship as long been attested. A specialist of museum studies, Eileen Hooper-Greenhill has identified the Medici Palace in Renaissance Florence as one of the earliest museums in Europe, where the Medici family articulated their wealth and power through the display of expensive objects in lavish spaces.[27] Public museums emerged in the eighteenth century, growing out of private collections often owned by sovereigns, and were intertwined with power relations from the first.[28] For instance, the opening up of royal collections in the Louvre was a direct consequence of the ideals of the French Revolution. As Sharon McDonald argues, it was "a symbolic attempt to generate a 'public' – a self identifying collectivity in which members would have equal rights, a sense of loyalty to one

---

[22] John Horne, *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[23] Horne, *State, Society and Mobilization*, pp. 1-17.

[24] Revel and Levi, *Political Uses of the Past*, p. 1.

[25] John Coakley, 'Mobilizing the Past: Nationalist Images of History', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 10:4, 2004, pp. 531-560.

[26] Coakley, 'Mobilizing the Past' p. 534.

[27] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 24.

[28] The British Museum, based on Sir Hans Sloane's collections, opened in 1759, and the public opening of the Louvre was a direct consequence of the French Revolution.

another, and freedom from previous tyrannies and exclusions".[29] Any study of museums, therefore, has to take into consideration the changing historical links between objects, power, and public space.[30]

This relationship between museums and political power derives in part from the fact that representations of the past are rooted in and serve to bolster groups, communities or social classes.[31] But a particular focus of scholarly interest in the relationship of museums to politics has been the sphere of nationalism. The mobilization of history has had strong connection with the rise of nationalism. In 1882, Ernest Renan defined the nation as "the culmination of a long past of endeavours, sacrifice and devotion". He continued: "To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more – these are the essential conditions for being a people".[32] Cultural institutions such as museums have been vital in constructing a relationship between past and present, in mobilizing history in order to create the idea of a national space, a sense of common identity, and to legitimise political ideals. National museums have been particularly crucial in forging links between history and national identity.

Since national museums are devoted to the collection, preservation, and display of the nation, their relationship with nationalism has been perceived as intrinsic. For Simon Knell, who recently edited a collection of essays on national museums, the latter provide "the scenography and stage for the performance of myths of nationhood".[33] In doing so, museums belong to the process of constructing "imagined communities" famously described by Benedict Anderson.[34] Rhiannon Mason has written that national museums have been "acts of assertion" of national identity.[35] The collective work edited by Flora Kaplan in 1994 explored the "roles of objects in national identity".[36] Here the focus is the creation of national collections and national museums and the construction of national identity. For his part, Tony

---

[29] Sharon MacDonald, 'Museums, National, Postnational and Transcultural Identities', *Museum and Society*, 1 (2003), p.1.

[30] The transformation of the concept of museum has, therefore, been studied by historians like Dominique Poulot who analyzed the birth and development of museums and cultural heritage in France. Dominique Poulot, *Une histoire des musées de France, XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Découverte, 2005).

[31] Chartier, 'Le monde comme representation', pp. 1505-1520.

[32] Ernest Renan, 'What is a Nation?', 1882, quoted in Knell. 'National Museums and the National Imagination', p. 8.

[33] Knell. 'National Museums and the National Imagination', p. 3.

[34] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983). Anderson considers museums as creating a major "sense of tradition". See the chapter on "the census and the museum".

[35] Rhiannon Mason, 'Representing Wales at the Museum of Welsh Life' in Simon J. Knell, ed. *National Museums: New Studies from Around the World*, (London: Routledge, 2011), p.247.

[36] Flora S Kaplan, *Museums and the Making of 'Ourselves': the Role of Objects in National Identity* (London; New York: Leicester University Press ; Distributed in the U.S. and Canada by St. Martin's Press, 1994).

Bennett has been concerned with the exploring how museums in the nineteenth century served "to incorporate the people within the processes of the State".[37] Recent studies such as the book published by Rhiannon Mason on national museums in Wales approach museums as sites where abstract concepts such as nation are translated "into tangible material evidence."[38] At the same time, it is important to ask about the success of national museums, compared to other cultural institutions, in constructing and interpreting the past.

National museums are built upon the idea of the specificity of the nation, and a focus on the category of national museum should not over-emphasize their apparent uniformity. In his introduction to *National Museums: New Studies from Around the Word*, Simon Knell warns that uniformity "has always concealed the cultural diversity which has altered and adapted the museum to local needs". He concludes that "the emergence of the national museum in different national settings cannot be read as nations doing the same thing".[39] Indeed, recent studies have shown that in the context of national museums the ways in which the relationship between the institution and national identity manifests itself can vary widely.[40] Local circumstances often dictate how museums come into existence or the ways in which they represent the nation in their exhibitions. This is one of the reasons why there have been very few comparative histories of national museums. Most of the works have been monographs. There is thus a need to go beyond constructions of national uniqueness by developing a comparative approach. The collective work published by Anne-Solène Rolland and Hanna Murauskaya, for example, analyzes the diffusion of the model of national museums.[41] Comparative studies permit us to explore how the changing roles of national museums depend on the local context of identity building, and on wider political, economic, and cultural processes.

The present comparative research does not attempt to examine "models" of national museums. It is closer to two recent European research projects on national museums. NaMu (National Museums) and its continuation EuNaMus (European National Museums) that have proposed to "develop the tools, concepts and organisational resources necessary for investigating and comparing the major public structure of National Museums".[42] The subtitle

---

[37] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 87.

[38] Rhiannon Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities : Wales and its National Museums* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 75.

[39] Knell, *National Museums*, p. 6.

[40] Knell, *National Museums*.

[41] Anne-Solène Rolland, Hanna Murauskaya (eds.), *Les musées de la nation : créations, transpositions, renouveaux : Europe, XIXe-XXIe siècles*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008).

[42] NaMu website, http://www.namu.se/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1 (last visited May 2012).

of EuNaMus is "Identity politics, the uses of the past and the European citizen" and relates directly to the research question of the mobilization of history. Thus, the second thematic research strand – in which the author has been involved – is *Uses of the Past: Narrating the Nation and Negotiating Conflicts*. The current work seeks to examine how and why national museums have participated in the mobilization of history in Ireland and Northern Ireland in the twentieth century, and the consequences on the representations of the past.

History and Identity Building in the Island of Ireland

The present study is a comparative history between two national museums in the island of Ireland, more precisely in Dublin and in Belfast.[43] The two museums each have a distinct history. The Belfast Museum opened in 1832. The Dublin Museum of Science and Art was founded in 1877 by an Act of Parliament and opened to the public in 1890. The two museums obtained the status of national museum in the twentieth century. While the Dublin Museum became the National Museum of Ireland in 1922, the Belfast Museum remained a municipal institution until 1961 when it became the Ulster Museum. The relation of these museums to the 'nation' is particularly complex in Ireland. Whereas the Dublin museum had a relatively unproblematic status in relation to the Irish Free State, the extent to which the Ulster museum could claim 'national' status has been highly contested. In Northern Ireland the nationalism of the Catholic community is opposed by the dominant Unionist majority. It is, therefore, important to treat ideas about the relationship of museums to the 'nation' with care.

One major dimension of Irish history has concerned the link between Ireland and Britain. The historical conflicts which took place between peoples of the two islands have played a significant role in the construction of Irish identities. While the Anglo-Norman invasions dated back to the eleventh century, the British colonisation of the island did not become intense until the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century process of Plantation. Through this process, the British monarchs granted English and Scottish Protestant settlers land estates in the Eastern and Northern parts of the island of Ireland. Through the settlement, the British monarchs supported the constitution of a Protestant Ascendancy to rule Ireland in the eighteen

---

[43] Dublin has been the political capital of the Republic of Ireland, Belfast is the main city in Northern Ireland which is also part of the United Kingdom. The National Museum of Ireland covers, since 2001, four sites. Kildare Street division houses the archaeological collections; Collins Barrack, which opened in 1997, is dedicated to Arts and History. Two other divisions are about Natural History and Country Life, respectively in Dublin and Castlebar, County Mayo. The Ulster Museum, which merged in 1998 with the Ulster American Folk Park and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum to form the National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland, regroups five departments: Archaeology, History, Applied Art, Fine Art and Natural Sciences all gathered in Belfast.

century. Although the island of Ireland enjoyed an almost autonomous parliament in the late eighteenth century, the execute power always remained in the hands of the British monarchs. Following the failed Irish insurrection against British authorities in 1798, the latter suppressed the Irish Parliament and declared the union between Ireland in Britain (1801 Act of Union).

The union – in which Ireland was politically dependent on Britain – was at the origin of opposite interpretations of Anglo-Irish relations. Two political ideologies developed in relation to British political domination: Nationalism and Unionism. Nationalism supported the idea of an independent island of Ireland and materialized through two distinct forms, constitutional and Republican nationalism. Constitutional nationalism and its leading figures like Charles Stewart Parnell and John Redmond attempted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to repeal the Act of Union to be replaced by Home Rule. Conversely Republican nationalism embodied by the Irish Republican Brotherhood – or Fenians – aimed to break free from British domination by any means necessary, including the use of violence. In opposition to nationalism, as a result of Plantation, part of the population in Ireland remained attached to the links with Britain. Loyal to the British Crown, this category of the population was mostly Protestant. These Loyalists supported the 1801 Act of Union and have, since then, been called Unionists. The intrinsic opposition between Nationalism and Unionism regarding the relations between Ireland and Britain and the religious distinctions were at the core of the partition of the island in the early twentieth century.

Nationalism materialized in several failed rebellions and insurrections which took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[44] In Easter week 1916, Irish Republicans took advantage of the First World War and the presence of British troops on the western front to organise an insurrection in Dublin, known as the 1916 Easter Rising. Although the insurrection was rapidly repressed, it contributed to an increasing discontent among the population and strengthened Irish nationalist movements. Hence, the War of Independence began in January 1919 and opposed the Irish Republican Army to the British forces in Ireland. A truce was agreed in July 1921 and led to the signature of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921. The treaty established the Irish Free State, a self-governing dominion in the British Commonwealth of Nations. However, the creation of the Irish Free State was accompanied with the partition of the island of Ireland. Indeed, under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, two separate entities (North and South) had been created on the island of

---

[44] The two main insurrections took place in 1798 and 1848. In 1798, the United Irishmen organized a rebellion for Ireland's independence in the wave of the political radicalization which spread in Europe in the 1790s. Similarly, the Young Irelanders rebelled in 1848 but were not more successful. Both rebellions were repressed by the British troops.

Ireland. Through the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, Northern Ireland was provided with an option to opt out of any independent Ireland. This option was exercised in 1921, and Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

Partition, therefore, created a Southern part dominated by Nationalists where the overwhelming majority of the population was Catholic,[45] and Northern Ireland which, in spite of the existence of a Parliament until 1972, remained a province of the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Northern Ireland had a majority of Protestants – but with a strong minority of Catholics – and was politically dominated by Unionists.[46] The dominant Unionist majority built a Protestant State in which the Catholic minority was excluded from government and suffered socio-economic discrimination.

One specificity of the Ireland has been the fact that despite – but also because of – the Anglo-Irish Treaty and Partition, Anglo-Irish relations remained a very sensitive issue in twentieth century. First of all, the creation of the Irish Free State in the South was based on a major controversy. The 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty provoked the Irish Civil War (1922-1923) in which Nationalists who accepted the conditions of Partition (the provisional Irish government) fought against those (Anti-Treaty Republicans) who intended to continue the fight for the total independence of the whole island. Anglo-Irish relations were even more divisive in Northern Ireland where the Catholic and Nationalist minority suffered from political, economic and cultural discrimination. Tensions emerged dramatically in the late 1960s in Northern Ireland. The denial of political rights for the Catholics and the escalation of inter-community tensions resulted in the outbreak of violence in the late 1960s, known as the Northern Irish conflict. The Northern Irish conflict was a period of sectarian and political violence regarding the political status of Northern Ireland vis-à-vis Britain, and the relations between the two main communities. From 1972, Direct Rule was applied by the British Authorities in Northern Ireland in reaction to the increase of violence.[47] Violence between Republican and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and British troops lasted three decades and

---

[45] Protestants in the Republic have represented less than 7% since the 1960s, and have always, since Partition, been in constant decrease. Source: Census, Republic of Ireland, 1991.

[46] On the contrary, the 2001 census showed that 44% of the Northern Irish population had a Catholic "community background" whereas there were only 35% in 1961. The expression "community background" was used by the census and is slightly different from the category used by the Irish census (confession). The term community background refers to "a person's current religion or if no current religion is stated, the religion that that person was brought up in". *Census*, April 2001, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Nevertheless 53% belonged to the Protestant background. Therefore the definition of the minorities in Ireland North and South does not lie on similar figures.

[47] The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) was created in 1972 after the Northern Ireland Government was dissolved in the face of a worsening security situation. The establishment of direct rule from London saw William Whitelaw appointed the first Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and to date, 16 MPs have served in this post over the past three decades.

made more than 3.500 casualties.[48] These constant divisions regarding Anglo-Irish relations lay at the base in fostering processes of mobilization of history.

Although Stefan Berger acknowledged that it "was by no means exceptional", he stressed that the Irish case "is one of the best to underline the potency of myths in historical culture".[49] The weight of the past in the present is indeed not limited to the island of Ireland but it is true that the interpretations of the past have engendered many conflicting views. In his introduction to the collection of essays about history and memory in Ireland, Ian McBride wrote "In Ireland, as is well known, the interpretation of the past has always been at the heart of national conflicts. Indeed the time-warped character of Irish mindsets has become a *cliché* of scholarly and unscholarly writing".[50] The expressions "trapped between present and past" or "trapped in the past" have flourished in Irish historiography.[51] McBride's expression is considered an unfortunate one, and David Lowenthal rightly corrects it by saying: "the Irish do not live in the past"; rather Ireland's history "lives in the present".[52] Evidence of this link between history and the present situation can be found in the great popular interest in history in Ireland and Northern Ireland. John Regan refutes, in a recent article, that public history is a recent practice in Ireland and notes that "historical surveys and monographs from time to time feature in the best-sellers' lists."[53] The island of Ireland appears as a challenging case study to explore the roles of museums in mobilizing history.

Given the significance of the historical links between Ireland and Britain in the opposition between Nationalism and Unionism, it is not surprising that certain historical conflicts have been particularly mobilized. Hence, this research focuses on the changing interpretations of three Anglo-Irish conflicts. It should be noted than the expression "Anglo-Irish conflicts" is not widespread in historiography and is rather restricted to conflicts between British and Irish authorities. Historians have, therefore, limited the association

---

[48] The 1998 Good Friday Agreement is considered as the official end of the Troubles, although other landmarks like the 1994 I.R.A ceasefire played a major part in the conflict resolution. The Good Friday Agreement was signed by the Irish and British governments and most of the Northern Irish political parties. Among other relevant issues, the Good Friday Agreement provided an agreed version of the new political system in Northern Ireland.

[49] Stefan Berger 'On the Role of Myths and History in the Construction of National Identity in Modern Europe' *European History Quarterly* 2009 39, p. 491.

[50] Ian McBride, 'Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland", in Ian McBride, ed., *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 1.

[51] Andreas Hüther, 'Trapped between Present and Past: Writing the 1798 Bicentenary' *Eighteen-Century studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Winter, 2005), pp. 336-339.

[52] David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 250

[53] John Regan, 'Irish Public Histories as a Historiographical Problem', *Irish Historical Studies*, 37, 146 (Nov. 2010) p. 90.

between "Anglo-Irish" and "war" to the War of Independence (1919-1921)[54] or at best to the 1913-1922 period.[55] The term "Anglo-Irish conflict" has hardly been applied to other historical conflicts.[56] Although it is true that apart from the War of Independence, few conflicts have opposed the Irish to British forces as such, this research examines how certain historical conflicts have been interpreted and represented as part of the history of Anglo-Irish relations. Thus, certain historical conflicts have been mobilized for identity building in order to create distinctions between the Irish and the British. In focusing on the changing representations of such historical conflicts, the objective is to understand to what extent they can contribute to explaining the re-assessment of Anglo-Irish relations in twentieth century Ireland and Northern Ireland. In order to do so, the research concentrates on three main historical conflicts: the 1690 Battle of the Boyne, the 1798 Rebellion, and the 1916 Easter Rising.[57]

The 1690 Battle of the Boyne (1 July 1690) followed the Glorious Revolution (or the Revolution of 1688) when the British monarch – the Catholic James II – was overthrown by Parliamentarians with the help of the Protestant William III of Orange-Nassau, stadtholder of Holland. As such, the Battle of the Boyne belonged to the "Williamite War", namely, the different conflicts between William III and James II from 1689 to 1691.[58] In June 1690 William reluctantly came to Ireland to take personal charge of what was now an army of 37.000 men made up of Dutch, Danish, and English troops.[59] On the other side, Louis XIV had sent about 6.000 troops, half French, the rest Germans and Walloons, to assist James. The two armies met at the site of the river Boyne, and William's victory allowed him to confine Jacobite troops to western Ireland. Although the issues at stake went beyond the status of Ireland, the Battle of the Boyne has been mobilized by Unionists in order to support the legitimacy of the Union. Northern Irish Unionists have continued to recall the 1690 Battle of

---

[54] Recently, Eamonn T. Gardiner published a book about the War of Independence: Eamonn T. Gardiner, *Dublin Castle and the Anglo-Irish War: Counter-Insurgency and Conflict*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

[55] Peter Cottrell, *The Anglo-Irish War : the Troubles of 1913-1922* (Oxford: Osprey, 2006).

[56] Oliver McDonnagh*, States of Mind: a Study of Anglo-Irish conflict (1780-1980),* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983).

[57] The purpose is not, here, to detail how these conflicts have been interpreted in the twentieth century but to explain why and how they can be analyzed.

[58] In the 1688 Glorious Revolution, James II (Catholic) was ousted from power by William of Orange, the Protestant husband of his daughter. In 1688-1689, on his way to Scotland, James attempted to regain the control over Ireland. However, the Protestants who had gathered in Londonderry refused to surrender and were besieged by the Jacobite army. The Siege of Derry (18 April – 31 July 1689). In spite of William's victory during the Battle of the Boyne, James' troops still occupied the west of the island. William's victory was merely complete after the Jacobite defeat at Aughrim in 1691 and the surrender of Galway and Limerick.

[59] 'Williamite War', author not mentioned, in Sean. J Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish history* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 623.

the Boyne because they continued to find it expressive of their current predicament, that is, to be part of a Protestant union with Britain. A very famous example is the marching season in Northern Ireland during which Unionists organize parades to commemorate the 1690 Battle of the Boyne (July 12th) and the Siege of Londonderry (August 12th).[60]

By contrast, Nationalists have focused on successive waves of insurgency such as the 1798 Rebellion which emerged from the political radicalization in Europe throughout the 1790s. The Society of the United Irishmen was created in 1791 by Irish Protestants such as Theobald Wolfe Tone, William Drennan, and Thomas Russell, initially to reform the Irish political system. In the wave of the French revolution, the United Irishmen radicalized and organized the 1798 Rebellion for Ireland's independence. In spite of the French military help they received, the Rebellion was repressed by the British troops in September 1798. The struggle against British political domination has been mobilized by Irish Nationalists as step in the struggle for independence. The 1798 Rebellion became a Republican *Lieu de Mémoire* and Wolfe Tone's grave at Bodenstown became a site of Republican pilgrimage.

The third historical conflict this research is dealing with is the 1916 Easter Rising. The Rising began on Easter Monday 24th April – when the rebels seized the General Post Office and other sites in Dublin. Due to a lack of military organization, the Rising was repressed by April 29th and the leaders surrendered.[61] Although it failed, the event had a major impact on the struggle for Irish independence. During the Rising, leaders signed the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, read by Patrick Pearse in the name of the provisional government. The rise of Republicanism further resulted from the reactions to the repression by the British authorities. The execution of fifteen leaders in May 1916 contributed to the development of sympathy for Republicans amongst the Irish population. The Rising became a major step in the Republican remembering of the Irish past in the twentieth century. The Irish State organised, until the 1970s, annual official military parades to commemorate the insurrection.[62] The idealization of the armed-conflict to free the nation was intertwined with the recollection of the conquest and the persecution perpetrated by the colonizer.

---

[60] The failure of the Siege and the fact that the Protestant inhabitants of Londonderry did not "surrender" is annually commemorated by Unionist on 12 August.

[61] Connolly, *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*. Anonymous article, p. 514. In Dublin, 64 insurgents were killed, along with 132 crown forces and about 230 civilians, and extensive use of artillery devastated much of the city centre.

[62] In Easter 1916, Irish Republicans organized an insurrection in Dublin while most of the British troops were on the Western Front. After a week of struggle, the rebels surrendered. Despite the military failure, the 1916 Easter Rising was the beginning of the revolutionary period which led to the 1921 Anglo-Irish treaty which granted independence to the South.

Although the Battle of the Boyne, the 1798 Rebellion, and the 1916 Easter Rising have been very important in the construction of historical narratives of Anglo-Irish relations, they were by no means the only critical events in Irish history. We could have extended our analysis to look, for example, at the Great War or the Great Famine. The latter, which took place between 1845 and 1852, seared Irish consciousness. Due to potato blight most of the harvest was destroyed, resulting in starvation. One million people died and more than one million emigrated. Although not strictly a conflict between Irish and British, it has been mobilized by Irish Nationalists to demonstrate how the Irish have been victims of the union with Britain. The representations of the Great Famine are, therefore, interesting for the research, but do not quite match the focus of this research on the representation of conflicts. A key concern is to understand how the military history of 1690, 1798, and 1916 evolved from being a very minor field to a dominant part of the two museums' permanent displays in the twenty-first century. The first chapter, for example, shows how the NMI was initially concerned exclusively with archaeology and antiquities. Only gradually did a focus on military conflicts in Ireland emerge.

1690, 1798, and 1916 in Historiography

These three historical conflicts (1690, 1798, and 1916) and their relationship with identity building have received major attention from historians of Ireland and Northern Ireland. In particular, the interpretations of these conflicts and their significance regarding the relations between the two islands have been part of a major quarrel initiated in the 1970s between "revisionists" and "anti-revisionist" historians.[63] Although the dispute has been very complex, the crux of the problem has been the relation between the history of Anglo-Irish relations – in particular those historical conflicts – and identity building in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Revisionist historians proposed debunking myths in Irish history and challenging the nationalist uses of the past. They notably attempted to challenge the celebratory interpretations of Republican insurrections such as the 1798 Rebellion or the 1916 Easter Rising.[64] The works have not been limited to the historical contexts of these three conflicts. Individually, they have also been the subject of many works on memory and representations.

---

[63] Ciaran Brady, ed., *Interpreting Irish History : the Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Blackrock: Co. Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 1994).

[64] George Boyce, '1916, Interpreting the Rising', in George Boyce and Alan O'Day, eds., *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy*, (London: Taylor and Francis, 1996). For more information about the issues at stake in the historical dispute, see the last section of the second chapter.

The Battle of the Boyne has largely been studied through the parades organized by the Orange Order and other Unionist groups.[65] The popular memories of the 1798 Rebellion and its commemorations also benefit from recent analysis.[66] Literature on the memories of 1916 has certainly been the most prolific in the last decade since the different commemorations have been examined in the twentieth century.[67]

In spite of the number of studies about 1690, the 1798 Rebellion, and the 1916 Easter Rising, the mobilization of history has not really been touched upon. For instance, most of the work on the historical debates and interpretations of the past focus only on academic history. Thus, the impact of the quarrel between revisionist and anti-revisionist historians on the overall history-making process is largely ignored. We do not know to what extent the debates have migrated beyond academic circles and played a role in public sites of history-making. Likewise, while the works on memories of conflict often set their argument in the context of academic interpretations of the past, they hardly analyze the bridges and vectors of transmission. For example, the final chapter of Keith Jeffery's innovative book on the memory of the Great War in Ireland concentrates on "Commemoration … Irish politics and the collective memory of the war". The agents of the reinterpretation of the past Jeffery examined were almost exclusively politicians, although the reinterpretations of the Great War in Ireland had been a major historiographical evolution.[68] It is, therefore, necessary to widen the approach of history-making to examine the relationship between academic history and the history produced in the two national museums.

Furthermore, memory studies in Ireland lack a more general approach to the relations between past and present. Thus, very few studies have focused on the long term construction of memory. One of the few examples is the well documented analysis from Anne Dolan on the commemorations of the Irish Civil War from 1923 to 2000. Through this long period, she has been able to evaluate the profound change of interpretation.[69] The tendency even seems to

---

[65] Dominic Bryan, *Orange Parades: the Politics of Ritual, Tradition and Control* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

[66] Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007); Peter Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of ' 98'?* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003).

[67] Mary E. Daly, Margaret O'Callaghan, eds., *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007); Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh, eds., *1916: the Long Revolution* (Douglas Village, Cork: Mercier Press, 2007); Roisín Higgins, *Transforming 1916: Meaning, Memory and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Easter Rising* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012); Rebecca Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916: Commemoration and Conflict in Post-Peace Process Ireland* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2010).

[68] Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[69] Anne Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War: History and Memory, 1923-2000* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

be to the reduction of time scale since recent studies have focused on particular anniversaries like the Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Easter Rising in 1966.[70] Restricted in time, works on memory are also often limited regarding the number of events remembered. Hence, most of the studies focus on the memories of a singular event like the 1798 Rebellion, or the 1916 Easter Rising. This raises the question of the comparable aspects of the mobilization of the history of 1690, 1798, and 1916.

Scholars who have analyzed memories of these conflicts have demonstrated that there have been no direct Nationalist and Unionist rival accounts of the same events, rather alternative cultural codes which give rise to different ways of structuring historical experience. For instance, though both Unionists and Nationalists commemorated 1916, the former remembered the Battle of the Somme whereas the latter recollected the Easter Rising. Indeed, the First World War has also been a subject of divisions. Ulster Unionists played a major role during the Battle of the Somme in July 1916 in which five thousand members of the 36th Ulster Division died during the first day of the assault. The 36th (Ulster) Division was made up of members of the Ulster Volunteer Force, mostly Protestants who were opposed to Home Rule. Their participation in the War – in particular the heavy losses they experienced during the Battle of the Somme in July 1916 – have been remembered by Unionists as evidence of the union with Britain. On the other side, even though almost 200.000 Irish joined the British Army, the memory of their participation was kept silent in the Irish Free State as it did not match the official discourse that placed emphasis on the distinction between the two islands. The studies of the Irish participation in the Great War are, therefore, much more recent.[71] Studies by David Fitzpatrick and later by Keith Jeffery and John Horne paved the way for more numerous works.[72]

The 1916 context has somehow provided more possibilities to analyze broader construction of historical narratives. Edna Longley and more recently Guy Beiner have written articles comparing the memories of the 1916 Easter Rising and the 1916 Battle of the

---

[70] Daly, O'Callaghan, *1916 in 1966*; Higgins, *Transforming 1916*.
[71] David Officer, '"For God and for Ulster'': the Ulsterman on the Somme', in McBride, *History and Memory*, James Loughlin, 'Mobilising the Sacred Dead: Ulster Unionists, the Great War and the Politics of Remembrance', in Adrian Gregory and Senia Paseta, eds. *Ireland and the Great War: a War to Unite Us All?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).
[72] David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life 1913-1921: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977); David Fitzpatrick, *Ireland and the First World War* (Mullingar: Lilliput, 1988); Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*; John Horne, ed., *Our war : Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008). See also Jane Leonard, 'The Twinge of Memory: Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday in Dublin since 1919', in Richard English and Graham Walker, eds., *Unionism in Modern Ireland: New Perspectives on Politics and Culture*, (Dublin: Basingstoke, 1996); Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, The Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Somme and their relevance for Nationalists and Unionists.[73] While Longley stresses the opposite frameworks of memories, Beiner's approach is more sophisticated. Beiner does not compare the overall memories of the Easter Rising and Battle of the Somme but their relations with the production of "trauma" and "triumphalism". This present research draws its inspiration partly from this attempt to connect representations of the past to broader identity building processes in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Mary Daly takes into account several commemorations in the 1940s and 1990s in order to draw conclusion about the political selection of histories.[74]

Consideration for several conflicts is further developed in a recent book published by Rebecca Graff-McRae.[75] Although the study gives more relevance to the 1916 Easter Rising, it is one of the few works which also consider the construction of representations for 1798, and the Battle of the Somme. In doing so, Graff-McRae is able to draw very interesting conclusions about the changing commemorative practices in the 1990s.[76] However, Graff-McRae is interested in the discursive aspects of commemorations, and underlines, therefore, the political narratives of the past. Very little is explained about the construction of representations and the diverse actors involved. For instance, she does not examine the archives of the Government Commemoration Committee which was in charge of the official commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion in 1998. While this present research deals with the mobilization of history, Graff-McRae analyzed the political narratives resulting from the process.

The comparative analysis is also complicated due to the two spaces considered: Ireland and Northern Ireland. While the Irish Free State was granted with autonomy in the British Commonwealth in 1921, and became the Republic of Ireland in 1949, Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom. This is highly relevant dealing with official narratives. The definition of official political narratives for Northern Ireland includes views coming from Northern Irish political parties, the Northern Irish Parliament (until 1972), and from British authorities as well. In order to overcome these obstacles and to study the mobilization of history in Ireland and Northern Ireland, it is necessary to reduce the scope of comparison. This is why, instead of exploring wide processes in two different political

---

[73] Edna Longley, 'The Rising, the Somme and Irish Memory', in Ma´ irı´n Ni Dhonnchadha and Theo Dorgan, eds., *Revising the Rising* (Derry: Field Day, 1991); Guy Beiner, 'Between Trauma and Triumphalism: the Easter Rising, the Somme, and the Crux of Deep Memory in Modern Ireland', *Journal of British Studies* 46, April 2007.

[74] Mary E. Daly, '*Histoire à la carte* ? Historical Commemoration and Modern Ireland', in Eberhard Bort, ed., *Commemorating Ireland. History, Politics, Culture* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004), pp. 34-55.

[75] Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916*.

[76] In particular, see the third chapter entitled "1798/1998: Commemorating (Dis)United Irishmen", pp. 141-160.

entities, this study focuses on agencies of mobilization such as the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) and the Ulster Museum (UM).

Studying the Changing Representations of Conflicts

Work to date has focused either on the National Museum of Ireland or to a lesser extent on the Ulster Museum. Elizabeth Crook's monograph on the National Museum of Ireland provides a detailed survey of the NMI.[77] She focuses on the creation of the national museum and its connection with archaeology and antiquarians. Hence, most of the chapters deal with the pre-1921 period. Only one short history has been published on the Ulster Museum. Written by Noel Nesbitt (librarian of the museum, Appendix 2) this history of the Belfast and then Ulster Museum is largely concerned with institutional developments.[78] More recently, Mary Bourke – head of the Education Department at the National Gallery of Ireland – published a detailed book on museums in Ireland in which she presents the history of most of the major museums in the island since the eighteenth century.[79] Gemma Reid wrote a very interesting chapter in 2005 about the construction of identity in the NMI and the UM during the 1990s and hers is the work that most clearly foreshadows my own.[80]

Although the institutional history of the NMI and the UM is obviously of interest, my own research concentrates on the changing representations of the three historical conflicts in the two museums. The research starts with basic questions regarding permanent and temporary displays related to 1690, 1798, and 1916. The long history of the collections in the two museums allows for the historical analysis of the representations of the three conflicts. In addition to the permanent collections on display, the research takes into consideration thirteen temporary exhibitions about the three conflicts. Most of these temporary exhibitions were mounted to mark commemorations of these three dates.

---

[77] Elizabeth M Crooke, *Politics, Archaeology, and the Creation of a National Museum in Ireland: An Expression of National Life* (Dublin ; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2000).
[78] Noel Nesbitt, *A Museum in Belfast: a History of the Ulster Museum and its Predecessors.* ([Belfast]: Ulster Museum, 1979).
[79] Bourke, *The Story of Irish Museums.*
[80] Gemma Reid, 'Redefining Nation, Identity and Tradition: the Challenge for Ireland's National Museums', in Mark McCarthy, ed., *Ireland's Heritages: Critical Perspectives on Memory and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 205-222.

<div align="center">List of Temporary Exhibitions</div>

Date	Subject	Event	Site
1932	1916 Easter Rising	Eucharistic congress	NMI
1941	1916 Easter Rising	25th anniversary	NMI
1948	1798 Rebellion	150th anniversary	NMI
1964	World Wars anniversaries	25th and 50th anniversaries	Ulster Museum
1966	1916 Easter Rising	50th anniversary	NMI
1966	1916 Battle of the Somme	50th anniversary	Ulster Museum
1967	McCracken exhibition	Bicentenary of his birth	Ulster Museum
1990	1690 Battle of the Boyne	Tercentenary	Ulster Museum
1991	1916 Easter Rising	75th anniversary	NMI
1998	1798 Rebellion	Bicentenary	Ulster Museum
1998	1798 Rebellion	Bicentenary	NMI
2003	History of Conflicts	Non Applicable	Ulster Museum
2006	History of Conflicts	Non Applicable	NMI

These multiple exhibitions are examined in order to assess changing representations of the Irish past. Chapters are arranged chronologically, although thematic issues run through them. The aim is to examine to what extent the two museums have provided opposed representations of historical Anglo-Irish relations in the twentieth century. To do so, particular attention is paid to three categories of representations. First of all, the comparison concentrates on the representations linked to the construction of the "Us" and the "Them". The analysis of the exhibitions considers definitions of Irishness and Britishness, and the extent to which they have been re-assessed in the course of the twentieth century. I am also interested in how key actors in the conflicts are represented. Celebratory representations of "heroes", inclusion of "enemies" and the definitions of "victims" allow for an analysis of identity building processes within the two museums. For instance, the first chapter examines to what extent the NMI participated in the construction of celebratory representations of Patrick Pearse and other leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising in the first decades of the Irish Free State.

In addition to the actors in the conflict, the research explores the changing representations of territory. This is another major category of representation through which to assess the changing interpretations of historical Anglo-Irish relations. It is necessary to

examine whether the exhibitions focused on one part of the island and whether relations with Britain were considered. For instance, the second chapter studies to what extent the rise of local Ulster identity in the 1960s and 1970s led to a re-assessment of the opposition between Irish and British identity in Northern Ireland. Likewise, the third and fourth chapters demonstrate that the new European framework (for funding but also for historical representation) in the 1980s and 1990s had consequences for the overall interpretations of Anglo-Irish relations.

Finally, given the choice to focus on historical conflicts, the research takes into account representations and interpretations of the use of physical force. In particular, the use of physical force in 1798 and 1916 in the struggle for Ireland's independence has been a crucial subject of debate in the twentieth century. The current work thus examines how the representations of conflict evolved in the course of the Northern Irish conflict that began in the late 1960s. The four last chapters of the dissertation show how the rise of violence in the North, and the different attempts to create peace, have shaped the construction of representations in the two national museums. These categories of representation are crucial to understanding the link between museums and nation, and to understanding how the latter was imagined.

To analyze the changing representations of 1690, 1798, and 1916 it is necessary to adopt an interdisciplinary approach. The history of museums and exhibitions has been revitalised by the rise of museum studies, which is particularly concerned with how the display of objects and works-of-art are central to the creation of meaning. First evoked in Peter Vergo's collection of essays, the "new museology" emerged as a form of critical theory about the construction of representations – or absence of representations – within museums.[81] Vergo wrote in his introduction that "old museology" was "too much about museum methods, and too little about the purposes of museums".[82] The basic challenge was to recognise that objects do not speak for themselves; they are always part of strategies and reveal wider constructions of meanings and knowledge.

Objects in museum are taken out of the context in which they were produced and deployed in a new context of display. As Gaynor Kavanagh stresses, when objects are displayed in the context of exhibition, they are transformed and acquire certain meanings.[83]

---

[81] Peter Vergo, ed., *The New Museology*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1989).
[82] Peter Vergo 'Introduction', in Vergo, *The New Museology*, p. 3.
[83] Gaynor Kavanagh, 'Melodrama, Pantomime or Portrayal? Representing Ourselves and the British Past Through Exhibitions in History Museums', *International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol. 6/2, 1987, p. 356.

It is important to examine how museums select, display and organize objects in relation to each others, in order to how they construct wider representations of history. The use of texts is one way in which the meaning of objects displayed in a museum context is shaped. My study thus considers titles, labels, panels and catalogues as part of the displays. Nevertheless, it museums are also dedicated spaces of display. It is, therefore, crucial to take into consideration how space is deployed and the scenography that provides objects with explanatory frameworks. My study thus analyzes the spatial arrangement of objects, the chronological pathways, the organization of sections, and the arrangement of galleries in relation to each others. For instance, chapter four discusses to what extent the use of audio-visual technology in the two national museums has created new types of representations for 1690, 1798, and 1916. The relevance of space, finally, is not limited to the exhibiting room: it includes the building as well. I argue for instance in the final chapter that the transfer of the historical collections of the National Museum of Ireland into a military barracks in 1997 had a major impact on the representations of the past provided by the museum.

The Roles of National Museums and the Construction of Official History

My research is concerned with assessing how the organization of permanent and temporary exhibitions can be used to analyze both the changing interpretations of the past in museums and their broader roles in constructing official history. Commemorative exhibitions are particularly important when examining the mobilization of history and the roles played by national museums. Apart from the 2003 and 2006 displays, every exhibition was designed in the context of commemoration. In her recent analysis of commemorations in Ireland, Rebecca Graff-McRae rightly points out that commemoration "connotes the ritual of anniversaries, the power-politics of states keen to use key historical moments to present political advantage". Commemoration is thus "an invocation of the past in the present".[84] She is right in arguing that "Commemoration is itself in constant negotiation". One should therefore follow her suggestion to investigate "what is being commemorated, where and how? By whom is it commemorated, and by whom forgotten? Who is excluded and marginalized and whose interests does it serve". On the other hand, commemoration is not only – as she studies it – "a discourse in time and space".[85] Her discursive approach tends to downplay the agents involved in the process of commemoration and the calculations they make and the pressures

---

[84] Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916*, p. 1.
[85] Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916*, pp. 2, 5, 6.

under which they operate. For instance, while analyzing the discourses during the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion, she does not utilize the archives of the Commemoration Committee that express the "voice" of the Irish government. My research, by contrast, explores commemorative exhibitions as processes of construction in which many different agents were involved.

In the book issued from the NaMu research project on national museums, Peter Aronsson reminds us of the need to "clarify the possible relationship between museum-making and state-making".[86] Although the nineteenth-century construction of collections will be taken into consideration in the thesis, my research essentially begins with the creation of two distinct political entities in 1920 and 1921.Both the NMI and the UM were institutions funded by the Irish and Northern Irish governments. The National Museum of Ireland depended on the Irish Department of Education from 1924 to 1984, but was then transferred to the Department of the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister). Similarly, the Belfast Museum and the Ulster Museum after 1961 depended on the Northern Irish Department of Education up to 1998 and thereafter the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.[87] Both institutions had to deal with the state policies and I shall examine the implications of this for their political independence. Peter Aronsson argues that the "most prominent option is of course 'loyalty', museums acting to promote the contemporary political context as a natural, functional response to challenges." One of our themes will be concerned with showing how representations of Ireland's past have been bound up with the changing character of Anglo-Irish relations. In thinking about the relation of two museums to 'official' history, the politics of reconciliation that emerged in response to the Northern Irish conflict in the 1970s is central. Interpretations of the past have been a key element in the Northern Irish peace process, and studies have highlighted the links between politics of reconciliation and interpretations of the past.[88] However, some of this literature assumes that the mobilization of history in this period was a new development, whereas I stress that it was one phase in a longer development.

---

[86] Peter Aronsson 'Explaining National Museums: Exploring Comparative Approaches to the Study of National Museums', in Knell, *National Museums*, p. 45.

[87] One significant difference between the two institutions was the fact that since 1972, the Ulster Museum, as all Northern Irish institutions, was under the rule of the Northern Ireland Office (NOI). The NIO was created in 1972 when the Northern Irish Government was dissolved in the face of a worsening security situation. So, the role of British actors will also have to be taken into consideration in order to frame the museum policies.

[88] A recent example is Graham Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past? Memories, Trauma and the Irish Troubles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

Yet as Aronsson also notes, "there are always options for various futures".[89] We should not assume that we know what 'official' history is in advance or assume that it is homogenous or assume that it always emanates from state agencies. It is important to take museums – and not official policy – as the starting point and to set the activities of the two national museums in broader landscapes of history-making. As explained above, history-making is a broad process which involves many different actors. Museums are by no means the only places in which representations of the past are forged. With the proliferation of different mass media, the probabilities of competition between interpretations of the past have increased. The roles of the two museums will thus be partly compared with other sites of mobilization of history such as other museums, television broadcasts, historiography, school textbooks, monuments, and ceremonies. This will help to understand what has been specific about the production of historical knowledge in the two national museums in Ireland and Northern Ireland. What I do not attempt, however, is to measure the effectiveness of museums in shaping public sentiment – and certainly not by comparison with other communications media – since this would require systematic analysis of visitors' interpretations of exhibition for which the sources are lacking.

Although the official status of the national museums comes from their dependence on governments, it is worth repeating that state agencies are not the sole decision-makers. In *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*, John Bodnar expresses dissatisfaction with the all too frequent assumption that commemorations are top-down processes.[90] Studying the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the United States, he argues that the commemoration interwove what he calls "official" and "vernacular" memories. Although the distinction between official and vernacular (or popular) memories can be questioned, his book reminds us that commemorations involve negotiations and struggles between different actors. In a similar way,, museums are spaces of dialogue, disagreement, and tension between different actors, who include directors, curators, education and marketing officers, designers, on the one hand, and outsiders such as politicians, academic historians, school teachers, donators, communication officers, and of course audiences, on the other. The first chapter, for example, demonstrates that veterans played a critical role in creating the historical collections of the 1916 Easter Rising at the NMI in the 1930s. Similarly, the fifth chapter shows how the relationship between museums and

---

[89] Aronsson, 'Explaining National Museums', p. 45.
[90] John E Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

academic historians changed in the 1990s and how this had consequences for the ways the past was represented.

Sharon McDonald has recently argued that "A crucial question for museums today concerns their role in a world in which nation-statist identities are being challenged. Are they too inextricably entangled in 'old' forms of identity to be able to express 'new' ones?"[91] The globalization of cultural exchange has tended to lead to a redefinition of national history and national museums. In Europe, museums have been confronted with the rise of international tourism, the process of European integration, and the involvement in international museum networks.[92] These processes go beyond national frameworks and create tensions within museums that were initially conceived as devoted to the national community. Chapters four and five explore the impact of the entry of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland – through the United Kingdom – into the European Community. European funding devoted to the development of tourism and the politics of reconciliation in Northern Ireland has modified the remit of the two national museums. In addition the existence of an Irish Diaspora, mostly in North America, Australia, and Britain, has influenced the ways in which Irish history has been represented. Chapter four discusses to what extent members of the Irish Diaspora have been involved both as actors and as a category of representations in the museums' history-making. One issue of the research is to determine to what extent the new transnational networks in which the two national museums have been involved have had consequences on the re-assessment of 1690, 1798, 1916 and the wider historical Anglo-Irish relations.

Sources

Not surprisingly, the archives of the two national museums form a key corpus of primary sources for this research.[93] I was able to consult the archives of the two national museums up to 2006. Usually, since national museums are official institutions, the thirty-year rule applies.[94] The archives of the Belfast/Ulster Museum are much less easily accessed than the NMI's archives, since there is no database and the research has to be done through hard

---

[91] Sharon McDonald, 'Museums, National, Postnational and Transcultural Identities', *Museum and Society*, 1 (1), p. 1.
[92] For instance, within the International Council of Museums (ICOM) which gathers museum professionals to debate, in particular, about the changing roles of museums.
[93] Situated in the registration department in the NMI's site at Collin's Barracks and on the UM's annex in Cultra.
[94] For instance, the Royal Museum of the Army and of Military History in Brussels does not allow access to its archives before 1982.

copies of selected documents.[95] One of the main problems with which historians of museums are confronted is a lack of sources to assess visual representation and spatial lay-out. My research has uncovered some descriptions, layouts and photographs, but the corpus is limited.[96] Leaflets, catalogues and other materials published by the NMI and the UM in relation to exhibition have been the most important category of sources used. Other sources emanate from state agencies such as the Office of Public Works in Dublin. The Office has been responsible for ownership and maintenance of public buildings like the NMI. So, its archives contain layouts and other description of exhibitions arranged at the NMI. External companies which have collaborated with the museums can also provide visual documents like Martello Multimedia which was responsible for audio-visual materials for the 1998 exhibition at the NMI. Finally, television archives (*Radio Television Eireann* in Ireland, and B.B.C Northern Ireland) and newspapers have also been useful to grasp the visual dimensions of displays.

The archives of the museums provide personal files from keepers which include correspondence, information on the everyday management of the collection, and organization of display.[97] Archives from the museums' departments of education have also been useful to grasp the mechanisms and the issues at stake in mounting displays.[98] The directors' archives, however, which are a crucial source, are not available either at the NMI or at the UM. The available sources shed only partial light on the negotiations and tensions within the museums. First, many decisions were taken orally and have not been transcribed. Second, although those materials are "private papers" from the staff, they do not always show the complexity of negotiations. The archives do not usually mention tension between the different actors involved in the exhibiting process. This was partially offset by the use of interviews, although these necessarily relate to the recent past.

In the South, the Department of Education's archives proved of limited value, but the archives of the Parliament and the archives of the *Taoiseach* Department gave some insight into the political uses of history.[99] Of major importance are the files devoted to official commemorations. In addition to the Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Easter Rising in 1966, the

---

[95] The refurbishment of the museum during the years 2006-2009 and the removal of the archives did not facilitate the research.

[96] For instance, the NMI does not possess any photograph of the 1966 commemorative exhibition of the 1916 Easter Rising.

[97] About the NMI, Gerard Hayes-McCoy' papers are now available at the University of Galway, but could not be studied. Liam Gogan's personal archives are available in the University College of Dublin's archives.

[98] Especially Helen Beaumont's archives at the NMI, and Marian Ferguson's private papers at the UM.

[99] The archives of the Department of Education are not in the National Archives of Ireland. They are stored in a particular site. There is no public database and any request must be transmitted to the staff.

archives of the government Commemoration Committee help to understand the construction of official narratives for the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion in the Republic of Ireland in 1998. This helps to set the NMI into a broader context of commemorations. Various reports published by state or private agencies on the two institutions have also proved very helpful. The 1949 Bodkin report on the NMI provides many details about the management of the NMI and its collections. Likewise, many reports have been published on museums in Northern Ireland by the Standing Commission on Museum and Galleries created in the United Kingdom in 1931. The analysis of the political mobilization of history in Northern Ireland, however, was generally more difficult. For the period before the creation of the Ulster Museum in 1961, the archives of the Belfast Corporation (Belfast City Council) have been used to examine the overall management of the museum. Similarly, for the period before Direct Rule (1972), archives of the government and Parliament of Northern Ireland provide details regarding the roles of the Belfast and Ulster Museum. However, after 1972 the sources are much more occasional. Archives of the Department of Education and later the Department of Culture for the 1990s could not be examined. Similarly, the archives of the Community Relations Council – which played a major role in the 1990s politics of reconciliation – are not available.

CHAPTER I: The Mobilization of History and the Opposition between Nationalism and Unionism: the National Museum of Ireland and the Municipal Museum of Belfast (1830s-1940s)

The first chapter explores to what extent Nationalism and Unionism have played a role in the mobilization of history and in the construction of historical collections at the Dublin and Belfast museums. Since the Belfast Museum (BM) only became a national institution in the 1960s, the first chapter concentrates on the creation and development of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) in Dublin, in the southern part of the island. Nonetheless, attention will be paid to the reasons for the contrasting evolutions of the two museums which find themselves on either sides of the border. The first section deals with the creation of the collections in Dublin and Belfast until the partition of the island. It will, then, be explained why the history of Anglo-Irish conflicts had a very limited importance in the official past. Finally, the chapter will demonstrate how the processes of commemorations – and the Republican veterans – contributed to the emergence of heroic representations celebrating the leaders of the 1798 Rebellion and of the 1916 Easter Rising.

A) Museums, Civic Pride and the Rise of Nationalism in Ireland: From Private Collections to Public Institutions (1830s-1921)

The history of museums and collections in the nineteenth century is deeply linked to the history of nationalism and its use of the past. Studies of nationalism have demonstrated to what extent politics and representations of the past are intertwined.[100] Although they all agreed that the past is essential to nationalism, early 1980s studies differed regarding the relationship between nations and nationalism. Social Anthropologist Ernest Gellner and Historian Eric Hobsbawm presented the national past as a creation, nationalists being responsible for the creation of nations. Gellner conceived the nation as a result of the impact of modernisation while Hobsbawm stressed the political "invention" of nations. Conversely, Sociologist Anthony D. Smith emphasized the pre-modern foundations of the nation, which therefore existed before nationalist movements. Although this has been a key debate for

---

[100] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (London: Blackwell, 1983); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, (London: Duckworth, 1983).

studies of nation and nationalism, one must consider both the national past as "created" and "used" by nationalists. Certainly, Smith is right to stress the unique character of regions through language, tradition and culture. Yet, it must also be noted that the combination of these characteristics is not, alone, enough to create the nation. The notion that these characteristics are naturally shared across a political space is an invention. Having said that, this present study considers museums' exhibitions as resulting from a process of the necessary construction of cultural identities as linked to nationhood. Museums have been useful to nationalists because they have translated abstract concepts into tangible material evidence.[101] This comparative history of the Dublin and Belfast museums shares, therefore, more links with the constructivist model of nation and nationalism. The collection of artefacts and the construction of collections enable the exploration into which aspects of the past were used by nationalists to construct national identity in the nineteenth century.

Although the links between the museums and nationalism are important, they have to be historicized in order to bring to light to what extent the museums have taken into consideration and translated national ideologies within their permanent and temporary exhibitions. Indeed, museums and not nation or national identity, are the starting points of this research.

1) Protestant Ascendancy and the Birth of Collections

Before analyzing the rise of nationalism in Ireland, it is important to highlight the political relations between Ireland and Great Britain. The relations between the two islands have a long history of union and conflict. Although the island of Ireland underwent many successive invasions, the conquest of Ireland by the kingdom of England took place in the sixteenth century under the reign of the Tudor dynasty. The conquest spread from the declaration of Henri VIII as king of Ireland in the 1530s to the overall control of the island by James I in 1603. This conquest was embedded in the imposition of English law, language and the extension of Anglicanism as institutional religion. What is more, the conquest was associated with a policy of land confiscation and a demographic colonisation called Plantation. Scottish and English Protestant settlers were sent to Ireland, mostly in the East and North-East to strengthen British control. In time, settlers became the new local ruling elites, members of the

---

[101] Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities,* p. 75.

Irish Parliament – based in Dublin – which answered to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.[102] These Protestant elites contributed to the rise of cultural activity in Ireland.

Contrary to the twentieth century Irish political context, the first Irish radicals who may be defined as Irish nationalists were not Catholic but Protestant. From the late seventeenth century, Roman Catholics were excluded from political rights and had suffered the Penal Laws in the late seventeenth century in which they were discriminated in the property rights.[103] In consequence, most of the political, cultural and professional elites in Ireland in the late eighteen and early nineteenth centuries were Protestant Anglo-Irish. For instance, the Society of the United Irishmen was created in 1791 by Irish Protestants such as Theobald Wolfe Tone, William Drennan, and Thomas Russell, initially to reform the Irish political system. In the wave of the French revolution, those patriots radicalized and organized the 1798 Rebellion for Ireland's independence. In response to the failed 1798 insurrection, the 1800 Act of Union (which took effect in 1801) suppressed the Irish Parliament and the island of Ireland became part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland until 1921-2.[104] In early nineteenth century Ireland, political, economic and social power was in the hands of this Protestant ascendancy. It was within the circles of Protestants that the Irish cultural nationalism emerged.

The role of culture in Irish nationalism has been the subject of many investigations.[105] John Hutchinson – a student of Anthony D. Smith – argues that two forms of nationalism, political and cultural, co-exist in Ireland. He defined the former as a philosophy with the idea of a civic polity of educated citizens united by common laws as its ideal. It is distinguished from cultural nationalism which perceives the state as secondary, believing that the essence of the nation is to be found in its distinctive civilisation.[106] In his study of Irish nationalism, Hutchinson highlights three phases of Gaelic revivals in the 1780s, 1830s and the 1890s, associated respectively with scholarship, political and mass movements.[107] The main advantage of the distinction between different phases of development of Irish nationalism is the attention paid to the initial construction of knowledge by cultural elites. In Ireland, this

---

[102] The Lord Lieutenant was appointed by the British government who retained the executive power.

[103] The Penal Laws followed the victory of William of Orange (Protestant) against James II (Catholic) supported by most of Irish Catholics in 1689-1691.

[104] The Northern Ireland parliament came into existence in the summer 1921, the Irish Free State only gained autonomy in 1922.

[105] In particular, F.S.L Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982, 2nd ed.); John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987).

[106] Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp. 13-16.

[107] Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp. 49-50; 115-116.

role was notably undertaken by Protestants within scientific societies who represented Ireland's cultural elite.

The construction of the museum collections was initially undertaken by members of the Protestant Ascendancy in Dublin and Belfast in the eighteenth century through the frameworks of learned societies. For instance, founding members of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA), created in 1785, were from a Protestant background and comprised academics, nobility, clergy of the established church and parliamentarians.[108] The Royal Dublin Society, founded in 1731, was committed to the development of design, arts and craftsmanship.[109] These learned societies were at the origins of the museums' collections in the nineteenth century. Regional museums were a corollary to the emergence of academies and societies which demanded space to house the specimens collected. There was a wish to acquire objects, to build collections, to classify and increasingly to open the collections to the public. In the early nineteenth century, there were three main private museums opened to the public: the Dublin Society Museum, the RIA Museum and the Dublin University Museum. The purpose was a desire for culture and knowledge and a sense of local ownership in the entire island of Ireland. The Dublin museum was born from this Protestant scholarship. Created by Parliament Act in 1877, the Dublin Museum was based on the collections of both the RDS and the RIA.

Likewise, Belfast economic development in the nineteenth century was largely due to commercial and industrial activity controlled by Protestant elites. By 1830 linen manufacture had supplanted previous cotton industry and Belfast "became the world's leading producer".[110] Belfast initially made its fortune from linen, but in the latter half of the nineteenth century shipbuilding became the dominant industry. The Belfast elites issued from the economic development sought to develop the cultural dimension to enhance intellectual life, but in more local frameworks. The focus was less on the entire island space but more limited to Belfast and its region. The Belfast Natural History Society was set up in 1821 to gather information on "zoology, botany, mineralogy and antiquities" and opened the Belfast Museum of Natural Society in 1831.[111]

---

[108] This privileged class consisted of about 7.000 families, mostly of English origin and Anglican in religion, many of whom were absentee landlords. Bourke, *The Story of Irish Museums.* pp. 35, 62.

[109] Previously known as the *Dublin Society for improving Husbandry, Manufactures and other Useful Arts and Sciences* established in 1731, the Society was renamed RDS when George IV became patron in 1820. John Turpin, 'The Royal Dublin Society and Its School of Art, 1849-1877', *Dublin Historical Record*, 36, 1982, pp. 2-20. The RDS played a major role in the development of the National Botanic Garden (1795), the National Gallery of Ireland (1854), and the National Library of Ireland (1877).

[110] A.C. Hepburn 'Belfast', in Connolly *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, p. 44.

[111] Bourke, *The Story of Irish Museums.* p. 129

The work of these scientific societies took place in a context of British political domination. The development of learned societies was not designed in opposition to Britain. Both the RDS and RIA were thus royal societies. The RIA of "science, polite literature and antiquities" received its royal charter in 1786, with George III as its patron, with a role to "civilize the manners and refine the taste of the people".[112] The Dublin Science and Art Museum was created in 1877 by Act of Parliament and was under the responsibility of the British Department of Science and Art (DSA) in South Kensington. Thus policies and strategies relating to the development of the collections in Dublin were linked inextricably to the British State's vision of culture.

The creation of the Dublin Museum is evidence of British policy to enhance socio-cultural education in Ireland which explains why learned societies, as proliferators of the British cultural status quo and perspective, received royal status. In the United Kingdom, cultural policy was linked to social and industrial development. In the nineteenth century, the British authorities supported the creation of design schools and other visual arts society in order to enhance industrialization (for which design was crucial). Although the Irish development of industry was far less advanced,[113] the new museum in Dublin was entitled the Dublin Museum of Science and Arts, in which arts and industry were associated. Another consequence of the industrial growth on cultural policy was the rise of the middle class. Culture became increasingly seen in the United Kingdom as a way to educate the middle class. In Ireland, the 1879 University Education (Ireland) Act aimed at creating "a progressive educated native middle class eager to participate like the Scots and Welsh in the running of the British Empire".[114] Similarly, the creation of museums in Ireland was considered by British parliamentary commissions as "part of a prestigious 'Imperial system' as forming 'part of a great system spreading over the whole kingdom'".[115] The creation of the Dublin Museum must, therefore, not be seen as evidence of nationalist policy but, conversely, as the result of the British authorities' intention to educate and control the citizens of the empire.

The creation of the Dublin Museum reflected the links between knowledge and power. The use of public museums in processes of social construction was not new in the nineteenth century and has been especially studied by authors inspired by Michel Foucault's works on

---

[112] Preface of the first volume of the RIA, quoted in Tarlac O. Raifeartaigh (ed.), *The Royal Irish Academy: A Bicentennial History. 1785-1985*, (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1985), p. 18.

[113] For most of the nineteenth century, the Irish economy centred on the production of raw materials for the rest of the United Kingdom. Industry was very much limited to the production of textile in the Northern part, and food-processing companies like the Guiness brewery.

[114] Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism,* p. 115.

[115] Annual Report to the Department of Science and Art, 1883. XXVII, p. xxx. Quoted in Crooke, *Politics*, p. 106.

power, knowledge and space. An example of the use of Foucault's ideas in museum studies is Eileen Hooper-Greenhill's *Museum and the Shaping of Knowledge* (1992). She stresses the emergence of the disciplinary museum during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the ways in which states began to deploy public museums as a means of "civilizing" their populations.[116] The concept of disciplinary museum was developed further in Tony Bennett's "The Exhibitionary Complex" (1988) and *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (1995).[117] Bennett applies Foucault's ideas about disciplinary power and governmentality to the development of the public museum in the nineteenth century. He argues that at this time the museum should be understood as an institution that was designed not only to improve the population as a whole but to encourage citizens to regulate and police themselves.[118] Bennett suggests that visitors to public museums were encouraged to accept and internalize "lessons in civic" because in the public spaces of the nineteenth century, the public itself was put on display and held in perpetual tension between observing and being observed.[119] When it opened in 1890, the Dublin Museum very much issued from a political intention to stress Ireland's belonging to the British Empire.

The Dublin Museum was composed of collections gathered by the Natural History Museum, the Royal Dublin Society library, the Geological Survey collections, the Royal College of Science and the Royal Irish Academy. The building situated in Kildare Street was neo-classical (Appendix 5), composed of a central rotunda surrounded with a classical colonnade. The management of the Dublin Museum looked very similar to that of the British Museum; the entrance was dominated by the collections of Greek and Greco-Roman sculptures and casts of international architectural features were given prominent display in the central court of the museum.[120] In all of these aspects, the Dublin Museum of Science and Art was in its first decades an imperial museum very different from the municipal museum in Belfast. Although different in their scope and status, however, the museums in Dublin and Belfast looked similar in their absence of national ideology. This was about to shift due to the rise of Irish nationalism in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

---

[116] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums,* p. 168.
[117] Tony Bennett 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations*, n.4, 1988, pp. 73-102; Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*.
[118] Bennett, *The Birth of Museum*, pp. 59-88
[119] Bennett, *The Birth of Museum*, pp. 67-69
[120] Crooke, *Politics*, p. 124. The first catalogues were reprinted from the British Museum.

2) The Rising Opposition between Irish Nationalism in Dublin and Belfast Civic Culture: the Different Involvement of the Museums

The creation of the Dublin Museum in 1877 and its opening in 1890 took place in an overall context of increasing opposition between two ideologies: Nationalism and Unionism. Federated around the conception of an Irish identity distinct from Britain, nationalism was composed of two major currents. Irish Republicanism was radical and advocated the use of force to reach Ireland's independence. It was embodied by the Fenian movement. The other nationalist movement was more moderate, using parliamentary means to obtain British concessions. Thus, from the 1870s onwards, the Irish Home Rule Movement sought to obtain an Irish Parliament and to repeal the Act of Union. Opposed to armed conflict which was supported by the Fenians, Home Rulers like Charles Stewart Parnell and later John Redmond, together with the Irish Parliamentary Party dominated Irish public life until the First World War. Home-Rule bills were unsuccessfully proposed by the British Prime Minister – William E. Gladstone – in 1886 and 1893.[121] The Third Home Rule bill was enacted by Westminster in 1914 but almost immediately postponed due to the outbreak of the First World War.

The development of Irish nationalism was associated with renewed political mobilization of history. The last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a Gaelic Revival with the establishment of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language (1877) and the Gaelic League (1893).[122] In addition to language, Irish nationalism used the past to legitimate a distinct Irish identity. Archaeology became an issue of tension between Britain and Irish Nationalists, with consequences for the display of collections, in particular at the Dublin Museum. In 1896, gold objects – known as the Broighter Hoard – were found by farmers in Broighter, County Derry, now in Northern Ireland. Sold to the British Museum, they became the subject of a controversy between the British Museum and the RIA.[123] The RIA wanted the objects to be declared "treasure trove" and to be re-accessioned to them.[124] Elizabeth Crooke – who has written the only monograph about the National Museum of Ireland – observes that this controversy was part of a longer trend in gathering archaeological collections to support a distinct Irish national identity.[125] Members of the RIA wanted to

---

[121] Member of the Liberal Party – closer to the Irish Home Rulers than the Conservative Party – Gladstone thought of the Home Rule as a reconciliation between Irish Nationalists and the British State.

[122] Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism,* pp. 154-168

[123] K. Neill, 'The Broighter Hoard: Or How Carson Caught the Boat', *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 7, n. 2, 1993, pp. 24-26.

[124] The Broighter Hoard is a collection of first century gold objects of the Celtic period, ca. first century B.C.

[125] Crooke, *Politics*, pp. 68-99.

develop "a characteristically Irish institution" where the display of antiquities from the so-called prehistoric "Golden Age" would come to the fore.[126] The Broighter Hoard was ultimately granted to the RIA, and then to the Dublin Museum. Antiquities crystallized, as in other parts of the United Kingdom like Scotland, the rising nationalist claims of Irish scholars.[127] It was in that context that the national status of the Dublin Museum was established.

The imperial dimension of the Dublin Museum of Science and Art was increasingly challenged by Irish nationalists. Whereas in London the institution was referred to as the Dublin Museum of Science and Art, in Dublin it was known in the Antiquities circles as the "National Museum of Science and Art".[128] From 1890 to 1910, the museum in Dublin moved indeed from an imperial to a national institution. The transfer of the management of the museum from the British Department of Science and Art to a Dublin-based department in 1899 – the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction – and the appointment of George Noble, Count Plunkett in 1907 as director of the museum, entailed this change in status.[129] A constitutional nationalist – in 1892 he unsuccessfully contested a seat as a Parnellite Nationalist – and founding editor of the nationalist paper *Hibernia*, George Noble Count Plunkett renamed the Dublin Museum. His report of 1908 stated that it was decided that the Museum should henceforth be styled "the National Museum of Science and Art, Dublin".[130] Likewise, he defended in 1912 in the *Museum Journal* the creation of a national museum. He stressed that

> No community, however small and insignificant, considers itself properly provided for unless it has a museum. To my mind a museum is more than a system; it is part of the national life, it is an expression of the national life.[131]

He perceived the possession of a national museum as evidence of the existence of an Irish nation. The new title was, according to him, "more appropriate for the institution having regard to its representative position in the capital as the Museum of Ireland and the treasury of Celtic antiquities".[132] The possession of Antiquities was indeed fundamental to his argument. He rearranged the collections according to this definition. In the new layout, the Irish Antiquities collection gained greater prominence. He pointed out that those visiting the

---

[126] Crooke, *Politics*, p. 112.
[127] Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities*, p. 86.
[128] Crooke, *Politics*, p. 115.
[129] See the list of directors, Appendix 1.
[130] Crooke, *Politics*, pp. 137-138
[131] *Museum Journal*, February 1912, p. 34. Quoted in Crooke, *Politics*, p. 1
[132] Crooke, *Politics*, pp. 137-138

national museum would "hold in less consideration the foreign objects that the museum contains than the great historical series of Irish antiquities and the general illustration of Irish arts and industries."[133] On the eve of the First World War, the Dublin Museum had therefore evolved from an imperial institution with a neo-classical aspect to a national institution with a particular bias towards Celtic antiquities. In less than a century, the different collections gathered by learned societies had been re-arranged and were then mobilized to support Irish national narratives.

A commitment to Irish self-government – even more Ireland's independence – was not shared all over the island and tensions emerged, especially in the North-East. The North-East was – even more than other regions – politically and economically dominated by Protestant families. The demographic domination was only disrupted by the massive arrivals of Catholics – attracted to the strong industrial activity – to the city of Belfast in the mid-nineteenth century. The resulting sectarian tensions and the rise of Irish nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century strengthened Unionism and Unionist organizations. Belfast emerged as the headquarters of resistance to the claims of Irish nationalism. Sean Connolly demonstrates that although Belfast was still presented as an Irish city during the visit of the Queen Victoria in 1849, the following three decades saw a perceptible hardening of attitudes.[134] The politicisation of identity politics in the North was embedded in the rise of Unionism.

Defined by its support to the union with Britain, Unionism was an ideology which mostly united Protestants in the Northern counties. The rise of Unionism was exemplified by the development of the Orange Order. Created in 1795, initially devoted to the celebration of William of Orange – from whom it took its name – the Orange Order supported the political union with Britain and fought for the Protestant legitimacy in Ireland.[135] Until the mid-nineteenth century, the Orange Order remained a minor organization but growing sectarian tensions and the Protestant fear regarding Irish nationalism enhanced its popular support. The number of parades arranged for William of Orange's victory every 12th of July increased in the 1860s.[136] Reflecting a more triumphant Irish nationalism which was gradually associated

---

[133] Crooke, *Politics*, p. 138

[134] Sean Connolly, *Imagining Belfast : Political Ritual, Symbols and Crowd*, Economic and Social Research Council, http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/identities/findings/Connolly.pdf (last visited June 2012).

[135] In 1690, William of Orange, Protestant head of the Grand Alliance, defeated James II, Catholic, at the Battle of the Boyne which was a decisive step in the struggle for the throne of England. From now on, the King of England would be Protestant.

[136] Bryan, *Orange Parades,* pp. 38-41.

with Catholicism, Unionism intensified. The last decades of the century witnessed a political and religious polarization of both Irish nationalism and Unionism.

Like Irish Nationalists, Unionists used the past to support their political ideology. For instance, it was in the last decade of the nineteenth century that the 1690 Battle of the Boyne and the Siege of Derry became associated with Unionism and Protestants.[137] Brian Walker observes that "there is no evidence that it (the Battle) was regarded as a great event by the Protestants of Ulster in the late 18th century".[138] Catholics were still part of the processions arranged for the centenary of the Siege of Derry in 1789. This was no longer the case in the 1880s and 1890s and these events were mostly celebrated by Protestant Unionists. Religious identity became gradually associated with the opposition between Nationalism and Unionism.

The process of developing politics of identity in Belfast was complex and gradual. As Connolly observes "notions of Belfast as a British city, as the capital of a regionally distinctive Ulster, and as an Irish city of a unique type coexisted and in some cases overlapped".[139] The history of the construction of the Belfast Museum's collection was initially influenced by the rise of Belfast civic culture. The economic growth based on production of textile and shipbuilding industry attracted large numbers of people. The town's population rose rapidly, from 87,000 in 1851 to 349,000 in 1901, to meet the needs of the shipyards and the factories filling the townscape.[140] Like other industrial urban centres such as Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, the growing confidence in the city's economy became materialized in civic culture.[141] Belfast was designated a city in 1888, Queen Victoria conferred the title of lord mayor on the mayor of Belfast in 1892, and the boundary of the city were significantly extended in 1896. The Belfast Corporation, which existed since 1613 when the town received its charter, became stronger in the 1890s and began to plan for the creation of a new and more grand municipal home, which culminated in

---

[137] The Siege of Derry took place in 1689 during the war between the Catholic James II and the Protestant William of Orange. The city, a Williamite Stronghold, refused to open the door to the Jacobite army which started a siege. The inhabitants were relieved by the Orangist troops; the episode has remained an example of the Catholic threat for the Unionist community and is commemorated annually by the Apprentice Boys of Derry on August 12. The Battle of the Boyne took place the following year (July 1690). William's victory is commemorated by the Orange Order every 12 July.

[138] Brian Walker, *Dancing to History's Tune: History, Myths and Politics in Ireland*, (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, 1996), p. 2.

[139] Connolly, *Imagining Belfast*.

[140] Gillian McIntosh 'Symbolizing the Civic Ideal: the Civic Portraits in Belfast Town Hall", *Urban History*, 35, 3, 2008, p. 363.

[141] See for comparative examples of other cities and towns Simon Gunn, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

1906 in the opening of Belfast City Hall in Donegal Square.[142] This was merely one example of the materialization of Belfast civic pride.

Civic buildings were erected such as the Free Public Library in 1888 which included a Municipal Art Gallery. This Municipal Gallery merged with the Belfast Museum in 1910 and gave birth to the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery which was under the supervision of Belfast Corporation.[143] It is important to note that Belfast Corporation was controlled at all times by the Unionist majority, and, therefore, strengthened the opposition between the Belfast and Dublin Museum. Nevertheless, the collections of the Belfast Museum very much reflected the strengthening of Belfast Corporation and the rise of Belfast civic culture. Following the merger in 1910, most of the collections and exhibitions at the Belfast Museum dealt with local art, and above all painting.[144] Contrary to the Dublin Museum, the Belfast Museum remained, in the early twentieth century, a municipal institution devoted to local culture. The Unionist ideology merely appeared in the 1910s.

The gap established by the opposition between Nationalism and Unionism in the last decades of the nineteenth century became stronger during the different conflicts in which Irish were involved between 1912 and 1921. The Irish were, between 1912 and 1921, confronted with three sorts of conflict: their divisions over Home Rule and the union, their involvement in the First World War and the struggle for independence through the 1916 Easter Rising and the War of Independence (1919-1921). In 1912, the third Home Rule Bill was introduced.[145] This decision was critically contested by Unionists who intended to keep the union with Britain. In January 1912, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was established and the 28 September 1912, half a million men and women signed Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant against Home Rule. The creation of the UVF was followed by the opposite creation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 by Irish Nationalists. However, the tensions were temporarily dispersed due to the outbreak of war in September 1914: the introduction of Home Rule Act was temporarily suspended.

In 1914, many Ulster Unionists joined the British Army as a reflection of their loyalty to Unionism, but in the rest of Ireland the issue was more ambiguous. In August 1914, John Redmond – leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party – stated that Ireland would fight to defend the country from invasion and would, therefore, not take advantage of Britain's involvement

---

[142] McIntosh, 'Symbolizing the Civic Ideal', p. 364.
[143] Nesbitt, *A Museum in Belfast*, p. 21.
[144] See the appendix, the list of Belfast Museum's exhibitions.
[145] The Third Irish Home Rule Act was passed in 1914 but was suspended due to the declaration of war.

in the war.[146] More importantly, after the Ulster Unionist enlistment in the Ulster Division within the British Army, Redmond urged for a similar Irish commitment, and, on September 20th, encouraged the Irish Volunteers to enlist to support the British war effort. Most of the Irish Volunteers followed Redmond, while a minority joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood as a mark of their disagreement. In consequence, roughly 200.000 Irish fought in the 10th and 16th Divisions between 1914 and 1918.[147] However, taking advantage of the British Army involvement on the western front, a small number of Republicans organized an insurrection in Dublin during Easter Week 1916. Although the rising failed and was easily repressed by the British troops, the event had a major impact on the struggle for Irish independence.

This period intensified the involvement of the Dublin and Belfast museums in politics, albeit in opposite direction. Noel Nesbitt stressed, in his history of the Belfast Museum, that during the First World War, "the curator (of the Belfast Museum) concentrated his attention on assisting the war effort by educating the public in such matters as food production and hygiene".[148] Indeed, an exhibition about disease during the war was mounted in 1915. Furthermore, in 1917 two exhibitions of photographs expressed the museum's mobilization. In July, photographs lent by the Ministry of Munitions of War, "illustrate the employment of women (…) for the effective production of war (…) to show their wonderful courage and devotion".[149] In November, "400 enlarged photographs, lent by the governments of the Allied Nations constituted a unique pictorial record of the topography of the various theatres of war".[150] These exhibitions were part of the *effort de guerre* already analyzed in many British museums.[151]

Conversely, some members of the staff of the Dublin Museum engaged in the 1916 Dublin rising. Count Plunkett who had asserted the national role of the museum in 1912 was the father of George Oliver Plunkett (who participated in the 1916 Easter Rising and the War of Independence) and Joseph Plunkett, one of the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising and

---

[146] The Irish Parliamentary Party was formed in 1882 by Charles Stewart Parnell. Constitutional Nationalists – in opposition to Republicans – under the Irish Parliamentary Party endeavoured to obtain the Home Rule.

[147] In the recent collection of essays about Ireland and the First World War, Philip Orr explains "It is hard to be exact about the number of Irishmen who served with the British armed forces in the Great War, given that many non-Irish troops served with British regiments and numerous Irish-born men fought with other military units raised in places as varied as Canada and Australia. However, the figure of 200,000 is a useful approximation. Philip Orr '200,000 volunteer soldiers', in Horne, *Our War,* p. 65.

[148] Nesbitt, *A Museum*, p. 35.

[149] A. Dean, 14th October 1929, *Souvenir of the Opening*, Belfast Municipal Museum and Art Gallery, Belfast 1929.

[150] Dean, *Souvenir of the Opening*.

[151] Gaynor Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, (Leicester: Leicester Unversity Press, 1998).

signatories of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic. Count Plunkett was sent by his son Joseph Plunkett to Europe to seek German aid and a papal blessing to plan the revolt.[152] Accordingly, when the Rising was repressed by the British troops, the Director was dismissed. Another key member of the Dublin Museum's staff was involved in the Rising. Liam Gogan, assistant keeper of antiquities in the Dublin Museum (Appendix 2), had been elected to the provisional committee of the Irish Volunteers in 1913, and appointed assistant secretary.[153] He also participated in the Easter Rising and was therefore suspended in 1916 and interned for three months in Frongoch, Wales. He only returned to his job in 1922.[154] The two museums largely mirrored the opposition between the Republican commitment to fight the British domination in Ireland while the Belfast Museum supported the union during the war. This contrasting path would reach official status with the partition of the island.

After the end of the First World War, in the December 1918 general elections, *Sinn Fein* – the party of the rebels – won a majority of seats. The representatives decided to assemble in Dublin in January 1919 to form an Irish Republican Parliament, declaring sovereignty over all-Ireland.[155] This political manoeuvre triggered the War of Independence (1919-1921) in which the Irish Republican Army fought against the British troops. This war resulted in the British government introducing the Government of Ireland Act (1920) which implemented Home Rule while providing separate parliaments in Dublin and Belfast.[156] It also established a Council of Ireland, which would oversee certain public services that could not be easily divided. Politicians in the south rejected the idea of a Dublin parliament in favour of the *Dail*[157] and the Council of Ireland was rejected by Unionists who saw it as a step towards all-Ireland Home Rule. The Act, however, can be described as the blueprint for partition. The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 allowed for the creation of the Irish Free State in the South and gave Northern Ireland the possibility to opt out of the Free State. Unionists did so in December 1922 and Northern Ireland stayed in the United Kingdom. The two parts of the

---

[152] O'Connor Lysaght, D.L, *Plunkett, George Noble, Count Plunkett in the Papal Nobility (1851–1948), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn. Oxford University Press. www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54747 (last visited June 2011).

[153] 'Liam Gogan', in James Maguire and James Quinn, eds., *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, vol. 4, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 22. He resigned his position after taking part in a failed attempt to secure arms in the United States.

[154] 'Liam Gogan', in Maguire and Quinn, *Dictionary*.

[155] From this point onwards, the expression 'all-Ireland' is an attributive which is associated with the whole island of Ireland, regardless of the partition.

[156] Westminster would have maintained power on various issues of imperial concern (such as defence and foreign affairs)

[157] First established in 1919, *Dáil Éirann* is the lower house and principal chamber of the Irish parliament.

island of Ireland would, from now on, never share similar political authorities and the two museums would belong to distinct political authorities.

In conclusion, by the 1920s when the two Irish political entities came into being, Arts, Natural Science and Archaeology were the major themes of display in the two institutions. The history of Anglo-Irish conflicts did not initially belong to the past as collected and displayed in the museums. The different organization (national in Dublin and municipal in Belfast), the different focus of the collections (archaeology in Dublin, arts in Belfast) did reveal, however, how important Nationalism and Unionism had become for the two museums. But the museums were different through their status; the Belfast Museum remained a municipal institution linked to Belfast civic culture whereas the museum in Dublin was supposed to represent the entire island (or the island as a national entity). The history of the BM's collection was entangled with the development of the city of Belfast and confirms the new set of studies on the relations between "scientific culture" and "civic pride" in Belfast.[158] It is also important to notice that the two museums were created long before the partition and the creation of two distinct political entities. The Dublin Museum as a structure was a legacy of the British domination; the focus on the Celtic and Early-Christian periods was the result of the nationalisation of the collections. This cross-fertilization between British cultural policy and Irish nationalism also explains why the National Museum of Ireland existed before the creation of the Irish Free State.

B) The Myths of the Origins, and the Role of Museums in Creating a National History

The Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in London on 6 December 1921 by representatives of the British government, and envoys of *Dail Eireann* – Irish Parliament – who claimed plenipotentiary status (including Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith).[159] This resulted in the creation of the Irish Free State as a self-governing dominion within the British Empire whereas Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom. The Irish Free State had a

---

[158] See the different projects at Queen's University Belfast : Scientific Metropolis: Belfast in an Age of Science, c. 1820-1914 ; Imagining Belfast ; Civic Identity and Public Space: Belfast 1800-2010, www.qub.ac.uk. (last visited June 2012).

[159] In accordance with its terms the Treaty needed to be, and was, ratified by the members elected to sit in the House of Commons of Southern Ireland and the British Parliament. *Dail Eireann* for the de facto Irish Republic also ratified the Treaty.

new Constitution.[160] Under the agreement of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the Irish Free State was a constitutional monarchy with a Governor-General, a Parliament (called the *Oireachtas*) made up of two houses (*Dail Eireann* and *Seanad Eireann*). The executive authority was vested in the King, and exercised by a cabinet called the Executive Council, presided over by a prime minister called the President of the Executive Council. Nevertheless, the signature of the treaty and the partition of Ireland led to the Irish Civil War (1922-1923) and the opposition between Pro and Anti-Treaty sides.[161] The new government of the Irish Free State (Pro-Treaty) defeated the Anti-Treaty side in May 1923 and, despite many executions and vivid bitterness, was able to stabilize Irish political life.

The situation in Northern Ireland was significantly different. First of all, while more than 90% of the population was Catholic in the Irish Free State, roughly two thirds of the population in Northern Ireland in 1921 was Protestant. After the partition of the island, Unionism shifted from a minority ideology in the island of Ireland to the dominant tradition in Northern Ireland. Union with Britain, and not independence, was the nerve of Unionist politicians.

Partition could therefore have had a tremendous impact on the cultural institutions like museums. The National Gallery, the National Library and the National Museum were amongst the services designated as the responsibility of the Council of Ireland set up to manage the relations between the two parts.[162] In theory, the collections from the National Museum should have been partitioned but this never occurred. Elizabeth Crooke reveals that the Prime Minister of the Northern parliament, Sir James Craig (Prime Minister of Northern Ireland from 1921 to 1940), was advised in February 1921 by Sir Ernest Clark, assistant under-secretary, that "the North should claim a share of the pictures and contents of museums in Dublin (…) of these things the north ought to have its fair share, and although the matter is not immediate, it might be well to prepare the way for a claim".[163] However when Partition was made legally complete, the collections of the National Gallery and the National Museum were not divided as those of the Public Record Office were. Partly as a consequence of the absence of partition of the Dublin collections, the Belfast Museum's collection did not change dramatically in the 1920s and 1930s. While the Dublin Museum officially reached the status of National Museum of Ireland (NMI) following the creation of the Irish Free State, the

---

[160] It was enacted with the adoption of the *Constitution of the Irish Free State (Saorstát Éireann) Act 1922*.

[161] The latter, led by Eamon de Valera, objected that the Irish Free State would remain part of the British Commonwealth and refused the partition. Pro-Treaty forces, led by Michael Collins argued that the Treaty provided a useful step in Ireland's independence.

[162] Crooke, *Politics*, p. 140.

[163] Crooke, *Politics*, p. 140.

Belfast Museum remained a municipal entity until the 1960s.[164] This exemplified the different participation of the two museums in the creation of identities North and South.

1) Uses of History in the Irish Free State: the NMI and the Presentation of a Catholic, Rural, and Gaelic National Past

The creation of a new state may result in the materialization of many national identity narratives like monuments, ceremonies and other symbols. The policy regarding the National Museum seemed to belong to this category. The national status of the museum was officially acknowledged in 1922 and the Minister of Education, John Marcus O'Sullivan, commissioned in 1926 an enquiry to research and report upon the main purposes that should be served by the National Museum.[165] The National Museum of Ireland was made the repository of archaeological monuments. In 1930, the National Monuments Act was established to protect "national" monuments in the Irish Free State. Archaeology was made a major issue and the Act made it a legal requirement that people report the discovery of any archaeological object; additionally any excavation had to be supervised by the Director of the National Museum of Ireland (section 26).

The development of national identity was undertaken in other fields as well. Education was reformed in the first years of the Irish Free State. History became a compulsory subject in primary schools in 1922, and the new programmes introduced in 1925 centred exclusively on Irish history.[166] In spite of these examples, history was not the core subject of the Irish cultural policy. The Irish language was given a special place, in particular due to its noted rapid decline as a spoken language, by becoming constitutionally defined as the official "national language" as early as 1922.[167] The focus on the Irish language derived more broadly from new constructions of Irishness.

The Irish language was linked to the definition of a rural and Gaelic Irish culture. The study of rural and Gaelic culture became associated with the development of Irish Folklore. As Micheal Briody puts it in his survey of the Irish Folklore Commission, there was in the

---

[164] The Ulster Museum was created in 1961.

[165] The details of the report will be analyzed later. Nils Lithberg, *Untitled report on the National Museum of Ireland*, Unpublished report, (Dublin: Ministry of Education, 1927).

[166] John O'Callaghan, *Teaching Irish Independence: History of Irish Schools, 1922-72* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), p. 19.

[167] Michael Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission, History, Ideology, Methodology 1935-1970* (Helsinki, Finnish Literature Society, 2007), p. 47.

Irish Free State "nostalgia for rural life and the Gaelic past".[168] Folklore was recognized, in the new Irish Free State, as a cultural resource for Irish identity. It should be recalled that the Irish Free State was primarily a rural country, with only a small industrial base. Given the demographic dominance of the countryside, it is not surprising that the ideal of rural life was romanticized by members of the political elite. Several associations were created for the protection of Irish folklore.[169] Irish governments were fully involved in the process. The Minister for Education in the first years of the Irish Free State was Eoin Mac Néill, Professor of Early Irish History at University College Dublin. Michael Briody underlines that Mac Néill believed that "the true basis of the Irish nation was to be found in the remote Gaelic past and that the language is the lifetime of nationality".[170] Concurrently, the *Cumann na nGaedheal* government sponsored the new Irish Folklore Institute in 1930. Language and Folk studies, more than any other fields, embodied the cultural policy of the Irish governments in the first decade of the Irish Free State in order to create an Irish national identity. The initial politics of identity focused on the origins of the nation. Governments were careful to support historical narratives designed to root the Irish State in the past. This did not change with *Fianna Fail's* arrival into power in 1932.

Following the 1932 general elections, *Fianna Fail* (translated as Soldiers of Destiny) came in power for the first time.[171] Founded in 1926 by Eamon de Valera, *Fianna Fail* was the political inheritor of the Anti-Treaty factions, the people defeated in the 1922-3 Civil War.[172] *Fianna Fail* was, by comparison with the former government, much closer to the Republican interpretations of the relations between Ireland and England. Consistently in power until February 1948, Eamon de Valera and his party undertook a political radicalisation turning the country from a constitutional monarchy to a constitutional republic.[173] Though the creation of the Irish Republic only occurred in 1948 – the *Republic of Ireland Act* came into effect in 1949 – several measures revealed the Irish political radicalisation in the 1930s. De Valera immediately removed the oath of fidelity to the Crown. In return Britain put duties on Irish imports, thus instituting an economic war. In 1936 the *External Relations Act* removed any mention of the king in the Irish Constitution and the following year a new Constitution was proposed. The 1937 Constitution claimed jurisdiction over the whole of Ireland, North

---

[168] Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission*, p. 51.
[169] The Folklore of Ireland Society was founded in 1926 by James Hamilton Delargy.
[170] Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission*, p. 45.
[171] The General Election was held on 16th February 1932 and the new Assembly first met on 9th March 1932.
[172] The Republican Party won 72 seats in 1932, against only 65 for the *Cumann na nGaedheal* (inheritor of the Pro-Treaty side and previously in government).
[173] Political prisoners were released, the ban on the I.R.A was lift and Eamon de Valera made clear the Oath of Allegiance was to be abolished.

and South and therefore ignored partition.[174] Under de Valera's government, the Gaelicization of the Irish society increased.

The Irish Folklore Commission was created in 1935 with an annual budget of Ir£100 for each of the thirty-two counties.[175] It was created as a State institute attached to University College Dublin and operated under the Department of Education. The IFC focused on non-elite and non-urban traditions, and the lifestyle of the former rural, relatively unsophisticated, segments of the population. The Gaelicization of the new state was used to break free from the colonial past. In a radio broadcast made on St Patrick's Day in 1943, de Valera stressed Ireland's identity and fostered the images of a peasantry in a land "whose firesides would be the forums of wisdom of serene old age".[176] Under the 1937 Constitution, the Irish Free State was renamed *Ireland* and the Prime Minister was now called *Taoiseach*.[177] The 1930s were marked by an official re-appraisal of the links between the two islands which was expressed in the wish to highlight distinctions. In order to do so, another criterion was the association between Irishness and Catholicism.

In addition to the politics of language and Gaelic culture, the *Fianna Fail* government stood out for its promotion of the Catholic identity. Partition had strengthened the religious identity building within the two states. In 1926, 92.5% of the Free State's population was Catholic while 7% were Protestant. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Roman Catholicism appeared as offering a common ground to a large majority of the population. While the *Cumann na nGaedheal* government also participated in the promotion of an Irish Catholic identity – notably during the centenary of the Catholic Emancipation in 1929[178] – the process mostly developed under the *Fianna Fail* government in the 1930s.

The Irish Catholic identity was colourfully promoted during the 1932 Eucharistic Congress jointly organized by the *Cumann na nGaedheal* and following *Fianna Fail* government.[179] The Congress (22-26 June) marked the 1500th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity into Ireland by St Patrick. It remains, today, the largest public spectacle in

---

[174] In Articles 2 and 3 the whole Ireland formed the "national territory". *Bunreacht na hÉireann,* Dublin, 1937. The clash between the Irish and British governments partly explained Irish neutrality during the Second World War

[175] Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French. Irish Folk History and Social Memory*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), p. 37.

[176] *The Irish Press*, 18 March 1943, p.1.

[177] Name of the head of certain Celtic tribes.

[178] The 1829 Catholic Relief Act removed most substantial restriction on Roman Catholicism in the United Kingdom.

[179] Roman Catholic Eucharistic Congresses are gatherings of ecclesiastics and laymen for the purpose of celebrating the Holy Eucharist. The first Eucharistic Congress was held in 1881 under Pope Leo XIII. Forty eight congresses have been organised by the Papal Committee for Eucharistic Congresses to increase devotion to the Eucharist as a part of the practice of faith.

twentieth-century Ireland with which the Irish State was associated.[180] The amount of government archives relating to the event shows how significant it was for the State's self image and it's relation to global Catholicism.[181] The Mass in the Phoenix Park – where a message from the Pope was radio-broadcast – was attended by over one million people, roughly one third of the Irish population in 1932. Saint Patrick, much more than any other historical character had been able to mobilize the whole country. In his 1935 St Patrick's Day speech, Eamon de Valera reminded people that Ireland had been a Christian and Catholic nation since St Patrick and that "she remains a Catholic nation".[182] The rapprochement between *Fianna Fail* and the Roman Catholic Church was not better expressed than within the new 1937 Constitution promoted by de Valera. Whereas the 1922 Constitution was more secular – partly because it had to be approved by Britain – the 1937 version moved towards a quasi-theocratic model. The 1937 preamble invoked "the name of the Holy Trinity from whom is all authority" and article 44 recognized "the special position" to Roman Catholicism as "the religion of the great majority of the citizens". The "moral monopoly" of the Roman Catholic Church derived also from its quasi monopoly regarding education. Still in the early 1990s, 2.988 of the 3.200 primary schools were run by the Catholic Church.[183] The relevance of Catholicism in the construction of an official Irish identity belonged to a conception of strict opposition between Irish and British. In this focus on the historical roots of the State, the National Museum of Ireland had a major role to play.

The National Museum of Ireland fully participated in the construction of idealised representations of myths of the origins of the nation based on a Catholic and Celtic past. In 1926, a report regarding the roles of the NMI was commissioned by the Minister for Education. Five experts, representatives of archaeology and the arts in Dublin, were appointed to consider these questions.[184] The head of the committee was Nils Lithberg, Director of the Northern Museum in Stockholm and professor of Folklife studies.[185] Crooke argues that "This appointment could be regarded as another way of breaking links with Britain simply because

---

[180] There was even an act passed by the government specifically for the event. It was called the Eucharistic Congress (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1932.

[181] The event itself culminated with a live papal broadcast from Rome on Sunday 26 June to the Irish people.

[182] Walker, *Dancing to History's Tune*, p. 81.

[183] A. Hyland, "Multi-Denominational Schools in the Republic of Ireland 1975-1995", in *Education and Religion*, conference organized by C.R.E.L.A at the University of Nice, 21-22 June 1996. http://www.educatetogether.ie/reference_articles/Ref_Art_003.html (last visited February 2012).

[184]. The Irish members were (Charles McNeill, expert in archaeology; Thomas Bodkin, arts; Dermod O'Brien (Board of Visitors National Museum) and P.A. Murphy, Natural Science.

[185] Lithberg, *Untitled Report on the National Museum of Ireland*. This appointment could be regarded as another way of breaking links with Britain simply because Lithberg was not English. Interest in folk heritage was also keeping with the style of Irish nationalism of the period that romanticized the rural way of life of the West of Ireland.

Lithberg was not English".[186] Lithberg's appointment by the Irish government was also explained by the strong cultural influence from Scandinavian countries on the development of folk-culture since the mid-nineteenth century and open-air museums in the early twentieth century.[187] Hence, according to Lithberg, a national museum should be divided into three categories: antiquities, folklore, and applied art.[188]

The report encouraged the nationalization of the collections. Attention was drawn to collections of Irish origin and the necessity to remove non-Irish casts from the central court of the museum. This materialized through the major recommendation that the archaeological collections "should receive the most prominent position in the Museum so that the visitor at his first entrance should at once recognize its (the museum's) national character".[189] The recommendation made by the 1927 Lithberg report to give prominence to the archaeological collections was one of the few measures strictly implemented (also because it did not cost anything) (Appendix 7).[190] Artefacts such as the Bronze Age *Lunulae*, the *Broighter Hoard* or the *Tara Brooch* were set off to their best advantage, and interpreted as evidence of the Irish Golden Age. Nationalism encouraged archaeologists to look more closely at spatial variations in the archaeological record than before in order to determine cultural similarities between sites.[191] These Irish examples belonged to a wider context of relationships between archaeology and nationalism in Europe as in all the other parts of the independent world, including the Near East, Latin America, China and Japan.[192] There was political need to demonstrate that the nation existed, and by constructing collections of antiquities, archaeologists helped states to develop legitimacy. The rise of nationalism allowed for the development of antiquities collections in museums, department of archaeology in universities all around Europe. Although antiquities were a major division of the National Museum of Ireland, the three categories that Lithberg supported as part of the set up of the national museums did not develop similarly.

---

[186] Crooke, *Politics*, p. 142.
[187] T. M. Owen 'The Role of a Folk Museum', in Alan Gailey, ed., *The Use of the Past*, (Belfast: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 1988), pp. 75-76.
[188] Lithberg, *Untitled Report*, pp. 6-8.
[189] Lithberg, *Untitled Report*, p. 7.
[190] Nevertheless, this focus on archaeology as evidence of national identity had been already implemented by the staff which had vastly purchased antiquities in the first years after independence. Crooke, *Politics*, p. 145.
[191] B. Trigger, 'Romanticism, Nationalism, and Archaeology' in Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett, eds., *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.263-279.
[192] Margarita Diaz-Andreu, *A World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 399.

In spite of political interest in folk studies, this field did not become a division of the NMI. Certainly, the 1927 Lithberg report – Lithberg was specialist of Folklore in Sweden – deplored the fact that "the subject of Irish ethnography has received but scant attention"[193] but it was not until the 1940s, when a professional officer was designated to work on folklife that an emphasis was placed on collecting this material.[194] Up to 1966, folklife did not have a division and remained part of the Irish Antiquities. This was partly due to the fact that a large part of the folklore studies and collections focused on oral traditions, and were not easily associated with the objects and works of art displayed at the NMI. In 1969, a report on the NMI even pointed out that the folklife collection had never been on display and remained in the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham.[195] In fact, the NMI was predominantly driven by Archaeologists and in as much focused on its Antiquities collections. Therefore, it seems that the close association between the state cultural policy and the museum's display was rather due to the long focus of the institution on the Early-Christian antiquities. Nowhere in the Irish Free State was the focus on archaeology and antiquities as developed as in the NMI. However, this was more due to the history of the collection than to the recent cultural policy of the Irish governments. In mobilizing the past, the NMI took into consideration its long tradition of collection construction. Any change in the representation of the past would be a negotiation between present uses of the past and the previous processes of collecting. That is why antiquities, rather than folklore, were reinforced at the NMI in the first decade of the Irish Free State.

2) The Loopholes in Irish Cultural Policy: Visual Arts and Modern History

The Irish government's support for language and Irish folklore did not spread to other cultural fields. Beyond the Irish politics of identity, it is important to historicize how culture at large was considered by the governments. Although Eamon de Valera created a Department devoted to Fine Arts when he was President of the Provisional Government from 1919 to 1921, this Department only lasted from August 1921 to January 1922.[196] This short existence revealed the difference between Irish and British traditions in cultural policy. In Britain,

---

[193] Lithberg, *Untitled Report*.
[194] *Report on Conditions in the National Museum of Ireland*, Compiled by the National Museum branch of the Institute of Professional Civil Servants, December 1969.
[195] *Report on Conditions in the National Museum of Ireland*.
[196] *Dail debates*, private sessions, 25 August 1921, col. 60.

culture was perceived as a tool to educate the masses issuing from the industrial revolution.[197] This was not the case in Ireland where industrial activity had been limited to the North. Moreover, this lack of a major policy was fuelled by the economic situation. The Irish Free State did not have the financial power to undertake any major cultural policies. For instance, from 1924, the NMI depended on the Department of Education which was bound by the restrictive policies of the Department of Finance. John Walsh observed in his survey of educational policy in Ireland that the members of the Department of Education "were completely under the thumb of Finance" and that "it was very tight where money was concerned".[198] When the Minister of Education agreed in the late 1920s to implement the recommendations made by the Lithberg committee on the role of the national museum, most of the points were rejected by the Department of Finance, with only three recommendations approved because they "involved no cost to the Exchequer".[199] The reluctance to pay for cultural activities – other than Irish language and Irish folklore – became especially obvious in the visual arts.

The case of the National Museum of Ireland was symbolic of the state's limited policy regarding visual culture. Visual arts were indeed, more than other fields, associated with British tradition. In 1922, the Department of Education decided drawing would no longer be, as it was under British rule, compulsory in primary schools.[200] Likewise, the National Gallery remained several years without any director and only in 1934 a director was appointed at the NMI.[201] Additional evidence was provided by the choice of Leinster House as a site for the new Irish Assembly. Leinster House, home of the Royal Dublin Society, had hosted the Dublin Art and Science Museum and this choice reduced the space available for the new national museum's collections. A common assertion about the relations between State and cultural institutions stressed that whilst entering Leinster House for the first time, Irish politicians turned their back on the two national institutions, the National Museum and the National Library hosted in the two wings of Leinster House.[202] All in all, cultural policy in the Irish Free State was initially mostly restricted to language and, to some extent, folklore.

---

[197] Alexandra Slaby, *L'Etat et la culture en Irlande* (Caen: Presse Universitaire de Caen, 2010), p. 108
[198] John Walsh, *The Politics of Expansion: The Transformation of Educational Policy in the Republic of Ireland, 1957-1972* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 1-6, 8-27.
[199] Minister's memo, 3 July 1928. Quoted in Bourke, *Irish Museums*, p. 331.
[200] Design was developed by British authorities to support the rise of industrialism and craftsmanship. Slaby, *L'Etat et la culture*, p. 122.
[201] Adolf Mahr was appointed in 1934. From 1916 to 1934 only acting directors managed the institution. See the list of directors, Appendix 1.
[202] For an analysis of the initial cultural policy – or absence of cultural policy – in the 1920s and 1930s, see Brian Kennedy 'The Failure of the Cultural Republic: Ireland 1922-1939', *Studies*, 81 (321), 1992, pp. 14-22.

In addition to the specific hierarchy in arts established within the Irish Free State, the history of the Anglo-Irish conflicts suffered from the political reluctance to deal with political and military history. The focus on an Irish Golden Age and on rural traditions fostered Irish unity without rousing the divisions issued from the Civil War (1922-1923). The Irish government was composed of the *Cumann na nGaedheal* party, led by William T. Cosgrave until 1932. In spite of Pro-Treaty victory, the Irish Free State was undermined by disagreement regarding the Anglo-Irish relations. In a period when the main political divisions were still linked to the bitterness of the Civil War, Celtic and Early Christian heritage appeared as a safe mode of producing Irish unity distinct from Britain. Historical conflicts such as the 1798 Rebellion, and even more the 1912-1923 struggle for independence remained highly divisive in the Irish Free State. This partly explained why political and military history was hardly included in official narratives of the past embodied by the NMI.

The bitterness engendered by the Civil War and the instability of the first years of the Irish Free State had an impact on cultural policy and contributed to the absence of a clear political strategy regarding the use of the past. Regarding commemorations in the early years of the Irish Free State, David Fitzpatrick evokes a "chronicle of embarrassment" and the absence of intention to come to terms with the recent past. Regarding the legacy of the 1916 Easter Rising, he stresses that the competition between the Pro and Anti-Treaty sides "made it impracticable to erect a memorial acceptable to all parties".[203] The first military celebration to commemorate the 1916 Rising occurred in 1924 (organized by the *Cumann na nGaedheal* government) and caused rifts between the government, the relatives of the deceased and virulent Republicans.[204] Simultaneous rival Republican activities took place and were attended by former rebels such as Eamon de Valera or Constance Markievicz.[205] Following the Civil War, any interpretation of the historical fight for independence, such as the 1916 Easter Rising was controversial and mostly avoided by the State.

The fact that the 1916 Easter Rising and the 1912-1923 period at large were not part of the National Museum of Ireland's collections in the 1920s and early 1930s was, at first sight, not surprising. To some extent, the consequences of this period – in particular the divisions between Pro and Anti-Treaty – were still very much acute in the Irish Free State. The inclusion of present times was not widespread in Europe; the collections of the Great War at

---

[203] David Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration in the Irish Free State: a Chronicle of Embarrassment' in *McBride, History and Memory*, p. 196.
[204] Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War*, p. 161.
[205] Diarmaid Ferriter, 'Commemorating the Rising, 1922-1965: "A Figurative Scramble for the Bones of the Patriot Dead"?', in Daly and O'Callaghan, *1916 in 1966.*, p.200.

the Imperial War Museum (created in 1917) were very much an exception. Nevertheless, the absence of modern history at the NMI was enlarged to the period following Anglo-Norman invasions in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Thus, the 1932 NMI's *Short General Guide to the National Collections* showed that the Rotunda and the Main Hall hosted the Irish Antiquities Collection which ran from Stone Age to "the last period of national independence 1014-1170" (Appendix 7).[206] This chronological organization, the Celtic and early Christian period was highly privileged at the expense of following periods which included the successive invasions of the Vikings, Anglo-Normans and the Conquest under the Tudor in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[207] Modern history was totally ignored. In comparison with other official narratives promoted in Education and textbooks, the absence of modern history at the NMI was specific to this institution. Textbooks did not stop with "the last period of independence" – namely the 12th century – but went until "the present day".[208] The 1926 programme pointed out that "Attention should be paid especially to the broader issues of the period such as the struggle for national independence and religious equality, and to the struggle for the land and the language".[209] Once again, the specificity of the NMI's character can be allotted to the history of its collection, inheriting a long focus on antiquities which was strengthened by the official policies.

3) The Belfast Museum, the History of the City, and the Limited Unionist Interest in Cultural Policy

This chapter mostly concentrates on the creation and development of the National Museum of Ireland because the Belfast Museum (BM) remained until the 1960s a municipal institution which focused on local history. In doing so, the Belfast Museum was closer to regional museums like the Cork Public Museum (South-West) founded in 1910 which told the story of Cork's social, economic and municipal history, and displayed Cork-born painters and sculptors.[210] The Belfast Museum belonged to the Belfast civic tradition also embedded in the magnificent Belfast City Hall completed in 1906. Following the city status granted by Queen Victoria to Belfast in 1888, the plan to construct the city hall mirrored the economic and

---

[206] *Short General Guide to the National Collections*. National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, p. 4.
[207] Patrick Wallace, 'Irish Archaeology and the Recognition of Ethnic Difference in Viking Dublin', in Junko Habu, Claire P. Fawcett and John M. Matsunga, eds., *Evaluating Multiple Narratives: Beyond Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist Archaeologies*. (New York: Springer, 2008), p. 166.
[208] Second National Programme Conference, *Report and Programme*, Dublin, Stationery Office, 1926, p. 40
[209] Second National Programme Conference, *Report and Programme*, p. 40.
[210] Bourke, *The Story of Irish Museums*, p. 299.

demographic growth of the city since the mid-nineteenth century. The existence of the BM was issued from this Belfast civic culture and, therefore, differed from the nationalist tradition in the South. Nonetheless, the study of the BM also reveals the limited politics of history undertaken by the Unionist government after Partition.

Violence was not limited to the Irish civil war and the creation of the Irish Free State. One should not forget the difficult context in which Northern Ireland was created. Several hundreds of people were killed in Northern Ireland between 1920 and 1922 in sectarian riots. The 1922 Special Powers Act suspended the normal legal processes and gave more power to the Northern Irish government to deal with the riots. The new Northern Irish parliament, which opened in June 1921 with a large Unionist majority led by Sir James Craig, had more pressing concerns than cultural policy. As Estyn Evans – one of the major Northern Irish anthropologists, notably responsible for the development of Folk Studies – observed: "money set aside for building cultural centres in the North was diverted to the more urgent needs of civil defence; and police stations were erected instead of museums and galleries."[211] As a consequence, the Belfast Museum suffered from a lack of political interest. However, the lack of interest revealed other considerations as well.

As stressed above, the collections of the NMI were not partitioned in 1921 as the Public Records were. In order to explain this fact, Elizabeth Crooke put forward the hypothesis that the Northern government might have accepted financial compensation instead.[212] Although she did not develop the point further and did not clarify what would have been the origins of the funding, the minutes of Belfast Corporation offer more light. In late 1929 and early 1930, the Departmental committee on Libraries in Northern Ireland – Belfast Corporation department in charge of libraries and museums – asked the Northern Irish Minister of Finance for a government grant (£240.000) "as compensation for the loss of certain public services, including the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin".[213] Indeed, an act passed by the Northern Irish government in 1924 allocated £400.000 for general compensation. Regarding this allocation, some Northern Ireland MPs demanded in 1929 that the money be made available for museums as well.[214] In 1930, the Minister responded to Belfast Corporation that grants were already attributed to other fields and that, basically, there

---

[211] Estyn Evans, 'Archaeology in Ulster since 1920', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 31, 1968, p. 4.

[212] Crooke, *Politics*, p. 140-141.

[213] Minutes of the Belfast Corporation, 3 January 1930, Belfast, Belfast Central Library.

[214] T.G. Henderson stated to the Northern Irish government that "You asked for £900,000 in respect of the construction of schools, for teaching young men who are going in for agriculture, and also to build libraries and museums, and you were responsible for allowing them to take £450,000 or £500,000 from you. Had you got that £500,000 we would have been able to secure £100,000 to finish our museum. But you were too soft - and that is putting it very mildly". (Hansard Northern Ireland, 1930: 46).

was no money left. This tends to confirm the hypothesis that money was accepted as compensation for partition but that this money was never provided to the benefit of museums, and culture at large.

This Northern Irish government's absence of interest in funding the Belfast Museum contrasted with the creation of a Protestant power in Northern Ireland and the segregation of public space. Segregation was most obvious in the education system which was divided into controlled Protestant schools, and maintained schools run by the Catholic Church. Segregation stretched over neighbourhoods, employment, cultural practices and sports. Moreover, the Unionist majority refused to acknowledge the nationalist minority as a legitimate interest group. Northern Ireland became structured geographically to guarantee a Unionist majority in its government through gerrymandering. For instance, the Ulster Unionist Party created new electoral boundaries in the 1920s to ensure the election of a Unionist council in counties where Catholics were in majority.[215] Proportional representation was abolished by Stormont – the Northern Parliament – in 1929.[216] As a consequence, the Stormont Parliament and most of the city councils would remain under the domination of Unionist political parties until direct rule in 1972.

The political domination of Unionism in Northern Ireland was linked to the support for Protestant culture. Mirroring the increasing association between Irishness and Catholicism in the South, the Northern Irish Parliament enhanced its links with Protestantism. In spite of religious distinctions between Presbyterians – the largest Protestant domination in Northern Ireland with 390.000 members in 1926[217] – and members of the Church of Ireland, Unionist politicians stressed Protestantism as a criterion for unity. James Craig spoke in 1934 of "a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people".[218] For instance, the links between the Northern Irish Parliament and the Orange Order – whose purpose was initially to commemorate William of Orange's victory at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 – became stronger. July 12th – the anniversary of the Battle – was made into a bank holiday in 1925 and the parades became rituals of the state from which Unionist politicians drew legitimacy.[219] During the 1933 parades, James Craig stated: "I can assure you that the policy of the future will be the policy of the past, and that will be no surrender to the disintegrating forces of this country. I am an

---

[215] Of direct consequence for the Belfast Museum was the fact that, although 25% of the population of the city of Belfast was Catholic, only five per cent of the Belfast Corporation – under which the museum depended – was Catholic in 1928. Jonathan Tonge, *Northern Ireland: Conflict and Change*, (Harlow: Longman, 2002), p. 23.
[216] John Whyte, 'How much Discrimination was there under the Unionist Regime, 1921-1968?', *Contemporary Irish Issues*, 1983, pp. 1-36.
[217] R.F.G. Holmes 'Presbyterianism', in Connolly, *The Oxford Companion,* p. 483.
[218] Bryan, *Orange Parades*, p. 61.
[219] Bryan, *Orange Parades*, p. 60.

Orangeman to the heart and always an Orangeman".[220] In his 1980 book, Michael Farrell defined Northern Ireland as "the Orange State".[221] The 1920s and 1930s witnessed an extension of the gap between the two parts of the island of Ireland which supported opposite interpretations of the relations between Ireland and Britain: nationalism in the South and Unionism in the North.

Having been a minority on a Catholic island since the process of Plantation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many Protestants – justifiably so or not – felt themselves under constant threat from the stronger Catholic enemies. The violence endured during besiegement and massacres during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries became the red thread of the Unionist historical narrative. The 1689 Siege of Derry and the following victory at the Battle of the Boyne were part of this general interpretation of the past. According to this Unionist historical narrative, only union with Britain could secure the lives of Protestants in Ireland. That is why the participation of Unionists in the British Army during the First World War and the heavy loss they underwent at the Battle of the Somme in July 1916 became symbolic of their sacrifice for the union.[222] Unlike in the Irish Free State, Unionists could not stress the Early-Christian roots as legitimacy for their domination. The Unionist historical narratives rather focused on the Plantation and the successive historical conflicts which marked their distinction from Irish and union with British. Historical conflicts like the Siege of Derry, the Battle of the Boyne or the Battle of the Somme were annually celebrated by different Unionist associations. However, like in the Irish Free State, the Northern Irish government did not develop particular cultural policy regarding these conflicts. This came from the characteristic of Unionism.

First, Northern Ireland did not break the link with Britain in 1922. It was very important for Unionists to stress this continuity. The 1923 Department of Education report pointed out that "It is obviously important that every citizen should become acquainted with the history of his native country, and for this purpose the children in our schools should acquire an elementary knowledge of the history of Great Britain, and of Ireland and especially Ulster as part of the United Kingdom".[223] Unlike the Irish Free State, Northern Irish Unionist politicians did not need to use the past to justify a new political status. Instead of building new historical narratives, the emphasis was placed on the British political identity of Northern

---

[220] *Belfast News Letter*, 13 July 1933.
[221] Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: the Orange State*, (London: Pluto Press, 1980).
[222] Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, p. 150.
[223] Ministry of Education for Northern Ireland, *Final Report of the Departmental Committee on the Education Service in Northern Ireland*, 1923, p. 53.

Irish Unionists.[224] That could explain why, when proposals were made to have the 12 July – anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne – declared a general public holiday, the Northern Irish government resisted. In July 1922 Craig stated "In view of the large number of existing statutory holidays and the fact that the 12th of July has for many years been observed as such, there does not appear to be any necessity to take the action suggested".[225] Northern Irish Unionists did not need special politics of identity in the 1920s. The absence of politics of identity also came from the strict opposition to Nationalism.

Unionists tended to define themselves more in terms of what they were not. In opposition to the Home Rule movement and the struggle for Ireland's independence, Unionists had created the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1912 and asserted their union with Britain during the First World War. Likewise, after Partition, Unionists did not hide their condemnation of commemorations seen as nationalist. For instance, remembering the 1798 Rebellion was, in Northern Ireland, mainly associated with nationalist circles. The prevalent Unionist political parties not only refused to participate in any commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion, but also banned most of them. In 1948, while the main event of the 150th anniversary of the Rebellion took the shape of a procession along the traditional nationalist marching-route of the Falls Road, the Unionist-dominated Belfast Corporation banned a 1798 commemorative event organized at the Ulster Hall.[226] In 1954, the Flag and Emblems Act protected the Union flag wherever it flew in Northern Ireland but allowed for the removal of the Irish tricolour if the police felt good public order required such action.[227] The active and official assertions of cultural identity remained very rare.[228] The Belfast Museum, like other cultural institutions, received hence little attention and little funding from the government.

Financially reliant on the Unionist Belfast Corporation, the Belfast Museum (BM) underwent little change in its collection until the 1960s when it became the Ulster Museum. In the tradition of nineteenth century British cultural policy which favoured visual arts, most of temporary exhibitions arranged at the Museum dealt with painting in contrast with the Dublin

---

[224] This was particular in comparison with other parts of the Commonwealth. For instance, in Australia, the First World War and its interpretation as blood sacrifice played a role in the constitution of an Australian national identification. This narrative "became a possible metaphor for an Australian Museum. The defeat at Gallipoli and subsequent slaughter in the Middle East and in France was reconstructed by a government into the ultimate triumph of 'Australian manhood' and the birth of a truly Australian national identity. M. Anderson and A. Reeve "Contested Identities**:** Museums and the Nation in Australia", in Kaplan, *Museums and the Making of Ourselves,* p. 93, 100.

[225] Northern Ireland Parliament debates, vol. II, 15 July 1922.

[226] Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of '98'?* p. 70.

[227] Bryan, *Orange Parades*, p. 69

[228] A statue of Edward Carson – leader of the Ulster Unionist Party from 1910 to 1921 – was erected in 1933 in front of Stormont and the silver Jubilee of George V was celebrated in Belfast in 1935.

Museum.[229] When the new BM's building opened in Stranmillis in 1929 – the building had been planned in 1912 but postponed due to the war – the whole second floor was devoted to the Art Gallery. Apart from the commemorative exhibition devoted to Queen Elizabeth I in 1958, no historical display was organized before the creation of the Ulster Museum in 1961.[230]

Despite the absence of major change, the few sources available regarding the collections in the 1920s and 1930s demonstrate clear support for a Unionist ideology connected to the region of Ulster.[231] The term Ulster was, for instance, much more present than in previous accounts of the collections. Historically, the term derives from the Irish *Cuige Uladh*, meaning the Fifth of Uladh, a reference to the five regions into which ancient Ireland was divided. It was composed of nine historical counties (Antrim, Down, Armagh, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Tyrone, Cavan, Donegal, and Monaghan). In addition, the term had a political overtone. It had been used by Unionists to refer to Northern Ireland – although three of the historical counties have been part of the South since 1921 (Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan) – to stress the specificity of the region in the island of Ireland.[232] In addition to a collection of artefacts related to the history of Belfast (on display at the first floor), the collections included in 1929 "the Ulster Window" which was defined as an "embodiment of the determination of Ulster".[233] The window was composed of artefacts regarding the period 1610-1920, "the former being the year of the Plantation of Ulster, the latter denoting the granting of self-government to Northern Ireland under King George V".[234] Hence, the history of Ulster started, according to the museum, with the colonization of the region by Protestant settlers – a story that corresponded to the Unionist historical narratives.

To conclude, the 1920s and 1930s cultural policies revealed processes of identity building in the two states which increasingly associated with two opposite ideologies based on a differing perspective with regards to the relations between Ireland and Britain. Concurrently, the two museums were also developing in very different frameworks. The NMI

---

[229] Oil Paintings and early British Water Colours (1920); Nathaniel Hone's Paintings, Irish landscape Painter (1925) ; Irish Portraits by Ulster Artists (1927); Modern Paintings lend by Contemporary Art Society (1930). See Dean, *Souvenir of the Opening*.

[230] In particular, the 1920s saw the staging of four major displays devoted to British and Irish painters. See Nesbitt for the list of exhibitions.

[231] The sole documents available are brief descriptions of its collections. The Museum Association Belfast Conference, *Handbook*, 1938, publication 123; Guide to the Irish Volunteer, Yeomanry and Militia Relics (18th and 19th), Belfast Museum and Art Gallery, publication n. 120, 1938.

[232] Brian Graham 'Heritage Conservation and Revisionist Nationalism in Ireland' in Gregory J. Ashworth and Peter J. Larkham, eds., *Building a new Heritage: Tourism, Culture, and Identity in the new Europe*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 141.

[233] Dean, *Souvenir of the Opening*.

[234] Dean, *Souvenir of the Opening*, p. 19.

developed in a new nation-state with a tendency for a mono-ethnic definition of Irishness while the BM belonged to a province of the United Kingdom where a strong Catholic minority opposed the dominant Unionist political power. The two case studies will, therefore, provide different examples of the roles of museums. It is interesting to notice that historical conflicts were neither displayed in the National Museum of Ireland nor in the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery. In the construction of Irishness in the Irish Free State, the mythical roots of the nation much more than modern political and military history were favoured. In the Northern Irish settler society – where the political power was held by inheritors of the Plantation – politics of identity was largely considered unnecessary due to the fact that Northern Ireland belonged to the broader United Kingdom. While the situation did not change in Northern Ireland until the 1960s, the National Museum of Ireland was, however, subject to major re-arrangements in the 1930s and 1940s. By the late 1940s, the NMI had a permanent historical collection and had designed three exhibitions about the 1798 Rebellion and the 1916 Easter Rising.

C) The Commemorations of Republican Insurrections and the Construction of Heroic Representations at the National Museum of Ireland (1932-1948)

As said above, the National Museum of Ireland fully participated in the construction of Christian and Gaelic roots of the Irish Free State through its archaeological collections. The continuous domination of Antiquities in the NMI prompts Marie Bourke – who recently published the broadest survey of museums in Ireland – to argue that "There was little change at the National Museum from the time of the Lithberg Report up to the Second World War".[235] True to some extent regarding the overall management of the NMI, the present analysis of the 1930s and 1940s exhibiting policy challenges Bourke's comment. The 1930s and 1940s were decades of construction of new modern historical narratives at the NMI in which exhibitions of historical conflicts played an increasingly important role. While no historical display was mounted in the 1920s, three key exhibitions – 1932, 1941 and 1948 – contributed to the creation of its historical collections.[236] Thus in the late 1940s, the NMI developed a permanent historical collection about the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

---

[235] Bourke, *Irish Museums*, p. 333.
[236] The 1932 and 1941 exhibitions were devoted to the 1916 Easter Rising; the 1948 was organized for the 150th anniversary of the 1798 Rebellion.

and participated in the official celebration of historical Irish insurrections. It also reflected the changes in official policy.

The absence of interest in modern history seemed to change in the 1930s with *Fianna Fail's* government in 1932. According to David Fitzpatrick *Fianna Fail* "was less reticent than its predecessors (the *Cumann na nGaedheal* government, political inheritor of the pro-Treaty side) in claiming the mantle of the martyrs".[237] Indeed, *Fianna Fail* set up a new commemorative ritual on the date of the first executions of the 1916 leaders and in March 1932 they made the graves of the leaders at Arbour hill accessible to the public.[238] Likewise, with the imminence of the 20th anniversary of the rebellion, the *Fianna Fail* government introduced in 1933 the plan to create a memorial at the General Post Office (GPO) where the rebels took refuge in 1916.[239] The initial strategy of the new government regarding the past looked closer to the Republican group activities. *Cumann na nGaedheal* government had always refused to take part in the Republican processions organized annually at Easter to Glasnevin cemetery where many nationalists were buried. Contrastingly, *Fianna Fail* began to participate in these Republican processions, in particular, in the Republican pilgrimage organized every year at Bodenstown, where Theobald Wolfe Tone (leader of the 1798 Rebellion) was buried.[240] This political shift contributed to new historical narratives in the 1930s.

1) Helen Gifford-Donnelly and the Birth of the 1916 Collection in 1932

The construction of historical narratives of conflicts emerged at the National Museum of Ireland due to the commitment of Republican associations. The first display of artefacts relating to Anglo-Irish conflicts – entitled *Pathway to Freedom* – took place in June 1932 and was the result of a long 1916 veterans' commitment to remember the Easter Rising.[241] Many Republican groups presented themselves as inheritors of the 1916 rebels' creed; most were identified with the Anti-Treaty side. One of the most important was the National Graves Association (NGA) which grew from the National Graves Committee established in 1926 and

---

[237] Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration', p. 197.
[238] Ferriter, 'Commemorating', p.202.
[239] Ferriter, 'Commemorating', p.202.
[240] Anglican born in Dublin, Theobald Wolfe Tone was a founding father of the Society of the United Irishmen created in Belfast in 1791. Defender of the political rights for the Catholics and Presbyterians, he travelled to the United States and to France to seek support for the Irish patriots.
[241] Anne Clare, *Unlikely Rebels: the Gifford Girls and the Fight for Irish Freedom*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 2011), p. 252.

which oversaw Irish soldiers' graves.[242] Most of these groups were very active in remembering the different Irish insurrections and the long struggle for independence. In 1929, the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A)[243] ordered its units to observe Easter Sunday as a "Day of national commemoration" for "the memory of all who gave their lives for the Sovereign Independence of Ireland".[244] These Republican groups were inheritors – like *Fianna Fail*, created in 1926 – of the Anti-Treaty side and therefore, did not recognize partition and British authority in the island of Ireland.

The creation of a *Fianna Fail* government, in 1932, was an initial boost for Republican groups and associations. Symbolically, the very first decision recorded in the Executive Council minutes after *Fianna Fail* took office was an order releasing I.R.A. men held under the Special Powers Act with a free pardon. The election of de Valera as President of the Executive Council initially appeared as an opportunity for groups such as the 1916 Club and its secretary (Helen Gifford-Donnelly) to promote Republican ideology.[245] *Cumann Saighdiúir Phoblacht na hÉireann*, or the 1916 Club, was one of the associations of veterans of 1916 associated with the birth of *Fianna Fail* in 1926.[246] Helen Ruth Gifford – commonly known as Nellie Gifford – was born in Dublin in 1880 and had six brothers raised as Catholics, and six sisters raised as Protestants, all active in nationalist politics.[247] At the core of the 1916 uprising, she was involved in the Irish Women's Franchise League and became part of the circle of Countess Constance Markievicz in the years preceding the insurrection.[248] Supporter of the Labour movement during the 1913 lockout, Helen Gifford accompanied James Larkin during his address to a Sackville St crowd from a balcony, thereby precipitating the "bloody Sunday" police baron charge on 31 August 1913.[249] As a founding member of the Irish Citizen Army, she served at St Stephen's Green in Easter 1916 and supervised the garrison's commissariat in the College of Surgeons' building.[250] Yet, perhaps more than her deeds during Easter 1916, her connection with the Republican networks made Helen Gifford a

---

[242] Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War,* p. 155.

[243] The I.R.A initially fought during the War of Independence (1919-1921) against the British troops. Following the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 and the Irish Civil War, the I.R.A split. Most of its members supported the Anti-Treaty side. After the defeat of the Anti-Treaty side in 1923, the I.R.A refused political involvement in the Irish State and was committed to the end of Partition.

[244] Quoted in Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration', p. 197.

[245] A biography of Helen Donnelly and her sisters has recently been published. Clare, *Unlikely Rebels*.

[246] *The Irish Times*, 5 April 1926, p. 3.

[247] McGuire and Quinn, *Dictionary of Irish Biography,* vol. 3, p. 398.

[248] Constance Georgine Markievicz was an Irish Sinn Fein and later Fianna Fail politician. Suffragette, inspired by the socialist ideas of James Connolly she participated in the 1916 Easter Rising. She was the first woman elected to the British House of Commons, and was Minister in the first Irish Republic between 1919 and 1922.

[249] McGuire and Quinn, *Dictionary of Irish Biography,* vol. 3, p. 398. The Dublin lock-out was a major industrial dispute and lasted from August 1913 to January 1914.

[250] Arrested at the surrender, she was imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol.

central figure. Two of her sisters (Grace and Muriel) married signatories of the Proclamation of the Republic and Helen was the person who introduced Michael Collins to Joseph Plunkett (her future brother in law) in 1916. After being released from Kilmainham Jail in June 1916, she fled to the United States where she married Joseph Donnelly and joined several other women veterans of Easter Week in lecturing on the Rising throughout America.[251] While returning to Ireland in 1921, she worked at preserving historical records of the struggle for independence. This was fundamental in the construction of a 1916 collection at the NMI.

Through the 1916 Club, she personally contacted and negotiated with prospective donors, thereby amassing a substantial body of material pertinent to nationalist organisations, the Easter Rising, and the war of independence. Her determination to remember 1916 led her to contact the NMI. In the mid-1920s, she wrote to the NMI, suggesting that it should mount an exhibition about the 1916 Rising.[252] She explained a few years later that she intended to preserve the relics of her former comrades which had survived raids and searches during the revolutionary period.[253] Likewise, Donnelly's sister Grace Gifford-Plunkett, the widow of Joseph Plunkett – one of the leaders of the Rising executed in May 1916 –, and daughter in law of Count Plunkett – former Director of the NMI – suggested in a letter to the *Irish Independent* that a museum be established to preserve and display relics associated with the nationalist history of Ireland.[254] The first 1916 collection at the NMI started from a veteran's intention to remember those who died in the Rising.

The example of the 1916 collection confirmed what American historian Jay Winter notices regarding the role of family in war remembrance. About the remembrance of the First World War, Winter observes that "family history and national history came together in unprecedented ways".[255] To be more precise, it is also important to notice the role played by certain members of the family. The most important agents of the memorialization of the 1916 Easter Rising were women. Under-represented in the staff of the National Museum of Ireland – and other public institutions in the Irish Free State – women were crucial in the collecting of artefacts since they gave many personal belongings. Unlike Helen Gifford-Donnelly who participated in the Rising, they were often widows, sisters or mothers of the rebels who died during the insurrection. In addition to Helen Gifford-Donnelly and her sister, one could

---

[251] McGuire and Quinn, *Dictionary of Irish Biography,* vol.3, p. 399.
[252] Clare, *Unlikely Rebels.* p.251.
[253] Nellie Gifford Donnelly, 'Mementoes of Easter Week: Plans for a Permanent Exhibition', *The Irish Press*, 4, April 1934.
[254] 'Of National Interest – Museum for Ancient Relics To The Editor "Irish Independent"', 7 September 1926, *The Irish Independent*. It is interesting to notice that Grace was daughter-in-law of the former director of the National Museum, Count Plunkett.
[255] Winter and Sivan, *War and Remembrance,* p. 42.

mention Pearse's sister and Tom Clarke's wife who provided the NMI with a bust and a statue respectively.

This popular quest to collect and save objects from the Rising was a broad movement in the 1930s, in which many institutions participated. In March 1934, the National Library of Ireland launched an appeal for "historical data" in preparation for a bibliography of printed material dealing with the "struggle for national independence and the political relations between Great Britain and Ireland to December 1921".[256] This was, however, not the case for the National Museum of Ireland. The particularity of the NMI was the initial reluctance of most of its staff to put 1916 on display.

Dudley Westropp, Keeper of the Art and Industrial Division of the NMI and to whom Helen Gifford-Donnelly wrote in order to collect objects related to 1916, did not initially propose any opportunity for the 1916 collections.[257] Born in 1868, Dudley Westropp was better known for his interest in Irish glass and silver; he had joined the Dublin Museum in 1899 and was Keeper of the Art Division from 1930 to 1936. What is more, he was member of a leading Anglo-Irish family and was member of the British Army – as Lieutenant in the 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifle – until 1898.[258] Although Westropp was perhaps not the best interlocutor in the NMI, he was representative of the museum's lack of interest. The 1916 Easter Rising was far from the focus of the NMI. Helen Gifford-Donnelly had to convince a staff mostly originating in archaeology – including Westropp – which gave little credit to modern history. Adolf Mahr,[259] keeper of the Irish Antiquities in 1932 – and later director of the NMI from 1934 to 1939 – had even proposed that the 1916 exhibition be housed in the basement, along with the uniforms of the Napoleonic era.[260] The display of the 1916 Easter Rising did not enter his overall plans.

In spite of the museum's reluctance, Helen Gifford-Donnelly's enthusiasm in collecting and displaying 1916 artefacts seemed to have taken advantage of *Fianna Fail*'s new government. When an exhibition of 1916 relics ultimately opened at the NMI in June 1932, *The Irish Times* stressed that the exhibition was held "By permission of the Minister for

[256] *The Irish Press*, 29 March 1934.
[257] Clare, *Unlikely Rebels*, p. 252.
[258] Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, *Armorial Families; a Directory of Gentlemen of Coat-armour.* (Rutland Vt.: Tuttle, 1970).
[259] McGuire and Quinn, *Dictionary of Irish Biography,* vol. 6, p. 301. Adolf Mahr was a famous German archaeologist, and had a major influence on the organization of the museum. Sometimes called "the Father of modern Irish archaeology", he oversaw a major reorganization of the collections in accordance with the 1927 Lithberg report which had recommended promoting, above all, the Irish antiquities.
[260] Clare, *Unlikely Rebels*, p. 253.

Education in the Irish Free State".[261] Helen Gifford-Donnelly's biographer – Anne Clare – argues that Gifford-Donnelly thought that the altered political landscape – *Fianna Fail* being closer to Anti-Treaty Republicans – could provide her with the opportunity to realize her ambition. She first approached Eamon de Valera (President of the Executive Council), and through him, the Minister for Education, Thomas Derrig (Appendix 4) and received their approval. When the Minister referred her to the museum officials, she was cordially received; and was offered space for three large glass cases for her exhibits, but the museum would not finance the exhibition nor provide staff for its presentation.[262] *Pathway to Freedom* opened during the 1932 Eucharistic Congress and emerged with difficulty from the museum's overall focus on Early Christian antiquities. The "retrospective exhibition of 1916 relics" was only part of the four displays arranged at the NMI for Congress week (the three others were devoted to the Early Christian Period).[263] The museum's lack of involvement gave free rein to a Republican interpretation of 1916.

The popular construction of the collection by Helen Gifford-Donnelly – for which the museum appeared only as a host – explained why the 1932 exhibition was a tribute to the dead leaders of 1916. The exhibition included many personal belongings: Patrick Pearse's letters, the day-to-day diary of Commandant Joseph Plunkett[264] and other "personal relics relating to nearly all of the most notable characters".[265] Helen Gifford-Donnelly's membership of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) and her connection with Joseph Plunkett and Thomas McDonagh – her brothers in law – may also contribute to explaining why Patrick Pearse[266] was not particularly put forward in the NMI's collection. A description in June 1932 mentioned the inclusion of objects relating to many characters without highlighting any particular leader.[267] Another consequence of Helen Gifford-Donnelly's involvement was the focus on the military dimension of the Rising. The Rising was defined as a military insurrection and the exhibition included many weapons; *The Irish Times'* review in June considered a revolver used in 1916 as one of the four most notable artefacts of the display.[268]

The 1932 exhibition was the first step in the construction of historical collections relating to the armed struggle in Ireland. One should bear in mind that the presentation of

---

[261] *The Irish Times*, 8 June 1932, p. 13.
[262] Clare, *Unlikely Rebels*, p. 253.
[263] *Report of the Department of Education* 1931-1942, Dublin, p. 62
[264] *The Irish Times*, 22 June 1932, p. 15.
[265] *The Irish Times*, 6 June 1932, p. 4.
[266] First leader executed in May 1916, Pearse had been Commander in Chief of the Easter Rising and one of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic.
[267] *The Irish Times*, 6 June 1932, p. 4.
[268] *The Irish Times*, 22 June 1932, p. 15.

such an exhibition about a very recent event of Irish history was very uncommon in museums. Its organization derived from an act of memorialisation led by veterans of the Rising. Due to the lack of archives, history of the 1916 Rising would merely emerge in the 1960s and educational textbooks ended before the struggle of independence. Notwithstanding the limited involvement of the museum in organizing the 1932 display, the NMI was unique as a public space devoted to the Rising. The exhibition focused on the Republican insurrection and its bottom-up process mirrored the popular involvement in the construction of national collections in Ireland since the nineteenth century and overcame the lukewarm political involvement of the NMI. The relevance of veterans was very similar to the overall involvement of war veterans in the construction of official narratives of the past in Europe during the 1930s. Jay Winter suggests, in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, that associations of the disabled and disfigured veterans of World War I became "agents of remembrance" in the interwar period.[269] In this same book, Paloma Aguilar shows that after the Spanish Civil War only the nationalist veterans were recognized and their wartime service celebrated. Those who fought on the republic's side either fled into exile or remained quietly in Spain.[270] Similarly in the Irish Free State, only the veterans of the 1916 Easter Rising participated in the construction of an official past within the NMI. However, Helen Gifford-Donnelly and the Republican control over the interpretation of 1916 were gradually re-assessed by the Irish government. It is necessary to explore the process of transformation from memories of veterans to an official past supported by the Irish State at the National Museum of Ireland.

2) Between Republican Popular Activity and Official Reluctance: the NMI and the Debates about the Interpretations of 1916 (1932-1941)

The study of exhibitions must take into consideration their status as result of processes of construction. Consideration for the process helps to pinpoint negotiations, disagreements and tensions in the construction of historical narratives during the 1930s and 1940s. A major tension which would colour the twentieth century commemorations of 1916, but which was particularly vigorous in the 1930s, entailed the relationship of the Irish governments to Anti-Treaty and Anti-Partition Republican groups. On the one hand, Republican groups celebrated

---

[269] Winter and Sivan, *War and Remembrance*.
[270] P. Aguilar 'Agents of Memory: Spanish Civil War Veterans and Disabled Soldiers', in Winter and Sivan, *War and Remembrance*.

the 1798 and 1916 use of violence to reach independence. This was all the more relevant for Republicans since they perceived the struggle for independence as unfinished due to the partition of the island and the presence of British authorities in Northern Ireland. However, unlike the 1798 and 1916 political context, the commemorations in the 1930s and 1940s took place in an independent State in which governments felt ill-at-ease with the celebration of the historical instances of violence. Although they celebrated the 1798 and 1916 leaders as heroes of the Irish nation, the governments refused to promote violence as a present means of action in relations with Britain and the North. Commemorations of Republican insurrections gradually became sites of struggle for the control of the interpretations of historical violence and Anglo-Irish relations.

Pathway to Freedom brought in large audiences. Liam Gogan, keeper in the NMI, informed Donnelly that her exhibition had "attracted an extraordinary amount of public attention", while the *Evening Press* reported that "vast throngs" of Irish and foreign visitors had come to see the 1916 objects.[271] The day after the end of the Eucharistic Congress – 27 June 1932 – Donnelly wrote to de Valera (President of the Executive Council) to support the creation of a permanent 1916 collection at the NMI.[272] The 1916 Club was again confronted with the mild support of some NMI staff. On the one hand, the staff acknowledged the success of the display. On the other hand, Mahr explained that galleries at the museum were already overcrowded and added that it would be impossible to find space for another collection.[273] Once again, the construction of the 1916 collection benefitted from the support of the government.

De Valera transmitted Donnelly's request to the Minister for Education – Thomas Derrig. The Minister responded in December 1933 that he was "aware that the temporary exhibition of 1916 relics held in the National Museum during the past year was of considerable interest to visitors" and that "he would be in favour of an arrangement whereby a suitable selection of such relics could be preserved and made available for permanent display to the public".[274] This political commitment towards the 1916 Easter Rising also materialized through gifts from de Valera to the museum. In 1936, for the 20th anniversary of 1916, President de Valera accepted a roll of honour of participants in the Easter Rising 1916 from

---

[271] Letter quoted in Clare, *Unlikely Rebels*, p.255; *Evening Press*, 25 June 1932.
[272] Letter of the secretary of the President to the Department of Education, 15 July 1932, S9501, NAI, Dublin.
[273] Letter from Adolf Mahr, keeper of antiquities NMI to the secretary of the Department of Education, 30 November 1933, A1/98/0006, NMIA, quoted in Anne Marie Ryan, *Exhibiting the Irish Revolution at the National Museum of Ireland since 1932*, unpublished master thesis, Leicester, Leicester University, 2011, p. 29.
[274] Letter from the Department of Education to the secretary of the President, 11 December 1933, S9501, NAI, Dublin.

members of the various 1916 garrisons, which was duly presented to the NMI and displayed in the central court of the exhibition space at Kildare Street.[275] Likewise, in 1941, the *Taoiseach* presented the museum with "an important group of documents and other items relating to 1916".[276] Even the bust of Pearse, centrepiece of the 1941 commemorative exhibition related to governmental policy (Appendix 9-A). The plaster came from the bust sculpted by Oliver Sheppard – Sheppard was, with Albert Power, the principal sculptor to receive State patronage in the 1930s – commissioned by the Government and placed in the *Dail* in 1939.[277] While Power had been commissioned by the *Cumann na nGaedheal* government to sculpt death masks of Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith (pro-Treaty side), in 1922,[278] de Valera asked him in 1932 to add Patrick Pearse, Cathal Brugha and Austin Stack.[279] The exhibition of the 1916 collection at the NMI took advantage of a new political interest in the Rising and *Fianna Fail*'s intention to enlarge the pantheon of Irish heroes.

However, this political support was synonymous with the end of the links between the NMI and the 1916 Club which soon lost control of the collection. When the Minister for Education agreed to support the creation of a permanent 1916 collection at the NMI, he pointed out that "it would be desirable to have a statement from the 1916 Club indicating the nature and extent of the accommodation".[280] Precautions were also taken regarding the involvement of the 1916 Club. The Club had pressed the opinion that a specialist should be appointed to take care of "their" exhibition and that the person chosen should have taken part in the fight for freedom.[281] This was strictly refused by the Minister who argued that this job should be taken by Tomas O'Cleirigh, assistant in the Art Division.[282]

Indeed, two keepers of the NMI were in charge of the design of the permanent 1916 collection. Liam Gogan was assistant keeper in the Arts and Industry Department and a 1916 veteran.[283] As such, he supervised the collection which was directly organized by Tomas O'Cleirigh. A specialist in Celtic Studies, Tomas O'Cleirigh was in charge of the 1936 book

---

[275] Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration' , p. 198.
[276] *Report of the Department of Education*, 1940-1941, Dublin, p. 44.
[277] Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch 'Commemorating the Hero in Newly Independent Ireland: Expressions of Nationhood in Bronze and Stone', in Lawrence McBride, ed., *Images, Icons and the Irish Nationalist Imagination, 1870-1925*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), p. 156
[278] Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration', p. 202.
[279] Jane Leonard, *The Culture of Commemoration: The Culture of War Commemoration*, (Dublin: 1996). Both Cathal Brugha and Austin Stack took part in the Easter Rising, the War of Independence and the Civil War. Republicans, they opposed the Treaty and fought with de Valera during the Civil War.
[280] Letter 11 December 1933, S9501, NAI, Dublin.
[281] Clare, *Unlikely Rebels*, p. 257
[282] Letter 11 December 1933, S9501, NAI, Dublin. This was confirmed by the 1935-1936 annual report of the Board of Visitors. Department of Education, *Report of the Board of Visitors of the National Museum of Science and Art and the Botanic Garden*, Dublin, 1935.
[283] See above.

about Irish publications sponsored by the *Fianna Fail* government.[284] O'Cleirigh's link with *Fianna Fail* was clearly emphasized in 1937, when he hosted a meeting in the Mansion House about the Easter 1916 commemorations. He did so as head of the local unit of *Fianna Fail*.[285] In spite of the Republican past of Liam Gogan, the thread between the 1916 collection and the 1916 veterans was cut off. Helen Gifford-Donnelly's proposal to write a booklet for the collection was vetoed by the Department of Education.[286] Although this could result from the government's wish not to involve popular organization in public institutions like the NMI, it echoed a shift in the relations between *Fianna Fail* and Republican groups.

As leader of the Anti-Treaty side during the Civil War (1922-1923), Eamon de Valera initially shared the Republican hostility towards the Partition. But the situation evolved in the 1920s. Already the creation of *Fianna Fail* in 1926, its participation in general elections contrasted with the Republican boycott of parliamentary authority. For instance, in 1929 de Valera stated that "we came in here (the Parliament) because we thought that a practical rule could be evolved in which order could be maintained. I differ from them because I had to recognize there was somebody who would have to keep order".[287] Relations hardened in the 1930s, and from 1935 onwards Valera came to grips with the I.R.A. In April 1935, *Fianna Fail* announced that it would no longer sell Easter Lilies, the symbol of "an organization of whose methods they disapprove".[288] More importantly, the rapprochement between *Fianna Fail* and the Catholic Church in the 1930s opened the gap between the government and Republican groups. The Catholic Church had become increasingly trenchant in its public criticism of the I.R.A. In 1931, the Irish hierarchy formally condemned the IRA in a common pastoral letter.[289] On 18 June 1936, the government made an order under the Special Power Act declaring the I.R.A an unlawful association. Any Republican pilgrimage to Bodenstown – Wolfe Tone's grave – was forbidden in 1939.

The dissociation between *Fianna Fail* and Republican groups went a step further with the rising international tensions surrounding the oncoming war. The Irish government declared neutrality in September 1939, putting the Irish Free State ends with enactment of 1937 Constitution in a state of "Emergency". In the meantime, Sean Russell, I.R.A chief of staff, put in motion a bomb campaign in the summer 1938 during which several cities in

---

[284] *The Irish Times*, 26 September 1936, p. 7.
[285] *The Irish Times*, 9 March 1937, p. 13.
[286] Clare, *Unlikely Rebels*, p. 259
[287] R. Fanning 'The Rule of Order: Eamon de Valera and the I.R.A, 1923-1940' in John P. O'Carroll and John A. Murphy, eds., *De Valera and His Times*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1986), p. 161.
[288] Easter Lily badges were worn by Irish Republicans to honour the memory of the 1916 rebels.
[289] Hubert Jedin, ed., *History of the Church*, vol. 10, The Church in the Modern Age, (London: Burns and Oates, 1981), p. 636.

England were targeted and hit. The I.R.A council declared war on Britain in January 1939. The threat their campaign potentially posed to Ireland's independence, hardened attitudes. Although the State had gained de facto independence after 1921, Ireland was still, in 1939, notionally a dominion of the British Empire and a member of the Commonwealth – although the practical powers of Britain were negligible.

The public status did not protect the NMI from every controversy. Adolf Mahr – director of the NMI from 1934 to 1939 – was born in 1887 in Austria and arrived in Ireland in 1927 to work in the NMI department of Antiquities. Mahr was also the head of the Nazi Party in Ireland. He had joined the Nazi Party in 1933 and became Ireland's Local Group Leader.[290] While being watched by the Irish intelligence services, he went back to Germany in 1939 and was refused his office at the NMI upon return after the war.

In reaction to the outbreak of the Second World War, de Valera declared Irish neutrality. Amongst many things, the war revealed a growing existing tension in Irish society, no longer directly between pro and anti-Treaty sides, but now also between government and Republican groups. The Irish government responded by the imprisonment without trial of members of the I.R.A. What was at stake in the late 1930s and early 1940s in the struggle between the Irish government and some Republican groups was the interpretation of the use of physical violence in ending both partition and British authority in the North. While Eamon de Valera had, in his 1932 inaugural speech as President of the League of Nation, made an appeal for peace, Republican groups still idealized the use of physical force.

The discrepancy regarding the notion of violence and its use in politics had an impact on the 25th anniversary of the 1916 Rising in 1941. The *1916 Veterans association* was one of the main Republican groups supporting a militaristic commemoration of the Easter Rising. Its secretary sent a letter to the President – Douglas Hyde – in February 1941 calling on the Government to declare on 24 April a National Holiday to be designated "Irish Independence Day" in order to "perpetuate the memory of the commencement of the final phase in Ireland's struggle for Independence" especially given that 1941 marks the 25th anniversary of the Easter Rising.[291] The Department of the *Taoiseach* noted that the 1916 Veterans association was one of the groups which "have openly sympathized with illegal armed activities in

---

[290] Gerry Mullins, *Dublin Nazi N° 1. The Life of Adolf Mahr*, (Dublin: Liberty Press, 2007).
[291] Letter from Bruke to D. Hyde, 8 February 1941, PRES 1/ P 1926, NAI, Dublin.

England". The letter ultimately stressed that these associations "inspire little confidence".[292] The government intended to control the commemorations of 1916.

Although the Government had already started to prepare the anniversary, the outbreak of war modified the overall attitude towards the insurrection.[293] On 25 October 1940, Eamon de Valera pointed out that "in present circumstances the holding of a commemoration on elaborate lines would not be appropriate".[294] In April 1941, the office of the President – Douglas Hyde – transmitted the proposed draft for his speech to the government. The draft was not approved by the *Taoiseach* who pointed out that "less stress might be laid on the past and the broadcast might perhaps be based on an appeal for unity at this stage rather than on a recital of the struggles and achievements of the past".[295] Whereas the first draft mentioned "the glorious event which we commemorate to-day" and the association of "1916 with the great Irish military movements of the past -1594, 1641, 1690, '98, '67 (…) all these dates represent periods of major action against foreign aggression, when the flower of the nation's manhood took up the sword"[296], the ultimate version only highlighted Irish unity in the recent period of European war.[297] The public status of the National Museum contributed to limiting the development of Republican narratives of the past and of the historical relations between Ireland and Britain.

Nevertheless, the organization of an exhibition for the 1941 commemoration of the 1916 Rising connected the NMI with the tension between Republicans and the government. The Irish government had planned that the temporary display would be dismantled after a few months. The NMI's wish to extend the exhibition was supported by the *1916 Veterans association* whose secretary, James Burke wrote a supporting letter to the Department of Education.[298] He defended the evening opening of the exhibition and proposed the "employment of Old Volunteers" – supposedly Republicans – in the Museum.[299] This matched the Republican intention to celebrate the insurrection but was dismissed by the government. The exhibition was dismantled and the permanent 1916 collection was removed to a smaller room. Although the transition from popular to official narratives of 1916 began as

---

[292] Correspondence between the President's office and the Department of the *Taoiseach*, 23rd January 1940, archives of the President's Office, PRES1/P1226, NAI, Dublin.
[293] Ferriter, 'Commemorating', p. 205.
[294] Note from Eamon de Valera, 25 October 1940, Department of the *Taoiseach*, S11409, NAI, Dublin.
[295] Letter from the Department of the *Taoiseach* to the President's Office, 9 April 1941, archives of the President's Office, PRES1/P1956, NAI, Dublin,.
[296] Draft, 20th March 1941, *ibid*.
[297] *Ibid*., 13 April 1941.
[298] Letter from Liam Gogan to the Acting Director in order for him to inform the Minister for Education, 13 November or December 1941, Box 140, NMIA.
[299] *Ibid*.

a collaborative effort between veterans and the government, the tension increased and the NMI became part of the struggle between the Irish government and Republican groups. This tension would mark every commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising throughout the Twentieth century.

3) Museum, Historians and Commemorations: the Struggle between Sentimentalism and Historical Professionalization in the Construction of National History in the 1940s

Several commemorations were arranged in the 1940s in Ireland, for instance, for the 25th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising (1941), the centenary of Thomas Davis' death (1945)[300] and the sesquicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion (1948). Conversely, lesser national experiences such as the centenary of the Great Famine, in the late 1940s and early 1950s passed by extremely quietly.[301] This traumatic event was, however an important component of Irish history, and the cornerstone of a massive Irish emigration. Despite social and economic conditions in Ireland slowly improving from the 1850s onwards, emigration continued, with over three million leaving in subsequent decades.[302] Yet, as Irial Glynn observes, "official independent Ireland preferred to celebrate an Irish revolutionary's heroic deeds from 1848 rather than draw attention to the much more tragic events that took place simultaneously, one hundred years before. Emigration remained too real, too painful and too embarrassing a phenomenon for official Ireland to commemorate in any major way".[303] In as much, a major dimension of the 1940s commemorations was the production of unity and the construction of celebratory representations of the past.

Nevertheless, an academic professionalization of history also developed from the second half of the 1930s and attempted to fight sentimentality in Irish history. The late 1930s were a fundamental period for history writing in Ireland.[304] The modern historical profession in Ireland emerged out of disaffection at the officially propagated versions of the post-1922 Irish Free State and of Northern Ireland. It was a conscious reaction against the excesses of

---

[300] Thomas Davis was the leader of the Young Ireland movement (1840s) which wanted to repeal the Act of Union.
[301] The Great Famine took place between 1845 and 1852 in Ireland. Due to starvation, one million people died and more than one million emigrated.
[302] Irial Glynn 'Famine, commemorations and asylum debates in Ireland conflated', in Irial Glynn and J. Olaf Kleist, eds., *History, Memory and Migration: Perceptions of the Past and the Politics of Incorporation*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 173-188.
[303] Glynn 'Famine', pp. 177-178.
[304] See Brady, *Interpreting Irish History*; Boyce and O'Day, *The Making of Modern Irish History*. For a critical reappraisal of the links between Irish revisionism and the Annales School, see Kevin Whelan, 'The Revisionist Debate in Ireland', *Boundary* 2, 31, 1, 2004, pp. 179-205.

nationalist history, then politically embodied in de Valera's constitution that declared Ireland as Gaelic, Catholic and indivisible.[305] Irish history was to become a scientific profession. Both the commemorative celebrations of the past and the professionalization of history had consequences on the NMI which would continue to act as a laboratory for the construction of national history.

The three main historians responsible for the professionalization of Irish history were Robert Dudley Edwards, Theodore William Moody and David Beers Quinn. Trained in London at the Institute of Historical Research, they returned to take up positions at University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin and Queen's University respectively. In the mid-1930s Theodore William Moody and Robert Dudley Edwards intended to bring about a revolution in the aims, methods and style of Irish historical writing.[306] In 1938, Moody and Edwards founded *Irish Historical Studies* which became the backbone of the movement of professionalization. In the preface of the first copy, they listed the main tasks of the journal. A special category was entitled "Historical Revisions" in which the historians explained they intended to refute unquestioned assumptions concerning well-known events, persons or processes by means of the findings of new research.[307]

They began what Moody later called "the mental war of liberation from servitude to the myth" and aimed at applying scientific methods to history by distinguishing facts from fiction.[308] The preferred mode of writing was the historical monograph based on thorough archival research, careful contextualization, critical questionings, and rigorous documentation of sources which replaced the hagiographical focus on national heroes and repudiated the teleologies of national development. It is crucial to highlight that Moody sketched out the two contrary but equally destructive myths which he saw as fatal to the writing of Irish history – the separatist sectarian myth, which he associated with Ulster loyalism, and the unitary, nationalist myth which was the hallmark of southern Republicanism.[309] One major consequence for the production of history was that there was an explicit policy to avoid the contemporary period as too enmeshed with partisan political interests and passions and which suffered from the lack of archives to back it.[310] Since very few materials were available regarding the 1916-1923 period, new historians ignored this time period. As consequence, the

---

[305] John Hutchinson 'Irish Nationalism', in Boyce and O'Day, *The Making of Modern Irish History,* p. 101.
[306] Ciaran Brady '"Constructive and Instrumental": The Dilemma of Ireland's first "New Historians"', in Brady, *Interpreting Irish History,* p. 4.
[307] Theodore Moody and Dudley Edwards, 'Preface', *Irish Historical Studies*, 1938, pp. 35-37.
[308] Theodore Moody, 'Irish History and Irish Mythology', *Hermathena*, 124, summer 1978, pp. 7-24.
[309] C. Brady 'Constructive and Instrumental', p. 7.
[310] Hutchinson 'Irish Nationalism', p. 102. Edwards played a major role in initiating the Bureau of Military History. Created in 1947, it recorded individuals who had played a role in 1916 and in the War of Independence.

NMI remained unique in its display of historical narratives concerning the Rising which took place precisely within this timeframe.

Although the National Museum of Ireland did not directly take part in the debates, it was connected to the new movement through one of its keepers: Gerard Hayes-McCoy (Appendix 2). In charge of the historical collections devoted to eighteenth and nineteenth century Ireland from 1937 to 1959, Hayes-McCoy was, unlike Liam Gogan and Thomas O'Cleirigh who had been trained in Celtic Studies, a historian. He obtained his doctorate in 1934 at the University of Edinburgh; his research dealt with Scottish mercenaries in sixteenth century Ireland. More importantly, Hayes-McCoy belonged to the first wave of new professional historians. He contributed to the London's Institute of Historical Research seminars where he met Dudley Edwards, Theodore William Moody and David Beers Quinn.[311] The work of Hayes-McCoy was fundamental for the NMI since he attempted to challenge nationalistic interpretations in favour of more verifiable historic facts. His work on mercenaries as transnational actors between the different regions of Ireland and Britain is considered today as having "anticipated by 60 years the much vaunted New British History of the late 20th century by tracing the interconnections between events in England, Ireland and Scotland".[312] This work had a major transnational dimension and was hence very useful in this study of the representations of historical relations between Ireland and Britain.

The shortage of surviving documents about the 1930s and 1940s makes it difficult to fully appreciate the crucial role Hayes-McCoy played in building historical narratives at the NMI. However, it seems that he participated in the overall design of the historic collections. Hayes-McCoy was also a specialist in military history and a founding member of the *Military History Society of Ireland*.[313] This played a role in the construction of narratives of historical conflicts at the NMI – distinct from the focus on Celtic and Early Christian periods. His interest in military history had notably materialized through the collection of artefacts relating to the 1798 Rebellion. He gathered many artefacts, especially pikeheads of the rebels.[314] Hence, most of the artefacts about the 1798 Rebellion which were part of the permanent historical collections would from thereon out consist of muskets, bayonets, pistols and

---

[311] McGuire and Quinn, *Dictionary of Irish Biography,* vol.5, p. 875.
[312] McGuire and Quinn, *Dictionary of Irish Biography,* vol.5, p. 875.
[313] He wrote several books and articles. For instance *The Irish at War* in 1964 and *Irish Battles: A Military History of Ireland* in 1969 and 'Strategy and Tactics in Irish Warfare, 1593-1601', *Irish Historical Studies*, No.7, vol.2, 1941, pp. 255-279.
[314] Hayes McCoy, Note, A1/140/001, NMIA, Dublin.

pikeheads.[315] To some extent, the collection of weapons created by 1916 veterans was carried on through Hayes-McCoy's military interest.

In addition to this military field, Hayes-McCoy was also responsible for a more historical approach to the overall collection. In 1953, he observed that "When the '1916 Collection' was begun in 1935 sentiment played a large part in the accumulation of material and its layout on exhibition. Perhaps inevitably, personalities were allowed to influence the acceptance of items, and, less justifiably, the collection which was formed was looked upon as a memorial of the dead rather than an ordinary museum collection".[316] Although he was not in charge when the 1916 collection was first established and arranged at the NMI, he adopted more rigid rules and direction for the collection during his term as keeper. For instance, in 1950 he rejected the offer of a lock of hair belonging to the nationalist icon Thomas Ashe on the grounds that it was "almost altogether sentimental".[317] Hayes-McCoy was also responsible for the creation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries historical collections in the late 1930s.

The creation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries historical collection in 1935 and its development could be seen as a mark of Hayes-McCoy's link with Irish new historians who avoided contemporary subjects. This collection was divided into twelve sections from the Old Irish Parliament (mostly members and speakers in the 1750s and 1760s) to Charles Stewart Parnell, leader of the Home Rule movement in the 1880s.[318] While Gogan and O'Cleirigh engaged exclusively with 1916, Hayes-McCoy collected, arranged and dealt with artefacts from earlier periods. He was particularly attentive to the other historical periods to counterbalance the previous prominence given to 1916. In 1939, Hayes-McCoy complained to the secretary of the Department of Education that "the section concerned with the 18th and 19th centuries and the 1916 collection (…) are at present housed in different parts of the museum which interferes with their sequential character and lessens their educational worth".[319] Hayes-McCoy was in favour of the promotion of historical narratives – from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries – and not the mere emphasis on the recent period of

---

[315] *Historical collection*, description made on the occasion of the 1798 Rebellion exhibition, A1/140/007, NMIA, Dublin.

[316] Ryan, *Exhibiting the Irish Revolution*, p. 35.

[317] Ryan, *Exhibiting the Irish Revolution*, p. 35.

[318] The first case was dedicated to the "Old Irish Parliament", considered as "the legislative assembly of the English colonists" and represented as disconnected from the people and unable to "adopt further desirable measures" such as Catholics emancipation. Description of the historical collection written by G.A Hayes-McCoy, keeper of the historical collection, probably on the occasion of the 1948 commemorative exhibition of the 1798 Rebellion, undated document, A1/140/007, NMIA, Dublin.

[319] Letter from G. Hayes-McCoy to the Secretary of the Department for Education, 23th November 1939, A1/140/001, NMIA, Dublin.

struggle for independence. In order to do so, he requested in the same letter to the Minister for Education, the creation of a historic museum – distinct from his own institution – which could host the entire historic collection.[320]

His wish for historical narratives also shaped the 1941 commemorative display organized for the 25th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising and for which he was, with Liam Gogan, responsible.[321] Until 1941, the 1916 collection had been a patchwork of various artefacts. The collection was a work in progress as the staff continued to add what the museum was receiving to the display. Due to a shortage of space, every artefact was kept in an exhibiting room. With no label, these artefacts were expected to speak for themselves. In 1941, for the very first time, artefacts of the 1916 collections were selected and arranged according to a coherent design. Unlike the previous display, the exhibition started with eighteenth and nineteenth centuries historical background of Irish nationalism. In as much, this exhibition demonstrated a more historical approach of the past at the NMI.[322] When the 25th anniversary exhibition was dismantled, a large number of the objects continued to be displayed in a room off the central court. The "Historical Room", as Hayes-McCoy created it, amalgamated the "Easter Week" collection with historic objects from the 18th and 19th centuries, so that that undue emphasis on the Easter Rising as a single historic event no longer permeated.[323]

In spite of Hayes-McCoy's efforts, the results of the professionalization of the collections were not fully convincing to all. In 1949, Thomas Bodkin – former Director of the National Gallery and a member of the 1927 Lithberg committee – wrote a very critical report on the NMI. He highlighted that the 1916 room was skilfully arranged but that the "objects exhibited are trivial or ridiculous and owe their inclusion to misconceived sentimentality".[324] He remarked that although the displays in the room spanned three centuries, the room was still known as the "1916 Room" and he highlighted the danger of viewing Irish history through the prism of a single event. One reason was that professional historical narratives clashed with the commemorative practice of celebrating national heroes.

In addition, the new historical exhibition which opened in April 1941 for the 25th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising was very much influenced by the present-day focus of

---

[320] *Ibid*.
[321] Hayes-McCoy was assistant keeper, and Liam Gogan was head of the Art and Industry division.
[322] Nicholas Canny, 'Gerard Anthony Hayes-McCoy, 1911-75', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography: from Earliest Times to the Year 2002* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) vol.5, pp. 875-6.
[323] Ryan, *Exhibiting the Irish Revolution*, p. 35.
[324] Thomas Bodkin, *Report to the Government of Ireland on various Institutions and Activities concerned with the Arts in Ireland* (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 1949).

the celebratory commemorations. On the one hand, Hayes-McCoy had succeeded in adding eighteenth and nineteenth centuries collections. However, the latter collections were arranged in the rotunda, the entrance of the museum (Appendix 7).[325] The photographs of the Rotunda and main hall show to what extent the eighteenth and nineteenth century were merely – from the chronological and spatial points of view – an introduction to the main event that was the 1916 collection.[326] Indeed, a 1940 internal note pointed out that "the new collection (18th and 19th century) is to be regarded as a kind of prolegomena to the 1916 collection".[327] Modern Irish history continued to be oriented towards the event commemorated. The use of the phrase "prolegomena" not only demonstrated that the 1916 collection was the end of the story, but also emphasized that the past was being reinterpreted through the prism of the recent struggle for independence. Liam Gogan, head of the Art and Industry Division acknowledged that the overall restructuration of the historical 18th and 19th collection in 1940 was "initiated as a memorial gesture in connection with the 25th anniversary of 1916".[328] This memorialization of 1916 also contributed to the celebration of heroic representations.

To some extent, the heroic representations derived from to the use of artefacts. The National Museum was an object-oriented site of preservation. This approach was revealed by the use of the term "relics" to describe the collection of *Pathway to Freedom*. Although not particular to the NMI, this showed how objects were considered a means to connect people with the leaders of the past. Similar to the Christian definition, the "relics" had either been in contact with, had been worn or used by or belonged physically to the 1916 rebels.[329] The use of the term revealed how central the bodies of the insurgents were to construct the collections. Like the development of relics in Christendom, their use gave a new authority to the NMI which became a temple to the dead leaders. Until the opening of Kilmainham Jail in 1966 – where the 1916 leaders were executed – the NMI would remain, together with the cemetery at Arbour Hill and Glasnevin, the only sites for Republican pilgrimage. Photographs of school

---

[325] Letter from Liam Gogan to the Secretary of the Minister for Education, 9th June 1941, box 140, NMIA, Dublin.
[326] Photo of the 1941 exhibition, A1/99/003 and A1/99/004, NMIA, Dublin.
[327] Internal note, undated, but prior to the opening of the historical collection, A1/131/002, NMIA, Dublin.
[328] Letter of the Art Division Keeper to the Secretary of the Department of Education, undated but assuredly before the agreed date of display removal, so between April and August 1941, A1/140/001, NMIA, Dublin.
[329] The term comes from the Latin *reliquiae*, meaning "remains". Among the first category of relics, there was one bullet with which Francis Sheehy-Skeffington was murdered at Portobello Barracks in April 1916 and donated to the museum by his wife in 1937. *The Irish Times*, 27 November 1937. Among the objects which had belonged to the leaders, there was the overcoat Sir Roger Casement was wearing when he landed from the German submarine, donated by his brother. *The Irish Times*, 16 April 1935, p. 2. Finally, although strictly body "relics" were not displayed, some death masks could be defined as such since they gave some physical presence to the leaders. Press cutting of *The Irish Press*, June 1937, included in Liam Gogan's papers, LA27-159, UCD archives, Dublin.

visits in 1941 show how these pilgrimages to the NMI were based on the visual contact with "relics" of 1916 dead leaders. The omnipresence of "relics" or "personalia" resulted from the collecting policy. Most of the artefacts of 1916 had been donated by family members.[330] As the family members often received access to the personal belongings of the dead leaders, initial donations reinforced the focus on "personalia" rather than institutional documents.[331] In addition to this structural definition of objects, the heroic representations derived also from the spatial design of the 1941 exhibition.

Among the diverse 1916 leaders, Patrick Pearse was particularly celebrated. In 1941, the visitors entered the main hall through a portico and had an instant view of the core of the exhibition, "an imposing bust of Padraig Pearse set on a tall white pedestal" (Appendix 9-A).[332] The first leader executed in May 1916, Pearse had been Commander in Chief of the Easter Rising and one of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic.[333] He was also a literary man, teacher at St. Enda School, poet and defender of the Irish language. These attributes made him the voice of the Easter Rising, as well as an idol for Republicans. Representations of Patrick Pearse were also much safer than for other leaders of the 1916 Rising like James Connolly.

James Connolly (1868-1916) was one of the Irish leaders during the Easter Rising and was executed in May 1916. Importantly, he was also a key figure of socialism in early twentieth century Ireland and Great Britain.[334] He had founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party in 1896 and played a major role in the 1913 lock-out in Dublin. Part of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) – initially composed of trade-union volunteers – Connolly commanded ICA's forces during the 1916 Rising. The role played by Connolly and the ICA in 1916 was well represented among the artefacts collected by Helen Gifford-Donnelly in 1932 since the latter

---

[330] Joseph Plunkett's mementoes, rosary beads and prayer-book were donated to the museum by his wife. *The Irish Times*, 31 December 1938, p. 4.

[331] For further examination of donators, see the next chapter about agents of remembrance..

[332] *The Irish Times*, 19 April 1941, p. 4. This was confirmed by one photograph of the exhibit taken by the museum staff from the main entrance which demonstrates that, from the entrance visitors had a view of the bust of Patrick Pearse on a pedestal. Photo of the 1941 exhibition, A1/99/003 and A1/99/004, NMIA, Dublin.

[333] The main issue has been to determine whether Pearse's leadership in 1916 represented a failure or a success. With the spread of historical revisionism in the 1970s and 1980s, the considerations for Pearse became representative of broader interpretations of the 1916 Easter Rising as a "bloody sacrifice". Although these debates would mostly take place after the 1960s, the representations of Pearse in the NMI revealed the mechanisms of construction of national historical narratives. Two innovative works contributed to the reappraisal of Pearse's activity in 1916. Francis Shaw, 'The Canon of Irish History: A Challenge', *Studies*, lxi, 1972 and Ruth Dudley Edwards, *Patrick Pearse : The Triumph of a Failure*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1977). The interpretations of Pearse's involvement in the Easter Rising became symbolic of the debates between revisionists (very critical towards Pearse) and anti-revisionist historians (more positive regarding Pearse and the overall Rising) n the 1980s and 1990s.

[334] He was involved in the Scottish Socialist Federation and the Independent Labour Party created in 1893 in Britain. He moved to Ireland in 1895 and became secretary of the Dublin Socialist Club.

had been part of the Republican and socialist group. Many items were related to the ICA (uniforms in particular) in the 1932 display.[335] The context was different in 1941: the exhibition was no longer designed by ICA veterans and the Irish government had been wary regarding the development of socialism in the 1930s. The focus on romanticized representations of Patrick Pearse was much less controversial.

The way Pearse was represented in the 1941 display revealed a heroic and romanticized rendition. The bust was made by Oliver Sheppard and commissioned by the Irish government.[336] Pearse sitting on his pedestal was not presented as a victim, executed by the British, but rather as a victorious figure. With a faraway expression – the slightly upward tilt of the head and gaze further add to this heroic stance – Pearse was dressed as a Roman emperor whose laurels and toga thrown loosely around the shoulders gave him an even more epic an classical heroic quality. Placed imposingly on a three-meter-high pedestal especially made for the occasion at the centre of the main hall, the 72 cm-high plaster of Patrick Pearse could be seen from anywhere in the hall (Appendix 9-A).[337] The bust was not intended to be contemplated as anything other than an artefact, since its position prevented public contemplation on equal terms. The bust did not have the same purpose as any other object. It was intended to give an overall aura to the hall. Some flowers were placed around the pedestal, adding to the glorification.[338]

This glorification of Pearse was not new in Ireland and mirrored a broader plan from the Irish government to create national heroes. For instance, when *Fianna Fail* came to power in the early 1930s, it commissioned busts of the 1916 leaders.[339] Textbooks had also presented Pearse in heroic features. In the 1930s, handouts from the Department of Education instructed teachers to emphasize "outstanding personages" and "striking incidents" in the struggle for independence.[340] The notes for teachers highlighted the "continuity of the separatist idea from Tone to Pearse" which embodied the history of the struggle for independence.[341] In presenting heroic representations of Pearse, the NMI was merely reproducing what had been done in other cultural narratives in the 1930s. This construction of representations during the

---

[335] *The Irish Times*, 6 June 1932, p. 4.
[336] For a survey of Sheppard's works, see Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch, 'Commemorating the Hero', pp. 158-164 ; and John Turpin, *Oliver Sheppard (1865-1941)*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).
[337] The staff had to climb a stepladder in order to fit the bust, Photo of the 1941 exhibition, A1/99/003 and A1/99/004, NMIA, Dublin.
[338] *Ibid*. although another interpretation could be the emphasis on mourning.
[339] *Ibid*.
[340] Quoted in F. T. Holohan, 'History Teaching in the Irish Free State 1922-1935' *History-Ireland*, vol. 2, 4, winter, 1994.
[341] *Ibid*. p. 27

commemoration of 1916 contributed to explaining why Hayes-McCoy's intention to challenge sentimentalism had a limited impact. The 1941 exhibition was not the only example of the impact of commemorations on the museum's historical collections.

As a national institution, the NMI was involved in other official commemorations in the 1940s.[342] In addition to the exhibition arranged for the 25th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, the National Museum of Ireland participated in the 150th anniversary of the 1798 Rebellion for which parades and rallies were organised "practically every weekend from June to November".[343] In the 1790s, in the wake of the French Revolution and its influence over Europe, Irish radicals gathered and formed the Society of the United Irishmen (1791). Mostly made of Irish Protestants and influenced by French and American Republicanism, the Society called for political reforms and more autonomy for the Irish parliament. The outbreak of the war between France and Britain in 1793 contributed to the radicalization of the movement. The United Irishmen were in contact with French revolutionaries who attempted to land in Ireland in 1796 (General Hoche's expedition). The United Irishmen ultimately asked for Ireland's independence. The Rebellion began in May 1798 and mostly spread in Antrim and Down (North-East), and Wexford (South-East) where the battles took place. Because most of the leaders of the United Irishmen had been arrested in Dublin in March 1798, no insurrection took place in Dublin. Although French troops landed in the West of Ireland in August 1798, the Rebellion was already repressed by the British troops in September. In spite of its failure, the Rebellion was celebrated in Ireland as the birth of Irish Republicanism.

In 1948, the exhibition was part of the Dublin week of commemoration organized for the 150th anniversary of Theobald Wolfe Tone's death. The main association in charge of the commemoration was the Dublin Committee.[344] The commemoration took place in an overall context of a promotion of Republican ideology. The fifth Government of Ireland – or more

---

[342] While the commemoration of the Great Famine was a low-key affair, the centenaries of the death of Thomas Davis attracted considerable public attention. Contrary to the 25th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, the commemorations of Thomas Davis was safer for the Irish government regarding the Republican idealization of the use of physical force in relations with Britain. In the 1840s, Thomas Davis was the leader of the Young Ireland movement which wanted to repeal the Act of Union. Presenting a romantic picture of Irish nationalism and being Protestant, he preached unity between Catholics and Protestants since being Irish resulted, according to him, from the willingness to be part of the Irish nation. Daly, 'Histoire à la Carte?', p. 36. The formal commemoration of the centenary of the death of Thomas Davis lasted five days.
[343] Collins, *Who Fears to Speak?*, p. 58.
[344] Presided over by John Breen, from the Labour Party and Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1948 and 1949, the Dublin committee was composed of the Dublin branch of the '98 Commemoration Association, some executives of the Anti-Partition Association and members of the NMI. Memorandum sent by the committee to the NMI, Collins, *Who Fears to Speak?*, p. 58. For the Dublin Branch: Bob Lambert (Chairman), George Meyler and Seamus O'Farrell; for the Anti-Partition Association : Malachi Quinn (Chairman), Desmond Crean and Maire Comerford. For a more detailed survey of the committee, see, Collins, *Who Fears to Speak?* p. 67.

commonly known as the First Inter-Party Government –[345] was responsible for the 1948 *Republic of Ireland Act*.[346] The State of Ireland officially became a Republic.[347] Although mostly a symbolic act, the creation of the Republic of Ireland contributed to the re-emergence of debates about Irish Republicanism during the commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion. Both the 1941 and 1948 exhibitions at the NMI were shaped by the heroic representations of the Republican insurrections.

The 1798 Rebellion had been part of the permanent historical collection arranged by Hayes-McCoy in the late 1930s. Hayes-McCoy collected many artefacts, especially pikeheads of the 1798 rebels.[348] Three cases were devoted to the 1790s and the 1798 Rebellion in the permanent eighteenth and nineteenth centuries collection. One concerned "relics" of Theobald Wolfe Tone, Napper Tandy, Lord Edward FitzGerald and other United Irishmen.[349] The two other cases displayed the 1798 Rebellion and were mostly about the battles which occurred in Wexford. It is interesting to highlight that the great men of the 1790s like Wolfe Tone and other United Irishmen were distinguished from the 1798 Rebellion itself whose artefacts – mostly military artefacts of the rebels such as muskets, bayonets, pistols and pikeheads – were gathered in two different glass windows. Only mention of "insurgents" appeared in the guide relating to the two cases on the 1798 Rebellion.[350] More than any heroes of the 1798 Rebellion, Hayes-McCoy had stressed the military history of 1798 instead. This shifted due to the sesquicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion in 1948.

In 1948, the focus on the United Irishmen came from two aspects of the commemorations: the focus on Dublin city and the involvement of the Anti-Partition Association. In 1948, the NMI worked in collaboration with the Dublin committee for the commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion. Liam Gogan wrote to John Breen after the commemorations that "you are to be congratulated on your successful Chairmanship of the Commemoration Committee ultimately responsible for the exhibition".[351] Indeed, a draft written by the Dublin committee was sent to the museum keeper to make clear what the

---

[345] The government was appointed in February 1948 and included the left-leaning Republican Party, *Clann na Poblachta*, led by Sean MacBride. The Republican Party was very much in the minority in the coalition led by *Fine Gael* and the Labour Party (main opposition parties to *Fianna Fail*). It was replaced in June 1951 by *Fianna Fail* Government.

[346] Signed by the President on the 21 December 1948, it came into force on 18 April 1949.

[347] It repealed the External Relation Act which, in 1936, declared the King of the United Kingdom exercises this authority.

[348] A1/140/001, NMIA, Dublin.

[349] *Historical collection*, description made on the occasion of the 1798 Rebellion exhibition, A1/140/007, NMIA.

[350] A1/140/007, NMIA.

[351] Letter from Liam Gogan to John Breen, undated, *ibid*.

objectives of the commemorations were.[352] This included a clear focus on the United Irishmen. The committee published *'98: Who Fears to Speak?* a leaflet in which it explained the need to celebrate "the heroes of '98" who "visualized an Irish Republic as independent of Empire as the newly freed United States of America, and as truly devoted to liberty and democracy as the French Republicans of their day".[353] The focus on the United Irishmen and the birth of Irish Republicanism contrasted with the military history of the battles in Wexford that Hayes-McCoy had aimed to establish in the permanent collections.

The fact that the NMI was in Dublin, the political capital, had considerable consequences for its representations of 1798. In 1798, Dublin was the "dog that did not bark", in other words, no insurrection had taken place in the city due to the arrest of the leaders of the United Irishmen. One way, for the Dublin Committee, to link the capital with the 1798 Rebellion was to focus on the United Irishmen. The dates of the 1948 commemoration – 14-21 November 1948 – matched the anniversary of Wolfe Tone's death (19th November 1798). In his speech opening the 1948 commemorative exhibition of the 1798 Rebellion at the NMI, John Breen, Lord Mayor of Dublin, asserted with enthusiasm that the Society of the United Irishmen was "the greatest revolutionary association Ireland ever had"[354]. He then added "While there were great men among the United Irishmen, Tone himself was outstanding in that he was the personification of the movement"[355]. Indeed, the participation of the NMI in the Dublin week of commemoration underlined – much more than within the permanent collections – the relevance of the 1798 leaders.

In addition, the Dublin Committee proposed another political mobilization of the United Irishmen. The most striking recommendation was to "Assert the right of the Irish Nation to be united within its national territory, thus linking our most important modern problem with the political ideals and objects of the United Irishmen"[356]. The emphasis on the reunification of the two Irelands was related to the arguments supported by the Anti-Partition Association some of whose representatives were part of the Dublin Committee.[357] Indeed, the

---

[352] Memorandum sent by the committee to the NMI, A1/140/007, NMIA.

[353] Quoted in Collins, *Who Fears to Speak ?* p. 62. The reference to the United States and French Republicans was a direct link to Wolfe Tone who emigrated to former after the Society of the United Irishmen was banned in 1794 and was also responsible for the French involvement in Ireland in 1796 and 1798.

[354] Draft of the speech given by the Lord Mayor, 29th November 1948, sent at Liam Gogan, Keeper of the Arts and Industry Department, A1/140/007, NMIA.

[355] *Ibid*.

[356] Memorandum sent by the committee to the NMI, A1/140/007, NMIA.

[357] Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, *Introduction to Cahir Healy papers*, Belfast, November 2007, p. 17. Created in 1945 by Northern Irish nationalists (it held its first annual meeting in 1947), the Anti-Partition League was a political organization based in Northern Ireland which campaigned for a united Ireland, in other

memorandum sent by the committee to the NMI stressed "The Anti-Partition Association cannot regard the commemoration as an end in itself. This, it considers, is an occasion on which to express and strengthen the general determination that the Partition of Ireland should, in justice, cease".[358] The Anti-Partition Association was the Southern support organization of the Anti-Partition League which tried to make the end of the partition a priority measure in Irish and British politics.[359] In order to do so, the Anti-Partition League used the fact that most of the United Irishmen were Protestant as a counter-argument to Partition. In the memorandum sent to the NMI, the Anti-Partition Association stressed that "By recalling the generous enthusiasm which gave rise to the United Irishmen movement among the Protestant and Presbyterian communities, and by paying special honour to the patriots of those faiths, it would wish to stress the impossibility that any religious section could ever live in fear in Ireland".[360] The narrative on the 1798 union between Protestants and Catholics – which was rhetorical since many Protestants had also fought in counter-rebellion troops and within the Orange Order – was supposed to make partition untenable. At any rate, the focus on the United Irishmen during the 1948 commemorations resulted in a shift in the museum's collection on display, from the Wexford military insurrection to the heroic United Irishmen.

Conclusion of Chapter I

Long-term and multifaceted history is crucial in generating a broader understanding the construction of representations and its links with national identity. It appears that the collections of the NMI and BM were born in similarly learned societies led by Protestants during the eighteenth century. In spite of this origin, however, the two museums have become gradually – though remarkably – distinct. This difference derived from the application of contrasting frameworks of representations – Belfast and all-Ireland in Dublin – and from the political mobilization of history linked to the rise of Nationalism and Unionism. In the 1940s, the narratives and status of the two museums reflected the creation of two distinct parts in the

---

words, for the end of the partition. B. Lynn, 'The Anti-Partition League and the Political Realities of Partition, 1945-1949', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 34, n.135, 2005, p.321.

[358] Memorandum sent by the committee to the NMI, A1/140/007, NMIA.

[359] In January 1948, the Anti-Partition League organized a rally in Dublin to challenge Eamon de Valera (then *Taoiseach*) to put forward the issue of the partition. Further encouragement had come with the electoral success of the Labour Party in Britain in 1945. Not only was there a Unionist perception that Labour could not be trusted in maintaining Northern Ireland's constitutional position, but its commitment to a socialist programme of economic and social reform caused alarm to the Northern Ireland cabinet. Moreover, in 1945, a group of sympathetic Labour MPs came together to form what became known as the "Friends of Ireland". Lynn, 'The Anti-Partition League', p. 324.

[360] Memorandum sent by the committee to the NMI, A1/140/007, NMIA.

island of Ireland. The South had become an independent state while Northern Ireland – dominated by Unionism – had remained in the United Kingdom. The analysis shows that the support for Nationalist and Unionist ideologies had contributed to the organization of the collections. The fact that Northern Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom explained the absence for the need to build a new cultural identity. In the south, the new Irish Free State needed historical narratives to legitimize its origin. The National Museum of Ireland was imperative to providing these narratives by focusing on the Celtic and Early-Christian roots of the nation. Irishness was associated with the Celtic, rural and Catholic past. As a consequence, the historical narratives promoted by the NMI concentrated on the Irish Golden Age.

Generally, this chapter shows why the representations of historical conflicts (1690, 1798, and 1916) were very limited in the two museums. The museums' support for Nationalism and Unionism did not initially materialize in exhibitions of historical conflicts. In Northern Ireland, despite the celebration of the Siege of Derry, the Battle of the Boyne and the Battle of the Somme, the Belfast Museum hardly proposed similar representations. The absence of politics of identity resulted in the more pronounced focus on arts and Belfast local interest in the BM. The long focus of the Dublin Museum on archaeology made the promotion of more recent historical narratives difficult. The construction of historical collections at the NMI – and the representations of historical conflicts like 1798 or the 1916 Easter Rising – remained a minor field in the museum and was more the consequence of the commitment of external actors.

The progressive construction of historical collections at the NMI challenged the strict opposition between official and popular narratives of the past. The 1916 collection at the NMI resulted from the personal commitment to veterans by Helen Gifford-Donnelly who, amongst others, played a major role in the memorialization of the event. Similarly to what was happening in Europe around the First World War, the purpose of the veteran supporters was to celebrate their fellow 1916 rebels and to provide them with a space in the Irish official pantheon. This veteran involvement explains the "sentimental" selection of the initial NMI collection as well as the consequent the heroic representations of the Republican leaders. The memorial tribute to the Republican leaders was pursued during commemorations in the 1940s. The official commemorations acted as a process of introduction into heroic narratives at the NMI which had so far focused on displaying Antiquities.

The birth of the Irish Free State took place in a context of deep division regarding the links between Ireland and Britain and the use of violence to end the British domination. Any

commemoration of Republican insurrections like 1798 or 1916 was controversial as it related to the present partition of the island and the possible Republican use of violence to end it. The most active actors in remembering 1798 and 1916 were Republican groups who denied the existence of the Partition – and therefore of the southern State as well. Officially remembering 1798 and 1916 bore the threat of instability for the Irish State. In contrast with the anti-partition Republican intention to celebrate the 1798 and 1916 leaders as heroes and symbols, of the use of physical violence against the British authorities in Ireland, the Irish governments increasingly challenged the parallels drawn between the events commemorated and the present situation. For this reason, the Republican attempts to build celebrative collections of conflicts at the NMI were challenged by a lukewarm official support. This resulted in the fact that the NMI's focus on archaeology and antiquities went unchallenged for most of the twentieth century. In Northern Ireland, the political use of the past became much more important during and after the 1960s through the wider development of the local Ulster identity.

CHAPTER II: National Museums and the Re-assessment of Anglo-Irish Relations: the Creation of the Ulster Museum and the Isolation of the National Museum of Ireland (1962-1978)

Unlike many Western states, the Republic of Ireland did not experience economic development until the 1950s. Partly explained by its policies of protectionism – established by de Valera in the 1930s – the Republic was still undermined by major emigration: the population fell to an all-time low record in 1961 (2.61 million).[361] The situation only improved in the 1960s which was a period of major economic shift in the Republic. This economic development matched a re-appraisal of the relations with foreign countries. In the late 1950s, under the influence of the economist and secretary of the Department of Finance T. K. Whitaker, the Republic of Ireland started to abandon its protectionist economic policy. The Republic joined the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1957 and removed the Control of Manufactures Act which had restricted foreign investment.[362] The country's policy shifted from protectionism to free trade, a shift which was also expressed by the process of admission to the European Economic Community, requested in 1961 (but denied in 1963). Both the Republic and Northern Ireland – through the United Kingdom – joined the European Community in 1973. The economic growth reached 4% a year between 1959 and 1973 and contributed to social changes.

The standard of living went up by 50 percent and emigration decreased reaching European average.[363] This shift was symbolic of a new era of domestic development and re-assessment of Irish identity. The deregulation of Irish economy in the 1960s took place in a general context of a redefinition of Irish Catholic identity. In the wake of the Second Council of the Vatican, the Irish government debated about the possibility to making divorce legal in Ireland.[364] In 1972, article 44.1.2 of the Irish Constitution which gave Catholicism "special position" was removed. The "moral monopoly" of the Catholic Church in the Republic of

---

[361] Joe Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 315.
[362] Denis O'Hearn, *The Atlantic Economy. Britain, the US and Ireland*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 132.
[363] Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985*. p. 359.
[364] Thomas Cauvin, *The Catholic Church and the Irish Constitution: Governmental Policies, 1965-1972*, Master Institute of Political Studies (Sciences-Po, Paris), unpublished, Paris, 2002.

Ireland began to become increasingly contested.[365] The social changes and economic opening contributed to the re-definitions of the links with Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom.

On 15 January 1965, newspapers in Ireland and Northern Ireland highlighted an unexpected event. The day before, Sean Lemass – *Taoiseach* of the Republic of Ireland (Appendix 4) – had gone to Belfast to meet Terence O'Neill, Northern Irish Prime Minister. This first meeting between Irish and Northern Irish political leaders since 1921 mirrored a period of improvement in the political relations between the two parts of the island.[366] This improvement was facilitated by the Labour Party's arrival to power in London in 1964. The Labour Party had traditionally been more distant from the Northern Irish Unionist political parties. Both Lemass and O'Neill symbolized – to some extent – a generational shift. While his predecessor – Basil Brooke – left his office at the age of 75, O'Neill was 49 when he became Prime Minister in 1963 (Appendix 4). Born in London 1914, he had not witnessed the political upheaval between 1912 and the 1921-1922 riots in Northern Ireland. In the Republic, a new generation came to power as well. Sean Lemass was 60 when he became *Taoiseach* in 1959 and replaced the seventy-seven year old Eamon de Valera as leader of *Fianna Fail*. Significantly, Jack Lynch, who replaced Lemass in 1966, was the first leader of *Fianna Fail* who had not participated in the 1916 Easter Rising.

However, notwithstanding these political similarities, the two parts of the island were on different paths. For instance, in 1973, both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland – through the United Kingdom – joined the European Economic Community; but they did so with unequal enthusiasm. It was noteworthy that 83% of the Irish population voted favourably in May 1972,[367] whereas in the June 1975 referendum, Northern Ireland turned to have lower support within the United Kingdom for remaining in the European Community.[368] Northern Ireland was, in the 1960s, polarized by internal sectarian tensions. In order to fight discrimination mostly undergone by Catholics, civic rights movements emerged in the mid-1960s. The Northern Ireland Civic Rights Association (NICRA) was created in 1967 and included a prominent Catholic majority. It did not call for an end of the partition but for the end of social injustices in housing, employment and political rights. Four main types of discrimination were at stake: discrimination in housing, in jobs (particularly in the public

---

[365] Tom Inglis, *Moral Monopoly: the Catholic Church in Modern Irish Society*, (Dublin; New York: Gill and Macmillan ; St. Martin's Press, 1987).

[366] To O'Neill's invitation to Belfast in January 1965, Lemass responded by an invitation in Dublin in February 1965. Similar meetings took place in 1967 and 1968 between O'Neill and Jack Lynch, new *Taoiseach*.

[367] http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/ireland_in_the_eu/index1_en.htm (last visited March 2012).

[368] In Northern Ireland, 52.1% were in favour, while 67.2% in the United Kingdom, 58.4% in Scotland, 64.8% in Wales and 68.7% in England.

sector), gerrymandering of electoral boundaries, and abuses of civil power, in the use of legislation backed by a sectarian auxiliary police force.[369]

Northern Ireland was still based on a prevailing Unionist majority embodied in the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP). In opposition to the civil rights movement perceived as a nationalist threat, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was created in 1966 and contributed to the increase of violence. Heightened violence during NICRA demonstrations in 1968 and the riots during the Battle of the Bogside in Londonderry (12-14 August 1969) finally plunged Northern Ireland into mayhem. The spread of violence as a means of action and communication in Northern Ireland had a tremendous impact on political systems. The Northern Irish Assembly was suppressed and direct rule applied in 1972 after the Northern Ireland (Temporary provision) Act. With the abolition of the Northern Ireland parliament in 1973, responsibility for policy laid with the British government in London. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was nominated by the British Prime Minister and assumed authority over the province.[370] Violence which broke out in the late 1960s and lasted over thirsty years – known as the Troubles[371] – contributed to the development of a sectarian civil war.[372]

The 1960s economic, social and political changes had consequences for Anglo-Irish relations and the construction of identities in Ireland and Northern Ireland. One of the most interesting examples of the redefinition of national identity was the development of historical revisionism in the Republic of Ireland. Certain historians endeavoured to reappraise Irish history in less divisive interpretations. Linked to the professionalization of historians which had taken place since the 1930s, the new historians – called revisionists – have had a major impact on the interpretations of the past in Ireland. Like the new historians in the 1930s, revisionist historians intended to debunk national myths in Irish history. A core interest of their work was the revision of the history of Anglo-Irish relations in less nationalistic ways. In doing so, they challenged openly the use of the past in constructing national ideology in the

---

[369] G. Gudgin 'Discrimnation in Housing and Employment under the Stormont Administration', in Patrick J. Roche and Brian Barton, eds., *The Northern Ireland Question: Nationalism, Unionism and Partition* (London, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1999), p. 98.

[370] He was assisted by state secretaries in the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), in charge of coordinating functions previously occupied by the Northern Irish government.

[371] Other terms such as 'war' or 'conflict' have been uses.

[372] The approximate three decades of violence which began in the late 1960s, and which were commonly known as the "Troubles", opposed various political and military groups – essentially Republican and loyalist – with police and later military forces, over the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. Punctuated by murders and assassinations, bombings and other terrorist acts of violence, the "Troubles" were not a uniform period and would need more contextualization throughout the chapters dedicated to the 1980s and 1990s. In doing, so, it will be possible to assess the changing impact on the representations of the past.

Republic of Ireland. This cultural example demonstrates how crucial the study of historical narratives from the Dublin and Belfast museums truly is.

This chapter aims to compare the construction of representations of Anglo-Irish conflicts from the two national museums. For the first time, the two museums had similar "national" status and mounted commemorative exhibitions of historical conflicts such as the 1798 Rebellion, the 1916 Easter Rising, or the two World Wars. Nevertheless, the two museums participated in differing ways to the re-interpretation of the history of the Anglo-Irish relations, and through it, to the definition of identities. This chapter will, therefore, first concentrate on the new roles of the Ulster Museum (UM) in representing the past, and then explore to what extent the National Museum of Ireland participated in the general reappraisal of Irish identity.

A) The Ulster Museum and the Construction of Ulster Local Identity

In 1961, the municipal Belfast Museum and Arts Gallery was renamed Ulster Museum with a "national" status.[373] At first sight, this shift seemed surprising since the Unionist political majority was constructed in opposition to nationalism. In her study of national museums in Wales, Rhiannon Mason convincingly argues that the term "national" should be used with precaution. As a historian, it is crucial to examine what the term "national" meant and how it changed over time. One should ask oneself what makes a museum "national".[374] Before analyzing which narratives the Ulster Museum (UM) promoted, it is necessary to explore the different discourses on the national dimension of the museum.

1) The Ulster Museum's Links with Regional Studies

The use of the term "Ulster" for the new national museum was controversial at the onset as it referred to different spaces according to historical or political traditions. Historically, the term referred to nine counties (Antrim, Down, Armagh, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Tyrone, Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan), and was often used by Unionists instead of the name Northern

---

[373] Museum Act (Northern Ireland) 1961 was voted in November 28th 1961. "The Museum Bill (Northern Ireland) setting up Belfast Museum and Art Gallery as a national institution had its third reading in the House of Commons at Stormont on October 25th 1961 (…) The Act was placed on the Statute Book on 28 November following". *Ulster Museum Report*, 1962-1963, p. 3.
[374] Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities,* p. 29.

Ireland.[375] In response to the creation of the Republic of Ireland in 1949, serious considerations were (unsuccessfully) made by the Northern Irish government to switch the name of the province from Northern Ireland to Ulster. The term "Ulster" was utilized by Unionist groups like the Ulster Volunteers (militia founded in 1912 to fight the Home Rule), political parties like the Ulster Unionist Party, founded in 1905, or paramilitary groups like the Ulster Defence Association, founded in 1971. The use stressed an Ulster identity different from the rest of the island; either due to the union with Britain or due to a regional specificity.

This regional identity derived first from scholarly studies which developed in the 1920s and 1930s. This was particularly important in the rise of geography and anthropology in Northern Ireland. Regional studies were associated with the work of Estyn Evans.[376] Influenced by Vidal de la Blache and the French geographical construction of the concept of region, Evans was appointed at Queen's University Belfast (QUB) in 1928 to develop a department of geography.[377] His view was revolutionary in portraying the island of Ireland. Evans focused on a "common ground"[378] and not on the Anglo-Irish economic and religious hardships.[379] Dealing with people, Evans highlighted common ways of life and traditions.[380] For him, Ireland was an exception in Western Europe for it "has preserved to a remarkable degree the customs and social habits of the pre-industrial phase of western civilisation".[381] In doing so, Evans promoted a vision of Ireland apparently similar to what folk studies and Eamon de Valera himself proposed in the 1930s. However, Evans argued that, in addition, the common traditions in Ulster differed from the rest of Ireland.[382] Based on his works regarding megalithic culture, he underlined the cultural specificity of Ulster. Although his definition of Ulster as distinct was used to depict him as an Ulster nationalist, Brian Graham observes that Evans' work on Ulster was more complex and while promoting Ulster regional originality,

---

[375] It was used by Unionists to refer to Northern Ireland although three of the historical counties were part of the Republic of Ireland (Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan). B. Graham "Heritage Conservation and Revisionist Nationalism in Ireland" in Ashworth and Larkham, *Building a new Heritage,* p. 141.

[376] For a survey and interpretation of Evans' works, see Brian J. Graham, "The Search for the Common Ground: Estyn Evans' Ireland", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 19.2 (1994) 189-190.

[377] It was the third department of geography in the British Isles after Liverpool and Aberystwyth. M. Stout 'Review of Emir Estyn Evans and Northern Ireland: The Archaeology and Geography of a New State' in J. A. Atkinson, I. Banks, J. O'Sullivan, eds., *Nationalism in Archaeology*, (Glasgow: Cruithne Press, 1996), pp. 111-127

[378] Estyn Evans, *Ulster: the Common Ground*, (Mulingar: Lilliput, 1984).

[379] Bigand, 'How is Ulster's History Represented in Northern Ireland's Museums?'.

[380] See for instance Estyn Evans, *Irish Heritage: the Landscape and the People and their Work*, 1942; *The Personality of Ireland: Habitat, Heritage and History*, 1973; *Ulster: the Common Ground*, 1984.

[381] Quoted in M. McManus, 'Some Notions of Folklore, History and Museum Interpretation: A Time for Reappraisal?', in Trevor Owen, ed. *From Corrib to Cultra. Folklife Essays in Honour of Alan Gailey*, The Institute of Irish Studies, QUB and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 2000, p. 20.

[382] M. Hill "Regions. Identity and Power: a Northern Ireland Perspective" in Donal O' Drisceoil, (ed.) *Culture in Ireland Regions: Identity and Power,* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies*, 1993), pp. *72-82*.

acknowledged a pluralistic view of culture which contrasted with the exclusive narratives of union promoted by Ulster Unionists.[383] Evans' construction of Ulster as a social and cultural unit amply influenced the development of cultural institutions in Northern Ireland.

The principal manifestation of Evans' work was in the development of ethnology and folk studies on Northern Ireland. Whereas history, in particularly regarding politics and war, rather stressed key events and great men, on the one hand, the divisions between nationalist and Unionist traditions, the study of ordinary people, traditions and ways of life allows ethnologists, geographers and folklorists to emphasise similarities on the other hand. The links between Queen's and the Belfast Museum (BM) became stronger when the latter reopened in 1929 in its new site at Stranmillis Road, close to the University. Ethnology became a new field at the BM in consequence of its new collaboration with the University.[384] In the 1930s, in order to keep up with the development of the Irish Folk Commission in the Irish Free State, Evans requested the support of the Northern Irish government to promote folk studies at Queen's University and to use part of the Botanic site of the Belfast museum as facilities. The relevance of folk studies grew stronger at the BM. In 1949, George Thompson, Evans' student, became keeper of Antiquities and Ethnography at the Belfast Museum.[385]

The development of folk studies became stronger in the 1940s and helped the development of a regional Ulster identity. As Tony Bennett observes the development of folk museums took advantage of the post-war interest in the "daily lives, customs, rituals, and traditions of non-elite social strata" which prompted a "flurry of new museum initiatives".[386] The development of folk studies spread in the United Kingdom in the 1940s and the Welsh Folk Museum was created in 1948.[387] In the 1950s, Northern Ireland was, with Britain and Scandinavian countries a major space of development for folk-life.[388] In Northern Ireland, Evans helped to form the committee on Ulster Folk-life and Traditions in 1953, later to become the Ulster Folk-life Society, which brought the Ulster Folk Museum into existence in 1958.[389] The creation of the Ulster Museum in 1961 was itself closely linked with the Ulster

---

[383] "Inconsistently, given his efforts to reduce the perceived impact of Celtic civilization upon Ireland, Evans held - as we have seen - that Ulster was the most intensely Irish of all the islands regions, a de *facto* recognition that the island constituted one socio-cultural unit - albeit far from homogeneous - rather than the two distinct entities of the Ulster nationalist." Graham, 'The Search for the Common Ground' pp. 183-201.

[384] G. B. Thompson, "The Road to Ballycultra", *in* Owen, *From Corrib to Cultra*, p. 8.

[385] Owen, *From Corrib to Cultra*.

[386] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, p. 109.

[387] Rhiannon Mason 'Nation Building at the Museum of Welsh Life' *Museum and Society* 2005, 3(1), p. 23.

[388] G. B. Thompson 'The Welsh Contribution to the Development of the Ulster Folk Museum', *Studies in Folk Life*, (London: Routledge, first edition 1969, 1977), pp. 30-32.

[389] Located in Cultra, County Down, seven miles east of Belfast, the Ulster Folk Museum merely opened in 1964. It became the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in 1967.

Folk Museum. Wilfred Seaby – appointed Director of the BM in 1953 – had a very important role in the creation of the Ulster Folk Museum.[390] In 1953, he openly raised the question of an open-air museum and suggested that "such a museum might be regarded as of national interest and worthy of financial assistance from the Northern Ireland government".[391] This resulted in a committee set up by Northern Ireland's government in March 1954 and a report supporting the idea of an open-air folk museum in November 1954. The links between the two museums were such that, Thompson, keeper of Antiquities at the Belfast Museum, became the first director of the Ulster Folk Museum in 1958. Importantly, the rising issue of a national Ulster Folk museum took place simultaneously with the development of the Ulster Museum project. In 1953, Seaby not only raised the relevance of a "national interest" for an open-air museum, but also contacted the government to obtain a grant for the Belfast Museum's building.[392] This initiated the shift from a municipal Belfast Museum to a national Ulster Museum.

In conclusion, the initial move towards a national Ulster Museum was due to the development of regional studies in which Northern Ireland emerged as a province. The 1958 Ulster Folk Museum (Northern Ireland) Act established the institution to preserve, study, and illustrate "the way of life, past and present, and the traditions of the people of Northern Ireland".[393] Rising museum activity took advantage of scholarly interest in people and popular culture. The focus on folklife also permitted the ability to avoid the divisive events of political and military history such as the Anglo-Irish conflicts. As the focus on rural and Catholic traditions in the South, folk studies were safer to build regional unity in the North. Nonetheless, unlike nationalism in the South, the Ulster regional studies did not intend to create national unity distinct from Britain. Initially issued from academia, the regional focus was rapidly used and interpreted by the new political development of Ulster Unionism.

2) Terence O'Neill's Political Promotion of Ulster Local Identity: a Limited Re-assessment of the Links with Britain

Until the 1950s, the Northern Irish government was not committed to the development of local studies. The creation of the Ulster Folk Museum (1958) and the Ulster Museum (1961) expressed a new political interest in Ulster local identity. In 1957, the Belfast Museum had

---

[390] See the list of directors, Appendix 1.
[391] Nesbitt, *A Museum in Belfast*, p. 45.
[392] Nesbitt, *A Museum in Belfast*, p. 48.
[393] Thompson 'The Welsh Contribution to the Development of the Ulster Folk Museum', p. 30.

asked the Department of Finance for a grant to complete the museum's building. Terence O'Neill – Minister of Finance from 1956 to 1963 – responded that the grant could not be allotted as long as the institution was a municipal museum but that "if the museum (…) could be regarded as a national one, the Government would be prepared to consider accepting the whole or substantial part of the financial responsibility (£420.000)".[394] The Belfast Corporation committee saw this move favourable due to the "growing congestion in the all too inadequate display and storage space".[395] Through the *1961 Museum Act*, the Belfast Museum not only changed its name but also its political status as the institution passed out of the hands of Belfast Corporation. A Board of Trustees was created with eight members, four appointed by the Minister of Finance, three by the Belfast Corporation and one by Queen's University. This did not change the ruling political majority of the museum since both the Belfast Corporation and the Northern Irish government were run by the Unionist party.[396] However, the interest from the government, and in particular from O'Neill, in the creation of a national museum must be examined. In June 1961, O'Neill opened the Museum Bill saying that "Today I have for the consideration of the House legislation to establish a national museum and art gallery".[397] It is necessary to examine the ways in which the Ulster Museum was defined as national institution.

The creation of the Ulster Museum was based on multiple scales: the city, the province, and the United Kingdom. In 1959, Terence O'Neill wrote to the Northern Irish Prime Minister – Basil Brooke – that the "national status" of the museum "will make it possible to have in our capital city an institution of a size and status more fitting to our needs as a separate area".[398] Although the museum shifted from a municipal to national status, the Belfast civic culture remained an important feature. During the Museum Bill, O'Neill stated that he hoped "the people of Ulster will grow to appreciate it in the years ahead and that we shall now be able to hold our heads high in the face of cities like Edinburgh and Cardiff".[399] The comparison with Edinburgh and Cardiff demonstrated that the history of Belfast was still relevant to understanding the development of the museum.

O'Neill's mention of Ulster as "a separate area" was very ambiguous. To some extent, it raised questions about the existence of Ulster nationalism. The term "Ulster nationalism"

---

[394] Minutes of the Belfast Corporation, 17 November 1957, Belfast, Belfast Central Library.
[395] *Ibid*.
[396] Obviously, some differences existed between the various Unionist political parties: Ulster Unionist Party, Protestant Unionist Party, *etc*.
[397] Terence O'Neill, Museum Bill, 29 June 1961, Hansard, Stormont Papers.
[398] Letter from Terence O'Neill, 2 February 1959, CAB 9A/123/1, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast.
[399] Terence O'Neill, Museum Bill, 29 June 1961, Hansard, Stormont Papers.

had its roots in the mid-1940s, when William Frederick McCoy – Ulster Unionist and member of the Northern Ireland Parliament – began to doubt the safeguarding of Northern Ireland's status which depended only on the British Parliament. However, in spite of the links established by Terence O'Neill between a national museum and Northern Ireland as being "a separate area", the Ulster Museum was not designed as a challenge to the union with Britain.

Born in London of a prominent Ulster family, Terence O'Neill had come to Northern Ireland after the war in 1945 where he had a very successful career in the Ulster Unionist Party. Having failed to obtain a seat at Westminster, he became member of Stormont in 1946 and then Minister of Health and Local Government and Minister of Education and Minister of Finance. He ultimately was Prime Minister of Northern Ireland between 1963 and 1969. Unionist, O'Neill was similarly leader of the Ulster Unionist Party from 1963 to 1969. His attachment to the union could not be doubted. He made clear in November 1964 that "Our constitution does not make us, nor do we wish to be a separate state. We wish to be British in every sense of that word".[400] The contradiction in O'Neill's approach to the links between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom may be explained by the fact that, in 1964, he addressed the Commonwealth Society in London and not a local Northern Irish public. In spite of O'Neill's ambiguity regarding "separation", his position was symbolic of a change in the Unionist ideology and broader European regional policies.

The period of O'Neill's premiership (1963-1969) was one of growing interest in "regionalism" throughout Britain, and Europe at large. Whereas, in the United Kingdom, the post-war Labour government had been committed to centralized planning and the nationalization of major industries, regional questions came back onto the political agenda from the late 1950s onward.[401] Minority languages in the UK, France and Spain enjoyed a revival. In lieu with historic national identities, there was a revival of nationalist movements. The most prominent were in Scotland, Wales, Catalonia and the Basque Country.[402] In Northern Ireland, O'Neill believed that devolution within the United Kingdom had by no means run its full course, and that some further measure of freedom of action was inevitable. He pointed out in 1965 that "this is an age of regionalism (…) within Great Britain, we will see further measures of decentralization".[403] He supported, hence, the development of regional government. It was in that framework that O'Neill understood the association

---

[400] Speech at the Royal Commonwealth Society, London, 12th November 1964. Terence O'Neill, *Ulster at the Crossroads* (London: Faber, 1969), p. 79.

[401] Michael Keating, *The New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial Restructuring and Political Change* (Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, Mass.: E. Elgar, 1998), pp. 42-47.

[402] Keating, *The New Regionalism*, p. 54.

[403] Court Ward Unionist Association, Belfast, 18 October 1965. O'Neill, *Ulster at the Crossroads,* p. 86.

between Ulster and nation. Thus, in the debates regarding the Museum Bill, he argued that the Ulster Museum would "play a role of ever-increasing importance in the national life of the Province".[404] Like for the Ulster Folk Museum, the Ulster Museum was about people in the province of Northern Ireland as part of the wider United Kingdom. This positive assertion of local identity was linked to the Union but was not – and this contrasted very much with the previous Northern Irish policies – limited to the Union. The claim that Northern Irish identity was richer than the simple assertion of the Union revealed the traditional tension between local and British construction of identity in the United Kingdom.

O'Neill's speech was an example of the complex construction of Unionist ideology and the early signs of change in the 1960s. Brian Graham and Peter Shirlow observe "the contested and incoherent nature of Unionism and the multiple resistances emanating from the fragmentation of what is often portrayed as a monolithic cultural identity".[405] The "fragmentation" of Unionism stemmed from the tensions regarding both the religious identity building among Unionists and the relations between Ulster and the United Kingdom. About the latter, Jennifer Todd argued in the late 1980s that there have been two major traditions within Unionism: Ulster Loyalist and Ulster British.[406] For Ulster Loyalist, Ulster Protestantism is a focal point for identity, British influence being a secondary consideration. In contrast, for Ulster British it is Britain which becomes the centre of influence. This inherent distinction between Ulster and British identity was not specific to Northern Ireland but was – to some extent – common to the other non-English parts of the United Kingdom. Like Todd in her argument concerning Ulster, Denis Balsom underlined in 1985 the internal tensions in the construction of Welsh identity regarding the historical links with England.[407] He distinguished three categories in Welsh identity: *Y Fro Gymraeg*, Welsh Wales and British Wales.[408] These divisions are one of a number of other fractures within Welsh national identity which occur along the fault-lines of language, geography, class and ethnicity.[409] The relative tensions between local and British identity were therefore not uniquely attributed to Unionism. However, after having deconstructed the Unionist identity building process, it is necessary to historicize the changing balance.

---

[404] Terence O'Neill, Museum Bill, 29 June 1961, Hansard, Stormont Papers.
[405] Brian Graham and Peter Shirlow, 'The Battle of the Somme in Ulster Memory and Identity', *Political Geography*, 21, 2002, p. 881.
[406] Jennifer Todd 'Two Traditions in Unionist Political Culture', *Irish Political Studies* 2, 1987, pp. 1-26.
[407] Quoted in Mason "Nation Building at the Museum of Welsh Life", p. 24.
[408] The former, found mostly in the North-West, was based on traditional Welsh culture, Welsh language and was dominated by the Welsh Nationalist Party. The second, in the South, had been more impacted by industrial activity and English. The latter, in the Eastern part and therefore closer to England, was totally Anglophone.
[409] Mason "Nation Building", p. 23.

Without opposing too much Ulster Loyalist and Ulster British tradition between Unionism – since both could co-exist – it could be asserted that Northern Irish Unionism had been dominated, at least until the 1960s, by the Ulster British tradition. During the Home Rule crises and the Irish Revolution, Ulster Unionists underlined the historical links with Britain in order to challenge the idea of Ireland's independence. In the first decades of Northern Ireland's existence, Unionists were first and foremost British and this explained the relative lack of interest in the Belfast Museum and the overall construction of local identity. The context in the 1950s and 1960s was different and O'Neill argued for more independence within the United Kingdom. In doing so, he reflected an upsurge of interest, among Unionists, in local culture. For instance, while analyzing debates in history teaching in Northern Ireland, Karin Fischer demonstrates that some Unionist deputies launched a campaign in the 1950s to support the teaching of Ulster history in state-sponsored schools.[410] As early as 1949, the Unionist deputy Morris May asked for compulsory Ulster history to be taught in schools.[411] New textbooks giving more space to Ulster history were recommended by the Minister for Education in 1956.[412] Although their interest was first and foremost in distinguishing Ulster history from Irish history taught in the Republic, the upholders of a local history exemplified the new strength of the Ulster Loyalist tradition.

As it has been said, O'Neill's interest in local development matched an overall rise of regional policy in Europe. His appeal for regional patriotism derived from the association of civic responsibility and entrepreneurial initiative. According to O'Neill, strong local society would contribute to Ulster economic development. This was especially expressed through the programme of Ulster Week. It was launched by O'Neill in 1964 in Britain (Nottingham) and was intended to help sell Ulster "goods outside of Northern Ireland". It highlighted Ulster agricultural goods, Ulster manufactures and Ulster tourism industry.[413] This intention to sell goods and the image of Ulster in Britain was associated with positive local narratives. The slogan chosen by O'Neill – "Ulster can make it" – expressed a much more active definition of an Ulster identity than within previous Northern Irish governments. In 1967, the concept of Ulster Weeks was transferred to Northern Ireland. Thus, the "civic weeks" (translation of the Ulster Weeks in Northern Ireland) were organized in Belfast. During his opening speech,

---

[410] Karin Fischer, *L'histoire à l'école en Irlande, 1920-1996,* unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Caen, 2002, p. 145.
[411] *Northern Ireland House of Commons Debates*, Vol. 33, col. 556, April 5th 1949.
[412] Fischer, *L'histoire à l'école en Irlande,* p. 202. These textbooks were : I. Herring, *History of Ireland*, Belfast, W.M. Mullan & Sonb, 1951, 1st edition, London, 1937 ; R. Clarke, *A Short history of Ireland from 1485 to the Present Day*, (London: University Tutorial Press), 1941.
[413] Civic Lunch, Nottingham, 26 October 1964. O'Neill, *Ulster at the Crossroads,* p. 148.

O'Neill pointed out two different guidelines for this programme: "Tell the people" and "Involve the people".[414] In Ulster, the message was hence intended to unite "the people" to increase the participation in the local economic development. O'Neill's conception of "the people" revealed a change in the community relations as well.

Terence O'Neill's politics of local identity also related to community relations. In 1966, he explained that the contention between the two traditions "prevented us from mounting a united effort to surmount other social and economic problems".[415] In order to help local economic development, the Northern Irish Prime Minister stated in April 1967 in *The Times* that "Lord Craigavon's remark about 'a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people' (…) had some relevance in its historic setting of the troubled twenties, but it is no more representative of the present spirit of Ulster Unionist politics".[416] In 1968, O'Neill went further by saying that out "of all the issues which confront a modern government, the terms 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' are not really relevant".[417] At first sight, it was true that O'Neill followed a different approach regarding the relations between Nationalists and Unionists in Northern Ireland. In 1964, he had visited a Catholic school – the first visit of a Northern Irish Prime Minister to a Catholic school – in Ballymoney, county Antrim. Likewise, he remembered in his 1972 autobiography that he had "spent a lot of time during that election (1965 general election) canvassing in Catholic and Protestant houses in Belfast where trouble has since erupted. In both I had a tremendous reception".[418] Although he idealized the situation, it remained true that increasing light was shed on community relations under his government. The Ministry of Community Relations and the Community Relations Commission were created in 1969 to enhance the relations between Nationalists and Unionists. Nevertheless, O'Neill's policy regarding the improvement of community relations should not be over-emphasized.

The Catholic community was still suffering from segregation and discrimination. The voting system in Northern Ireland was still largely segregated. O'Neill remained an ardent Unionist and never challenged the union. The political life in Northern Ireland was still highly dominated by Unionists and the Community Relations policy was exclusively undertaken by the Unionist government. The Unionist monopoly of these policies and the Unionist incapacity to deal with cultural aspects of community relations were, according to David

---

[414] Opening of the Belfast Week, 1967, O'Neill, *Ulster at the Crossroads*, p. 151.
[415] Conference, Corrymeela, 8 April 1966. O'Neill, *Ulster at the Crossroads,* p. 113.
[416] O'Neill, *Ulster at the Crossroads,* p. 125.
[417] The Irish Association, Belfast, 19 February 1968, O'Neill, *Ulster at the Crossroads,* p. 130.
[418] Terence O'Neill, *Autobiography, (*London: Hart-Davies, 1972), p. 75.

Bloomfield, reasons for failure.[419] Change remained often more rhetorical. To some extent, O'Neill's support for Community Relations was more a response to the rising civil rights movement – the creation of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) – and the call for ending segregation. Criticized by the Nationalist community for being mostly rhetorical, O'Neill's policies were also challenged by some Unionist groups. At large, Unionists remained unconvinced regarding the need to reform community relations. The limited impact of O'Neill's community relations policy revealed how divisive religious issues were in Northern Ireland.

Challenges to O'Neill's policy appeared among Unionists and revealed a second main division within Unionism: religious identity building and anti-Catholicism. Tension within Unionism was clearly embodied in the opposition between Terence O'Neill (member of the Church of Ireland) and the Reverend Ian Paisley (Presbyterian). A church minister, he founded the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster in 1951, which was extreme in its hostility to the Roman Catholic Church, in particular through the "vitriolic anti-Catholic" *Protestant Telegraph* he founded in 1966.[420] Paisley openly criticized O'Neill's expression of condolence on the death of Pope John XXIII in 1963, and again when he visited a Catholic school in 1964. In 1988, as member of the European Parliament, Paisley opposed the speech of Pope John Paul II and shouted "I denounce you as the Antichrist".[421] He embodied the increase of sectarian tensions and the rejection of any form of political compromise in Northern Ireland. A vivid symbol of this was him throwing snowballs at Terence O'Neill and Sean Lemass during their historical meeting in 1965. Paisley arranged counter-demonstrations in opposition to civil rights marches in the second half of the 1960s, supported preferential treatment for Protestants in employment, and total freedom for Orange parades.

Initially limited to his religious preaches, Paisley's opposition to O'Neill's policy obtained a major political basis in the second half of the 1960s. Paisley founded the Protestant Unionist Party (1966-1971) and later the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP, 1971) which became a major challenge to the so far dominant Ulster Unionist Party. Based on "urban working classes and rural evangelical", the DUP symbolized O'Neill's failure in uniting Unionism, and to a wider extent, people in Ulster.[422]

In conclusion, Terence O'Neill's policy contributed to the rise of local development in Northern Ireland, using regionalism to support local economic development within the United

---

[419] David Bloomfield, *Peacemaking Strategies in Northern Ireland.* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997), p.52
[420] Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985,* p. 427.
[421] P. Boyer, in H. J. Hillerbrand, ed., *Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, vol. 1, (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 126.
[422] Alvin Jackson, "Democratic Unionist Party", in Connolly, *The Oxford Companion,* p. 148.

Kingdom. O'Neill's policy marked a shift in the balance between Ulster Loyalist and Ulster British traditions within Unionism, but also contributed to the split between moderate and more radical approaches of Unionism in Northern Ireland. O'Neill's emphasis on local identity allowed for the rise of cultural policy from which the Ulster Museum was an example. The creation of the Ulster Museum expressed the initial political need to materialize an Ulster local identity. Nevertheless, due to divergence regarding community relations and the political definition of the union with Britain, any strong political mobilization of history at the Ulster Museum appeared limited.

3) Representing Unionist Historical Narratives through Commemorative Exhibitions at the New Ulster Museum (1962-1967)

How far, if at all, did the deepening splits within Unionism in the 1960s influence museum practice at the Ulster Museum (UM)? Did O'Neill's policy of seeking to promote reconciliation between the two communities have any impact on the construction of collections and exhibitions at the UM? It is quite a challenge to study the exhibiting policy of the UM in the 1960s and 1970s, as very few documents remain.[423] It is thus important to take into consideration as many exhibitions as possible when assessing representations of the Anglo-Irish relations at the UM. At the same time, we should bear in mind Rhiannon Mason's warning, made in relation to the National Museums in Wales, that "while it is certainly possible to identify dominant discourses at work in museum representations, there is a danger of reading museums as too internally coherent, too unitary in their meanings".[424] It is thus important to consider the exhibitions of the UM as processes in which different representations of Unionist reality may have coexisted.

The few materials concerning the 1960s series of exhibitions arranged at the UM demonstrate that the institution was associated with Unionist narratives of history. It staged an unprecedented number of exhibitions in this period. While only two commemorative historical exhibitions were designed by the Belfast Museum (BM) between 1929 and 1960, at

---

[423] The sources utilized are roughly similar to those used for the previous chapter, which looked at the BM and Dublin Museum. However, it is important to note that the Ulster Museum's archives are seriously incomplete. Very few documents remained from the period before the 1978 creation of the Local History Gallery. Nevertheless, information about the construction of representations in the two museums was found in documents dealing with the new roles of the museums and their relations with other sites of knowledge production. This permits a broader examination of the roles of the national museums in the three decades under survey.
[424] Mason 'Nation Building at the Museum of Welsh Life', p. 19.

least five commemorative displays were mounted between 1962 and 1967.[425] These included a Golden Jubilee display for the 1912 signing of the Ulster Covenants in 1962,[426] another display about William of Orange in 1962, two exhibitions about the World Wars and the Battle of the Somme in 1964 and 1966 respectively, as well as one commemorating the birth of Henry Joy McCracken (1967).[427] Concurrently, as the Ulster Museum became a national institution, it modified its exhibiting policy and provided new sorts of displays. This multiplication of commemorative exhibitions at the UM was accompanied by a change in topics addressed, with the history of politics and wars becoming much more important for the UM that it had been for the Belfast Museum. Thus, as William of Orange who was the key character of the Orange – and Unionist – tradition in Northern Ireland, participation in the two World Wars was presented by Ulster Unionists as evidence of their union with Britain.

The first two displays – in 1962 and 1964 – were about characters and events traditionally celebrated by Unionists in Northern Ireland. In 1962, William of Orange's exhibition focused exclusively on his life and his accession to the British throne. The framework of reference was Britain and the island of Ireland was not mentioned. For instance, nothing was displayed about the Battle of the Boyne which was yet a major step in William's ruling over the British Isles.[428] The UM stressed the traditional British identity of Ulster, called Ulster British tradition by Jennifer Todd. Likewise, the 1964 commemorative exhibition of the two World Wars concentrated on the Allied troops and their opposition to Germany.[429] No major distinction was made between the different parts of the United Kingdom in their fight against Germany. British history was displayed in the Ulster Museum which therefore fully supported the Unionist interpretation of the historical conflicts as symbols of the union.

The organization of temporary exhibitions at the UM during the 1960s was shaped by the collaboration with Unionist agencies. In July 1967, the UM collaborated with the Orange Order to mount an exhibition of its "relics".[430] This dependence on external agencies was partly due to the lack of collections. This was particularly visible when it came to representing

---

[425] One commemorative exhibition was arranged in 1954 for the Silver Jubilee of the opening of the Museum and Art Gallery. Another exhibition was mounted in 1958 about the "Elizabethan Ulster" in November 1958, the 400th anniversary of the accession to the throne of Queen Elizabeth I. See Nesbitt, *A Museum in Belfast*, p. 46.

[426] The Ulster Covenant was signed by half a million of men and women in September 1912 in protest against the Third Home Rule bill.

[427] Henry Joy McCracken took part in the 1798 Rebellion.

[428] See the William memorial exhibition's material, archives of the Local History Department, Ulster Museum, cultra.

[429] *Ulster Museum Report*, 1964-1965, p. 7.

[430] *Belfast Telegraph*, July 5th 1967.

the First and Second World Wars. When dealing with these topics the UM relied broadly on external loans and collaboration with experts.[431] For example, the 1964 exhibition about the two World Wars "was chiefly drawn from the interesting collections of two or three local enthusiasts".[432] The bulk of items exhibited came from the collection of two private collectors – Gerard and Peter Leslie – who had exclusively collected about the 36th Ulster Division and who were ultimately in charge of the exhibition design.[433] Ulster Unionists had played a major role during the Battle of the Somme in July 1916 in which five thousand members of the 36th Ulster Division died during the first day of the assault. The 36th (Ulster) Division was made up of members of the Ulster Volunteer Force, mostly Protestants and against the Home Rule. Other Irish fought in the 10th (Irish) and 16th (Irish) Divisions who were mostly members of the National Volunteers, Catholic and in favour of the Home Rule. In addition, the Ulster Museum requested help from a former member of the British Army, the Brigadier Dyball, member of the 107th (Ulster) Infantry Brigade which traces its historic title back to the First World War when the Brigade was a component of the 36th Ulster Division. The extension of the framework of representation – from the Belfast to the Ulster Museum – was therefore monopolized by Unionism. The national status of the UM was, initially, driven by the historical union between Ulster and Britain. While the 1916 Easter Rising collections became the core of the historical collections in Dublin, the World Wars obtained similar status at the Ulster Museum.

In this context, it is important to notice an increasing focus on Ulster as framework of representation. It first appeared for the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in which the death of thousands of Ulster Unionist soldiers was defined by the Unionist Lord Mayor of Belfast – and asserted in the commemorative booklet published by the City Council as well[434] – as a "sacrifice"[435] made by the 36th Ulster Division whose "heroism will never be forgotten so long as the British Commonwealth lasts".[436] Nonetheless, the issue commemorated by the

---

[431] See the correspondence between Nesbitt (assistant keeper), Seaby (Director) and the various institutions lending items. William Memorial Exhibition's archives, World Wars Exhibition's archives, Battle of the Somme Exhibition's archives, UMA, Cultra.
[432] *Ulster Museum Report* 1965-1966.
[433] *Ulster Museum Report* 1965-1966. The latter was consulted several times and that was in charge of measurements, arrangement of items and writing of labels. The Two World Wars Exhibition's archives, archives of the Local History Department, Ulster Museum, Cultra. See also the letter from the director to Peter Leslie. Letter from Seaby to Leslie, 9th July 1964, The Two World Wars Exhibition's archives, UMA, Cultra.
[434] *Commemoration of the Battle of the Somme*, booklet published by the City Council, 1966, in *The Somme Exhibition*, UMA, Cultra.
[435] *Belfast Telegraph*, 30 June 1966, p. 7.
[436] *Belfast Telegraph*, 30 June 1966, p. 7.

UM's exhibition was not the British involvement in the two World Wars.[437] Displayed from July 1st to September 3rd, the exhibition emphasized the Ulster regiments' sacrifice (Appendix 9-B). The third panel was entirely devoted to "some stories of outstanding heroism of individuals".[438] The Museum report stressed that "The theme of the exhibition was particularly the part played by the 36th (Ulster) Division in the initial attack on 1 and 2 July 1916".[439] Any artefact which did not focus on the 36th Ulster Division was removed by Noel Nesbitt[440] – the librarian in charge of the display and of the local history collections since February 1960.[441] This was done to the detriment of the 16th or the 10th Irish Divisions which also fought in 1916 but which were mostly composed of Catholics.[442] The UM provided therefore heroic Unionist narratives of the First World War very similar to those highlighted in the *Belfast News Letter*[443] in July 1966 for which "The pain caused by the loss of so many young lives can never be fully assuaged, but at least history can testify that their courage and their sacrifice were not in vain".[444] The narratives produced for the 1966 exhibition slightly differed from those merely promoting British identity in 1962 and 1964.

In 1966, the emphasis on the 36th Ulster Division was explained by the fact that it belonged to an Ulster identity. The Museum report argued that "the exhibition attracted a great deal of attention, owing no doubt to close and affectionate links which many Ulster people still preserve with men of the Ulster division".[445] This association between Ulster and the 36th Division was the traditional mark of a political discourse that excluded Catholics from the Ulster past. In addition, it matched the new role of the museum in representing the whole province of Ulster. Although the focus on Ulster was partly due to the event

---

[437] The title of the display was accordingly "The Battle of the Somme". Texts and panels from the 1966 exhibition, *The Battle of the Somme*, UMA, Cultra.

[438] Texts and panels from the 1966 exhibition, *The Battle of the Somme*, UMA, Cultra.

[439] *Ulster Museum Report*, 1966-1967.

[440] Noel Nesbitt was formerly a classics teacher. He was, not surprisingly – given the Unionist orientation of the Ulster Museum – Protestant ; he came from a Baptist School and was linked to a Presbyterian Club. See "From Library to Museum", in *The Northern Whig*, 2 February 1960. As librarian, this Belfast man was interested in local history, and published a book on Belfast history in 1969, see Noel Nesbitt, *The Changing Face of Belfast*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1969).

[441] For instance, he asked the Imperial War Museum about photographs concerning the 36th Ulster Division. Letter from Nesbitt, 5th May 1966, *The Battle of the Somme exhibition*, UMA, Cultra. He endeavoured to link clearly the different maps with the activities of the 36th Ulster Division only. Letter from Nesbitt to Evans (private donator), 21st March 1966, *The Battle of the Somme exhibition*, UMA, Cultra.

[442] While the 36th (Ulster) Division was made up of members of the Ulster Volunteer Force, mostly Protestants and against the Home Rule, other Irish fought in the 10th (Irish) and 16th (Irish) Divisions. They were mostly members of the National Volunteers, Catholics and in favour of the Home Rule.

[443] One of the three main Northern Irish newspapers, the Belfast News Letter was probably the most favorable to the Unionist political parties.

[444] "Ulster Remembers", in the *Belfast News Letter*, July 1rst, 1966, p. 4.

[445] *Ulster Museum Report*, 1966-1967.

commemorated – not the First World War but the particular Battle of the Somme – it was re-asserted the following year for the commemoration of Henry Joy McCracken.

From 25 August to 30 September 1967 an exhibition was on view at the Ulster Museum for the bicentenary of the birth of Henry Joy McCracken.[446] Born in Belfast, Henry Joy McCracken was a Presbyterian who became member of the Society of the United Irishmen in 1795. In 1798 he was one of the leaders of the revolt in Antrim; he was made prisoner, court-martialed and hanged in Belfast on 17 July 1798. In comparison with other events staged at the UM during the 1960s, the McCracken's exhibition attracted little attention.[447] However, the 1967 exhibition contrasted with the previous exhibitions which expressed a very Unionist version of the past. Henry Joy McCracken, as United Irishman and part of the 1798 insurrection, was more celebrated by Republican groups. In 1967, the Republican *Belfast Wolfe Tone Society* published a special leaflet dedicated to the United Irish and entitled *Henry Joy McCracken and his Times*.[448] No ambiguity was left concerning McCracken's belonging to the United Irishmen and his radical political ideals to reach Ireland's independence. The organization of an exhibition devoted to a United Irishman at the Ulster Museum looked, therefore, surprising and contrary to its Unionist narratives.

One of the reasons for mounting the McCracken exhibition was that, unlike the previous displays, the UM was not collaborating with Unionist groups like the Orange Order (1967) or British Army veterans (1964). The 1967 commemorative exhibition was exclusively mounted by Noel Nesbitt. A Belfast Protestant coming from a Baptist School and linked to a Presbyterian Club,[449] Nesbitt was interested in local history.[450] His interest in local history influenced the way the 1967 exhibition was arranged. The display was "designed to give some indication of Belfast's radicalism in the 1790s and to illustrate what the city looked like and what it produced in the late 18th and 19th centuries".[451] News covering the opening of the exhibition showed that the exhibition was composed of two maps of Belfast – 1791 and the "present day" – with various sites related to McCracken, of engravings of Belfast in the 1770s

---

[446] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, September 21st 1967, UMA, Cultra.

[447] This event has actually remained unknown, also from most of the literature dealing with the commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion. For instance, Peter Collins' survey of the 1798 commemorations in Ireland and Northern Ireland does not mention its existence. Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of '98'?*.

[448] F. Heatley, *Henry Joy McCracken and his Times*, (Belfast: Belfast Wolfe Tone Society, 1967), p. 52

[449] "From Library to Museum", in *The Northern Whig*, February 2nd 1960.

[450] He published a book on Belfast history in 1969. Nesbitt, *The Changing Face of Belfast*. In 1959, he had compiled *A Bibliography of Ulster Directories* – Ulster being in that case the historical nine counties – for a competition held by the Northern Branch of the Library Association. D. Armstrong, Belfast and Ulster Street Directories, Guide and Directory, Library and Information Service Council, 2008. http://www.liscni.co.uk/docs/Belfast_and_Ulster_Street_Directories.pdf [7 July 2011]. p. 5.

[451] *The Irish Times*, 25 August 1967, p. 11.

and pictures of the city in the 1890s.[452] Hence, the attention focused on the local framework, namely the city of Belfast, more than the general context of insurrection in Ireland in the 1790s. As far as the remaining materials demonstrate, Henry Joy McCracken was hardly represented as a member of the Society of the United Irishmen whose political activity led to the 1798 Rebellion, but rather as a "local" radical. In the display, various items relating to McCracken's life were displayed, such as his uniforms or a ring containing a lock of hair.[453] As far as the bulletin news and *The Irish Times* showed, no weapon – a sign of the military insurrection – was on view.[454] The display did not support the Republican narrative of 1798 as being an insurrection for Ireland's independence but promoted rather the social and local dimension of the revolt. The exhibition was evidence that, in spite of the shift from municipal to national status, the Ulster Museum still included representations of Belfast civic identity.

The construction of local history collections at the UM also contributed to the re-definitions of community relations in Northern Ireland – Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists – and indirectly the interpretations of Anglo-Irish relations. In 1967, Noel Nesbitt was interviewed about the McCracken exhibition and asked whether he had "worries about political reaction" – in other words, about the potential Unionist criticisms towards the issue on display. He answered "not really" and gave some explanation. He highlighted that the UM had just arranged an exhibition about the Orange Order (1967) and could therefore "not be accused of being partial".[455] Indeed, at the request of the Orange Lodge of Research, the Orange historical exhibition was arranged at the Ulster Museum to coincide with the Triennial Meeting of the Imperial Grand Orange Council held in Belfast on 10 and 11 July 1967.[456] While contrasting the two exhibitions, Nesbitt acknowledged the association which could be made between McCracken, the 1798 Rebellion and Northern Irish nationalists. More importantly, he introduced the notion of balance between the two communities evoked by O'Neill in his community relations policies. The move from municipal to national museum encouraged the UM to explore the relations between the two main communities. Although this did not disrupt overall support for Unionism, it raised new possibility of representations.

The consideration for community relations revealed close links between the UM and O'Neill's policy of Ulster identity. In addition to commemorative exhibitions, in 1967 the UM organized the "Civic Week" – 20 May/17 June – during which various events related to

---

[452] RTE Bulletin News, 1967, *Henry Joy McCracken: Bi-centenary Exhibition*, 1.12 minute, N379/67B, RTE archives, Dublin.
[453] *Ibid*.
[454] *Ibid* and *The Irish Times*, 25 August 1967, p. 11.
[455] RTE Bulletin News, *Ibid*.
[456] *Ulster Museum Report*, 1967-1968.

local history were staged.[457] Two exhibitions were mounted (*Growth of a city* and *A hundred years of Ulster landscape*), and future developments for Civic weeks were planned.[458] This was a concrete consequence of O'Neill's policy on the Ulster Museum which served as a site of display for the Prime Minister's support for local development. Similar links appeared in the following years. In December 1968, Terence O'Neill began his campaign for the Golden Jubilee of the creation of the Northern Irish Parliament (1921-1971). For that purpose, a festival was intended to unite Ulster population: Ulster 71.[459] The idea was based on a positive history of Ulster to contrast with the socio-economic difficulties of the late 1960s. O'Neill stated in 1968 that:

> In that year Northern Ireland will celebrate its 50th anniversary ; 50 years of challenge and difficulty and occasional disappointment, but also 50 years of splendid achievement, of growing prosperity, of expanding opportunity (…) I should like to see 1971 becoming Ulster's Year just as certainly as 1967 was Canada's Year.[460]

The government suggested using the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and the Ulster Museum as focal points for this 1971 Jubilee.[461] The UM was amply bound to the political need to develop local identity in order to foster economic development. This resulted in the development of local history at the UM. The 1968 Ulster Museum report recognized a new interest in "local historical nature" and "local history".[462] In consequence, a keeper (Dr Alan McCutcheon) was appointed for Technology and Local History in 1965. A geographer from QUB, McCutcheon had been directing an official survey of the industrial archaeology of Northern Ireland for the government. From 1965 to 1968 he was still employed by the Ministry of Finance.[463] This also demonstrated the links between the Northern Irish support for local identity and the development of a local history division at the UM. An independent Local History gallery opened later in 1978. Nevertheless, the political development which had been at the origin of the support for local history was overwhelmed by the rising sectarian

---

[457] For instance, an exhibition entitled "A Hundred Year of Ulster Landscape" was on view. See *the Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, 1967, UMA, Cultra.

[458] *Minutes of the Board of Trustee*, 9 March 1967, UMA, Cultra.

[459] Several names were proposed by the government committee formed in 1969 : Ulster Jubilee, Come to Ulster Year, NI-Land 71. For a survey of Ulster 71, see Gillian McIntosh, "Stormont's Ill-timed Jubilee: The Ulster '71 Exhibition" *New Hibernia Review*, vol. 11, n. 2, Samhradh/Summer, 2007, pp. 17-39.

[460] Copy of Terence O'Neill's House of Commons (NI) speech 17 December. 1968, "Come to Ulster" Policy and General File (hereafter abbreviated as CTU), PRONI; INF/1/9. Quoted in McIntosh, "Stormont's Ill-timed Jubilee: The Ulster '71 Exhibition".

[461] McIntosh, "Stormont's Ill-timed Jubilee: The Ulster '71 Exhibition".

[462] *Ulster Museum Report*, 1968, p. 21

[463] Nesbitt, *A Museum in Belfast*, p. 53.

violence which burst out in 1969. The Ulster Museum entered into three decades of violence known as the Northern Irish conflict.

4) The Ulster Museum in the 1970s: Local History during the Northern Irish Conflict

The riots which resulted in the late 1960s from the struggle between the civil rights movement and the Unionist counter-demonstrations began a period of sectarian violence and intense political instability. The fight between Republican (Provisional I.R.A and Official I.R.A) and loyalist[464] (Ulster Volunteer Force and the Ulster Defence Association) paramilitary groups fostered the gradual involvement of the British troops and political power. British troops were deployed on 14 August 1969 during the Battle of the Bogside in Londonderry. Requested by the Northern Irish parliament in order to restore order and initially mostly welcomed by Catholics as a way to secure their neighbourhoods, the British presence in Northern Ireland rapidly became a source of controversy. The involvement of the British Army in the shooting of Nationalists during a civil rights demonstration in Londonderry – known as the Bloody Sunday, 30 January 1972 – exacerbated the political instability of the province.

The Northern Ireland (Temporary Provisions) Act in 1972 introduced direct rule in Northern Ireland. The Northern Irish Parliament was suspended and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland – a British Cabinet minister – replaced the Northern Irish government. As a consequence, the association between the Northern Ireland government and political Unionism (in particular the Ulster Unionist Party which had been in government from 1921 up to direct rule in 1972) no longer existed. Direct rule brought the end of British laissez-faire and the British government increasingly took part in the management of Northern Ireland. The various attempts to restore political authority – like the 1973 Sunningdale Agreements between the British government, the Irish government and Northern Irish political parties – proved to be unsuccessful.[465] One consequence of the sectarian violence and direct rule was the changing status of the Ulster Museum. Previously, the Northern Irish Department of Finance controlled, through nomination, the museum's Board of Trustees. With direct rule,

---

[464] The term "Republican" and "Loyalist" refer to the radical sections of Nationalists and Unionists who supported the use of physical force either to end or to protect the Unionist domination in Northern Ireland.
[465] The Sunningdale Agreement planned the creation of a coalition government in Northern Ireland and a Council of Ireland with members from the two parts of the island.

supervision passed into the hand of British authorities. This shift expressed the end of the unilateral political domination of Unionism in Northern Ireland.[466]

It was impossible for the Ulster Museum to stay fully aside from the context of sectarian violence. Harold Blair – a 35 year old Protestant electrician – was killed in 1976 by an I.R.A bomb in the UM's neighbourhood. The attack took place a block away from the UM; on Landseer road.[467] Nevertheless, it is extremely difficult to assess the eventual impact of the sectarian context on the overall management of the UM. What can be noted is that the context entailed cautious policies. Anthony Buckley, former curator of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum remembers that this was a time when "homes were being nightly raided, when rioting was an everyday occurrence, and when explosions and gunfire regularly rattled the windows".[468] As a public building, the UM could not have ignored this threat and organized a Bomb evacuation drill in September 1971.[469] The necessity of this was underlined when the Ulster Museum's entire collection of costume and textiles was destroyed in 1976 in the bombing of Malone House, on the outskirts of Belfast, where it had been stored.[470] Although the bombing, claimed by the I.R.A, was apparently intended against the House and not the museum's collections, it revealed the difficulties posed by the Northern Irish conflict for maintaining the cultural heritage.[471] It became clear that public space in Northern Ireland had become the subject of a bitter struggle between extremists from both sides.[472] It was also true of Dublin where Nelson's pillar was destroyed by Republican dissidents in March 1966, the explosion at Wolfe Tone's grave in Bodenstown in 1969 and the destruction of Wolfe Tone's statue at Stephen's green (Dublin) in 1971 by the Ulster Volunteer Force.

The dramatic rise of violence is of course related to the drop in visitor rates to the UM which declined from 120.000/130.000 in the mid-1960s to 91.000 in 1969. However, after the peak of violence in 1972 attendance began to recover, reaching 215.000 in 1974 and staying

---

[466] Accordingly debates about admission charge in 1973 took place in the House of Commons. House of Commons debates, 6 February 1973, Hansard HC, 1973: 369-94.

[467] http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/cgi-bin/AHRC/names.pl?surname=Blair&forename=Harold (last visited April 2012).

[468] Anthony Buckley, "'Cultural Heritage in an Oasis of Calm'. Divided Identities in a Museum in Ulster", in Ulrich Kockel, ed., *Culture, Tourism and Development*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994), p. 131.

[469] Bomb evacuation drill, observations on practice, 3 September 1971, Local History Gallery, UMA, cultra.

[470] In 1970 the National Trust leased it for their headquarters and the Ulster Museum housed their costume collection there.

[471] Malone House was erected on the site of a very extensive 17th century fort which was called Castle Cam, or Freeston Castle, but there are no remains of the ancient fort now to be seen. The Georgian mansion-house was built in the 1820s for William Wallace Legge, a prosperous Belfast merchant who had inherited the surrounding land in 1821.

[472] The Remembrance Day bombing (also known as the Enniskillen bombing) took place on 8 November 1987 at the town war memorial; eleven people were killed by the Provisional Irish Republican Army attack.

close to 200.000 in the late 1970s.[473] On 28 June 1971, the UM opened its new building in Stranmillis creating 74.000 square feet of exhibition space.[474] The cost of the extension was £800,000. A few months later, in 1972, a section devoted to Local History opened. The section depended on the new department of Technology, Local History and Numismatic and was composed of one keeper, Alan McCutcheon, one assistant and two research assistants.[475] The growth of the local history collections continued and resulted in the creation of an independent Local History department in March 1978. This creation was supported by the new director of the UM – and former keeper of the local history collection, Alan McCutcheon.[476] So, although the UM had to deal with the threat of violence in Northern Ireland, it was able to pursue the development of local history initiated in the 1960s.

To some extent, direct rule and the involvement of British authorities in the management of Northern Ireland had enhanced the local identity policy. For instance, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) was a paramilitary group founded in 1971 partly in opposition to the British policy in Northern Ireland. It was to wage a twenty-four year military campaign against the Provisional Irish Republican Army. Yet, the group also openly questioned the union between Ulster and Britain and did not reject the possibility of an independent State of Ulster. The UDA promoted an Ulster nationalism based partly on the theory of "the Cruthin".[477] Developed by Ian Adamson in the early 1970s,[478] the theory of the Cruthin was based on the emergence of an Ulster-Scottish cultural narrative which was viewed, notably by the UDA, as an alternative to that of the Celts.[479] According to Adamson, the Cruthin were originated from what is now Scotland, and were the original inhabitants of Ireland. In this model, the Celts – who arrived later – were invaders and not the native Irish as Irish nationalism had contrarily stressed. Likewise, according to Adamson, the Scottish planters who migrated to Ulster in the sixteenth century were, therefore, not colonials, but merely reclaiming their ancestral homelands. Although Adamson's theory received little academic support, its political use expressed the new Unionist interest in building historical local narrative.[480]

---

[473] Ulster Museum, *Annual Reports*.

[474] Newspaper cuttings, 10 June 1971 (unknown origin), Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

[475] Nesbitt, *A Museum in Belfast*, p. 54.

[476] Nesbitt, *A Museum in Belfast*, p. 70.

[477] Mairead Nic Craith, *Plural Identities, Singular Narratives: the Case of Northern Ireland*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), p. 93.

[478] Ian Adamson was member of the Ulster Unionist Party and former Lord Mayor of Belfast. He was also founder chair of the Ulster-Scots Language Society.

[479] Ian Adamson, *The Cruthin: a History of the Ulster Land and People*, Belfast, 1974.

[480] Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 96-98.

Unionist historical narratives continued to be expressed, among other sites, at the new Ulster American Folk Park created in 1976 in Omagh (County Tyrone) as part of the American Bicentenary celebrations. The park was devoted to Ulster-Scot emigration to North-America and consisted of two halves, one devoted to Ulster, the other to the American conclusion of the trans-Atlantic journey. Visitors could follow the thread of the Mellon family, who had left Ulster in the nineteenth century and founded the bank dynasty in the United States.[481] The choice of representing the Mellon family was not coincidental. In addition to being one of the main funding companies for cultural projects promoting the Ulster narrative; the Mellon family was of Protestant Ulster-Scott origin. One of the purposes of the Ulster American Folk Park was to counter-balance the view that emigration to North America had strictly been limited to Irish Catholics.[482] The Ulster American Folk Park intended to recall that the first wave of emigration was composed of Protestant Scot-Irish from the North. A key person in the establishment of the American Park was Eric Montgomery. Montgomery, a Unionist and information officer in the Northern Ireland administration actively worked on the development of the Ulster identity.[483] The focus on local history spread in Northern Ireland and intensified at the UM.

In 1978, the UM opened its Local History gallery. The first novelty was the creation of a clear historical narrative: the Ulster Story. Organizers built a storyline and a path that could be followed.[484] Ulster's history began with an introduction area well delimited. Ulster was initially defined as a regional entity and geography and in as much representations of landscapes welcomed the visitor. Eighty slides provided views of the six historical counties composing Ulster and Donegal - politically a county in the Republic of Ireland. These six counties included Antrim, Armagh, Donegal, Fermanagh, Down, Tyrone and Derry.[485] The relevance of geography to introduce Ulster's history reflected Estyn Evans' influence on building a regional definition of Ulster. This regional presentation of Ulster gave space, for the first time, to events traditionally seen as part of the Nationalist historical narratives.

---

[481] Stephen Brown and Anthony Patterson, *Imagining Marketing: Art, Aesthetics, and the Avant-garde* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000). p. 151.

[482] The Mellons came from Ulster and Thomas Mellon (1813 – 1908) was born in Ulster, in County Tyrone, and emigrated with his parents to Pennsylvania. Andy Sawyer "National Museum in Northern Ireland", report for the EuNaMus project: http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/064/026/ecp64026.pdf (last visited April 2012).

[483] Andy Sawyer "National Museum in Northern Ireland", report for the EuNaMus project: http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/064/026/ecp64026.pdf

[484] *Local History Gallery, layout*, 1977, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

[485] Among the eighty slides, eleven were about county Tyrone, ten about county Antrim, ten about county Armagh, twelve about county Down, seven about county Fermanagh, nine about county Donegal and twelve about the city of Belfast (Belfast being divided between counties Antrim and Down).

As far as the archives show, the 1978 gallery was the first display composed of representations of the 1798 Rebellion.[486] For instance, a reproduction of Thomas Robinson's *Battle of Ballynahinch* (Appendix 9-L) – a major battle during the 1798 Rebellion – was put on view for the very first time in Northern Ireland.[487] And although the 1967 display devoted to Henry Joy McCracken dealt partly with the overall context of the 1798 insurrection, it hardly went beyond Belfast frontiers. In as much the 1978 exhibit, while still adopting a local prism, made a clear effort to tell a much more complete story. Hence, even though the gallery began with a case devoted to H. J. McCracken; William Drennan, Wolfe Tone, Thomas Russell and William Orr were represented as well.[488] Importantly, the exhibition was careful not to support the Republican narratives of 1798. The focus on Ulster enabled the Museum to skip the insurrection in Wexford where the role of Catholic priests had been stronger.[489] Conversely, the staff was very careful to add sections in which the two main traditions could recognize their heritage. On the one hand, the section acknowledged 1798 as "the birth of Republicanism".[490] On the other hand, two other sections dealt with *Militia* and *Yeomanry*, that is, the 1798 counter-rebellion troops.

The introduction to Republican insurrections in the Local History gallery also had an impact on the UM's representation of the 1916 Easter Rising. The section about *Partition* included both the construction of political *Unionism* in the North and the *1916 Easter Rising* from which a copy of the Proclamation of the Republic was displayed centrally.[491] Although texts emphasized the constitution of the U.V.F more than the Easter Rising, no judgmental statements were made in the exhibition text or display set-up. As far as the archives of the UM indicate, this was the first time the 1916 Easter Rising was included in the permanent collections as a distinct event of Ulster history. In front of the artefacts devoted to the 1916 Easter Rising, the staff had installed artefacts about the 1912 *Ulster Covenant* and the constitution of the *U.V.F* (Ulster Volunteer Force). Hence, the construction of a local history gallery was based on the opposite display of historical conflicts which had been associated either with the Unionist or the Nationalist traditions.

---

[486] This novelty was confirmed by the general use of reproductions instead of artefacts.
[487] The Battle of Ballynahinch marked the end of the 1798 Rebellion in the North. Rebels led by Henry Munroe were defeated by British troops. The original copy was part of the President of Ireland's personal collections in Dublin.
[488] All major figures of the Society of the United Irishmen.
[489] Insurrection in Wexford was indeed the principal bone of contention between Nationalists and Unionists. The latter considered the insurrection in Wexford as a series of sectarian massacres of Protestants.
[490] *Local History*, Main Display Area, p. 2, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.
[491] Case J.2 on the *U.V.F* was directly followed by J.3 on the *Easter Rising* and the rise of Sinn Fein. *Drawing of the cases*, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

The 1978 gallery was marked by a plethora of military history through sections about the *War of the Two Kings* (1690), the *1798 Rebellion*, the 1912 *Ulster Covenant* and the *1916 Easter Rising* and, regrouped in a last section, the "Military Activity including the First and Second World War".[492] This was the first time, one of the two national museums on the island of Ireland had presented such a rich history of Anglo-Irish conflicts. The fact that the conflicts were either displayed with their nationalist and loyalist sides (like the 1798 Rebellion) or facing an opposite interpretation of Anglo-Irish relations (the 1916 Easter Rising in front of the 1912 Ulster Covenant) indicates that the increased representations of wars came from the museum's intention to give space to both the historical fights against Britain and the union.

This shift was undermined by the overall support for Unionism. The permanent display was entitled "Ulster story" and retraced the Ulster history – significantly so – from the sixteenth century until the present time (1970).[493] The initial panel stressed that "From 1593 to 1603, the final contest between Gaelic Ireland and the Tudor conquerors was fought out"[494]. The 1601 Battle of Kinsale in which O'Neill and his Spanish allies were defeated "meant the end of the Gaelic lordships"[495]. The Battle was the final episode of Ireland's conquest by the Tudors. Thereby Ulster's history tallied with the submission to the English crown. Ulster history began, thus, with the birth of British authority in Ireland. The political conquest was immediately followed by the "Plantation" of Ulster (section 4). The text panel asserted that "Land, the basis of society, must be given to Protestant immigrants who would be loyal to the interest of England".[496] The chronology of the exhibition therefore reproduced a Unionist version of the past.

Likewise, although the 1916 Easter Rising was presented, the text panel set it into the historical construction of Unionism. The section was called "Conflicts" and dealt with the 1910-1925 period, that is, from the election of a Liberal government and the Unionist reaction to the development of Home Rule, until the Irish Boundary Commission in 1925.[497] In contrast to the sole paragraph devoted to the 1916 Easter Rising, the text panel began with

---

[492] The last section was composed of uniforms of Irish regiments in British Army. Local History, Main Display Area, Description, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

[493] O'Neill and Tudor, Secrets of Ulster, the Flight of the Earls, Plantation in Ulster, Settlement, Continuity, Early 17th century, Sir Arthur Chichester, Rebellion, Cromwell, the Covenant of 1641, the War of the Two Kings, Poor and Plenty, Economy, Emigration, Linen, Irish Volunteers, Independence, James Hope, Militia, Yeomanry, Daniel O'Connell, Famine, Young Ireland, Home Rule, Land, Partition, Police, Military History. List of sections, 1977, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

[494] Texts and labels, 15th December 1976, *ibid*.

[495] *Ibid*.

[496] *Ibid*.

[497] The Commission met to define the exact delimitation between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland. "Conflicts", text panel of the 1978 display, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

three paragraphs devoted to the development of Unionism in the 1910s. Gemma Reid therefore concluded that "Catholic and Nationalist visitors tended to view the exhibit as Unionist biased".[498] Although Republican insurrections and nationalist movements like Home Rule were part of the display, the overall legitimacy of the Unionist domination in Ulster did not seem to be challenged. The 1978 gallery was the result of twenty years of Ulster local history development challenging the sole existence – while not the supremacy – of the Unionist tradition.

To conclude, the Ulster Museum came from and contributed to the development of studies and politics of local identity. Its creation and the development of local history collections expressed the rise of what Jennifer Todd calls the Ulster Loyalist tradition within Unionism. This process of constructing Ulster identity – or ulsterization – led to the result that, for the first time, the two museums in Belfast and Dublin had similar status. The creation of the UM had major consequences on the manner in which the past was portrayed. Its new national status and its association with Unionism promoted the UM as equivalent in status with the National Museum of Ireland in the South. In the 1960s, the UM focused on the Battle of the Boyne and the World Wars while the NMI limited its narratives to the Republican insurrections of 1798 and 1916. While acknowledging the Union's ties with Britain, the Ulster Loyalist tradition concurrently worked at the development of local economic, political and cultural structures. This fostered the active development of cultural institutions fully devoted to Ulster Unionism in the 1960s and 1970s. The national status of the Ulster Museum was initially imagined through the need to build regional unity within the United Kingdom. The UM was, therefore, still promoting the dominant political discourse, did not give space to the minority Catholic tradition. The two national museums in Dublin and Belfast promoted therefore clearly opposing positions regarding the link between Ireland and Britain. At the same time, while the Ulster Museum benefited from a favourable context of local development, the National Museum of Ireland increasingly appeared to be isolated from the various debates regarding national identity and Irish history.

---

[498] Reid, "Redefining Nation, Identity and Tradition", p. 215.

B) The Reasons for a Decline: the National Museum of Ireland Disconnects from the Debates Regarding Irish National Identity

As in Northern Ireland, the 1960s was a crucial decade for the re-assessment of Irish identity also in the Republic of Ireland. The decade was marked by a changing official policy regarding Anglo-Irish relations. Sean Lemass had replaced Eamon de Valera as both leader of *Fianna Fail* and *Taoiseach* in 1959. Lemass' policy contrasted with de Valera's, in particular regarding economic relations with Britain. Whereas de Valera had drastically limited economic relations with Britain, Lemass was favourable to the opening of the Republic of Ireland's market to international investment. This policy notably materialized through tourism and industry. Unlike the Ulster Museum the National Museum of Ireland did not participate in the various debates. The NMI's isolation from the different national narratives contributed to the explanation of the overall decline of the institution in the construction of Irishness.

1) The National Museum Confronted with the Rise of New Republican Sites of Celebration

The struggle between anti-partition Republican groups and the Irish government came from the disagreement regarding a major issue. When did the Irish Revolution end? Did it stop with the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the creation of the Irish Free State – as the Irish government asserted – or was it an unfinished issue due to the Partition and the presence of British troops in Northern Ireland, as the Republicans argued? The debates had been undermined in the 1950s due to the partial disappearance of Republican groups.

In reaction to the launch of the Border Campaign in 1956 against different British targets in Northern Ireland by the I.R.A, the Republic of Ireland's Fine Gael/Labour government (in power from 1954 to 1957) arrested most of the I.R.A's leadership. The following *Fianna Fail* government (in power from 1957 to 1969) was even more active, interning I.R.A members which weakened the Republican army. The Border Campaign was officially called off in 1962 and contributed to the division of the Republican movement. The 1960s marked a split in the I.R.A. Some I.R.A chiefs like Cathal Goulding attempted to lead Republicanism towards more social issues and Marxist theories. In 1969, the I.R.A split between the Official I.R.A – led by Goulding – and the Provisional I.R.A. The fall of Republican support was also expressed during the general elections.

Notwithstanding its political decline in the Republic of Ireland, diehard Republicans remained active. This was particularly obvious throughout the Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Easter Rising, in 1966. For instance, Republicans were responsible for blowing up Nelson's pillar in Dublin in March 1966.[499] Granite pillar topped by a statue of Horatio Nelson, it was erected in 1808 in O'Connell street.[500] In March 1966, former I.R.A volunteers led by Joe Christle, planted a bomb which destroyed the upper half of the pillar.[501] *An Phoblacht's* (the official newspaper of *Sinn Fein* close to Republican ideology) May 1966 editorial made clear that:

> Irish revolutionaries cannot adequately pay their respect to the memory of their predecessors until that time when the enemies of our traditional aspirations have been toppled from power in Ireland.[502]

In spite of this vivid example, Republicanism could not be restricted to the use of physical force. Indeed, participation in the Golden Jubilee was rather embodied in the Old I.R.A which had no direct link with contemporary violence whatsoever.[503] This organization was associated with – and initially mostly composed of members of – the Irish Republican Army which had fought during the War of independence (1919-1921) and should be distinguished from the I.R.A involved in Northern Irish violence. They participated in the commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising in 1966 but did not do so through the NMI, as the *1916 Club* had done in 1932. Although the NMI arranged a commemorative exhibition, other sites attracted the attention of the Old I.R.A. One of the main commemorative projects in which the Old I.R.A became involved was the restoration of Kilmainham Jail.[504] It was located in West Dublin, first opened in 1796 and functioned as an active prison until 1924.[505] The prison was a place of imprisonment for Irish patriots during the repression of the 1798,

---

[499] Member of the Royal Navy made famous by his victory over Napoleon's troop in Trafalgar in 1805.

[500] Sackville Street until 1924. O'Connell street is Dublin main street, especially with the General Post Office where the rebels took refuge in Easter 1916.

[501] Joe Christle was one of the leaders of the second generation of the I.R.A, in the 1950s. Thinking the leadership of the I.R.A too conservative, Christle was dismissed in 1956 and took with him several members of the I.R.A Dublin's unit. They organized themselves, linked up with other dissidents and, in November 1956, began their own campaign by blowing up five customs huts along the border. Robert White, *Ruairi O Bradaigh : the Life and Politics of an Irish Revolutionary*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), p. 58.

[502] *An Phoblacht*, May 1966.

[503] Many Republican groups claimed to be the legitimate inheritors of the original Irish Republican Army who fought during the War of Independence (1919-1921).

[504] Eric Zuelow 'Enshrining Ireland's Nationalist History Inside Prison Walls: The Restoration of Kilmainham Jail', *Eire-Ireland*, vol. 39, fall-winter, 2004, pp. 193-194.

[505] The vast majority of convicts who passed through the prison were confined there for assault, burglary, shoplifting, rape, highway robbery, murder, bigamy, cattle stealing, and other such "common" crimes. See Zuelow "Enshrining Ireland', p. 186.

1848 and the 1916 uprising.[506] In particular, it was the site of the execution of the leaders of the Easter Rising in May 1916. It was therefore a major site for the history of the Anglo-Irish conflicting history. After several failed projects, the restoration of the site began in the late 1950s – the Restoration Society was founded in 1958. As Pat Cooke – former director of Kilmainham Jail – stressed, prominent among the Kilmainham Jail Restoration Society were veterans of the period 1916-1924.[507] Interestingly, Helen Gifford-Donnelly – who had been at the origins of the 1916 collections of the NMI – was also involved in the Restoration Society.[508] This revealed a shift of Republican interest from the NMI to more recent site dealing with Republican history.

The Jail reopened for the Golden Jubilee of the Easter Rising in April 1966 and proposed an exhibition which, according to Pat Cooke "left no doubt as to the nature of the building as a shrine to patriotic sacrifice, and endorsed the tradition of physical force resistance to British Rule in Ireland".[509] In his opening speech, Eamon de Valera – now President of Ireland[510] – encouraged donations of historic material to Kilmainham Jail, and said he knew of "no finer shrine" for relics of the Irish Revolution.[511] Previously destined to the NMI, the donations of artefacts to Kilmainham Jail were symbolic of the shifting authority in housing the "relics" of 1916. In a 2004 email, Lahr Joye – keeper in the Arts and Industry department of the NMI – confirmed this view and described the 1936-1966 period as the "golden period" for collecting on the Irish Revolution at the NMI and regretted that "from then on it would appear that more material went to the Kilmainham Jail than the national museum".[512] It was indeed true that, in comparison with the opening of Kilmainham Jail in 1966, the space granted to 1916 at the NMI appeared very limited. Since the 1941 commemorative exhibition had been dismantled from the central hall, the 1916 collections were moved to the 1916 room – a small adjacent room – and were not re-arranged until 1966. The NMI's focus on antiquities contrasted with the brand new site of the Kilmainham Jail entirely devoted to the 1916 Easter Rising. Hence, while the NMI's historical collections had been inspired by Republican agents of memorialization like the 1916 Club in 1932 or the

---

[506] Cuimhneachan, 1916-1966. *A Record of Ireland's Commemoration of the 1916 Rising*, Dublin, 1966, p. 29.
[507] Pat Cooke, "Kilmainham Gaol : Interpreting Irish Nationalism and Republicanism", *Open Museum Journal*, electronic journal, vol. 2, 2000. This was confirmed by the work of Eric Zuelow on the Restoration Society. Zuelow "Enshrining Ireland", p. 193.
[508] McGuire and Quinn, eds., *Dictionary of Irish Biography,* vol. 3, p. 398.
[509] Cooke, "Kilmainham Gaol"
[510] The President of Ireland is the head of the State. The powers of the President are mostly ceremonial. Eamon de Valera was President from 1959 to 1973.
[511] 'Kilmainham - Opening of Memorial Museum', RTE Library and Archives, www.rte.ie/laweb/ll/ll_t06_schedule_a.html, (last visited March 2012).
[512] Lahr Joye, note, 1 June 2004, A1/04/063, NMIA.

Anti-Partition Association in 1948 for the commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion, it appeared much more disconnected in 1966. In addition to this shift, the NMI suffered from a lack of official support from the Irish government.

2) The NMI's Incapacity to Attract Official Support

By 1958, there had been a growing awareness of the important role that tourism could play in stimulating the lagging economy, especially following the publication of the *Programme for Economic Expansion*.[513] The number of international tourists coming to the Republic of Ireland increased significantly, growing from 941.000 to 1.944.000 from 1960 to 1985.[514] International tourism raises the important issue of the Irish Diaspora. Little has been devoted so far in this research to the Irish Diaspora, either as actors or as subjects of representations. Issued from emigration – in particular during the aftermath of the Great Famine – there is a significant Irish Diaspora in Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa.[515] The history of Ireland is composed of a large network between the island and its Diaspora. The political links between the Irish government and the Irish Diaspora in North America were especially well established during the 1920s and 1930s. Mary Daly notices that W.T. Cosgrave, who was President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State from 1922-32, broadcast a St. Patrick's Day message to the United States in March 1926, several years before King George V began his annual Christmas broadcasts to the British Empire.[516] However, by the late 1930s Britain also had become the dominant destination for Irish emigrants, and by 1950 there were more people of Irish descent living in Britain than in the United States.[517]

In the new Irish economic policy in the late 1950s and 1960s, Britain became a major partner. A crucial point was that the overwhelming majority of tourists in Ireland were from

---

[513] The Programme supported a move away from protectionist policies established in the 1930s to attract foreign investments.

[514] Bill Carter and A. J Parker, *Ireland: a Contemporary Geographical Perspective* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 303.

[515] The Great Famine (1845-1851) was one of the most traumatic events in Irish history. Mostly due to the potato blight (potato disease), around 1.5 million people died on a population of 8 million, and 1 million emigrated, mostly to the United States and Canada, the most favoured destinations amongst emigrants. P. L. Killbride and N. J. Farley "The Irish Diaspora", in Melvin Ember, Carol Ember, Ian Skoggard, eds., *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*, (New York: Springer, 2005), vol. 1, p. 125.

[516] Mary Daly, "Nationalism, Sentiment, and Economics: Relations between Ireland and Irish America in the Postwar Years", *Eire-Ireland*, 37:1/2, 2002, pp. 74-91.

[517] Between 1951 and 1961 over 400,000 men and women are believed to have emigrated from Ireland, but only 62.400 went to the United States. Daly, "Nationalism, Sentiment", pp. 74-91.

mainland Britain.[518] In 1960, 827.000 out of the 941.000 tourists came from Britain while there were only 69.000 tourists from North America.[519] Given this dependence on tourism stemming across the Irish Sea, Zuelow (2004) argues that it is hardly surprising that Irish tourist promoters have not gone out of their way to emphasize the history of hostile Anglo-Irish relations.[520] Indeed, as early as 1925 the Irish Tourist Association spoke of "new and stronger ties of friendship" between Ireland and England, already drove the recent conflict out of sight. Zuelow clearly demonstrated how "activities or projects that would dredge up memories of past Anglo-Irish hostility or contemporary political problems were avoided by the semi-state tourism organizers".[521] For instance, *Bord Fáilte* – the Irish Tourist Board created in 1955 – maintained this distance by shirking mentioning Kilmainham Jail or any related revolutionary sites or events in the pages of its tourist magazine until the 1980s.[522]

Zuelow's argument could be challenged for two reasons. First, part of the figures about British tourism in Ireland dealt with Irish migrants returning home for holidays. Second, although less numerous, the Northern American Diaspora received increasing attention from Irish authorities. The rise and amelioration of transatlantic air flights in the 1950s and 1960s contributed to new interest directed at international tourism. Daly points out that Pan American Airlines submitted in 1951 proposals to Seán Lemass, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, who was responsible for tourism and transport, aimed at the possible organisation a festival devoted to Irish tourism from the United States.[523] The festival was known as *An Tóstal* and opened in 1953. Importantly, as part of the opening ceremonies, de Valera laid a wreath at the 1916 memorial at Arbour Hill (where 14 of the 1916 leaders executed by the British troops had been buried), before attending a memorial mass for the Old IRA. The North American Diaspora was eager to revisit sites of Republican conflict, as an important part of their cultural heritage. Thus, when he visited Ireland in 1963, even John F. Kennedy went to Arbour Hill, laying down a wreath at the Memorial Park. Although nuanced considering tourism activity, it remains true that the Irish government also aimed to ameliorate economic activity with Britain, as it was doing with the United States and Canada.

The *Taoiseach* worked at better economic links with Britain. Harold Wilson, British Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party, accepted the opening of trade negotiations,

---

[518] British were Ireland's single largest tourism market, valued at some £24.3 million annually in 1962. Quoted in Zuelow, 'Enshrining Ireland'p. 198.
[519] Carter and Parker, *Ireland,* p. 303.
[520] Zuelow, 'Enshrining Ireland', p. 182.
[521] Zuelow, 'Enshrining Ireland', p. 183.
[522] Zuelow, 'Enshrining Ireland', p. 201.
[523] Daly, "Nationalism, Sentiment", pp. 74-91.

which culminated in the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement in January 1966, considerably improving relations between the two countries. The improved relations were most apparent with Northern Ireland. As said above, Lemass and O'Neill met in January 1965 to discuss practical cooperation, notably about tourism. In July 1963, Lemass had recognized that the Northern state existed through the free will of the majority of its people.[524] It was in this context of improvement, that the Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Rising was organized.

An official commemoration committee was set up and presided directly by Sean Lemass and a commemoration programme was established as early as November 1964.[525] After the destruction of the Nelson's pillar by Republicans in March 1966, the Irish government banned the playing of 1916 rebel songs on sponsored radio programmes.[526] In contrast with the Republican celebration of the insurrection, Lemass intended to use the commemorations as evidence of Ireland's modernization instead. Diarmaid Ferriter asserts in his social history of Ireland that:

> individuals like Lemass had different conceptions of how the commemoration should be used from traditionalists like de Valera and Frank Aiken. Lemass tended to focus on the idea of providing another opportunity to emphasize a new era of national development, rather than simply the traditional reiteration of Pearse's rhetoric.[527]

In February 1966, Lemass presented the commemoration as an opportunity to "further enhance the status of our nation in the eyes of the world, emphasizing both our pride in the past and confidence in our future".[528] Lemass preferred to highlight Ireland's economic development and less the use of physical force in Anglo-Irish relations.

The improved relations between Irish and British governments also materialized through the return of objects and remains from the Irish struggle for independence.[529] To some extent, the NMI took advantage of this new political and economic context that had emerged between Dublin and London as well. In 1965, Anthony Lucas, director of the NMI, wrote to his counterpart at the Imperial War Museum in London, seeking to borrow on a long-

---

[524] Lee, *Ireland*, p. 367.
[525] Daly and O'Callaghan, *1916 in 1966,* p. 22.
[526] Mary Daly "Less a Commemoration of the Actual Achievements and more a Commemoration of the Hopes of the Men of 1916", in Daly and O'Callaghan, *1916 in 1966,* p. 22, p. 73.
[527] Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, (Dublin: Overlook Press, 2007), p. 564.
[528] *The Irish Indepedent*, 12 February 1966.
[529] For instance, Harold Wilson accepted the return of the remains of Sir Roger Casement – who played a major role in 1916 – to the Republic of Ireland in February 1965. Roger Casement was a British diplomat who joined the Irish patriots, notably by being the connexion with Germany. Captured and sentenced to death in 1916 he was buried in 1916 in the prison cemetery where he had also been hunged (Pentonville prison, near London). His body was repatriated for State funeral, with full military honours in Glasnevin cemetery.

term basis a number of items relating to the 1916 Rising, including a flag flown by the rebels over the General Post Office (headquarters of the rebels in Easter 1916).[530] The Imperial War Museum initially rejected the request. Nonetheless, interventions from the office of the *Taoiseach* secured the full transfer of the flag to the NMI.[531] Lemass wrote personally to Harold Wilson, who subsequently arranged for the return of the flag to Ireland with authorities at the Imperial War Museum.[532] The flag was, henceforth, and as a result of economic relations, included in the NMI permanent 1916 collections. In the new 1966 permanent collection, the NMI did not provide any special design for the object.[533] Conversely, the booklet produced by the government stressed that it was the "Centrepiece of the exhibition".[534] The government made clear the Flag was returned by the British government. At the opening of the exhibition, the Minister of Education, Patrick Hillery highlighted once again that the flag was "restored to Ireland by the generosity of the British government".[535] Its presence was represented by the Irish government as a symbol of the improved political relations between the two governments.[536] Although limited to just one particular instance, the different relevance given to the flag and, through it, to Anglo-Irish relations mirrored the different priorities the NMI and the Irish government were each highlighting. The fact that the Irish government focused on future economic development, representations of Irish dynamism and good relations with Britain resulted in a certain isolation of the NMI with official policy.

The 1966 exhibition mounted by the NMI to match the Golden Jubilee was – much more than the 1941 display – a minor event in the overall commemoration of 1916. The commemoration committee of the government chaired by Lemass did not mention the project to the NMI before May 1965.[537] Even then, the archives of the committee only mention the

---

[530]Letter from Dr. A.T. Lucas, Director of the National Museum to Dr. A.N. Frankland, Director Imperial War Museum, 12 November 1965, A1/094/005, NMIA, Dublin. Quoted in Ryan 'Exhibiting the Irish Revolution', note 99.

[531] In February 1966, the Irish ambassador in London – G. Molloy – informed the Minister for External Affairs (Frank Aiken) – that "the Imperial Museum was approached some time before by the National Museum in Dublin with a request that the collection (including the flag) presented in 1937 to the Imperial War Museum be returned in time for the forthcoming 1916 commemoration ceremonies". Letter from G. Molloy to Frank Aiken, 14 February 1966, 97/6/532, NAI, Dublin. In February, G. Molloy – Irish ambassador in Britain – informed the Irish government that the Commonwealth Relations Office, with whom he had been in contact, handled the issue with the Imperial War Museum. Letter from G. Molloy, 14 February 1966, *ibid*.

[532] 'Taoiseach wrote to Wilson for its return', *The Irish Times*, 1 April 1966.

[533] The Flag was part of the case 9, on the side wall of the room. Oliver Snoddy, *Guide to the Historical Exhibition Commemorative of the Rising of 1916*, (Dublin: National Museum, 1966).

[534] Cuimhneachan, 1916-1966. *A Record of Ireland's Commemoration*, p. 48.

[535] *The Irish Times*, 13 April 1966, p. 11.

[536] Similarly, the flag and the good relations between Dublin and London were put forward in the commemoration booklet published by the government in 1966, Cuimhneachan, 1916-1966, *A Record of Ireland*.

[537] 2000/14/69, NAI, Dublin.

fact that the Department of Education was "in touch with the National Library and the National Museum".[538] This did not mean the Irish government had no cultural project regarding the Golden Jubilee, but simply that the NMI was not among the major sites of commemoration. In addition to the traditional parades during Easter week, the government oversaw the opening of the Garden of Remembrance. Located in Parnell Square, Dublin, the garden was dedicated to all those who perished in the cause of Irish freedom – organized a commemoration concert, an exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland, a historical pageant and a television programme.[539] Much more than would have been at the NMI, the attention of the government was focused on displaying art galleries.

More than the NMI, the art exhibitions designed at the National Gallery of Ireland and Municipal Gallery matched Lemass' plans for the commemorations.[540] Lemass' personal taste played a relevant role. Brian Kennedy stressed that Arts held a very important place in Lemass' conception of the future of Irish society.[541] The *Taoiseach* considered arts as a pillar for the development of leisure in Ireland, the expression and development of which is often a sign of an improved economic standing of a country or city.[542] What is more, the exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland was equipped with new technology. The exhibition used – and this novel in the Republic of Ireland – audio-guides and the Gallery made it a key element of its advertisement.[543] Likewise, the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art opened its commemorative exhibition on 12 April. Its booklet highlighted that "Most of the exhibitors (…) had no personal recollection of the Rising".[544] The display was voluntarily expressing "modern" views on 1916. As the booklet continued, "it would have been feasible, but not particularly original or imaginative, to have depicted the events of 1916 in a conventional style reminiscent of the nineteenth-century painters but it was evident that the exhibitors were modern in outlook and style even when treating of an historical subject".[545] It was clear that Lemass, along with the gallery, was aiming to give Irish identity a fresh coat. Opened by the *Taoiseach*, the exhibition displayed "the art competitions sponsored by the Commemoration

---

[538] 2000/14/69, NAI, Dublin.

[539] For a description of each project, see the booklet published by the Department of External Affairs. Cuimhneachan, 1916-1966. *A record of Ireland.*

[540] Opened in early April, the exhibition provided through busts and paintings an interpretation of Irish history. It put on views "scenes from battles or military engagements which took place in the course of Ireland's struggle for freedom from the period of the Norman invasion". Cuimhneachan, 1916-1966, *A Record of Ireland*, p. 52.

[541] Brian Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities, the State and the Arts in Independent Ireland*, (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1990), p. 133.

[542] Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p. 1

[543] *The Irish Times*, 27 July 1966, p. 6.

[544] *Ibid*.

[545] *Ibid*.

Committee".[546] Contemporary arts contributed to making the gallery more "modern", a relevant aspect of Lemass' policies. This overall new interest in visual culture was expressed in 1967 when one of the most important Irish exhibitions of contemporary art was mounted in Dublin. *Rosc '67* displayed the works of fifty of the most important international artists.[547] This modernity contrasted with the NMI which had displayed more or less the same artefacts since the 1930s and where the use of audio-visual technology was totally absent. Unlike other sites like Kilmainham Jail, the National Gallery of Ireland or the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, the 1916 collection – and the NMI at large as we will see below – was seen as old-fashioned.

The gap between the NMI and new technology could also be seen through the development of television programmes. Although the NMI had been one of the main medium for commemoration of 1916 in 1941, the context was significantly different in 1966. In addition to art galleries, the NMI was confronted with the rise of television. Since 1961, RTE (*Radio Teilifís Eireann*) had been broadcasting in the Republic of Ireland.[548] According to Mary Daly, for many Irish people, "the 1916 jubilee was commemorated not by parades or pageants, but on television".[549] Many programmes were indeed devoted to 1916.[550] For instance, the RTV guide produced for 1966 Easter Week – a special commemorative edition of the TV guide – sold over 250.000 copies.[551] This was more than the overall visitors for the NMI for the year 1965-1966 (173.864).[552] One particular broadcast, entitled *Insurrection,* received a great deal of attention in the governmental commemoration booklet.[553] Produced by Hugh Leonard, *Insurrection* was broadcast on R.T.E each night during Easter Week 1966 and attempted to give life to the Rising.[554] *Insurrection* was described in the government

---

[546] *Ibid*.
[547] Slaby, *L'Etat et la culture en Irlande*, pp. 131-133. The two first chairs of Art history opened at Trinity College and University College Dublin as well.
[548] The 1966 Irish TAM survey of that year estimated that 55% of homes in the state had a television (77% in urban areas and 37% in rural areas), Daly and O'Callaghan, *1916 in 1966,* p. 161.
[549] Daly and O'Callaghan, *1916 in 1966*, 2007, p. 21.
[550] RTÉ's commemoration of the golden jubilee year began with a series of 19 Thomas Davis lectures entitled *Leaders and Men of the 1916 Rising* on Radio Éireann. The series ran until May and featured some of the most respected historians of the time with F.X. Martin serving as consulting editor. James Plunkett, Charles Scott and Aindrias Ó Gallchóbhair had been conducting interviews with survivors of the 1912 – 1922 period. More than seventy veterans gave interviews to RTÉ either in their homes or in studio. *RTV Guide* (Dublin, 1966), 8 April 1966.
[551] RTE Library and archives, www.rte.ie/laweb/ll/ll_t06_main.html (last visited July 2011).
[552] Institute of Professional Civil Servants, *Fóntas Músaem d'Éireann – Museum Service for Ireland*, Dublin, 1973, p. 32. I thank Ragdhall O'Floinn for his help in finding this reference.
[553] Whereas three pictures accompanied the section about the Museum, seven were devoted to Insurrection.
[554] Already in 1959, George Morrison, an Irish director, assembled historical footage of the events surrounding the Easter Rising in *Mise Eire*. It was released at the 1959 Cork Film Festival. It surveyed Irish political changes from the 1890s to 1918.

leaflet as telling "the day-by-day story of the Rising"; it added that "over four hundred troops … reenacted the event on the sites of the 1916 clashes".[555] The RTV guide defined the broadcast as "a dramatic reconstruction of the events of Easter Week as it might have been seen by an Irish television service at the time".[556] The comparison between the NMI's exhibition and the TV programmes is certainly distorted since the two media functioned differently, but it was nonetheless true that the government preferred to support programmes and sites of display which appeared more "modern" and perhaps had a farther reach, in this case, those which employed new technology. The official preferences derived from a re-assessment of Ireland's development in the 1960s, more orientated towards the future development than the conservation of the past. Much more than the roots of the state – which was the focus of the official cultural policy in the 1930s and 1940s – the government aimed at stressing the potential of the Irish nation. In contrast with the commemorative events quoted above, the NMI's exhibition was more defined by continuity than by change.

3) From the Celebration of Irish Heroes to the Story of Irish Nationalism: 1966's New Permanent Exhibition at the National Museum of Ireland

For the Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Easter Rising, the NMI re-arranged its historical collections which had been on display since 1941 (Appendix 9-C). However, unlike the 1941 display, the 1966 exhibition was not designed in the central hall of the museum but in an adjacent room. Moreover, the display arranged for the Golden Jubilee remained mostly unaltered until its re-arrangement in 1991 for the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising. Although the lack of space for display could be invoked as a reason, the absence of change also came from the still marginal attention given to modern history. Anthony T. Lucas – director of the NMI from 1954 to 1976 – was much more interested in folklore and archaeology, especially for the early Christian period.[557] In 1968, he published a short booklet about the National Museum in which he stressed that the institution was first and foremost a site for preserving artefacts.[558] Exhibitions were secondary. Hence, Oliver Snoddy, in charge of the 1966 commemorative exhibition, explained in an interview that the director had little

---

[555] Cuimhneachan, 1916-1966, A *Record of Ireland*, p. 74.

[556] *RTV Guide* (Dublin, 1966), 8 April 1966, p. 6.

[557] He published several works, among them, Anthony T. Lucas, 'The West Cross, Monasterboice: a Note and a Suggestion' *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, 12, 3, 1951, pp. 123-125; Anthony T. Lucas, "Souterrains: The Literary Evidence" *Bealoideas* 39-41, 1971-1973, pp. 165-191; Anthony T. Lucas, *Treasures of Ireland. Irish Pagan and Early Christian Art*, Dublin, 1973.

[558] Anthony T. Lucas, *The National Museum: Its Place in the Cultural Life of the Nation*, (Dublin: *An Roinn Oideachais*, 1968).

interest in the Rising.[559] That was true that Lucas did not regard 1916 and modern history as particularly relevant for the museum. In the 1968 booklet, Lucas dealt with the various collections of the museum but did not mention the 1916 collection. Historical collections at large were absent from Lucas' depiction.[560] This partly explained why the 1916 collections underwent no major change in the 1960s and 1970s.

In many aspects, the exhibition reproduced the traditional history of Irish nationalism and was composed of the same artefacts (Appendix 9-C). Similar to the 1932 and 1941 temporary exhibitions, the 1966 NMI display focused mostly on the 1916 Rising. Apart from a few mentions of the context of the First World War, the participation of Irish soldiers in the British Army was still largely ignored. Similarly to previous displays, personalia received major attention. Oliver Snoddy, in charge of the exhibition, advocated a personality-focused display in the planning stages, suggesting that the large cases at the front of the exhibition be filled with "personalia" such as the barrister's wig and gown of Patrick Pearse.[561] In the final design, nearly half of the exhibition cases were given over to individual leaders.[562] This emphasis on individual contributions resulted in a sentimental presentation of the Rising, reflected in Minister Hillery's speech at the opening of the exhibition when he commented on "the immediate poignancy of the personal relics of the men and women who have become part of Irish history".[563] In spite of this continuity, the exhibition expressed a certain degree of change in the way Anglo-Irish conflicts were represented.

The close analysis of the display reveals a more limited celebration of the past. First of all, as mentioned above, unlike in 1941, the 1966 exhibition was not arranged in the central hall of the museum but in the adjacent room it had occupied since its transfer in 1941. The overall vision of the collection was therefore much less impressive than it was in the previous commemorative exhibition when the centre of the room was occupied by a pillar on which Pearse's bust was placed. Moreover, Anthony Lucas, director of the NMI, wrote to Snoddy in 1966 that "Equal emphasis must be scrupulously given to all the major personalities involved".[564] This equal emphasis challenged the heroic representations of particular leaders. According to the layout of the 1966 display, Pearse had no central position.[565] The 1916

---

[559] Bhreathneach-Lynch, "Revisionism, the Rising, and Representation", p. 95
[560] Lucas, *The National Museum*.
[561] Letter from Oliver Snoddy, Assistant Keeper Arts and Industrial Division to Keeper, Art and Industrial Division, 3 December 1965, A1/65/0006, NMIA.
[562] There were twenty-four cases used in the exhibition and cases 15-24 were devoted to personalities such as Sean MacBride, Con Colbert, James Connolly and Roger Casement. Snoddy, *Guide to the Historical Exhibition*.
[563] Exhibition tells story of the Rising', *The Irish Times*, 13 April 1966.
[564] Letter from Lucas to Snoddy, 3 May 1966, A1/74/005, NMIA.
[565] Snoddy, *Guide to the Historical Exhibition*.

leader benefited, as others, from a case window which was the last one on the wall devoted to leaders.

In comparison with the 1941 display, a statue of Tom Clarke was added.[566] Tom Clarke was one major character of the 1916 Easter Rising, one of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Republic and was executed – like Pearse – on 3 May 1916.[567] Although impressive in its size – roughly 2.5 meter high – the statue did not produce the same heroization as Pearse's bust in 1941.[568] In her study of the Irish Public Sculptures, Judith Hill wrote about that, in this statue, Clarke was "presented as an old man, exhausted but still a committed man, his clothes hanging loosely, but his pointing arm firm".[569] According to Hill, Clarke's physical condition came not merely from "a concern to produce a realistic account » but was also "understood to be a result of British mistreatment".[570] Portrayed as a young man turned into a classical hero – with the laurel wreaths of the winner – the 1941 Patrick Pearse's bust contrasted with the old Tom Clarke depicted with ordinary clothes more representative of nineteenth century Republicans than a classical hero. In spite of the presence many memorabilia and Clarke's statue, the overall exhibition was rather marked by a shift from heroic representations to the history of nationalism.

The previous relevance given to heroic representations of the 1916 leaders was challenged by a new focus on the narration of the past. Certainly, Antony Lucas, the director, had no particular interest in 1916, but his way of managing the museum did face certain repercussions. He suggested to Snoddy that the guide should "form a potted history of the events of the week which could be read as a whole, intelligible in itself, independent of the matter set out in relation to the individual cases". The director insisted that enough

---

[566] The statue was the plaster copy of a bronze statue designed by Albert Power in 1940 and sculptured by his son – James – in Limerick in 1956. John Turpin "Oliver Sheppard, Albert Power and State Sculptural Commissions" *Dublin Historical Society*, vol 55, spring 2002, p. 45. On Albert Power and Thomas Clarke's statue, see also Sighle Breathnach-Lynch, "'Executed': The Political Sculpture of Albert G. Power", *Eire-Ireland,* 29, 1, Spring 1994, pp. 44-60. In Limerick, standing against the side of the plinth, the statue pointed at the 1916 Proclamation – of which Clarke was a signatory – decorated with laurel wreaths, a flaming torch and a snake (supposedly meaning the victory over foreign ruler). Judy Hill, *Irish Public Sculpture: a History*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), p. 175.

[567] Born in 1858, Thomas (or Tom) Clarke had been, since the 1870s, a member of the Irish Republic Brotherhood and linked to the Fenian movement in the United States. Tom Clarke emigrated in the United States in 1880 after his involvement in riots with the police in Dungannon. He became member of the *Clan na Gael* – sister organization of the Irish Republican Brotherhood – through which he participated in the bombing campaign in England. Arrested and tried in England in 1883, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Released in 1898 after fifteen years of imprisonment, Clark headed back to the United States, and only came back to Ireland in 1908 and became a major figure of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

[568] *Ireland*, documentary film, Vincent Corporation Production, Dublin 1967, minutes (18-20), AA 424, Irish Film Archives, Dublin. The film dealt with major touristic sites in Ireland contained footages about the NMI.

[569] Hill, *Irish Public Sculpture,* p. 175.. Indeed, having been sentenced to imprisonment in the 1880s, Tom Clarke's health was undermined and this was something Albert Power intended to represent.

[570] Hill, *Irish Public Sculpture,* p. 175.

information should be given to "piece the story together".[571] An article reviewing the display in *The Irish Times* was accordingly entitled "Exhibition tells the story of the Rising".[572] In line with the work of Hayes-McCoy in the 1940s and 1950s, this interest in telling the story of the past was associated with the challenge of sentimentalism. Anthony Lucas informed Oliver Snoddy, who was in charge of the guide of the 1916 collections, that "there should be no trace of 'emotion' in thought".[573] He recommended that "everything must 'from first to last' be treated utterly coldly and objectively, as if one were dealing with geological facts".[574]

Lucas was a specialist of folklore and archaeology, especially for the early Christian period. This may explain his association between history and geology. But the emphasis on facts revealed also a wider reconsideration of artefacts. Unlike the descriptions of the 1930s and 1940s exhibitions, artefacts were not, in 1966, defined as "relics". More than the sanctity of artefacts, attention was paid to the narratives and understanding of the past. For instance, the 1966 commemorative exhibition was composed of significantly fewer items than the 1941 display. This was a consequence of the more strict selection of the objects, supported by the director.[575] According to Snoddy, the director had instructed him to drastically reduce the amount of material on show and to produce a catalogue in which a strictly factual account of the event was conveyed.[576] The wish to challenge the celebration of the past was motivated by a focus on educational policy which brought the publication of a guide of 1916 collections.[577] The 1966 guide served for the display and included a map of the various sections, and an explanatory text for each case.[578] Although the text panels were only introduced in 1991 rearranging (for the rearrangement of the gallery), the 1966 organization of the display was a step forward in providing texts as a pedagogical approach to the collections. Indeed, the changing representations of 1916 within the NMI were very similar to what took place in history teaching.

Compared with previous decades, the 1960s witnessed a dramatic change in politics of education. Similar to the NMI's approach, history teachings drew much more attention to

---

[571] Letter from Lucas to Snoddy, 31 May 1966, A1/74/005, NMIA.

[572] *The Irish Times*, 13 April 1966, p. 11.

[573] Born in 1911, leading ethnologist, and folk studies, President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, A.T Lucas was director of the NMI from 1954 to 1976. Letter from Lucas to Snoddy, 3 May 1966, A1/74/005, NMIA.

[574] Letter from Lucas to Snoddy, 3 May 1966, A1/74/005, NMIA.

[575] Booklet published by the director about the role of the museum in 1968. Lucas, *The National Museum*.

[576] See, the interview of Snoddy in Bhreathneach-Lynch, 'Revisionism, the Rising, and Representation', p. 95

[577] It was only the second time a guide to the collections was produced, and the first time it was devoted to the historical collections. The first guide to the collections was published in 1932.

[578] Although the guide did not seem to be ready for the opening of the exhibition. Indeed, the Director sent a correcting draft to Snoddy in May 1966, one month after the opening, A1/74/005, NMIA.

facts while importance was taken away from a focus on Irish heroes in history textbooks. In 1963, the Irish government published *Facts about Ireland* that would be edited eight times by 2001.[579] This was due to an overall reconsideration for the use of education. The publication in 1958 of the government White Paper on Economic Expansion led to the first economic programme and changed attitudes to economic and industrial development. The aim of the programme was to prepare Irish industry, commerce and agriculture to meet the economic demands of the European Community. As John Coolahan contended, "economists were now emphasizing education as an economic investment" with necessary "returns on investment".[580] From the 1960s to the 1980s, a range of investigative bodies examined and reported on many facets of the educational system.[581] In 1965, a History Syllabus Committee was set up to review the secondary school history syllabus which had been used since 1941. Instead of political and military history, emphasis was put in the new 1971 history curriculum for primary schools and this focused primarily on social, cultural and economic history.[582]

In the 1973 history textbook entitled *The Educational Company's History of Ireland*, it was regretted that "in the past, the writing of Irish history for school was (…) obsessed with the Anglo-Irish struggle".[583] In his study of Anglo-Irish relations in Irish textbooks, Brian Mulcahy argues that there was a move away from the glorification of violence to constitutional leaders like Parnell.[584] Likewise, James Bennett observes that 1972 Hugh O'Neill's *New Course in Primary History* promoted much less celebrated images of Patrick Sarsfield, Irish leader during the Siege of Limerick by William of Orange in 1690.[585] To some extent, the National Museum of Ireland was part of a broader re-appraisal of the celebration of the Irish past in official narratives. Although the NMI was not the major site of governmental support in 1966, the representations of 1916 were influenced by the need to move from a glorified memory of the Rising to more factual narratives of the past.

In this overall reinterpretation of the glorification of the past, one reason for the NMI's move from heroic representations to the education through Irish story was new consideration

---

[579] It was re-edited in 1965, 1969, 1972, 1978, 1981, 1985, 1995 and 2001.

[580] John Coolahan, *The ASTI and Post-Primary Education in Ireland, 1909-1984*, (Dublin: Cumann na Meanmhuinteoiri, 1984).

[581] For instance, the Investment in Education team, the Commission on Higher Education, the Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools. See John, Coolahan, *Irish Education: its History and Structure*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2002), p. 131.

[582] Deptartment of Education, *Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools 1970-1971*, (Dublin: 1971), p. 12.

[583] Quoted in Fischer, *L'histoire à l'école en Irlande*, p. 352.

[584] Mulcahy, Brian J. "A Study of the Relationship between Ireland and England as Portrayed in Irish Post-Primary School History Text Books, Published Since 1922, and Dealing with the Period 1800 to the Present." Ph. D. dissertation, University of Hull, 1988. Quoted in Fischer, *L'histoire à l'école en Irlande*, p. 465.

[585] J. Bennett, 'History Textbooks in Primary Schools in the Republic of Ireland, 1971-1993' *Oideas* 42, summer 1994, pp. 26-38.

for its public. The need to tell the story of 1916 was legitimate, according to Lucas, because many visitors now knew little about the events. He required Snoddy to be particularly careful to "provide a background intelligible to the person who knows little or nothing about the time and the event".[586] The Rising had occurred fifty years before and, much more than for the 1941 display, a significant number of visitors in 1966 had not experienced the Rising and needed more information. The disappearance – partial in the 1960s – of the witnesses of the Easter Rising questioned the distinction between individual memory and history, and consequently the use of historical knowledge to explain the past. Lucas wanted to provide a history of the Rising since the direct memory was fading away. The need felt by the NMI, and particularly its director, to include artefacts and protagonists in a story of 1916 indicated that the simple displays of artefacts were no longer sufficient, and that visitors needed some re-contextualization.

The need to provide a story for those who knew "little or nothing about the time and event" also resulted from a new category of visitors. The director argued about the 1916 collections that "visitors from abroad will of course know little or nothing about the social and political background of the time".[587] By 1962 tourism revenue had indeed reached nearly forty-seven million pounds and was climbing rapidly every year.[588] No figure is available regarding the foreign visitors to the NMI in the 1960s but the 1972 Museum's report foresaw that "in the expanded geographical context of Europe, our cultural institution will be invested with a new and heightened relevance".[589] This echoed the particular political context of the early 1970s, when the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom entered the European Economic Community.[590] Although it was only in its infancy, consideration for an audience not assumed to be homogenous but as plural "audiences" or "voices" started to play a role in exhibiting policy.[591]

Thus, the NMI was still, in the 1960s, clearly promoting a nationalist history of Ireland which ignored the historical links with Britain (be it through Unionism or through the participation of Irish soldiers in the First World War). The NMI and the UM were promoting opposite versions of the past in the 1960s. In spite of this continuity, the framework in which the NMI represented Anglo-Irish conflicts had shifted and no longer celebrated Irish heroes as

---

[586] Letter from Lucas to Snoddy, 31 May 1966, A1/74/005, NMIA.
[587] Letter from Lucas to Snoddy, 31 May 1966, A1/74/005, NMIA.
[588] Eric Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish. Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009), p. 74.
[589] Board of Visitor, *Annual Report*, 1971-1972, Dublin, p. 4.
[590] Both entered the E.E.C in January 1973.
[591] Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, (London, Routledge, 2000), p. 143.

it did in 1941. Following the work of Hayes-McCoy in challenging sentimentalism, Anthony Lucas attempted to produce more factual narratives of the past. It is relevant that the challenge of heroic sentimentalism was no longer due to the influence of historiographical trends, as occurred with the professionalization of Irish historians in the 1930s, but rather due to the overall management of the institution. The re-appraisal of mythical representation of Pearse and other Republican leaders came from a need to adapt the museum to its new and diverse public of Irish and foreigners. This need would become stronger with the rise of international tourism in the 1990s.

4) The National Museum, the Northern Irish Conflict, and the Revision of the Past

In comparison with the temporary and permanent exhibitions arranged by the UM between 1962 and 1978, the display proposed by the NMI offered much fewer novelties. At large, the museum was still dominated by archaeology and the collections of Antiquities. The new field in which the National Museum launched itself in the 1960s and early 1970s was the archaeology relating to Vikings. Previously and despite the relevance Vikings had had in Ireland, notably founding Dublin in the 10th century, the topic had failed to gain much attention.[592] The first excavation started in Dublin in 1961 and was led by Marcus O'hEochaidhe (government department of the Office of Public Works) at Dublin castle. In 1962, the National Museum of Ireland began its campaign of excavation with Brendan O' Riordain and Patrick Wallace – two future directors of the NMI – at High Street.[593] From 1962 to 1981, the NMI was at the core of the excavation works.[594] In the middle of the 1970s, Wallace was very involved in the controversy over Wood Quay, site of Viking excavation where the Dublin City Council planned to construct its new headquarter. On 23 September 1978, twenty thousand people demonstrated against the project, starting from the National Museum. The only concession made was the possibility to carry out excavations.[595] For this

---

[592] Dublin was founded twice over by the Vikings: first as a longphort or permanent trading-cum-piratical base in the 840s, and secondly from about 917 as a defended town – or *dún*. Patrick Wallace, 'The Archeology of Ireland's Viking-Age Town', in Daibhi O' Croinin, ed., *A New History of Ireland: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 815. Until the 1960s, Vikings were considered as foreigners who settled in town, whereas archeology tended to focus on early Irish society, familial and rural.
[593] Breandan O' Riordain was director from 1979 to 1988 and Patrick Wallace was director from 1988 to February 2012.
[594] High Street, Winetavern Street, Christchurch Place, and Wood Quay.
[595] J. Bradley, *Viking Dublin Exposed: The Wood Quay Saga*, (Dublin: O'Brien Pr, 1984) ; Patrick Wallace, *Viking and Norman Dublin: The Wood Quay excavations*, (Dublin: 1985).

excavation, the museum established Wallace as the project leader.[596] The different remains of the Vikings began to be episodically displayed at the National Museum. The Celtic past began to make room for displays on the Viking contributions to Irish culture. This involvement of the museum demonstrated a re-appraisal of the insular and ethnic definitions of Irishness as hermetic to invasions, but also that the focus and interest of the museum still lay in archaeology. In contrast with the Antiquities collections, the modern historical collections benefitted from limited attention, and the NMI remained aside from the consequences of historiographical debates.

The politics of identity and the interpretations of Irish history in the Republic of Ireland underwent the consequences of the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland. The intervention of British troops in the North was received in the Republic by a rise of anti-British feelings. The British embassy was, for instance, burned on 2 February 1972, three days after Bloody Sunday. Violence in the North resulted in the increasing challenge in addressing the historical use of physical force in Irish history. Concretely, the Northern Irish conflict contributed to the move from ethnic to state nationalism and the academic revision of Irish history.

In 2001, Desmond O'Malley and Tom Garvin emphasize in their essay "Redefining southern nationalism" the development of more pluralist manifestation of Irish nationalism since the 1950s. John Regan goes further and pinpoints the specificity of southern nationalist ideology.[597] He argues that, in the 1970s, "the epicentre of the southern state's creation narrative slowly migrated between from 1916 to 1922", in other words, "the 1922 state increasingly, though never completely, replaced the revolutionary republic as the geographical medium for examining twentieth-century 'Ireland'."[598] The commemoration policy of the Irish government confirmed this analysis. The worsening of the situation in the North encouraged the Irish government to control even more strictly the commemorations of the past. The threat posed to the stability of the Southern state resulted, after the 1969 outbreak of violence in the North, in the suspension of the parades organized for the commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising. Instead of the 1916 Easter Rising, the Irish

---

[596] T.F. Hefferman, *Wood Quay: the Clash over Dublin's Viking Past*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), p. 42.
[597] John Regan "Southern Irish Nationalism as a Historical Problem" *The Historical Journal*, 50, 1 (2007), p. 200.
[598] Regan "Southern Irish Nationalism", pp. 216-217.

government intended to commemorate the end of the War of Independence and the Truce signed in 1921.[599]

The government set a Committee to organize the planning and carrying out of ceremonies in July 1970 for the commemoration of the 1921 Truce.[600] The event was the only example of commemoration related to Anglo-Irish conflicts until 1991 (the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising). The commemoration of the 1921 Truce mirrored a wish from the Irish government to move from the commemoration of conflicts to the commemorations of the formation of the State. Careful attention was paid by the government, and the Committee, to avoid division during the 1971 commemorations. The Committee wanted a booklet for the commemoration and added that it would be highly undesirable that it should contain any exaggerated statements about engagements.[601] The Committee stressed that, in response to the Republican emphasis on the role played by the I.R.A in the War of Independence (1919-1921), it was "necessary to balance this by indicating the political moves centred on mansion House – the correspondence with Lloyd George, meetings with Unionists and agreement for a truce".[602] In other words, more than the Republican army, the Committee insisted on highlighting peace and the political agreement.[603] The Committee considered the commemoration of the 1921 truce as "a counter to the divisiveness of the individual commemorations arising".[604] Limiting the divisiveness was more important than celebrating any individual or particular event.

In the context of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, it was also important not to undermine relations with Britain. Anglo-Irish and North-South relations were the subtitle given by the Secretary of the Department of the *Taoiseach* to his note about the truce commemoration.[605] He explained that the 1921 truce should be celebrated as "an event of great magnitude in the history of Anglo-Irish relations" and "the first positive beginning of understanding by Britain that the conquest of Ireland was neither possible nor necessary". At any case, he concluded, this should "do no damage to the government's present general policy

---

[599] Began in January 1919, the War of Independence followed the Irish Republic's declaration of independence. It opposed the Irish Republican Army to the British troops. Both sides agreed on a ceasefire – or truce – on 11 July 1921, followed by the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921.

[600] The committee was composed of a small number of persons involved in the War of independence together with representatives of four Government Departments. Letter of Jack Lynch (*Taoiseach*) to the Major Roger McCorley, 27 Bealtaine, 1971, *50th anniversary of 1921 Truce (1971)*, 2002/8/425, NAI.

[601] 19 April 1971, 2002/8/425, NAI.

[602] Anonymous note, 1970, 2002/8/425, NAI.

[603] A peace conference was held at Mansion House (Dublin) on 8 July 1921 where Eamon De Valera accepted an invitation to meet the British Prime Minister in London.

[604] Anonymous note, 1970, *50th anniversary of 1921 Truce (1971)*, 2002/8/425, NAI.

[605] Note from O'Sullivan, 22 January 1971, 2002/8/425, NAI.

of reconciliation".[606] The rise of sectarian violence in the North had therefore encouraged the Irish government to move from the 1916 commemorations – the parades were banned in 1971 – to the commemoration of historical "good relations" with Britain through the 1921 Truce. Likewise, John Regan notices that while the Irish government organized no commemoration for the 60th anniversary of the 1916 Rising in 1976, "cabinet papers relating to the foundation of the Free State were released" and "provided the primary sources necessary for institutional histories of state formation that centred around 1920–2."[607] In spite of this example, John Regan's argument on the move from the commemoration of 1916 to the creation of the State – and therefore the move away from the historical use of physical force – did not date from the 1970s. As it has been demonstrated above, the move was initiated in the 1960s through Lemass' re-appraisal of Anglo-Irish relations. The change was initiated in the 1960s and amplified by the escalation of violence in Northern Ireland.

Historical revisionism was driven by the wish to debunk myths of Irish history.[608] As explained in the previous chapter, it had its roots in the 1930s in the work of the new historians. However, for some decades, the works that issued from the professionalization of Irish history had a limited public impact. The emphasis of revisionist historians on empiricism and heavily archive-based accounts of the past was the legacy of the professionalization of Irish history undertaken in the 1930s.[609] The attacks of revisionist historians concentrated on the symbols of nationalist interpretations of the past like the 1916 Easter Rising. Already in 1948 Francis X. Martin had undertaken a historical survey which challenged the heroic interpretations of the leaders of 1916.[610] He did so in the *Irish Historical Studies*, the journal founded by Moody and Edwards in 1938 as the basis of the new professional Irish history. In 1963, Hayes-McCoy, former keeper of the NMI's historical collections, condemned the nationalist tendency of certain school textbooks and claimed that "Such are the books that, forty years after, still trumpet for the revolution, as though nothing happened in a century but the work of Tone, the Young Irelanders the Fenians and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and as though that century could go on forever".[611] This approach challenged the Republican

---

[606] Note from O'Sullivan, 22 January 1971, 2002/8/425, NAI.
[607] Regan, "Southern Irish Nationalism" p. 221.
[608] The term is somehow misleading since all historians are somehow revisionists by challenging previous accounts and interpretations. Brady, *Interpreting Irish History*; Boyce and O'Day, *The Making of Modern Irish History*.
[609] Stephen Howe argues that this came from the fact that the pioneer 'revisionists' did not attempt major works of synthesis or popularization, while Irish Historical Studies itself long excluded contributions on twentieth-century topics. Stephen Howe, "The Politics of Historical 'Revisionism': Comparing Ireland and Israel/Palestine", *Past & Present*, n. 168, 2000, pp. 232.
[610] Francis X. Martin, "Eoin MacNeill on the 1916 Rising", *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 11, 1948.
[611] Gerard Hayes-McCoy, "A Defect in Irish Education", *University Review*, vol. 3, n. 4, 1963, p. 20.

celebration of 1916 for the Golden Jubilee. In 1966, for the Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Easter Rising, historians were very much involved in radio and television programmes. A new television series called *The Course of Irish History* began in 1966 and was edited by Francis X. Martin and Theodore W. Moody.[612] As a member of the Radio Éireann Authority, Moody expressed his concern that "all aspects of the Rising should be taken into account, and it was agreed that in presenting the clash of idealism and emotions, the programmes should be as balanced as possible".[613] The challenge to the celebratory version of 1916 by these historians somehow matched the official reluctance to undermine the Anglo-Irish relations. Similarly to the official policy, historical revisionism grew stronger in response to the Northern Irish conflict.

Historical revisionism was largely stimulated by the conflict in Northern Ireland, although the most famous revisionist works appeared only in the 1980s with widely read overviews written by Joe Lee or Roy Foster.[614] As Michael Laffan notices "historians who examined the long-term significance of 1916 in Irish history were forced to view it in the context of the 1970s and 1980s".[615] Revisionist historians became increasingly critical regarding the results of Republican violence in Irish history. Revisionism became fundamental in the reappraisal of Anglo-Irish conflicting history. Although he was not a historian, Francis Shaw's article on 1916 expressed increasing challenges of the celebration of the 1916 Rising. Written in 1966 for the Golden Jubilee, the article was only published in 1972, after the death of the author.[616] Shaw openly criticized Patrick Pearse and the veneration of violent resistance; he claimed that this had done much to ensure the permanence of Partition.[617] The publication of Shaw's work in 1972 revealed how the interpretations of 1916 and political violence had shifted in just a few years. Revisionist historians interpreted the 1916 Easter Rising more as a short-sighted suicidal gesture on a part of a minority of Republicans rather than a heroic event.[618] Perhaps the most critical view of Patrick Pearse was published by Ruth Dudley in 1977.[619] Although not particular to Ireland, the spread of historical revisionism constituted a step in the sense that the Rising was not only seen as

---

[612] The series dealt with Irish history from pre – historic times up to the present and finished with a debate between the contributors involved.

[613] RTÉ Archives, 'Authority Minutes,' 30 July 1965, quoted in www.theirishstory.com/2010/11/18/a-tv-pageant-%E2%80%93-the-golden-jubilee-commemorations-of-the-1916-rising/#_edn11 (last visited July 2011).

[614] Lee, *Ireland* ; Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972*, London, Pinguins Book, 1988.

[615] Michael Laffan "Insular Attitudes: the Revisionists and their Critics", in Ní Donnchadha and Dorgan, *Revising the Rising,* p. 111.

[616] Shaw, "The Canon of Irish History".

[617] Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, p. 747.

[618] See Laffan "Insular Attitudes".

[619] Edwards, *Patrick Pearse*.

counterproductive but could also appear as being responsible for the social, economic and political failure in the North.[620]

While revisionist historians were critical regarding physical force and Republicanism, they appeared more willing to stress multiculturalism in Irish history. Stephen Howe, in his comparison of Irish and Israeli revisionism contends that "(Irish) 'Revisionism', in its more directly political aspects, has sought to question prior definitions of nationality, to liberalize it or substitute 'civic' for 'ethnic' conceptions, not to supplant it altogether ».[621] Revisionism describes indeed a historiography which sought to replace a monolithic Gaelic, Catholic and rural representation of Irish-Ireland with that of a culturally more diverse or plural society.[622] In the history of conflicts, one of the major consequences was the rediscovery of Irish participation in the First World War.[623] In the South, the Irish contribution to the First World War had largely been silenced by dominant Republican narratives in the 1930s. The history of the Irish soldiers in the 10th and 16th Irish division had become, according to Francis X. Martin, "the Great Oblivion".[624] Written in 1967, Martin's article dealt with the fact that, far from being honoured as returning heroes, the members of the 10th and 16th Irish Divisions were a distinct embarrassment for the Irish governments, and later for *Fianna Fail* which participated in the silencing of their history. The rise of historical revisionism has therefore been crucial in the interpretation of historical Anglo-Irish relations. It notably contributed to changing the definition of Irish cultural heritage.

Brian Graham demonstrates how historical revisionism influenced the definition of heritage in Ireland and enlarged the number of interest worthy sites. He notices how the rise of revisionism contributed to the rediscovery of an Anglo-Irish heritage in the Republic of Ireland.[625] This shifting definition of national heritage is fundamental for the study of the national museums. However, the links noticed by Graham between revisionism and the definitions of cultural heritage could not be extended to the National Museum of Ireland. The National Museum lacked conviction in the revision of Irish national history. Historical revisionism's arguments were in opposition with what the NMI had displayed since the

---

[620] This Irish historiographical trend was part of a broader current of reappraisal. Indeed, critical positions against nationalist history and use of violence in nation building process were not particular to Ireland. Anti-Vietnam War organizations, peace movements and counter-culture spread broadly in the 1970s.

[621] Howe, "The Politics of Historical 'Revisionism'", pp. 227-253.

[622] However, the notion that there was a school of historical revisionists trying to replace old nationalist orthodoxies with an alternative framework is overly simplistic. The unity of historical revisionism was mainly claimed by its challenger.

[623] For a complete study of the remembrance of the Great War in Ireland, see Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*.

[624] Francis X. Martin, "1916 – Myth, Fact and Mystery", *Studia Hibernica*, n°7, p. 68.

[625] Brian Graham "Heritage Conservation and Revisionist Nationalism in Ireland" in Ashworth and Larkham, *Building a new Heritage*.

1930s. In spite of Hayes-McCoy's position as keeper of the historical collections, the permanent exhibitions had been tainted with a nationalistic sentimentalism which was hard to shake. Structurally, the critical revision of national history supported by revisionist historians was also problematic in a public space such as the National Museum of Ireland which had proposed heroic representations of the past. A critical analysis of narratives and representations in museums would merely appear with the new museology in the late 1980s.[626] Notwithstanding the fact that national museums have certainly never been places where critical analysis of national history could easily be undertaken, there are specific reasons that explain the gap between the NMI and revisionist historians. The main barrier was certainly the keeper in charge of the historical collections.

Gerard Hayes-McCoy left the National Museum in 1959 after a twenty year career as keeper of the historical collections. He became professor of Irish history at the National University in Galway where he met Oliver Snoddy.[627] Hayes-McCoy supervised the research of Snoddy who, after having written a master thesis on the Irish Revolutionary Movements in 1963,[628] defended his thesis on *The Irish Volunteers of 1780* in 1965.[629] Previously, Snoddy had become, in 1963, assistant keeper at the NMI and remained in charge of the historical collections until 1989. The resemblance with his supervisor and predecessor at the NMI went no further. Snoddy was a poet, founder of the publishing house *Coiscéim* – which published Irish books – and was president of the Gaelic League which promotes the Irish language in Ireland from 1974 to 1978.[630] Unlike Hayes-McCoy, Snoddy was involved in nationalist circles.

Snoddy's support for Irish nationalism was well expressed in the 1970s during the debates on the European integration, and general Euroskepticism throughout the European Community. He campaigned against the Republic of Ireland's entry into the European Economic Community in 1972. He defined the possible entry as a "second act of union", in reference with the 1800 Act of Union which suppressed the Irish parliament and made Ireland part of the United Kingdom.[631] He argued that "many of the arguments being used now in favour of E.E.C membership were echoes of those used by advocates of the Union in the last

---

[626] Vergo, *The New Museology*.
[627] Oliver Snoddy often used his Irish name: Padraig O'Snodaigh.
[628] Oliver P. Snoddy, *Irish Revolutionary Movements 1913-1916*, (Dublin: University College Dublin, 1963).
[629] Quoted in *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 15, n.57, 1965, pp. 70-73.
[630] Snoddy became Chairman of *Clódhanna Teo*, a Gaelic League imprint, before taking it over and running it himself as *Coiscéim*, a major publishing outlet for writing in Irish in the 1980s and 1990s. Amongst his collections of poetry are *Cumha agus Cumann* (1985), *Cúl le Cúl* (1988), and *Ó Pharnell go Queenie* (1991). *Rex* (1981) was a novel and *Linda* (1987) a work of short fiction.
[631] Oliver Snoddy, in *The Irish Times*, 5 May 1972.

year of the eighteenth century".[632] Snoddy's interventions were motivated by his wish to defend national independence. According to him, the move towards the European Community was similar to the development of historical revisionism. In 1976, he stated that some of the revisionists "especially those whose anti-nationalism was informed by a certain inter or supra-nationalism seemed to echoed part of the European unification theses".[633] Snoddy was indeed an ardent critic of revisionist historians. In 1969, he attacked Francis X. Martin's article "1916 – Myth, Fact, Mystery" in which Martin challenged the traditional link between the Rising and Ireland's independence.[634] Snoddy published his major challenge of revisionism in 1991. The book, entitled *Godfathers of Revisionism 1916 in the Revisionist Canon,* was very critical of Martin and Shaw's interpretations of 1916.[635] Snoddy appeared as a major supporter of anti-revisionism. His position in historical debates was fundamental since Snoddy was in charge of the 1966 exhibition arranged by the NMI for the Golden Jubilee. He was also responsible for the 1916 collections until his departure in the late 1980s. Snoddy's criticism of historical revisionism strengthened the gap between the museum and academia. This would only change with the development of anti or post-revisionism in the 1990s.

5) The National Museum under Criticism

The isolation of the NMI from official, modernizing, policy and the trend of historical revisionism contributed to the general decline of the museum. The decreasing role of the National Museum of Ireland in representing Anglo-Irish conflicts – and the 1916 Easter Rising in particular – since the 1940s did not only come from the discrepancy between the museum's narratives and the major re-interpretations of national identity in Ireland. It also resulted from internal limits. This limit has been stressed throughout a multitude of different reports.

From the late 1940s and throughout the 1970s, the NMI underwent increasing criticisms which challenged its ability to present national history. This was pinpointed by different reports. In 1948, Thomas Bodkin[636] who had been requested by the *Taoiseach* to

---

[632] Oliver Snoddy, in *The Irish Times*, 23 October 1971.
[633] Oliver Snoddy, in *The Irish Times*, 28 May 1976, p. 11.
[634] Padraig O Snodaigh, in *The Irish Times*, 28 August 1969, p. 8; Martin, "1916-Myth, Fact, Mystery".
[635] Oliver Snoddy, *Two Godfathers of Revisionism: 1916 in the Revisionist Canon*, (Dublin: Fulcrum, 1991).
[636] Former Director of the National Gallery of Ireland, Thomas Bodkin was Professor of Fine Arts and Director of the Barber Institute in the University of Birmingham. He was director of the National Gallery of Ireland from 1927 to 1935

undertake a review of the Museum,[637] asserted that "the national museum to the casual visitor to-day presents the appearance of an old marine store, or junk house, filled with beautiful things, but cluttered up with other rubbish" and "everything seemed to have been treated in much the same way as an auction room on the Quays on a Friday afternoon".[638] About the 1916 collection, he wrote that "These things were really disintegrating rubbish, and should not be put on view in great quantities in a public museum."[639] Bodkin asked, then, for the transfer of the 1916 collection into a brand new museum devoted to Irish Military History under the control of the Department of Defence.[640] The transfer was not agreed by the government but it mirrored a strong challenge to the museum's authority in storing and displaying history.

In February 1952, a deputation with B. Butler – *Fianna Fail* TD for Dublin South – was received by the *Taoiseach* John Costello. Butler suggested that the St Enda building – where Patrick Pearse had taught – be used "to house the 1916 Exhibition at present in the National Museum".[641] The project was intended to render the building into a permanent "Memorial to the Pearse Brothers".[642] Contrary to Bodkin's proposal for which no document reveals any further consideration, the Pearse Memorial project attracted the *Taoiseach*'s attention. He subsequently discussed the matter with the Minister of Education.[643] The main argument for not supporting the project further would be found in the Last Will and Testament of Pearse's mother. She had stated that the building should be "a Memorial for her two sons, Patrick and William", "purely as a Memorial, all the furniture to be left as at present".[644] As the secretary of the Department of *Taoiseach* argued, the transfer of the collection "would be to make the house a memorial to the Rising and not to the Pearse brothers only".[645] The display of the 1916 collections at the NMI was not without challenge and did not appear as a major success story. Further criticisms emerged in the 1970s but were more related to the general management of the institution.

---

[637] The report was dated 30th September 1949. *Richard Mulcahy's paper*, P7/C156, University College Dublin archives.

[638] *The Irish Times*, 18 February 1948, p. 5.

[639] In a letter to the *Taoiseach* he made his thought clearer in stressing that "A major proportion of the objects are trivial or ridiculous". Copy of the letter of Bodkin, 11 July 1949, *Richard Mulcahy's papers*, P7/C156, University College Dublin archives.

[640] Copy of the letter of Bodkin, 11 July 1949, *Richard Mulcahy's papers*, P7/C156, University College Dublin archives.

[641] Summary of the meeting, *secretary of the Department of the Taoiseach*, 14 February 1952, 9045B, NAI.

[642] Summary of the meeting, *secretary of the Department of the Taoiseach*, 14 February 1952, 9045B, NAI.

[643] 15 February 1952, 9045B, NAI.

[644] 14 February 1952, 9045B, NAI.

[645] 21 April 1952, 9045B, NAI.

The Government did not ignore the Museum's staff working conditions. In 1970 and 1971, several interventions and debates took place in both the *Daíl* and Senate. In June 1970, the *Fine Gael* senator John Kelly stated: "The working conditions of professional staff are deplorable. (...) About two years ago I was conducted through the basement under Merrion Street and I saw there in dust and cobwebs items which I recalled having seen as a child when my father took me to the museum. They are now relegated to the basement".[646] Several features demonstrated that the NMI had indeed been depreciating in its ability to represent the nation. For example, the number of visitors halved between the early 1930s and the early 1970s.[647] The fall started in the second half of the 1940s, and the lowest figure was reached in 1964 (153.000). Part of the worries about the decline of the NMI came from the exhibition space. The area open to the public fell from 88.400 square feet in 1920 to 57.000 in 1974.[648] Likewise, the space allotted to office and collections accommodation lost 18.500 square feet.[649] The 1969-1970 Board of Visitors report uncompromisingly affirmed that it reflected "poorly on us as a nation that our National Collections (…) fared far better at the hands of the former alien governments, under whose influence they were, than they have under our own governments".[650] The comparison made with reference to the Ulster Museum was unflattering to say the least, especially since their number of visitors had grown from 114.000 to 215.000 from 1960 to 1974.[651] As a consequence/result, an article asserted in the *Irish Times* in December 1974 that "comparisons between the South and Northern Ireland (…) can point to the splendid example of the Ulster Museum which with its recent extension is now one of the best equipped of its kind in these islands". It was even suggested that, due to the lack of space, some collections should be transferred to Belfast.[652]

Further criticisms emerged with the publication of reports in 1970, 1973 and 1974.[653] The first one was requested by the Museum's staff itself to inform the government about the poor conditions in which they had been working. The second rather concerned recommendations for a better management of the institution. Likewise, in 1974 an inquiry was set up by the Arts Council to "clarify the situation in the various arts in the Irish Republic (…) and to make recommendations with a view to helping the Arts Council to formulate its

---

[646] Irish Parliamentary debates, *Senate debates*, Volume 68, col. 511, 11 June, 1970.
[647] 389.300 people visited the NMI in 1932, only 163.000 in 1969. See Appendix 10: visitors.
[648] *Museum Service for Ireland Booklet*, Dublin, 1973
[649] Nigel Monaghan, "The National Museum of Ireland", in Neil Buttimer, Colin Rynne and Helen Guerin, eds., *The Heritage of Ireland,* (Cork, Colin Press, 2000).
[650] Board of Visitors, *Annual Report*, 1969-1970, p. 3.
[651] See the Appendix 10.
[652] "A Living Museum", in *the Irish Times*, 4 December 1974, p. 11.
[653] Institute of Professional Civil Servant Report in 1970; Museum Service for Ireland Booklet in 1973.

future programmes".[654] Vividly, the report stressed that the museum had long "been subject of strong criticisms for its conservative policies, boring displays and the general inadequacy of the service it provides. Such criticisms are undoubtedly justified".[655] These reports fostered many articles in newspapers regarding the poor quality of the national institution. Several articles in the 1970s noted that the National Museum of Ireland had become "a national disgrace"[656]; "Wanted: a Museum Director with Ideas"[657]; "What's gone wrong with the museum?"[658], "Is the museum worthy of our past?"[659] The NMI and the UM contrasted not only through the opposite ideologies they were supported by also due to their contrasting activity.

To conclude, the Republic of Ireland was, like Northern Ireland, marked by the re-assessment of political ideologies and the reinterpretations of Anglo-Irish relations. The main difference was that the NMI did not participate in the various debates about Irishness and Anglo-Irish history. The NMI was built on a long tradition of archaeological collections and on an ethnic definition of the nation. While official policy regarding Anglo-Irish relations changed tremendously in one decade (1960s), the NMI could not keep up with the pace. For instance, when the Irish government decided, for the first time, to commemorate the 1921 Truce, the NMI was unable to provide historical collections to support the new official narratives. In March 1971, Colonel Brennan, chairman of the government committee, visited the NMI but "found that there was no worthwhile material for photographic reproduction available there". Merely, "Mr. Snoddy, Assistant keeper had been instructed by the director to prepare a script for a booklet to be issued free to school".[660] Although Snoddy had the *savoir-faire* to publish a commemorative booklet, the museum as an institution did not have the potential to handle such an exhibition. This example demonstrates that museums (perhaps even more so national museums) were, during the 1960s, more reactive than proactive in the change of national history. Even the Ulster Museum had to rely on external collections to arrange commemorative exhibitions about the World Wars in 1964 and 1966. The different between the NMI and the UM was that the latter was issued from the re-assessment of local history and Ulster identity. Therefore, it received official support. Official support, as mentioned earlier, was not the case for the NMI.

---

[654] J.M Richards, ed., *Provision for the Arts*, (Dublin: The Arts council / The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1976), p. 5.
[655] Richards, ed., *Provision for the Arts*, p. 35.
[656] Ann Crookshank "National Museum: National Disgrace", *The Irish Times*, 5 September 1975, p. 14.
[657] C. Shield, "Wanted: a Museum Director with Ideas", *Hibernia*, 21 May 1976, p. 29.
[658] M. Heron "What's Gone Wrong with the Museum?", *The Irish Independent*, 25 July 1973, p. 10.
[659] E. Shanahan "Is the Museum Worthy of our Past?", *The Irish Times*, 5 November 1975.
[660] Notes of the Committee, 29 March 1971, *50th anniversary of 1921 Truce (1971)*, 2002/8/425, NAI.

The history of Anglo-Irish conflicts was increasingly challenged both by the Irish government which preferred emphasizing the new good relations with Britain, and revisionist historians who aimed to revise nationalist history and ethnic identity in Ireland. Already undermined by the domination of archaeology, the historical collections of the NMI suffered from a lack of interest. The 1916 permanent collections arranged in 1966 remained on display for twenty-five years without change. The 1960s and 1970s saw a dramatic loss of influence by the NMI in establishing an official history of modern Ireland. Having compared the participation of the two national museums, the UM and the NMI, in the debates about the construction of identity in the Republic and in Northern Ireland, it is now necessary to appraise the historical narratives promoted within the exhibitions mounted by the two museums from 1962 to 1978.

Conclusion of Chapter II

The comparison of the National Museum of Ireland and the Ulster Museum reveals new similarity in the 1960s. Both parts of the island now had national museums which, among other fields, specifically displayed historical narratives. The main reason of this approximation was the enlargement of the scope of representation in the new Ulster Museum, from a municipal to a national framework. In spite of this similar status, the term national did not have the same meaning in both museums. The NMI expressed the traditional definition of an Irish ethnic nation distinct from Britain. Conversely, the UM was issued from a regional definition of Ulster as part of the United Kingdom. In addition to these different definitions of the nation, the two museums had followed opposite dynamics. In the 1930s and 1940s, the National Museum of Ireland had, contrary to the Belfast Museum, played a significant role in defining national history. The situation was somehow reversed in the following period when the UM was more linked to the re-definition of identity in Northern Ireland. The UM was developed with the starting point being the redefinition of Anglo-Irish relations within Unionism in which the Ulster Loyalist tradition played an increasing role. The UM and the local history collections materialized the Unionist need to promote an Ulster local identity. The NMI was much more isolated from the debates regarding national identity.

The changes in Nationalist and Unionist ideologies had contrasting consequences in the two national museums. Representations of historical Anglo-Irish conflicts were granted a significant position in the UM's permanent and temporary exhibitions. This derived from the Unionist intention to develop local identity and the awareness of the presence of two major

traditions in Northern Ireland. The 1978 Local History gallery presented therefore sections about 1690, 1798, 1916 and the two World Wars. The situation in the Republic of Ireland was different and the NMI's historical collections suffered from a lack of official interest, itself a consequence of the reluctance to stress Anglo-Irish hostility. This official policy and the development of historical revisionism contributed to a general move away from military history.

The contrasting evolutions of the two museums in the 1960s and 1970s foster more general questions about the role of museums in changing societies in a world that moved away from the acute focus on national state building, to one wherein supranational and international characteristics played an ever increasing role. In comparison, the role of the Ulster Museum was clearer and more easily reachable. The UM was issued from an academic and political upsurge of local identity narratives whereas the NMI had been constructing its collections for a long time when the debates regarding Irishness and the national past appeared in the 1960s and 1970s. While the UM continued the initial policy on local identity throughout the 1970s, the NMI had to undertake major adaptations. For instance, regional studies in Northern Ireland were easily included in the 1978 Local History gallery but it was much more difficult for the NMI to adopt historical revisionism which was deeply challenging to nationalistic history. The gap between the two museums increased in the 1980s. As a consequence, the two institutions had very different positions for the Tercentennial of the Battle of the Boyne in 1990 and the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising in 1991.

CHAPTER III: Museums and Identity Building during the Northern Irish Conflict: Commemoration of the Battle of the Boyne and the Easter Rising (1990-1991)

By the late 1980s, Northern Ireland had become one of the major battlefields of terrorist violence against the armed forces of the state in Europe. And sectarian violence divided nationalist and Unionist communities even more. The hopes for a rapid victory against British troops in the early 1970s of I.R.A military leadership had faltered. The paramilitary group evolved towards a strategy of "Long War" and the development of political activity through *Sinn Fein*. The relations between Republicans and British troops worsened in the late 1970s and early 1980s following the Hunger Strike movement at Maze Prison.[661] Initiated by Republican prisoners to obtain political status, the hunger strike movement increased the tension between Nationalists and British authorities and attracted international attention to Northern Ireland.[662] In 1984, a bomb exploded at the Brighton Hotel where Margaret Thatcher and other members of the Conservative Party were meeting. On 8 November 1987, a bomb from the Provisional I.R.A exploded at Enniskillen during the Remembrance Day ceremony and killed 11 people, mostly civilians. Sectarian murders were not limited to Republican activity, and loyalist groups amply participated in the bitterness of the conflict.[663] In parallel with sectarian violence, the British authorities – and to some extent the Irish governments – became increasingly involved in seeking a solution to the conflict.

In order to restore peace, British authorities modified their conception of the conflict and gave more and more space to the Irish government to deal with the overall management of Northern Ireland. The Irish government was invited to participate in the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973 and in the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. The 1985 treaty gave the Irish government an advisory role in Northern Ireland's management. Although the Agreement failed to bring an end to violence in Northern Ireland – the two Unionist political parties strongly rejected the involvement of the Irish government – it mirrored the new cooperation between British and Irish governments in dealing with the Northern Irish crisis. The

---

[661] Prison closed to Lisburn (Northern Ireland) where members of Republican and loyalist paramilitary groups were jailed.

[662] The political status of the Republican prisoners had been removed in the 1970s. They were now defined as ordinary criminals. In order to retrieve their status, Republican prisoners (the most famous was Bobby Sand) initiated the dirty protest and later hunger strikes in 1980 and 1981.

[663] On 17 May 1974, the Dublin and Monaghan bombings by Loyalists caused the death of 33 civilians in the Republic of Ireland.

collaboration was limited to certain issues, but it contributed to the re-evaluation of the relations between the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Britain. It is interesting to investigate to what extent these political relations shaped the re-evaluation of the historical Anglo-Irish relations.

It was in this context of re-definition of Anglo-Irish relations that two major commemorations took place: the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne (1990) and the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising (1991). While their political power in Northern Ireland had been contested by direct rule, Unionists were amply associated with the memory of the 1690 Battle of the Boyne. The Battle of the Boyne and the victory of William of Orange (Protestant) over James II (Catholic) were interpreted by Unionists as symbol of the union between Ulster Protestants and Britain. Most famously, every 12 July, the Orange Order has celebrated the defeat of James II at the hands of William III. The rules of the Order stressed that "We also associate in honour of King William III, Prince of Orange, whose name we bear as supporters of his glorious memory and the true religion by him completely established".[664] William's victory was, for Unionists, the success of religious freedom and parliamentarianism over the despotic rules established by the Catholic James II.[665] More importantly, William's victory and the following discrimination of Catholic landowners had contributed to the Protestants' domination in Ireland. Hence, King Billy – the nickname of William of Orange – had been the subject of many glorifying representations on the murals in various loyalist neighbourhoods. Bill Rolston points out that, despite the arrival of new paramilitary topics and figures in the 1980s, representations of King William victoriously crossing the Boyne remained a crucial image in the Unionist repertoire in the 1990s.[666]

While mounting *Kings in Conflict: Ireland in the 1690s* for the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne, the Ulster Museum (UM) was therefore confronted with a surfeit of celebrations and a long-term association between the Battle and the Unionist community.[667] The Ulster Museum welcomed 50.102 visitors for the exhibition. To some extent, the figure was disappointing; for instance, the exhibition about the Spanish Armada[668] mounted in 1988

---

[664] Quoted in J. Simms, 'Remembering 1690' *Studies*, 1974, p. 241.

[665] James II of England (1633-1701), was the last Catholic King of England, Scotland and Ireland from 1685 to 1688. His support for absolutism was associated with pro-Catholics policy.

[666] Bill Rolston, *Drawing Support. Murals in the North of Ireland*, (Belfast: Pale Publication, 1992), introduction.

[667] *Kings in Conflict: Ireland in the 1690s* was a temporary exhibition organized for the Tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne and remained five months on view at the Ulster Museum (UM), from April to September 1990.

[668] The Spanish Armada was the Spanish fleet that sailed against England in 1588 with the intention of overthrowing Elisabeth I of England. After several plots to overthrown Elisabeth I, Philipp II of Spain, co-

attracted twice this number of visitors.[669] However, *Kings in Conflict* appeared as a crucial example of the reinterpretation of the past in Northern Ireland. A.T.Q. Stewart, a well-known historian of Ulster, underlined the issues at stake in staging *Kings in Conflict*. He wondered

> How could an exhibition on this scale be mounted, without offending the sensibilities of one side or the other in Ulster's deeply divided society, and without igniting a major controversy of an all too familiar and dreary kind? How might it be designed both to challenge, and in some way relate to, the vigorous street culture of Belfast, where, on gable end and ceremonial arch, the same historical events are colourfully depicted as recent episodes in the 'Troubles'?[670]

The fact that the organization of the exhibition started in 1985 – therefore in the context of the Anglo-Irish Agreement – gives even more importance to this commemorative exhibition in order to explore the links between the political context and the reinterpretations of Anglo-Irish historical relations. It is also important to notice that, even though the exhibition was designed for the commemorations of the Battle, its scope went beyond the year 1690. It is, hence, necessary to discuss the significance given by the museum to this conflict in the 1690s.

To some extent, the 1991 design of a commemorative exhibition at the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) was more traditional. Entitled *The Road to Independence*, the display was a re-arrangement of the 1916 collections in line with the 75th anniversary of the Rising, like it had been done in 1941 and 1966. Even though the exhibition emerged as a re-arrangement, it is necessary to examine to what extent the political context brought new interpretations of the Rising. *Kings in Conflict* and *Road to Independence* were the first commemorative exhibitions arranged by the two national museums since the 1960s. Their simultaneity and the fact that they dealt with major events for Nationalist and Unionist versions of history encourage questioning the participation of the two national museums in constructing official past in the early 1990s. However, the differences between the two events commemorated and the ways they were displayed should not be ignored.

Firstly, the UM's display was a temporary exhibition arranged for the tercentenary of the Boyne whereas *Road to Independence* was designed as the new permanent exhibition of

---

monarch of England until the death of his wife Mary I in 1587 (imprisoned by Elisabeth and sentenced to death), launched an expedition to invade England.

[669] General Information on the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland, General and major exhibition figures, 1988-1997, undated, Local History Department's archives, UMA, Cultra.

[670] A.T.Q. Stewart, "Kings in Conflict: Exhibition Review" *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 1991-1992, pp. 152-153.

the historical collections.[671] More importantly, the two exhibitions dealt with very distinct events. The Battle of the Boyne was a typical seventeenth century military event and opposed roughly twenty-five thousands Jacobites[672] to thirty-six thousand Williamites.[673] On the other side, the 1916 Easter Rising was a much more restricted event.[674] At European scale, the importance of the Battle of the Boyne came from the fact that it was the first proper victory for the League of Augsburg against Louis XIV.[675] In Ireland and England, it marked the end of James' hope of regaining his throne by military means, and virtually assured the triumph of the Glorious Revolution. Regarding 1916, although it had a major impact on politics in Ireland, its relevance on the European scene was limited. Although the distinctions have to be taken into account, they do not prevent a comparing assessment of the two exhibitions. The point is not to compare 1690 and 1916 but to explore how the commemorations prompted redefinitions of historical Anglo-Irish relations.

The apparent traditional support of the two national museums for opposite Unionist (Battle of the Boyne) and Nationalist (Easter Rising) narratives was, in fact, much more complex. This chapter will, first, demonstrate how the changes of interpretations regarding the 1916 Easter Rising within the NMI derived more from new museological practices than ideological commitment. The second section argues that the UM was at the core of the redefinition of identities in Northern Ireland through policies of multiculturalism. The UM was a laboratory for challenging myths regarding the 1690s and for setting the historical narratives into a broader European past.

---

[671] The different status had major consequences on the organization of the displays. For instance, it was much easier for the UM to secure loans for displays than for the NMI which mostly relied upon/ had to rely upon its own collections. As temporary exhibitions are more restricted – and therefore more flexible – in the period and theme under survey, the UM had a structurally better chance at obtaining both new loans as well as new ideas. The temporary exhibition may allow for more innovative techniques and scenography than permanent exhibitions which are designed to stay rather stagnant for longer periods of time. The different status will have to be considered in the overall comparison.

[672] Including 6.000 French troops.

[673] The Battle resulted in approximately two thousand and two hundred casualties, 1.500 Jacobites and 750 Williamites.

[674] Republicans – mainly the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the smaller Irish Citizen Army – organized an insurrection which was limited in space, time and number of rebels. In spite of skirmished in counties Meath, Galway, Mayo and Wexford, most of fighting took place in Dublin. Although the accounts may vary, roughly one thousand and two hundred rebels participated in the Easter Rising. Lee, *Ireland*, p. 25.

[675] Known as the Grand Alliance after England joined the League in 1689, it was formed in 1686 by Emperor Leopold I in order to defend the Palatinate from the French threat. The League – and later Alliance – was composed at various times from Austria, Bavaria, Brandenburg, England, the Holy Empire, the Palatinate, Portugal, Savoy, Saxony, Spain, Sweden and the United Provinces.

A) The Representations of the Easter Rising during the Northern Irish Conflict: Ideological Continuity and New Exhibiting Practices at the National Museum of Ireland

1) Remembering or Silencing 1916? Academic and Political Debates in the 75th Anniversary of the Easter Rising

The 75th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising was marked by debates about the appropriateness of a commemoration of the insurrection while Northern Ireland was going through sectarian violence. In academia, these debates had their roots in the development of historical revisionism. As mentioned in chapter 2, historical revisionism which emerged in the 1960s had become the dominant historiographical current in the 1980s. Major revisionist histories of Ireland were published in the 1980s like Roy Foster's *Modern Ireland* which highly criticized the nationalistic history of Ireland. About the 1916 Easter Rising, Foster stressed the decision to rebel in spite of the certainty of military defeat, was the result of the romantic Republican tradition.[676] Although less critical in his interpretations of the Rising, Joe Lee (whose history of Ireland published in 1989 appeared as another major revisionist work) underlined the "hastily rearranged insurrection" – due to the interception of German weapons by British troops – and "proved to be a militarily gallant but hopeless enterprise in the face of superior force".[677] The critical view of the 1916 insurrection spread with the progress of historical revisionism. The domination of historical revisionism was such that Roy Foster could write in 1986 that "We Are All Revisionist".[678] In spite of what Foster's assertion seemed to indicate, revisionism had remained ill-defined. The frame of revisionism became clearer due to the intense debates which emerged at the end of the 1980s with what was defined as neo-traditionalism, anti-revisionism or later as post-revisionism.

The challenge to revisionism was embedded in Brendan Bradshaw's article "Nationalism and Historical Scholarship in Modern Ireland" published in 1989 in the *Irish Historical Studies*.[679] The core of the debate focused on nationalism and Anglo-Irish historical relations. Historian of early modern Ireland at Cambridge, Bradshaw portrayed an Irish past in which national consciousness dated back to "perhaps a millennium before the onset of

---

[676] Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*.
[677] Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985*, p. 25.
[678] Roy Foster "We Are All Revisionists Now", *Irish Review*, n°1, 1986, pp. 1-5.
[679] Brendan Bradshaw, "Nationalism and Historical Scholarship in Modern Ireland", *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. xxvi, n° 104, November, 1989, pp. 329-351.

modernity".[680] Contrary to revisionists, Bradshaw not only underpinned the existence of national consciousness but also considered it as something the Irish people needed. According to him a national master-narrative was a "beneficent legacy" which had to be sustained. At the centre of his theory was the criticism of the long-term British domination, the "legacy of oppression" and the fact that the Irish had suffered for many centuries. Accordingly, he discerned in revisionist historiography a failure to engage with "the phenomenon of catastrophic violence as a central aspect of the history of conquest" and to "marginalize a central dimension of the Irish historical experience".[681] Hence, the challenge, by revisionist historians of the Irish national narratives, was considered as an attempt to rehabilitate the British presence in Ireland, its proponents supporting of the suffering and oppression in Ireland's past and apologizing for the role played by the oppressors.[682] So, the opposition between revisionism and anti-revisionism centred on the interpretations of historical Anglo-Irish relations.

The debates about the history of Anglo-Irish relations grew as the commemorations of 1916 drew near. The second phase of attacks on historical revisionism did not come from historians but rather from literary and cultural critics such as Seamus Deane, Luke Gibbons or Declan Kiberd.[683] These authors attacked the supposedly revisionist historians' objectivity, detached from the politically biased Republican history.[684] Seamus Deane argued that "There is no such thing as an objective history, and there is no innocent history. All history and literature, as far as I understand them, are forms of mythology".[685] This mirrored the relativism embodied by Hayden Whyte's work on literature and history.[686] Deane argued in 1991 that "historians do not write about the past; they create the past by writing about it".[687] Revisionist historians' claim for objectivity was challenged by the Irish expression of a broader literary turn in which history was first and foremost a process of writing. Centred on

---

[680] Brendan Bradshaw, "Nationalism and Historical Scholarship", p. 345.
[681] Brendan Bradshaw, "Nationalism and Historical Scholarship", pp. 339-341. For more argumentation from Bradshaw, see Brendan Bradshaw, "Revising Irish History", in Daltun O Ceallaigh, ed., *Reconsiderations of Irish History and Culture*, (Dublin: Leithmas, 1994).
[682] Kevin Whelan, "The recent Writing of Irish History" *UCD History Review*, 1991, pp. 27-35.
[683] Seamus Deane, "Wherever Green is Read", in Dhonnchadha and Dorgan (eds.), *Revising the Rising* ; Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) ; Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre-Dame Press, 1996) ; Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation,* (London: Vintage, 1996).
[684] A major argument for revisionist historians had been to debunk nationalistic myths and to produce a history distinct from political narratives.
[685] Deane, "Wherever Green is Read".
[686] Whyte, *Tropics of Discourse,* p. 121.
[687] Deane, "Wherever Green is Read", p. 101.

the relations between history and discourse, this wave of criticisms was also related to the Anglo-Irish relations.

Interestingly, while the birthplaces of Irish revisionism were at least as much at the London's Institute of Historical Research as they were in Dublin, anti-revisionism centred on Derry in Northern Ireland. The core of anti-revisionist criticisms came from post-colonial associations such as the Field Day association, created in 1980 and initially constituted of playwrights and actors. Field Day was associated with the Nationalist cause and aimed at highlighting the Catholic culture in Northern Ireland and providing counter-hegemony to British cultural imperialism. Declan Kiberd, in his own Field Day pamphlet, pointed out the "imperialist nature of the British presence in Ireland" and the fact that Britain still "occupies" Ireland in form of the support of the "régime" of Ulster Unionism.[688] In relation to the South, Field Day stressed how the South had forgotten its Republican past. This was crucial because Field Day not only directed its criticisms towards revisionist historians but also against the Irish governments which had contributed to forgetting the Rising. As a consequence, the 1991 publication of Field Day *Revising the Rising* which supported the commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising and became a landmark in anti-revisionist interpretations of the past.[689] In the collection, Declan Kiberd attacked the historical and the political oblivions of 1916 that Deane explained by the development of revisionism in Ireland. The latter wrote that the Rising "has been so effectively revised that it 75th anniversary is a matter of official embarrassment".[690] It was true that the Irish government had a very limited involvement in the organization of the 75th anniversary of the Rising in 1991, symbol of a political intention not to revive controversies regarding the use of physical force in Anglo-Irish relations.

The 75th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising in 1991 did not witness a major involvement on the part of government but did reveal political tensions. The commemorations suffered from a lack – in comparison with the 1966 Golden Jubilee – of official support. Unlike in 1966, no commemoration committee was set up by the Irish government. The government merely announced a "list of special, and national ceremonies to mark the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Rising" in February 1991.[691] It had an impact on the funding allocated to the Museum. Asked about the amount of money spent for the commemoration, Charles Haughey (*Taoiseach*) responded that Ir£2.000 had been allocated to the Museum.[692]

---

[688] Declan Kiberd, *Anglo-Irish Attitudes.* Field Day pamphlet 6. (Derry: Field Day, 1984), pp. 15-18-24.
[689] Ni Dhonnchadha and Dorgan (eds.), *Revising the Rising*.
[690] Kiberd "The Elephant of Revolutionary Forgetfulness", p. 9; Deane, "Wherever Green is Read", p. 91.
[691] *The Irish Times*, 21 February 1991, p. 2.
[692] The authenticity of this statement could not be proved

This was a meagre sum in comparison with what the Ulster Museum received in 1990 from the Northern Ireland Department of Education for the design of *Kings in Conflict*.[693] The limited involvement of the Irish government in the 75th anniversary of the Rising came from the Northern Irish political context.

Thus, the main change influencing the commemoration of the Easter Rising in 1991, compared with 1966, was the flare-up of paramilitary violence in the North. The Provisional Irish Republican Army had claimed to be the true inheritor of the 1916 Republicans and the I.R.A which fought in the war of independence. In this context, it was difficult to commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising and the use of physical force without being accused of condoning the violence of the Provisionals.[694] In 1991, Joe Carroll argued in *The Irish Times* "that *Fianna Fail* (in power since 1987) has gone 'revisionist' over 1916 and has problems in celebrating the 75th anniversary". Comparing the meagre involvement of the 1991 Government with the 1966 Golden Jubilee, he explained that in 1966 "there was no Provisional I.R.A and no rivals for the chief's Republican cloak".[695] Although the absence of *Fianna Fail's* rivals for the "Republican cloak" in 1966 was wrong – since Lemass was also involved in a struggle with certain Republican group to control the interpretations of 1916 – it was true that the 1991 Government was particularly cautious not to appear supportive of the use of physical force. The politics of commemorations of 1916 were, in 1991, similar to what had been undertaken since 1969 – the annual parades for the anniversary of 1916 were banned in 1971 – and silence was preferred to troublesome commemorations.

Dublin was European capital of culture in 1991 and many events were designed to mark this honour.[696] The Irish government understood the commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising as part of this wider process. Charles Haughey informed the Parliament in 1990 that the NMI's exhibition to commemorate the Rising in 1991 would be part of the "special events to mark Dublin's honour as Cultural Capital of Europe for 1991".[697] Likewise, in February 1991, in response to a question about government participation, he stressed that "it is the year in which Dublin is the European City of Culture. In the case of the latter there will be a wide programme of events connected with that and many of them will relate to the 1916

---

[693] As seen below, the Department provided £95.000 for the organization of *Kings in Conflict*.
[694] Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: the Irish Rebellion* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006), p. 352.
[695] J. Carroll, "1916 Commemoration Opens a Pandora's Box", *The Irish Times*, 9 March 1991, p. 5.
[696] In 1991, a touring exhibition presented the Celts as a "unifying European Culture". The subtitle of the display was "The Origins of Europe". Likewise, *Bord Failte*, the governmental institution in charge of tourism, helped to build an interpretative centre in 1993 entitled *Ceide Fields* in County Mayo as a "home of the first Europeans". M. Kneasfsey "The Cultural Tourism: Patron Saint of Ireland ?", in Kockle, *Culture, Tourism and Development*.
[697] Irish Parliamentary debates, *Dail debates*, Charles Haughey, 13 November 1990, vol. 402, col. 1108.

anniversary".[698] Supporting the links between Ireland and Europe was, in 1991, much safer than the organization of major commemorations regarding the use of physical force against British authorities in 1916. However, to say that this meant the Irish government "had gone revisionist" was debatable. While revisionist historians were critical regarding the Rising, it seemed that the Irish government did not go that far and merely refrained from putting too much funding and investment.

The position of the Irish government contrasted with Republican groups which attempted to "reclaim the spirit of 1916" by setting up a group with this name. Robert Ballagh, an Irish artist and president of the Ireland Institute for Historical and Cultural Studies which promotes Republicanism, became the leader of the group. As he explained, "In early 1990, a group of concerned citizens, aware that the government seemed determined to ignore the anniversary, decided to take steps to insure that the event would be properly celebrated. I decided to sign up to this initiative which took as its title 'Reclaim the Spirit of Easter'."[699] Indeed, a committee was established in December 1989 and organized a week of activity on Easter, 1990.[700] The movement's aim was to challenge what it saw as the official oblivion of 1916. The 75th Anniversary Committee stated that its aims were "to look at the ideals of the 1916 Rising and relate them to the situation in Ireland today" as well as to "To celebrate being Irish and demonstrate pride in our history".[701] Reclaim the Spirit revealed the intention of certain Republican groups to demonstrate that violence in the North should not prevent the celebration of Irish historical insurrections. The celebration of 1916 heavily contrasted with the official narratives but also with revisionist historians. Ballagh claimed that:

> The British occupation of Ireland down the centuries was once seen as exploitative and repressive. However, according to 'responsible' historians, this British presence in Ireland should be seen as an act of benign generosity. We should accept that the United Irishmen were fanatical bigots and the 1798 rebellion was a sectarian blood bath; that the famine was simply an accident of nature and that (…) the Easter Rising was an unnecessary, even ungrateful, orgy of violence, as the British were on the point of ceding national democracy.[702]

---

[698] Irish Parliamentary debates, *Dail debates*, Charles Haughey, 27 February 1991, vol. 405, col. 1802.
[699] Robert Ballaght "1916 and all that – a Personal Memoir" in *The 1916 Rising: Then and Now*, *Papers from a conference held at Trinity College, Dublin on 21 and 22 April 2006, organised by The Ireland Institute and Dublin University History Society*. [http://www.theirelandinstitute.com/institute/p01-ballagh_memoir_page.html] (last visited January 2012)
[700] An Chaisc 1916, Newsletter of 'Reclaim the Spirit of Easter 1916' Festival, (Dublin: 75th Anniversary Committee of 1991, March 1991).
[701] An Chaisc 1916, Newsletter of 'Reclaim the Spirit of Easter 1916' Festival.
[702] Ballaght "1916 and all that"

The movement expressed what Field Day had opposed to revisionism, and Declan Kiberd was invited in April 1991 to talk about "1916: the literacy legacy".[703] Reclaim the Spirit was one of the main organizing agencies for cultural events during the 1991 commemorations. In addition to the series of lectures, it organized an exhibition of paintings devoted to Constance Markievicz in April 1991 at the Labour History Society and a multi-screen video presentation – Seven steps to 1916 – in the lobby of the General Post Office.[704] The association between the commemoration of 1916 and Labour reflected how significant socialism had become in Irish Republicanism. In the 1960s, under the guidance of figures like Cathal Goulding, Republicanism in the North shifted emphasis on socialism and Marxist analysis of Irish history. In 1974, the Irish Republican Socialist Party was founded by former Official I.R.A members, in connection with the Irish Socialist Republican Party that James Connolly (one of the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising) had created in 1896. In the Republic of Ireland, the late 1980s witnessed the rise of Republican socialism embodied in the Workers' Party's success at the 1989 general elections.[705] Robert Ballagh and Reclaim the Spirit belonged to this rise of Republican socialism. In 1996, they participated in the commemoration of James Connolly; Ballagh designed the cover image of James Connolly Memorial Unveiling brochure.[706] The commemoration of the 1916 Rising in the 1990s fostered, therefore, many academic as well as political debates regarding the past to be remembered.

To conclude, the debates which took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s regarding the suitability of commemorating the 1916 Easter Rising while sectarian violence was still endemic in Northern Ireland were not new and recalled the divergence between certain Republican groups and governments to control the interpretations of the past in the 1940s and 1960s. The 1991 commemorations were particular in the sense that, in comparison with previous major anniversaries, the Irish government was now much more hostile to some of the Republican interpretations of Anglo-Irish relations. It should not be forgotten that the Irish government had been, since the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, involved in the political management of Northern Ireland. This can, of course, be attributed in the explanation of the lack of official involvement. In as much, mounting a commemorative exhibition in 1991, the museum could not expect major support from the Irish government.

---

[703] An Chaisc 1916, newsletter of the 'Reclaim the Spirit of Easter 1916' Festival.
[704] 1916 Anniversary Committee. *Souvenir Programme, Reclaim the Spirit of Easter 1916*, Dublin 1991.
[705] Issued from Sinn Fein, the Workers Party was created in 1970 (renamed Workers Party in 1982). In 1989, it became the fourth political party in the Republic of Ireland with seven seats at the *Dail*.
[706] B. Trench, *James Connolly, Memorial Unveiling Brochure*, Dublin, May 1996.

2) The Organization of *The Road to Independence* in a Context of Limited Official Involvement

The 1916 Room closed in September 1987 and, at the outset, it was not intended to produce any new exhibition but only to "clean the dust, adapt lighting and paint walls".[707] It was only six months after the closing, in February 1988 that John Teehan, keeper in the Arts and Industry department, wrote to the Director that "I would not think that it should remain static forever. Therefore I suggest that a new presentation be considered for 1991 – the 75th anniversary of the Rising".[708] This suggestion was immediately supported by Oliver Snoddy, assistant keeper who had been in charge of the 1916 collections since the 1960s.[709] John Teehan sent the proposal to the Secretary of the Department of *Taoiseach* in July 1988 for a new exhibition for the 75th anniversary of the Rising.[710] This correspondence reflected the new links between the NMI and the government. Indeed, since 1984, the NMI was no longer under the supervision of the Department of Education but of the Department of the *Taoiseach*. Although it was intended to be connected with the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising, the new exhibition was more the result of an internal re-arrangement of the collections (as had been the case in 1966).

The re-arrangement was undergone without considering the debates between revisionist and anti-revisionist historians regarding national history. The only mention of academic historians in the early 1990s related to Michael Kenny's publication of a booklet devoted to the 1916 exhibitions.[711] Kenny explained to the editor that he sent a draft to "a lecturer in UCD who specializes in 1916" and that the latter made "two very minor points".[712] All in all, the NMI hardly collaborated with academic historians. One reason had been the object-oriented displays arranged by the institution since then. Exhibitions were about objects much more than about history. For instance, the NMI mounted the 1979 exhibition dedicated to Irish Silver and the 1983 exhibition dealing with Volunteers' Glasses. As the fields covered by these displays indicate, the exhibiting policy of the NMI remained, in the 1970s and 1980, broadly defined by its focus on artefacts and the prevalent interest in archaeology. The museum needed *connoisseurs,* specialists of material culture and not historians.

---

[707] Letter from John Teehan to Patrick Wallace, 18 February 1988, A1/88/027, NMIA.

[708] Letter from John Teehan to Patrick Wallace, 18 February 1988, A1/88/027, NMIA.

[709] Letter from Oliver Snoddy to Patrick Wallace and John Teehan, 19 February 1988, A1/88/027, NMIA.

[710] Letter from John Teehan to the Secretary of the *Taoiseach*, 26 July 1988, A1/88/027, NMIA.

[711] Michael Kenny had replaced Oliver Snoddy as keeper in charge of the 1916 collections in 1988/1989.

[712] Letter from Michale Kenny, 21 April 1993, A1/93/018, NMIA. Unfortunately, the letter does not mention either the lecturer contacted or the issues in question.

Even though the NMI did not participate in the academic debates regarding revisionism and the history of Anglo-Irish relations, the correspondences revealed internal debates. As demonstrated above, Oliver Snoddy had strong anti-revisionist arguments. Nonetheless, he left the NMI in 1988 and did not take part in the re-arrangement of the 1916 collections in 1991. Michael Kenny and John Teehan were responsible for the new permanent exhibition and evoked a different approach for the 1991 exhibition. Michael Kenny was assistant keeper in charge of the 1916 collections while John Teehan was head of the Art and Industry department, to which the 1916 collections belonged.[713] Although Kenny was ultimately in charge of the organization of the 1991 exhibition, Teehan worked on the initial project. He had sent out a proposal to the Department of the *Taoiseach* in 1988 and was involved in the general organization of the exhibit.[714] That is why most of the documents in which he appeared were about the overall narratives of the displays. Teehan and Kenny expressed contrasting feelings regarding how the past should be represented.

The aspect Teehan was particularly eager to develop was the challenge of insular Republican interpretations of the 1916 Rising. He pointed out that "while the rising should be presented in all its reality, it must none-the-less appear as the historical event that it is and in no-way as a 'glorification' or 'incitement to violence' at this time".[715] His suggestion to not glorify the past materialized through his wish to enlarge the representations in the display. He argued that the permanent exhibition "should cover various international aspects, such as the Irish in America, in Australia and in the armies of Britain and other European countries".[716] This was a radical move in comparison with the insular narratives provided so far at the NMI where the history of Irish outside Ireland had mostly been ignored. Likewise, he wrote to the Department of the *Taoiseach* that "the display could begin with the 17Th century", considering notably the 1690 Battle of the Boyne as part of the historical "movements and occurrences (…) which have brought the country to the present point". In order to do so, he encouraged the collaboration with the Ulster Museum. He asserted in his letter to the Department of the *Taoiseach* that "As this exhibition (the permanent exhibition) would have an all-Ireland compass and would take account of the evolving political situation in the North, I suggest that

---

[713] Kenny was initially interested in Irish silver and Irish coinage and had worked, since 1975, on the collection of metalwork, scientific instruments, coins and medals. Teehan was member of the Dublin Goldsmith Company and his publications demonstrate rather an interest in material culture. See John Teehan, *The Company of Goldmiths of Dublin Exhibition*, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1987). He was responsible in 1988 for the NMI's involvement in the Dublin Goldsmith exhibition at the Ulster Museum. NMI's archives, A1/88/034

[714] Letter from Teehan to the Secretary of the *Taoiseach*, 26 July 1988, A1/88/027, NMIA.

[715] Memento from John Teehan, 26 September 1990, A1/90/108, NMIA.

[716] Letter from Teehan to Kenny, 17 October 1988, A1/89/045, NMIA.

the Ulster Museum could be invited to cooperate".[717] Teehan proposed therefore a totally new territorialization of the past on display at the National Museum.

Teehan's proposals also touched upon the absence of representations of "enemies". In 1990, he wrote to Wallace (director) that the museum should ask "London" for a loan of uniforms, especially for the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries.[718] The Black and Tans and Auxiliaries were paramilitary groups used by the British troops in the War on Independence between 1919 and 1921. They became famous for their acts of violence against Irish civilians and became symbolic of the harsh British repression in Ireland. The keeper explained his proposal by writing that he thought "the 'enemy' or 'opposition' should also be represented in the exhibition".[719] This intention to include "the enemy" was a very new proposal regarding the representations of Anglo-Irish relations. Teehan's conception for the new permanent exhibition was revolutionary for the National Museum and contrasted with what Oliver Snoddy had proposed already in the 1960s. Had Teehan's arguments been implemented, the NMI would have undertaken a major ideological shift regarding the definitions of Irish history and the Anglo-Irish relations. Nonetheless, Teehan appeared isolated at the NMI which, somewhat unsurprisingly, would mostly follow Michael Kenny's more traditional vision of the past.

In 1997, Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch interviewed Michael Kenny in order to decipher the way 1916 was presented in the National Museum.[720] Remembering this meeting, she states that Kenny was at heart supporting "anti-revisionism" and intended "to redress the balance".[721] This statement should be taken with much precaution. It is very difficult to assess this statement for several reasons. First of all, Michael Kenny has not kept much of his correspondence.[722] Moreover, as keeper of the 1916 collections he was not the one in direct correspondence with the Department of the *Taoiseach* – Teehan was. Therefore, he did not need to justify or explain the design of the display in writing. More importantly, it does not seem that Kenny was as much involved in historical debates as Bhreathnach-Lynch claims. Kenny's positions were actually nuanced and he did not take publicly position against historical revisionism. In an interview with Anne-Marie Ryan in July 2011,[723] Kenny did not

---

[717] Letter from Teehan to Kenny, 17 October 1988, A1/89/045, NMIA.
[718] Letter from Teehan to Wallace, 12 December 1990, A1/90/108, NMIA. The document does not make clear which institution in London John Teehan was referring.
[719] Letter from Teehan to Wallace, 12 December 1990, A1/90/108, NMIA.
[720] Bhreathnach-Lynch "Revisionism, the Rising, and Representation".
[721] Personal interview with Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch, March 2010, Dublin.
[722] The archives of the NMI contain very few of his files.
[723] Anne-Marie Ryan has been curator at Kilmainham Jail, and wrote a master thesis dissertation on the 1916 exhibitions at the National Museum of Ireland.

acknowledge any involvement. He "identified the main differences between the 1966 exhibition and the 1991 exhibition as mostly relating to developments in museum practice."[724] He highlighted the diminution of artefacts, the production of text panels and not ideology as the reasons for any change.

It was yet true that Kenny differed from Teehan. While Teehan emphasized the need not to celebrate the use of physical force, Kenny stressed instead his "great respect" for the period.[725] Kenny explained in the exhibition leaflet that the 1916 Easter Rising "was not an unplanned rebellion of dreamers and poets as it has sometimes been portrayed", notably by some revisionist historians. He also pointed out that "the general perception of it as a hopeless and foolhardy undertaking, however, is very much the wisdom of hindsight".[726] While Teehan stressed the need to collaborate with the UM and to give more space to events outside the history of Irish Republicanism, Kenny seemed more in line with the traditional conservatism of the National Museum. Hence, although the museum had no major links with academia, there were internal debates regarding the representations of 1916. These debates did not rely on the suitability of commemorating 1916 but on the possibility of enlarging the exhibition to include the "others" and the potential consequences on the displays. Nevertheless, the organization of the 1991 exhibition was shaped by the overall nervousness regarding the commemorations of 1916.

The debates regarding the representations of 1916 were not limited to the staff of the NMI and also came from the public status of the museum. As said above, between 1984 and 1992, the NMI was under the direct supervision of the Department of the *Taoiseach*.[727] It is difficult to explore in detail relations between the Museum and the Department of the *Taoiseach* whose archives for the period are not available.[728] However, given that the Irish government was reluctant to celebrate the 1916 Easter Rising in 1991, it is probable that the rearrangement of the 1916 collections for the 75th anniversary engendered "nervousness about certain aspects of the exhibition".[729] The expression used by Anne-Marie Ryan perfectly sums up the situation in 1991.

---

[724] Ryan, Exhibiting the Irish Revolution. Note 119.

[725] Memento, 29 September 1989, A1/89/045, NMIA.

[726] Michael Kenny, *The Road to Freedom. Photographs and Memorabilia from the 1916 Rising and Afterwards,* (Dublin: Country House, 1993) pp. 5-6. Bhreathnach-Lynch quoted instead "the general perception of it as a hopeless and foolhardy undertaking (…) merits re-examination". The term "merits re-examination" could not be found in the booklet and may result from an untrue quote. Bhreathnach-Lynch "Revisionism, the Rising, and Representation", p. 96.

[727] Before 1984 it was under the supervision of the Department of Education. In 1992, it moved to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the *Gaeltacht*.

[728] The common 30 year rule applied.

[729] Ryan, Exhibiting the Irish Revolution. p. 46.

This nervousness first emerged through the political attention paid to the exhibition. In 1988, John Teehan sent a proposal for the new 1916 exhibition to the Secretary of the *Taoiseach*.[730] As far as the NMI's archives show, this had not been done for the 1941 or 1966 previous exhibitions. This may have been the consequence of the newly emerging dependence on the Department of the *Taoiseach*. More particularly, two issues brought about official worries. Interviewed by Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch, Michael Kenny explained that he initially planned to entitle the exhibition "The Struggle for Independence".[731] Indeed, in September 1989, Michael Kenny wrote a memo for the progress of the staging entitled "1916: Struggle for Independence".[732] However, the title was ultimately changed and the display was called *The Road to Independence*. Kenny explained that the change of title resulted from the fact that he had encountered objections from "civil servants" who pointed out that the word "struggle" was too strong.[733] Patrick Wallace (director) pointed out that the civil servants proposed "The path to independence" instead.[734] In other words, civil servants aimed at downplaying the part played by the use of physical force against Britain for achieving independence; in as much, the title was smoothed out, from a struggle to a path and, ultimately, to a road.

Kenny and Wallace remained unclear about the identity of these "civil servants". Kenny could not, in the interview, remember their identity or department.[735] Besides, no tangible evidence from the museum's archives could be found regarding governmental pressure. Of course, this sort of communication between the museum's staff and "civil servants" may have been done orally and not have been registered or kept (above all since the archives about the 1991 exhibition are far from complete). In fact, while answering a question about the "disagreements he had with politicians", Wallace mentioned that views expressed by departments were more often those from civil servants.[736] This is interesting because he added that influence was more clearly felt when the Museum was, from 1984 to 1992, under the direct supervision of the Department of the *Taoiseach*. The most credible assumption regarding the pressure to change the title of the 1991 exhibition would therefore be that these "civil servants" belonged to the Department of the *Taoiseach*.[737]

---

[730] Letter from Teehan to the Secretary of the *Taoiseach*, 26 July 1988, A1/88/027, NMIA.
[731] Bhreathnach-Lynch "Revisionism, the Rising, and Representation".
[732] Memento from Michael Kenny, 29 September 1989, A1/89/045, NMIA.
[733] Bhreathnach-Lynch "Revisionism, the Rising, and Representation".
[734] Patrick Wallace "Preface", in Crooke, *Politics, Archaeology*, p. vii. Personal interview with Patrick Wallace, Dublin, November 2008.
[735] Personal interview with Michael Kenny, October 2009, Dublin.
[736] Personal interview with Patrick Wallace, January 2010, Dublin.
[737] Yet, the Office of Public Work – whose architect was responsible for the design of the exhibition – could also be one possibility.

The second issue of tension was the inclusion of weapons in the display. Although this issue had never been the subject of any dispute in the past, the staff evoked a context of tensions. Interrogated about the 1991 controversies, the director did not initially mention the title of the exhibition but the presence of weapons in the display.[738] In a letter the keeper sent to the director in 1989, Kenny wrote that "It is simply impossible to tell the story of an armed-rebellion without guns".[739] This suggested that the presence of weapons in the new permanent display was debated. Little evidence remains about the controversy regarding the display of weapons in 1991. The only element found in the museum's archives deals with a 1989 report. Writing to the Director in September 1989, John Teehan informed the Director that an inspector visited the display and expressed a few concerns about several artefacts.[740] The 1990 meeting minutes revealed that the worries were about the guns on display.[741]

It turns out, the inspector was not asking for the complete removal of the guns – this was in anyway not his role – but rather wished to question the conditions of security for such artefacts. Nevertheless, the staff understood it was the issue at stake.[742] Kenny argued that "It is simply impossible to tell the story of an armed-rebellion without guns".[743] Likewise, John Teehan wrote that "the guns are very much part of the events covered by the present and earlier exhibitions and that fact must be reflected in the display".[744] This might have been evidence of deeper tensions, not stated in the written report. It is extremely difficult to interpret this controversy which may ultimately have been a minor technical problem. However, the simultaneity of this tension with the disagreements about the title of the exhibition strengthens the hypothesis of an official reluctance to highlight the historical use of violence during the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising. Moreover, the weapons intended to be on display were those on view until 1988 when the gallery was closed for refurbishment. Kenny wrote to the Director in September 1989 that "they are the same guns which have been on exhibition for twenty five years and are mounted in essentially the same manner".[745] Until

---

[738] Personal interview with Patrick Wallace, January 2010, Dublin.
[739] Report from Kenny to Wallace, 29 September 1989, A1/89/045, NMIA.
[740] Letter from Teehan to Wallace, 14th September 1989, A1/89/045, NMIA.
[741] *Meeting Minutes*, 22 March 1990, A1/89/045, NMIA. Four points were discussed: "these guns were at serious risk", "their presentation was inviting to a thief", "the method of protection now applying would not be tolerated in any gun-shop in town" and that "it seemed to him, many of the guns could be used and he pointed out the implications of this should they be stolen. Letter from Teehan to Wallace, 14 September 1989, A1/89/045, NMIA.
[742] This was due to the unilateral rejection of guns modification; the staff refused to dismantle some parts of them. The only solutions were either to change the complete system of security, especially changing the windows, or to simply remove the guns.
[743] Report from Kenny to Wallace, 29 September 1989, A1/89/045, NMIA.
[744] Letter from Teehan to Wallace, 14 September 1989, A1/89/045, NMIA.
[745] Report from Kenny to Wallace, 29 September 1989, A1/89/045, NMIA.

1991, security had never been an issue of tension. In a letter he sent in response to criticisms about the *Road to Independence,* Kenny contended that he had been "accused (…) of being 'pro I.R.A' for including 'too many weapons'".[746] This mirrored the general context of the commemoration in which the comparison between the 1916 Easter Rising and the present Republican involvement in paramilitary activities was underlined.

This context of nervousness about the display of weapons contrasted with the official views in the 1960s. In 1966, the display of weapons received radically different feedbacks from the Irish government. Minister for Industry and Commerce, Patrick Hillery, in his 1966 opening speech, stressed that:

> the weapons they (rebels) used … tell their own story of the shifts and subterfuges forced upon the fighters to obtain the arms vital for their struggle. These arms are in themselves eloquent of the unequal nature of the contest and of the tremendous courage of those who embarked upon it.[747]

In conclusion, while mounting the 1991 exhibition, the NMI did not receive major support from the government. The issues regarding the title and the display of weapons could render one to think that the Irish government curbed the scope of the exhibition. Importantly, the National Museum of Ireland was not politically encouraged to reinterpret the past. Political commitment in the form of the Irish government's participation in processes of reconciliation could have encouraged the NMI to provide a revision of the past; however, in 1991 the government played the card of low-key commemorations of the Republican insurrection instead. It will be seen below that this contrasted greatly with the politics of the past in Northern Ireland.

3) The Display of Traditional Artefacts Relating to 1916 Leaders in an Enlarged Historical Context: Multiple Narratives of the Anglo-Irish Relations in *The Road to Independence*

As a mirror of the overall organization, *The Road to Independence* did not really contrast with previous permanent displays. In an article published in *The Irish Times*, Nuala O'Faolain described the re-opening of the collections.[748] She wrote that "Last week the room was reopened, bright and modernised (…) The same artefacts are there – guns, uniforms, flags,

---

[746] Letter from Kenny to Lynch, undated, A1/90/108, NMIA.
[747] *The Irish Times*, 13 April 1966, p. 11.
[748] Nuala O'Faolain (1940-2008) was an Irish writer and journalist (editorialist at *the Irish Times* from 1986).

death-masks".[749] This description of the collection was indeed quite accurate. Michael Kenny acknowledged that there had been no inaccurate additions and "the only items removed were those which I felt trivialized an exhibition and a period for which I have great respect".[750] Although the permanent exhibition was renamed, it was ultimately a mere re-arrangement.

The main focus of the exhibition was still the 1916 Rising. A rotunda was designed (Appendix 7) at the centre of the room and depicted the *Proclamation of the Republic* and an enlargement of Walter Paget's painting of the General Post Office (GPO) entitled "The Birth of the Republic".[751] This painting showed rebels at the GPO on fire just before they surrender. The priest is blessing the wounded insurgents, giving a confessional glow over the whole scene.[752] The relevance of the rotunda – in particular the painting – was such that the interview of the Director for the documentary covering the opening of the exhibition took place right in front of the "Birth of the Republic".[753] Reviewing the exhibition, Gemma Reid noticed that "the passageway creates an atmosphere of a memorial or tribute".[754] The juxtaposition of the Proclamation of the Republic – as setting out in detail the aspirations of the rebels[755] – and the painting which represented the rebels[756] under fire inside the GPO just before their surrender, was supposed to recreate the atmosphere and significance of the site while inserting crucial links between the Republic and the use of violence (Appendix 9-G).

The focus on the Republican use of violence in 1916 was enhanced by one particular addition. A few months after the opening of the exhibitions, a silent video was included into the display. The video was composed of 16 TV screens which showed the events of the Rising and finished with an image of the Irish tricolour flag and a slow sequence showing the names, age, date of execution and portrait of each of the 16 executed leaders.[757] Interestingly, the video – Seven Steps to 1916 – had been previously used at the General Post Office and was a project developed by the *Reclaim the Spirit of 1916* group.[758] To some extent, the links between Republicanism and socialism supported by Reclaim the Spirit were also present in

---

[749] Nuala O'Faolain, "An Era Beyond Imaginative Reach", *the Irish Times*, April 29th 1991, p.12.

[750] M. Kenny, 29 September 1989, A1/89/045, NMIA. Among the artefacts removed were a "bicycle pump" used at the Battle of Ashbourne and "the starting handle of a car which was 'out' in the Rebellion".

[751] Walter Paget (1863-1935). The painting depicts a scene within the General Post Office, at the height of the Rising. Patrick Pearse stands holding a revolver, James Connolly lies wounded. The picture was commissioned in 1916 by supporters of the Rising

[752] Clair Wills, *Dublin 1916: The Siege of the GPO*, (Dublin: Profile Book, 2009), p.116.

[753] *RTE News Bulletin Road to Independence*, (Sweeney Fionnuala), 1.37 min, April 1991, BN 91/114, RTE archives, Dublin.

[754] Reid, 'Redefining Nation, Identity and Tradition', p. 210

[755] *Ar Thoir Na Saoirse 1916-21. The Road to Independence,* (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1991).

[756] The signatories of the Proclamation were clearly visible, see Wills, *Dublin 1916*, p. 115.

[757] Reid, 'Redefining Nation, Identity and Tradition', p. 210.

[758] 1916 Anniversary Committee. *Souvenir Programme.*

the NMI's exhibition. In comparison with the 1966 exhibition, much more attention was paid to Sean Connolly, the Irish Citizen Army and the rise of socialism in early twentieth-century Ireland. It was largely underlined in the panel about the "background of 1916" and in the leaflet published by Michael Kenny.[759]

The links between the NMI and *Reclaim the Spirit of 1916* reinforced the traditional focus of the museum on the 1916 leaders. However, the narratives proposed by the two agencies differed on a major issue: the space given to women in the Irish past. *Reclaim the Spirit of 1916* arranged lectures, meetings and exhibitions which gave space for the story of women's involvement. The group organized "an evening dedicated to women's role in Irish society".[760] On April 2nd, 1991, the group opened an exhibition of paintings entirely devoted to Constance Markievicz. Born Constance Gore-Booth – member of a wealthy Anglo-Irish family from western Ireland – in 1868 in London, Countess Markievicz played a tremendous role in Irish history between 1912 and 1922.[761] Constance Markievicz had three major convictions: Irish nationalism, feminism and socialism. A privileged Protestant woman, she was involved in Irish nationalism and joined *Sinn Fein* and later the Irish Citizen Army, led by its socialist leader, James Connolly. Hence, she took part in the 1916 Easter Rising as Lieutenant and was imprisoned at Kilmainham Jail. She was also a member of *Inghinidhe na hEireann* (Daughters of Ireland), a revolutionary women's movement and actively participated in the women's suffrage campaign. In 1918 she became the first woman elected to the British House of Commons, although she did not take her seat in agreement with the abstention policy of *Sinn Fein*. Opposed to the Anglo-Irish treaty she fought the Civil War with anti-partition Republicans. She died shortly after her election as *Fianna Fail* deputy in 1927.

Several works on women and the 1916 Easter Rising were published in the early 1990s, as part of a growing interest in women's history in Ireland.[762] Thus, the autobiography of Kathleen Clarke – wife of Tom Clarke executed in May 1916 and Republican activist – was published in 1991, 19 years after her death.[763] In spite of their involvement in the "road to independence", women did not receive much acknowledgment in the representations of Irish history at the NMI until the 1990s. Out of the 79 paintings and documents included in

---

[759] Eleven – out of 75 – documents were about Irish socialism, the Irish Citizen Army or James Connolly. Kenny, *The Road to Freedom.*

[760] An Chaisc 1916, newsletter of the 'Reclaim the Spirit of Easter 1916' Festival.

[761] She met her husband, Count Casimir Markievicz in Paris.

[762] Mary Moriarty and Catherine Sweeney, *Markievicz: the Rebel Countess*, (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1991); R. Taillon, *Women of 1916 : When History was Made*, (Belfast: Beyond the Pale, 1996).

[763] Kathleen Clarke, H. Litton, *Revolutionary Woman: Kathleen Clarke, 1878-1972. An Autobiography*, (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1991).

Michael Kenny's published guide of *The Road to Independence*, only three represented women.[764] One was a poster from the Gaelic League depicting *Eire*, the traditional feminine embodiment of Ireland comparable to Britannia (Britain) or Marianne (France).[765] The two other documents demonstrated that women and the gender aspect were all but entirely ignored by the museum. Although one document referred to the *Cumann na mBan* – the women Republican association formed in Dublin in 1914, auxiliary of the Irish Volunteers – no mention of the specific women involved was made. The woman was described simply as "a member in uniform".[766] The situation was similar for the representations of Constance Markievicz.

On the one hand, she was considered in Michael Kenny's publication as "one of the most colorful figures of the period, she was associated with almost every nationalist organizations".[767] But nothing was mentioned about women's involvement in the Rising. The absence was even more blatant in the booklet the NMI published with *an Post* (the state-owned provided of postal service) in 1991. The second page was devoted to the photograph of Constance Markievicz in her uniform, but not a word was said about her.[768] The same photograph of Constance Markievicz was used in the 2001 educational pack published in connection with the exhibition. However, school children were only asked to draw her military uniform.[769] Nothing was taught or learned regarding her activities for the rights of women or the presence of women's organization in the 1916 Rising. Concurrently, Anne Clare symbolically observes that while Helen Gifford-Donnelly was at the origin of the 1916 collections displayed by the NMI, her name has never been mentioned by the museum as recognition of her commitment.[770]

While the absence of women in representing history is not specific to the NMI, this reveals particular constructions of representation.[771] First of all, the interest from Republican groups (like *Reclaim the Spirit*) in dealing with women's history derived from the fact that many women involved in the 1916 Easter Rising – notably through the Cumann na mBan[772] – opposed the Anglo-Irish treaty and remained outside of parliamentary politics. Markievicz

---

[764] Kenny, *The Road to Freedom.*
[765] Kenny, *The Road to Freedom.*, document p. 18.
[766] Kenny, *The Road to Freedom.* document p. 34.
[767] Kenny, *The Road to Freedom,* p. 34.
[768] *Ar Thoir Na Saoirse 1916-21. The Road to Independence*.
[769] National Museum of Ireland, *Road to Independence, Education Booklet*, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2001).
[770] Clare, *Unlikely Rebels.*
[771] Gaby Porter "How are Women Represented in British History Museums?" *Museum International*, 43, 3, 1991, pp. 159-162.
[772] Irish Republican women's organization created in 1914 and led by Constance Markievicz.

fought the Civil War with the Anti-Treaty troops, Kathleen Clarke (Tom Clarke's wife), opposed the treaty and was later involved in *Clann na Poblachta*,[773] Margaret Pearse (Patrick Pearse's mother), campaigned for *Sinn Fein* and opposed the treaty as well. The major figures of women's involvement between 1916 and 1923 were therefore, mostly used by Republicans in 1991 (much more than by the Irish government) to demonstrate that the Irish State was to be challenged. Since the National Museum did not intend to support strong Republican narratives, its representations of women's involvement were more limited.

On the one hand, the military dimension of the 1916 Easter Rising contributed to downplay the importance of women in Irish history. On the other hand, the way military history was portrayed was also to blame. The Road to Independence mostly focused on historical leaders who were almost exclusively men. As said above, the "great men" of 1916, in particular those executed in May, have attracted most attention. The portraits of the 1916 leaders executed in May at Kilmainham Jail were hung on the wall of the Rotunda at the centre room of the NMI. This choice contrasted with what was done at sites more connected with Republicanism. Under the supervision of Pat Cooke – director of the site since 1986 – an art exhibition was arranged at Kilmainham Jail in the former cells of the prison. One major novelty – which would also drive the 1990s permanent collections at Kilmainham Jail – was the move from attention allotted from heroes to ordinary people. Pat Cooke stated that:

> Hitherto the interpretation had concentrated almost exclusively on the story of the nameable heroes and their struggle for Irish freedom … But here, after all, was the County of Dublin Gaol, which had been built with the intention of containing and subjecting to reform the common people convicted before the law.[774]

This move from heroes to ordinary people also had a major impact on gender representations. The director concluded by encouraging "the tempering of the place's heroic symbolism by highlighting the fate of ordinary men and women convicts as a significant strand in its history."[775] Hence, in the 1991 exhibition devoted to Irish national identity, eight of the twenty-one artists selected were women. Certainly, the art-oriented aspect of the exhibition gave more liberty to the staff of Kilmainham Jail, but the overall move towards "ordinary people" contributed to a re-assertion of equal gender representations in Irish history.

---

[773] Republican party found in 1946.
[774] Cooke, "Kilmainham Gaol", pp. 4-5.
[775] Cooke, "Kilmainham Gaol", pp. 4-5.

In a similar way, another reason for women's overall absence in the history of modern Ireland was the traditional focus on archaeology in the national narrative. Similarly, just as the involvement of Irish soldiers in the British army was downplayed at the NMI, [776] so was there a neglect of the non-military aspects of the First World War. This absence was crucial since, internationally, the history of the First World War had had a massive impact on civilians and the home front.[777] Women workers during the Great War had transformed the gender and age composition of the labour force in most European societies. The general mobilization of the role of the Irish during the two world wars further explains the absence of women from the historical narratives provided to visitors by the NMI.[778]

The analysis of the objects on display shows therefore the continued significance given to the use of physical force by Republicans in 1916 to obtain Ireland's independence and the focus on "great men" in Irish history. This was not new, but in the 1991 context, this meant that the NMI appeared closer to what Republicans intended to commemorate. It can yet be argued that this proximity to *Reclaim the Spirit of 1916* was due more to the museum's stasis than to a true commitment to Republican narratives of the past. Mostly ignored by the government and disconnected from academic debates on 1916, the NMI was marked by the continuity of representations. Nonetheless, it did not mean the display was totally devoid of change. What was striking about the 1991 new permanent display was that the changing representations of the past came from the re-appraisal of artefacts and their mode of display in the museum. The changes of interpretations of Anglo-Irish historical relations did not come from a reinterpretation of the Rising itself but rather from the need to enlarge the framework of representations.

In an interview with Anne-Marie Ryan in 2011, Michael Kenny identified the main differences between the 1966 exhibition and the 1991 exhibition as mostly relating to developments in museum practice.[779] It was true that the spatial organization of the artefacts had evolved, but this was not a particularity of 1991. It resulted from a long process initiated by Hayes-McCoy and further supported by Anthony Lucas in the 1960s in which historical context received more and more importance. Information for visitors who knew little about 1916 had been requested in 1966 by Anthony Lucas, but this only resulted in the production

---

[776] There was only one mention in the guide of the collection, and one photograph of Irish in the trench. Kenny, *The Road to Freedom*.

[777] Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). In particular the chapter on civilians.

[778] For a chapter devoted to Irish women during the Great War, see E. Reilly "Women and Voluntary War Work", in Gregory and Paseta, *Ireland and the Great War*.

[779] Ryan, Exhibiting the Irish Revolution. note 119.

of a guide to the 1916 collections. In 1991, the need for information also drove the arrangement of the collections.

For the first time, numerous written panels were produced about topics such as the *Irish Republican Brotherhood*, the *Gaelic League*, *Sinn Fein*, the *Ulster Volunteers*, the *Irish Volunteers*, the *Background to 1916*, *Easter Week 1916* and the *Dail Eireann*.[780] The 1991 RTE News Bulletin showed a dozen panels hanging on the walls of the room.[781] The space devoted to information panels was so different from previous exhibitions that Kenny confessed some criticism had been expressed because the exhibition seemed/ was seen to be "overladen with documentary material". Kenny hastened to give his opinion and pointed out that "My feeling is that some visitors are complaining because they can now actually read what they previously only saw".[782] The development of text demonstrated a new museological approach to artefacts which did not speak for themselves but had to be set into their historical context.

Moreover, the increased presence of written materials stemmed from reconsideration of exhibiting policy. For instance, whereas the 1966 guide to the collection was introduced as providing "a summary of the historical background",[783] its 1991 counterpart stressed that "the author sets out to explain the background to 1916".[784] The latter highlighted that "the purpose of the exhibition is to trace the background to 1916, explain the Rising itself and catalogue the series of events which culminated in the signing of the Treaty in 1921".[785] This had been approved in a meeting in 1990 where it was agreed that "the idea behind this exhibition is that anyone visiting it would leave with knowledge of this period in Irish history".[786] The process rendered the museum experience from one of a summary visit to one offering an explanation of the past.

The exhibition leaflet also explained that "Graphic and photographic material serves to compliment the artefact collection and is shown in the window spaces while a number of

---

[780] According to the list, panels were mounted about : the 1913 Strike, the Irish Citizen Army, the Ulster Volunteer Force, Irish Volunteers, Howth Gun-running, First World War, the End of the Insurrection, Courtmartial and Execution, the Aftermath, the Threat of Conscription, Contemporary Events and Scenes, Prisons and Prisoners, War of Independence, Hunger strikes in 1920, Reprisals, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, British Military Presence (1920-1921), Street searches and the withdrawal of British Army. A1/90/108, NMIA. All the panels were included in the booklet published in 1993.
[781] *RTE News Bulletin Road to Independence*, (Sweeney Fionnuala), 1.37 min, April 1991, BN 91/114, RTE archives, Dublin.
[782] Internal memo from Michael Kenny, 29 September 1989, A1/89/45, NMIA.
[783] Anthony T. Lucas, "Note" in Snoddy, *Guide to the Historical Exhibition.*
[784] Back cover in *Ar Thoir Na Saoirse 1916-21. The Road to Independence.*
[785] Back cover in *Ar Thoir Na Saoirse 1916-21. The Road to Independence.*
[786] *Minutes of Meeting*, 13 August, supposedly 1989 or 1990, A1/90/108, NMIA. Present at the meeting were D. Greene, D . Byrne (OPW, architect), T. Sherlock, B. Moloney, M. Kenny (Arts and Industry, keeper), P. Wallace (Director) and C. McIvor.

scenes or set-pieces, using reproduction uniforms and clothing helps to recreate the background and atmosphere of the period".[787] In a meeting in August 1990, it was decided that "costumes, guns and banners should be placed in the centre of the hall with the documentary evidence, photographs and small memorabilia along the sides".[788] The centre of the room was still occupied by the traditional artefacts but the walls were given new spatial roles. The staff was aware that the relationship between the centre and the periphery, or between artefacts and background, shaped the general representations. The summary of the display pointed out that material could be "fleshed out" by using copies or enlarged copies of the photographic collection.[789] The use of the term "flesh out" indicated that the inclusion of the photographs was a new policy, and this was intended to have an impact on other artefacts. Photographs and text panels associated walls with the historical context of the collections displayed at the centre.

This spatial rearrangement and the addition of historical context had very significant consequences on the narratives promoted by the museum. Firstly, the historical framework of Irish history was enlarged. Although the core artefacts were still promoting an insular view of Irish history, the walls provided international context. In addition to panels regarding traditional issues such as the Irish Citizen Army or Easter Week, other panels dealt with a more international context such as the First World War. The "Background to 1916" panel, started by asserting that "Upon the outbreak of the First World War, the Supreme Council of the I.R.B actively set about planning a rebellion".[790] Presenting the 1916 Easter Rising in the context of the First World War was uncommon and the inclusion of text panels and images of the First World War itself was new in the permanent collections. More information was proposed regarding Unionists and British troops as well. One text panel dealt with the Ulster Volunteers and their reactions to the 1912 Home Rule Bill. Others informed the visitors of the British military presence in Ireland from 1919 to 1921. The references to Unionists and the First World War were limited but expressed nonetheless an enlargement of the framework.

The photographs had similar consequences. They came from the Cashman collections.[791] Much more than artefacts in the windows they related to the larger context

---

[787] *Ar Thoir Na Saoirse 1916-21. The Road to Independence.*
[788] *Meeting minutes*, 13 August 1990, A1/90/108, NMI.
[789] A1/90/108, NMIA.
[790] A1/98/056, NMIA.
[791] Joseph Cashman (1885-1969) was a photographer who chronicled public life in Ireland, notably providing a visual record of the 1910s and 1920s Ireland. The 669 photographs provide coverage of political figures and movements – above all in Dublin – from 1913 to 1966. As far as the museum's archives show, the Cashman collection was not used before 1991. The photographs were not included in the 1966 commemorative display and the Museum acquired copyright for the collection in 1969. A1/69/007, NMIA.

during which the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence took place. Much more space was devoted to British Troops, the World War and a lesser level to the U.V.F. For instance, a section was entirely devoted to the First World War with photographs of the "Royal Irish Rifles in Ypres, 1917" the "16th Irish Division, Battle of Guillement, 1916".[792] The inclusion of an enlarged context of representation allowed for the presentation of new actors in Irish history.

This inclusion was particularly expressed through the Black and Tans. The Black and Tans was a paramilitary force initially recruited by British Authorities to fight the Irish Republican Army and to suppress the insurrection in Ireland in 1920 and 1921. Composed largely of First World War British veterans, they became notorious for their violence against Irish civilians. Special Constable, the Black and Tans were responsible for law enforcement without being regular members of a police force.[793] They had very limited police training and became the symbols of the atrocities perpetrated by the British troops during the War of Independence. For the very first time, one Black and Tans uniform was included in the display among other uniforms of Republican groups.[794]

In addition to the uniform, photographs were utilized to represent the "enemy". Seven photographs hung on the wall in the section entitled "Black and Tans and Auxiliaries".[795] While the uniform could lead visitors to include the Black and Tans as one regular group among others, photographs focused on their brutality. The overall caption explained that "They gained an unenviable reputation for violence, arson and murder".[796] More specific captions stressed sections entitled "Contemporary events and scenes", "Street searches", "Aftermath of Black and Tan attack on Templemore" and "Farmhouse burned by Black and Tans, Midleton" which highlighted violence perpetrated by the Special Constables.[797] The inclusion of the uniform and the photographs of the Black and Tans reflected John Teehan's view on the inclusion of the "enemies" and the need to enlarge the collections to actors previously absent. It should be noticed that Teehan's vision materialized much more in the production of the general background and context rather than in the display of materials at the centre of the room. This discrepancy contributed to the production of multiple narratives of the past.

---

[792] List of panels, A1/90/108, NMIA.
[793] The name comes from the fact that the influx of men who joined the newly formed troops provoked a shortage of uniforms. The new recruits, therefore, received khaki uniforms (trousers) and dark green or blue tunics.
[794] List of artefacts, A1/003/002, NMIA.
[795] See photographs, A1/90/108, NMIA.
[796] A1/90/108, NMIA.
[797] A1/90/108, NMIA.

To conclude, the National Museum of Ireland acted as a true laboratory in constructing representations of the past despite the meagre official support it received from the Irish government. Groundbreaking to a certain extent, *The Road to Independence* proposed multiple distinct narratives of the 1916 Easter Rising and Irish history at large. The centre of the exhibition proposed a traditional interpretation of the past which focused on Republican insurrections. What was different in 1991 was the manner in which these artefacts were presented to the public. It is yet difficult to distinguish – as Michael Kenny did – between ideological and museological practices to explain the changes within the NMI. It was, certainly, true that the presence of text panels and information about the international background resulted from a long – at least since Lucas' intervention in the 1960s – attempt to set the 1916 Rising in a broader context of understanding the past for visitors "who know little about Irish history".[798] An interesting notation in changing patterns of representation was the meeting point between traditional and contemporary ways of viewing the past; Irish history was designed through artefacts while the international context was limited to wall panels and photographs.

Notwithstanding this distinction, the spatial organization of objects and the inclusion of international context also expressed a revision of the insular history of Ireland. The enlargement of the context of representation allowed for the inclusion of actors previously ignored, like certain "enemies". Moreover this re-arrangement modified the manner in which Irish history was presented. Although the staff considered artefacts in window cases as the core of the display, fleshed out by the photographs and document panels, the balance was questioned by Nuala O'Faolain in *The Irish Times*. In her review of the display, she underlined that "The G.P.O (General Post Office, where the rebels took refuge in 1916) is the centre, but the exhibition sketches in its context, in which it appears a tiny event".[799] The inclusion of a broader framework contributed to the reinterpretation of the past. Changing representations came, therefore, mostly from the promotion of a broader context. This was the consequence of the absence of demand for political reinterpretations of the past. This contrasted very much with the context in Northern Ireland where the Ulster Museum was requested, rather, to provide new historical narratives in order to enhance community relations.

---

[798] Letter from Lucas to Snoddy, 31 May 1966, A1/74/005, NMIA.
[799] Nuala O'Faolian, "An Era Beyond Imaginative Reach", *The Irish Times*, 29 April 1991, p. 12.

B) From Celebration to Commemoration: the Ulster Museum and the Tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne

The tercentenary of the Siege of Londonderry (1989) and the Battle of the Boyne (1990) were major events for Unionists. Parades have been organized annually for the Battle of the Boyne by the Orange Order (12 July) and for the Siege of Londonderry by the Apprentice Boys of Derry (12 August).[800] Unsurprisingly, the two Unionist organizations were very much involved in the various commemorations arranged in 1989 and 1990 to celebrate the two events. The commemorations were occasions to reassert religious distinction in Northern Ireland. Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Peter Robinson published in 1988 a book entitled "Their Cry Was No Surrender. An Account of the Siege of Londonderry, 1688-1689" in which he celebrated the Protestants' commitment not to surrender to the Catholic troops.[801] The commemorations were also marked by the glorification of William of Orange. The Orange Order set up a Commemoration Committee which published a booklet in which the Grand Master celebrated William as "Brave and fearless".[802] However traditional, these celebrations of 1690 were for Unionists, the context in 1990 was significantly different from previous commemorations.

1) Multiculturalism and the Development of Community Relations Policy

The idea of community has gained relevance in museum studies and museum management since the 1980s. Questions of access, participation, and representation have become regular concerns for those working in museums.[803] This greater awareness of "community" has had a significant impact on the museum profession and the nature of everyday activities such as collecting, display, and the way that museums view their public. Outreach activity increasingly asks whether museums are serving their communities. The rise of community issues has been particularly potent in the United Kingdom. The Museum Association Code of Ethics states that museums must now "consult and involve communities, users and supporters

---

[800] Founded in 1814, the Apprentice Boys of Derry is a Protestant Unionist organization which commemorates the resistance of the Derry inhabitants to the Jacobite troops during the 1689 Siege.

[801] The Democratic Unionist Party was created by Ian Paisley in 1971. The DUP has been more radical in its refusal of the various Anglo-Irish agreements which involved the Irish government.

[802] Billy Kennedy, *A Celebration, 1690-1990: the Orange Institution. King William III, Prince of Orange* ([S.l.]: Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, 1990).

[803] Elizabeth M Crooke, *Museums and Community Ideas, Issues and Challenges* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 22.

and value the contributions they make".[804] This matched the community development at the heart of UK government policy in the 1990s which intended to enhance sustainable communities, social inclusion, and neighbourhood renewal. Community and social cohesion were key issues for the UK government. This directly influenced the work of museums. In 1998, the UK Social Exclusion Unit published a report entitled *Bringing Britain Together: a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* in which museums were given a role in the regeneration of social inclusion in communities.[805] The new roles attributed to museums in the UK fostered the development of multiculturalism as exhibiting strategy.

The need for museums to serve their communities more deliberately was linked to the implementation of cultural diversity policy. National museum bodies in the UK, Australia, South Africa, and the United States, to name but a few, have each produced policy guidance on cultural diversity. In Australia, a Cultural Diversity Policy was adopted in 2000 which declared that museums were from now on required to take proactive role in shaping attitudes to cultural diversity. Museums have been asked to "promote understanding, acceptance, and tolerance of cultural difference".[806] In the UK, most of museums have developed outreach divisions responsible for developing links and running initiatives related to cultural diversity priorities. In particular, museums were asked to develop links with minority groups. Thus, the development of community relations and multiculturalism in Northern Ireland belonged to a wider reappraisal of the roles of museums. However, the specificity of the local context of violence resulted in an adaptation of these policies to the politics of reconciliation.

In his survey of peacemaking strategies in Northern Ireland, David Bloomfield stresses that these "can be differentiated into structural and cultural processes".[807] Structural initiatives are those that aim at achieving progress through institutional change and are therefore mostly implemented in the political arena. The cultural approaches "are those that operate at a broad community level, aiming to further resolution by a process of reconciliation between two or more distinct communal or cultural groups".[808] In the first decade of the Northern Irish conflict, the British authorities mostly attempted to end violence and concentrated on constitutional issues.[809] As we have seen in the second chapter, community

---

[804] Quoted in Crooke, *Museums and Community*, p. 23.
[805] Social Exclusion Unit, *Bringing Britain Together: a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, 1998, para. 10. Quoted in Crooke, *Museums and Community*, p. 55.
[806] Museum Australia, *Cultural Diversity Policy*, 2000. Quoted in Crooke, *Museums and Community*, p. 86.
[807] Bloomfield, *Peacemaking Strategies in Northern Ireland* , p. 24.
[808] Bloomfield, *Peacemaking Strategies in Northern Ireland*. p. 50
[809] Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd. "Why Can't you Get Along with each Other? Culture, Structure and the Northern Ireland Conflict", in Eamonn Hughes, ed, *Culture and Politics in Northern Ireland 1960-1990*, (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991), pp. 27-43.

relations emerged in the late 1960s under Terence O'Neill's policy of local Ulster development but disappeared with the rise of violence and direct rule.[810] However, community relations never completely disappeared and were carried on by associations. Many associations had flourished in the 1970s and worked at better relations. For instance, cross-community holidays projects were supported by Children's Community Holidays, Harmony Community Trust or Children's Holiday Schemes.[811] According to Anne-Alexandra Fournier, there were 45 groups officially dealing with community relations in 1986 which received £410.000 from the Northern Irish Department of Education.[812]

In politics, community relations were initially developed by the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). Founded in 1970, the SDLP was the main nationalist party in Northern Ireland and, unlike the Provisional I.R.A or the Sinn Fein, rejected the use of violence. In the 1970s, the SDLP argued that political stability could only be achieved by establishing political structures which recognized the identity of both political traditions in Northern Ireland.[813] At the outset, the SDLP used this approach to support its argument in favour of an Irish dimension of the management of Northern Ireland. Limited in the 1970s because of the British government's priority in fighting paramilitary activities, cultural initiatives increasingly gained relevance in the 1980s.

In 1985, the Anglo-Irish Agreement's preamble recognized "the need for continuing efforts to reconcile and to acknowledge the rights of the two major traditions that exist in Ireland, represented on the one hand by those who wish for no change in the present status of Northern Ireland and on the other hand by those who aspire to a sovereign united Ireland achieved by peaceful means and through agreement".[814] This conception underlined that the conflict in Northern Ireland resulted from the seemingly irreconcilable differences between the two main communities. The 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement gave official support to the two traditions policy. Following the Agreement, the *Standing Advisory Commission on Human*

---

[810] The Community Relations Commission was created in 1969 and ended in 1975.
[811] Hewstone Miles and Rupert Brown, eds., *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).
[812] Anne-Alexandra Fournier, 'L'intégration de la thématique communautaire dans les politiques publiques nord-irlandaises : genèse et illustration contrastée dans l'éducation et l'emploi' (Grenoble: Institut d'Etudes Politiques, 2009), p. 143.
[813] Katy Hayward and Catherine O'Donnell, *Political Discourse and Conflict Resolution Debating Peace in Northern Ireland* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 83, http://site.ebrary.com/id/10422054.
[814] Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Ireland, 1985, http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/aia/aiadoc.htm (last visited March 2012).

Rights (SACHR) ordered a report about community relations policies in Northern Ireland.[815] The 1986 report entitled "Improving Community Relations" was delivered by Hugh Frazer and Mari Fitzduff.[816] The report was crucial because it challenged the primacy of constitutional issues over community relations.[817] The report pointed out that "the two communities lack opportunities to learn about each other", and so, proposed to develop "initiatives … which enable people from different communities to learn more about the common problems they face."[818]

The approach was to accommodate the view that Northern Ireland had two traditions with different but equally legitimate cultures and aspirations, and to encourage both traditions to express their cultural separateness without embarrassment. The long-term aim was the evolution of a plural society which accommodated and respected differences. In the late 1980s, Northern Ireland was, therefore, witnessing a new interest from the British authorities in cultural policies to build peace between communities. Multiculturalism became part of the overall peacemaking process.[819] It came from the hypothesis that, in order to change the divided situation in Northern Ireland, there must be an emphasis on the socio-cultural nature of divisions. Culture was seen as a means to reconcile communities.

The 1986 report entitled *Improving Community Relations* recommended the creation of an official institution entirely devoted to and financing community relations. As a result, the British government created the Central Community Relations Unit in 1987 "to advise the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and the British Government, on community relations in Northern Ireland and also to co-ordinate efforts at improving relations between the communities".[820] This was the first time since the early 1970s, that community relations policies were centralized under a unique official institution. Two sub-groups of the Central Community Relations Unit would become major actors of cultural policies in Northern Ireland: the Community Relations Council and the Cultural Traditions Group. The Cultural Traditions Group was created in 1988 and had an advisory role while the Community

---

[815] Created in 1973, the SACHR was an independent body which assessed discriminations in Northern Ireland. The SACHR was replaced by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in 1999.
[816] H. Frazer and M. Fitzduff, *Improving Community Relations: A Paper Prepared for the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights*, Belfast: August 1986.
[817] Frazer and Fitzduff, *Improving Community Relations*, p.19.
[818] Frazer and Fitzduff, *Improving Community Relations*, p. 28.
[819] M. Savaric "State and Culture in the English-Speaking World: Le Multiculturalisme et l'Irlande du Nord", *Multiculturalism*, vol 5, n°1, 2007, pp. 92-114.
[820] Conflict Archives in the Internet (CAIN). http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/corgan.htm (last visited April 2012).

Relations Council was created in 1990 for the overall management of funding.[821] At any rate, the new British cultural policy in Northern Ireland resulted in a massive afflux of public funding managed by the Community Relations Council. In 1992-1993, the Council received more than £1.5 million.[822]

Despite the creation of official bodies, the definitions of community relations remained blurred. On the one hand, the Central Community Relations Unit issued from the two traditions policy promoted in 1985 and 1986. In this case, it was believed that better community relations would be achieved through equal representation of the two main traditions.[823] In that approach, it is crucial to notice that neither Nationalism nor Unionism were challenged by the development of policies promoting multiculturalism. Taking examples of reconciliation in other settler states – namely where colonization resulted in the political domination of the minority – multiculturalism was used to provide space for the two main cultural and identity related traditions. The 1990s processes of reconciliation in South Africa after Apartheid or in Canada, Australia and New Zealand between colonials and natives used multiculturalism to enhance community relations. Likewise, the community relations policies initially strengthened the division of Northern Irish societies into two equal but distinct interpretations of the Anglo-Irish relations. The Northern Irish conflict was defined as an opposition between two distinct traditions, and therefore, it appeared that a solution should be found in the local relations between Nationalists and Unionists within Northern Ireland. In this approach, the British authorities and their presence in Northern Ireland was somehow ignored as being inextricably part of the fabric of the cultural and political conflict. Paradoxically, in spite of the major British financial involvement in Northern Ireland – notably through the Community Relations Council – the British government attempted not to be perceived as a direct actor of the reconciliation. That is why the Central Community Relations Unit and the Community Relations Council were financially dependent on London but acted as independent local agencies.

On the other hand, certain programmes from the Cultural Traditions Group went beyond the clear opposition between Nationalism and Unionism. *Giving Voices*, a report of the activities of the Cultural Traditions Group for the period 1990-1994, stressed that the major challenge faced by the Cultural Traditions Group was to try to nurture cultural diversity as "a source of richness, a stimulus to new approaches to community life" rather than "a

---

[821] A. Finlayson "The Problem of 'Culture' in Northern Ireland: a Critique of the Cultural Traditions Group" *The Irish Review*, 20, 1997, p. 76.
[822] Bloomfield, *Peacemaking Strategies in Northern Ireland*, p. 153.
[823] Savaric "State and Culture in the English-Speaking World" pp. 92-114

source of division and conflict".[824] Cultural diversity aimed also at making the construction of identities more complex than the simple binary opposition between the two main traditions. From 1989 onward the Cultural Traditions Group would organize annual conferences about cultural diversity. The first conference was entitled "Varieties of Irishness", the second "Varieties of Britishness" and the 1991 event "All Europeans now?" Not only were Irishness and Britishness plural identities, but Europe appeared as a potential criterion in the restructuring of local identification.

Importantly, the cultural approach to conflict management largely operated outside the strictly political arena, involving members of society who do not wield significant official political power. The Community Relations Council was a funding agency and did not directly establish cultural programmes. Among its various sub-sections, the cultural traditions programme "involved supporting local groups, educators, arts groups, broadcasters and film makers among others, in promoting a more general public awareness of, and sensitivity to local cultural diversity".[825] The work involved liaison with public arts bodies, museums, galleries, universities, broadcasting bodies and so on. Much more than the community relations policies themselves, it is therefore crucial to explore to what extent the Ulster Museum interpreted the new context of cultural policy in arranging the 1990 commemorative exhibition of the Battle of the Boyne. Although *Kings in Conflict*'s organization began earlier (1985), the UM took into consideration the overall focus on community relations.

Newspapers and the UM's publications agree on 1985 as the birth of the *Kings in Conflict* project, the very same year of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and just before the 1986 report on community relations.[826] The UM collaborated with the different official institutions which dealt with community relations. The minutes of the Board of Trustees highlighted that "the Group (Cultural Traditions Group) would be making funds available for suitable projects and the Museum would be putting in bids for the Boyne exhibition and other projects".[827] The funding allotted to the UM expressed the links between the institution and community

---

[824] *Giving Voices*, *The Work of the Cultural Traditions Group*, (Belfast: Community Relations Council, 1995), p. 3.

[825] Community Relations Council, *Annual Report*, Belfast, 1991, p. 14.

[826] The catalogue of the *Kings in Conflict* asserted that "the Board of Trustees decided in 1985 to mark the anniversary by devising an exhibition" J.C. Nolan, "Preface" in William Maguire, ed., *Kings in Conflict. Ireland in the 1690s*, Catalogue, p. 7. An article of the *Irish Time* in April 1990 stated that Maguire "has been planning the exhibition since 1985" in D. Ahlstrom, "Battle of the Boyne Exhibition Opens in Belfast", in *The Irish Times*, April 11th 1990, p. 11. Similarly, Jane Coyle started her article on the commemorations of 1690 in Belfast writing that "As far back as 1985, the question of how to commemorate the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne loomed large on the agenda of Belfast's Ulster Museum". J. Coyle, "Belfast Remembers the Boyne", in *The Irish Times*, May 5th 1990, p. A5. This goes along with the exhibition catalogue which gives 1985 as chronological stone.

[827] Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 17 February 1989, UMA, Cultra.

relations policy. Indeed, in the preface to *Kings in Conflict's* catalogue, the director of the museum acknowledged that "the exhibition has been made possible by major financial support from the Department of Education for Northern Ireland within its programme for cultural heritage initiatives".[828] The minutes of the museum's Board of Trustees revealed that the Northern Irish Department of Education gave £95.000 for the exhibition.[829] This funding was actually processed through the Cultural Traditions Groups which depended on the Central Community Relations Unit.

This subvention was quoted in April 1990 by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brian Mawhinney who, in response to the question about official commemorations of 1690 in Northern Ireland, stressed that "substantial sponsorship has been provided for a major exhibition at the Ulster Museum entitled 'Kings in Conflict', which examined the roles of William the Third, James the Second and Louis the Fifteenth (sic) in Ireland in the 1690s."[830] The fact that the exhibition was the only project mentioned by Mawhinney proved how the UM was amply associated with the official involvement in commemorating 1690.[831] The organization of the 1990 exhibition demonstrated how the Ulster Museum had moved away from Unionist influence and represented much more the new community relations policy directed by the British authorities.

In this context, it was not surprising that *Kings in Conflict* was designed according to community relations policies. In 1985, the arguments "for" and "against" the staging of a commemorative exhibition were listed by William Maguire, keeper of the Local History collections and in charge of the display (Appendix 2). Among the arguments "against", he stressed that "If we do the Boyne tercentenary on one side, we may be expected to do the 1798 bicentenary and the Easter Rising centenary on the other, with similar risk of giving offence."[832] The past was conceptualized according to the opposition between the two main traditions for which historical conflicts had major significance. This position was very similar to what Noel Nesbitt had answered in 1967 regarding the staging of the Henry Joy McCracken exhibition. At that time, Nesbitt had observed that the UM could not be described

---

[828] J.C. Nolan "Preface", William Maguire, ed., *Kings in Conflict, Ireland in the 1690s*, (Belfast: UlsterMuseum, 1990), p. vii.
[829] Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 4 May 1989, UMA, Cultra.
[830] *House of Commons*, debates, April 18 1990, col. 876-877.
[831] Given that the archives of the Cultural Traditions Group could not be consulted, we can only speculate about the influence of the Northern Ireland Office – and the British Government – on the decision to subsidize the exhibition.
[832] William Maguire, "1690 and All that", Internal note, file entitled "1990", Local history department, UMA, Cultra.

as partial since it had previously already mounted an exhibition about the Orange Order.[833] In conceptualizing two distinct cultural traditions, the UM was close to museums established through biculturalism in settler societies. Thus, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa was created in 1992 and fostered the presentation of biculturalism, the native Maori culture and the European roots of settlers.

The major difference between 1967 and 1990 was the consideration of the two traditions in the same display. Even though in 1985 Maguire had seemed to depict the 1990 exhibition as related to the Unionist tradition – the 1798 Rebellion and the Easter Rising being closer to the Nationalist tradition – the position of the UM evolved in the second half of the 1980s. Asked to explain the purpose of the display and the possible sectarian interpretations of the 1690s, Sean Nolan, director of the UM, stressed that " For one section of the community to say it is not coming because they see themselves as being on the losing side will be a great loss to their knowledge and understanding of what actually happened".[834] In other words, the director seemed to be willing to talk to the Nationalist community as well, in spite of the fact that the 1690 Battle of the Boyne was traditionally presented as a victory of Unionism. Likewise, William Maguire said "I don't see why Irish people of every tradition should not commemorate the events of the period, and we expect this exhibition to have the widest appeal".[835] Consideration for the diversity of the public had evolved from different commemorations for different communities to the construction of an exhibition for different publics. Certainly, part of these discourses derived from the general museums' policy to reach broader audience – in a marketing strategy – but it also reflected the increasing attention paid to community relations in Northern Ireland.

So, direct rule and British involvement in the management of Northern Ireland had provoked the end of Unionist political domination. In addition to the redefinition of the political landscape, British involvement entailed new cultural policies from now on driven by community relations and multiculturalism. The two ideologies, Nationalism and Unionism, were not fundamentally contested and community relations even participated in the strengthening of two distinct interpretations of the links between Ireland and Britain. The purpose was not to fight these ideologies but to enhance relations between them in Northern Ireland. Although the official policies of community relations were merely beginning in the

---

[833] See chapter II.
[834] J.C. Nolan, in *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 April 1990, p. 1.
[835] *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 April 1990, p. 9.

second half of the 1980s, they had an impact on cultural programmes and institutions. One of the first major consequences of these policies appeared in education.

2) Mutual Understanding, Critical Analysis and the New Links between Education and the Ulster Museum: the Production of an Educational Pack for *Kings in Conflict*

In 1972, the supervision of the Ulster Museum passed from the Department of Finance to the Department of Education. This affiliation played an increasingly relevant role when education became a major tool for social reconstruction in Northern Ireland. The new interest in history teaching appeared before the community relations policy was institutionalized by the creation of the Central Community Relations Unit and the Cultural Traditions Group in the late 1980s. Already in 1976, David Harkness, professor of Irish history at Queen's University and major actor of the teaching history debates in Northern Ireland since the 1970s, stressed "the peculiar obligation which lies upon the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland to know their history (…) it is my belief that (…) history can still serve to reconcile".[836] Likewise, for Seamus Mallon (SDLP) "the reconciliation within our community will be vastly aided by the type of knowledge of the different traditions, that will bring that mutual respect that we all hope for so much".[837] In spite of the pre-existence of debates regarding the use of history teaching to reconcile communities, the relations between the UM and Education mostly took advantage of the reforms of the late 1980s.

History teaching and education in general undertook a major shift in the late 1980s. In the United Kingdom, the 1988 *Education Reform Act* redefined the new school curricula. This general reform had particular significance in Northern Ireland where the definitions of Irishness and Britishness were deeply set community relations.[838] It also had particular relevance since schools in Northern Ireland were openly divided according to the community.[839] The reform gave the opportunity to apply the community relations policy to

---

[836] D. Harkness, *History and the Irish*, An inaugural lecture delivered before The Queen's Univ. of Belfast on 5 May 1976, p. 8, quoted in Fischer, *L'histoire à l'école en Irlande,* p. 382.

[837] The Northern Irish assembly was reestablished in 1973 but collapsed on 28 May 1974. Seamus Mallone, Official Report of Debates, vol. 3, col. 669, 8 May 1974.

[838] J. Reeve "Making the History Curriculum" in Kavanagh, *Making History in Museums*, p. 229. Regarding the definitions of Irishness and Britishness, see for instance the 1989 conference on variety of Irishness, Maurna Crozier, ed., *Cultural Traditions in Northern Ireland: Variety of Irishness,* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, QUB, 1989). In 1990, similar conference on Variety of Britishness.

[839] The structure of schools in Ireland and Northern Ireland reflected indeed the different environment in which the two national museums were working. While in the South, the schools depended on the Department of education and had more or less a common syllabus, the schools in Northern Ireland were, in the 1990s, still designed out by communities. Three categories of schools existed in 1990s Northern Ireland. *Maintained schools*

education. The implementation of Reform in Northern Ireland was marked by two major features: a common curriculum for every school and the creation of Education for Mutual Understanding.[840]

Created in 1987, the Central Community Relations Unit was initiated to outline new education policy in Northern Ireland. The impact of the Community Relations Council on *Kings in Conflict* remained limited since the official agency was only established in 1990, in as much the Ulster Museum was much more bound with the reform of education supported by the Central Community Relations Unit.[841] Outlined by the Central Community Relations Unit, the reform attempted to challenge the sectarian distinction between Catholic and Protestant schools. The Northern Ireland Curriculum which was established by the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 set a basic rule of educational entitlement for pupils from four to sixteen in every school in Northern Ireland.[842] The curriculum, for the first time, was to be uniform to every school. In order to do that, the reform supported the teaching of Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage.[843] Education for Mutual Understanding was a compulsory subject for pupils and Cultural Heritage became a general theme. These were only two of the six curricular themes in the new 1990 Northern Ireland Curriculum and resulted from the direct connection between the Central Community Relations Unit and the Department of Education Northern Ireland. The main purpose was to enhance the knowledge that each community had about the other.

Education for Mutual Understanding was defined by the Northern Ireland Curriculum Council as "self-respect, and respect for others, and the improvement of relationships between people of differing cultural traditions."[844] The objectives of Education for Mutual Understanding were "To learn to respect themselves and others, to appreciate the interdependence of people within society, to know about and understand what is shared as well as what is different about their cultural traditions, and to appreciate how conflict may be

were under the management of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS); *controlled schools* depended on the Education and Library Boards and were mostly attended by Protestants. The third minority category was composed of the *integrated schools*. Even though they were encouraged by the Good Friday Agreement, integrated schools remain today a minority. Only 3% of pupils go to integrated schools in Northern Ireland. Elise Feron, "Irlande du Nord: une réconciliation incertaine", *Cultures et Conflit*, n. 40, 4. 2000, pp. 15-35.

[840] Department of Education of Northern Ireland, *The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) order*, (Belfast: H.M.S.O, 1989).

[841] Bloomfield, *Peacemaking Strategies in Northern Ireland*. p. 137.

[842] It was reviewed in 1994 and the revised Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment was introduced in September 1996. Department of Education of Northern Ireland, *The education reform*.

[843] For a general view of the themes, see L. Caul, ed., *A Common Curriculum: The case of Northern Ireland*, (Belfast: Learning Resources Unit, Stranmillis College, 1993).

[844] Northern Ireland Curriculum Council, *Cross-curricular Themes- Guidance Materials*, (Belfast : NICC, 1990).

handled in non-violent ways."[845] The Education for Mutual Understanding's guide stated that "education can contribute in an important way to bridging division and to removing inter-group suspicions."[846] Likewise, Cultural Heritage aimed at a "cultural understanding model which implied that more harmonious relationships [would] follow from educational programmes that provide information and insight into the customs and practices of other cultural groups."[847] Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage expressed the impact of community relations policy on Education and the new school curriculum attempted to "promote the two heritages as being of equal value and highlight what they share and the large area of overlap between the two traditions".[848] Being under the supervision of the Department of Education Northern Ireland, the Ulster Museum participated in the reform of education in Northern Ireland and the organization of *Kings in Conflict* must be understood in this context. Given that the large majority of schools in Northern Ireland were segregated spaces with no community relations, it was important the Ulster Museum become a space of dialogue.

An educational officer was appointed at the UM in 1976 and links between the museum and education policies were already evident in the 1980s.[849] For instance, in 1982, learning resources published for teachers in Northern Ireland by the Stranmillis Education Document Centre were based on the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, the Northern Irish archives (PRONI) and the Ulster Museum materials.[850] The significance of museum's educational role was embedded in the 1990 Ulster Museum's Corporate Plan. The latter highlighted that "staff are actively involved in major initiatives of the Department of Education, as for example, in curriculum development, in Education for Mutual Understanding and in the work of the Cultural Tradition Group."[851] Sheila Speers, education officer of the Ulster Museum, was indeed part of the official commission that produced the common curriculum in 1990. The educational activities of the Ulster Museum developed even further thanks to the 1990 reform.

---

[845] Northern Ireland Curriculum Council, *Cross-curricular Themes*.
[846] *Education for Mutual Understanding*, Guide, quoted in A. Hyland "Making the Story not so Gory", *Fortnight*, September 1990, p. 30.
[847] Alan Smith and Alan Robinson, *Education for Mutual Understanding, the Initial Statutory Years*, (Coleraine : Centre for the Study of Conflict, 1996), p. 12.
[848] Report of the cross-curricular Working group on Education for Mutual Understanding to the Parliamentary Under-secretary of state for education, *Education for Mutual Understanding: A cross-Curricular Theme*, (Belfast: NICC, 1989), p. 31
[849] Ulster Museum, *Annual Report*, 1974-1978, p. 8.
[850] "A Search in Time", (Belfast: Learning resources Unit, Stranmillis College, 1982). Quoted in V. Gillespie "Recent Publications for History Teachers Produced in Northern Ireland", *Stair*, 1983, pp.14-15.
[851] *Ulster Corporate Plan*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1989).

For the first time in the history of the Ulster Museum, an educational pack was produced for *Kings in Conflict*.[852] The *Kings in Conflict*'s pack was intended to be used for pupils of "all ability levels in the upper primary and lower secondary age range".[853] Diffusion surpassed the three hundred copies sold by the UM since copies were sent to "all grammar and secondary schools in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland".[854] Although teachers' packs were common in Britain in the 1980s as part of a national curriculum for primary schools, they had been more rare in Northern Ireland; probably due to the fact that Catholic and Protestant schools did not have a common curriculum with each other.[855] The Department of Education's funding was allotted by the Cultural Traditions Group (£95.000) to the display but also "for the production of a school pack related to the exhibition and for an illustrator to work on the pack".[856] Education Reform and the common curriculum provided new opportunities for the UM to increase its presence in Northern Ireland. Hence, in May 1990, the UM "presented 60 teachers with the first copies of a colourful information pack about its 'Kings in Conflict' exhibition".[857] Sheila Speers (educational officer of the UM and responsible for the Educational Pack) "hoped it would lead to increased bookings to see the exhibition by schools and stressed there was a special offer for teachers who made a booking".[858] Schools were, in 1990, a major part of the public for *Kings in Conflict*. However, although the pack was linked to the overall organization of the exhibition, the display and the pack must not be confused, they both had specificities.

Unlike the exhibition which was designed by the keeper of the historical collection – William Maguire – the pack was a joint publication of the Ulster Museum and Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. The two editors were Trevor Parkhill (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland) and Sheila Speers (Educational Officer of the UM).[859] Moreover, the pack was the result of a specific educational policy of the UM. Speers directed the *Kings in Conflict* educational pack's publication committee. Unlike the exhibition which benefited

---

[852] The pack was composed of four posters: The map of "Ireland in 1690", the Battle of the Boyne, Cities besieged (Londonderry and Limerick) and the introductory poster of the exhibition depicting the three kings (William, James and Louis). In addition it included an "illustrated booklet of sources telling the story of the war", a "Teacher's booklet with suggestions for class work" and "details of the *Kings in Conflict* slide-pack which may be purchased as an optional addition". Back cover of the educational pack. Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, (Belfast, Ulster Museum, 1990).
[853] *Booklet of sources*, education pack, p. 3.
[854] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, 27 September 1990, UMA, Cultra.
[855] J. Reeve "Making the History Curriculum" in Kavanagh, *Making History in Museums*, p. 235.
[856] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, 4 May 1989, UMA, Cultra.
[857] "Kings in Conflict package published", in *Belfast Telegraph*, 3 May 1990.
[858] "Kings in Conflict package published", in *Belfast Telegraph*, 3 May 1990.
[859] Speers was a crucial intermediary between the Northern Irish Department of Education and the museum. In addition to her activity within the UM, she was part of the committee who worked at producing a new history curriculum for every school in Northern Ireland. Personal interview with Sheila Speers, March 2010, Belfast.

from a research committee made up of historians, the pack was "designed by teachers for teachers" and "was designed with teacher's interests in mind".[860] That is why the discussion about the educational pack is distinguished from the study of the narratives promoted within the display.

The increased focus on educational policy affected the gender ratio in the museum staff. Although the ratio differs according to the museums and divisions – for instance, art museums and the visual art collections of the UM had a gender ratio less favourable to men – the museums' staff was traditionally a male profession in Northern Ireland as elsewhere. Most of the UM's curators were men and the position of keeper of the local history collection has never been occupied by a woman. The new relevance placed on education policy brought about a reconsideration of the gender ratio. The documentary research for the Education pack was undertaken by three teachers, two of whom were Patricia Hill and Patricia Pauley.[861] Within the Ulster Museum, the heads of the education department as well as education officers had traditionally been women. Sheila Speers was the UM's education officer from 1980 to 1996 and was then replaced by Marian Ferguson. Likewise, Felicity Devlin was the NMI's education officer in the late 1980s and was replaced only replaced by Helen Beaumont in the early 2000s. The educational dimension of *Kings in Conflict* contributed to the modification of the gender ratio in the UM members and associates.

The pack expressed the links between the UM and the educational reform. The introduction to the pack's Activities booklet stressed that "It is hoped that the pack will also contribute to the cross-curricular themes of Cultural Heritage and Education for Mutual Understanding".[862] In order to do that, equal representation for the two main traditions was adopted. While presenting the sources of the pack, the Teacher Suggestions booklet stressed that "It is often said that it is the winners who write the history, in that it is their evidence which tends to survive better than that of the losing side. Care, however, has been taken to represent Jacobite and Williamite evidence in as equal a proportion as possible."[863] The pack was, thus, not limited to the Unionist interpretations of the Battle of the Boyne.

To some extent, the pack attempted to provide two versions of history. The back cover of the pack pointed out that the sources told the story of the war "from Jacobite and

---

[860] "Kings in Conflict package published", in *Belfast Telegraph*, 3rd May 1990.

[861] Hill was teaching in St Catherine's Primary School in Belfast and was also teacher on secondment to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. McBride was teaching in Boys' Model School in Belfast and was also teacher on secondment at the UM. Finally, Pauley was teaching at Strabane Grammar School and was teacher on secondment at the UM. Booklet of source, inside front cover.

[862] Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, Activities, Introduction, p. 2.

[863] Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, Activities, Using the Documentary Evidence, p. 14.

Williamite viewpoints."[864] Indeed, in the section about Ireland in 1688, the booklet of sources opposed the "Jacobite witnesses" to the "Williamite witnesses" with clearly different presentations of the events.[865] This expressed the need, defended by the community relations agencies, to give equal representations to the two main cultural traditions. The pack demonstrated that, before the Community Relations Council was fully implemented in 1990, Education for Mutual Understanding and the education reform shaped part of the *Kings in Conflict's* project.

As an educational project, the *Kings in Conflict* pack developed another major issue of educational reform in Northern Ireland. The Teacher Activity booklet stressed that "The role of the teacher will be to develop the pupil's activity as a young historian".[866] Pupils were asked to be aware of the fact that "a document may have significance other than its apparent purpose" and that they had to attempt to concentrate on "what is said but also what is left out". Accordingly they had to "compare" sources and to question the "reliability" of these because "the historian must also be ready to identify bias in the sources he (sic) consults". Ultimately, the booklet explained that "the historian often has to offer his conclusion with the proviso that it is the best version the evidence allows."[867]

The critical analysis of primary sources within the education pack derived from a new turn in history teaching in Northern Ireland and Europe. Since the 1970s, history teaching had been marked in Europe by a new emphasis on the critical approach of primary sources.[868] It was no longer considered positive for pupils to be seen as passive receptacles of knowledge, and so educational policy reforms focused more on supplying pupils with more critical tools and methods. Alan McCully, specialist in history teaching in Northern Ireland, argues that "the adoption of a skills-based approach to history teaching opens up the classroom to different interpretations as never before and prepares the ground for the introduction of sensitive and disputed areas of Irish history".[869] History teaching has responded to conflict by eschewing a traditional "master" narrative approach and instead adopting an inquiry-based, multi-perspective method to enable students to critique evidence, perspectives and interpretations, thus learning to formulate more reflective and balanced view of past events

---

[864] Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, back cover.

[865] Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, sources, pp. 12-13.

[866] Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, Activities, Documentary evidence, p. 15.

[867] Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, Activities, Documentary evidence, pp. 14-15.

[868] See especially the journal *Teaching History*. *Teaching History* began in 1976 and has been the leading UK professional journal for secondary history teachers.

[869] Alan McCully "The Relevance of the Teaching of Cultural and Social Studies to the Handling of Controversial Issues in the History Classroom", in R. Austin (ed.), *Essays on History Teaching in Northern Ireland*, (Coleraine: Faculty of Education Resource Centre, University of Ulster, 1985), p. 57.

for themselves.[870] Controversial episodes like the Battle of the Boyne were particularly adapted to underpin these theories.

Regarding the Siege of Londonderry, the pack presented George Walker's diary in which the "Jacobite soldiers carried their dead and wounded on their backs in making their escape".[871] The Teacher Suggestion booklet explained that "The reader is left with the impression that the Jacobites are cowards. The pupil, however, should also be asked why else would the casualties have been carried back to their own lines: the dead to be buried; the wounded to be treated and not left to the real or imagined cruelties of the people of Londonderry".[872] This example was supposed to be used by teachers to demonstrate how to "identify bias in the sources".[873] Multi-perspectivity in history teaching has become a recognised stance of the international community in seeking to promote educational reform in post-conflict societies.[874] Through this critical analysis approach, the pack was able to challenge unilateral Unionist and Nationalist interpretations of the conflict. According to this principle of critical analysis, the pack could include sources dealing with controversial issues such as the Londonderry inhabitants living conditions during the Siege.[875]

Kings in Conflict markedly became, through its educational pack, an innovative tool of experimentation for new approaches of history teaching. The exhibition was even more important in the communication of the multi-perspective story, since at that time no common textbooks had yet been used in Northern Ireland schools. As a consequence, in September 1990, the Irish and Northern Irish Ministers of Education met in Belfast to announce that a video based on the UM's exhibition would "be used to bring Protestant and Roman Catholic children together in Ulster and to increase understanding among pupils in the Republic".[876] The video was funded by education departments North and South and was sent to schools throughout the whole island. In a period of reform of the history curriculum in Northern Ireland, the Ulster Museum contributed significantly and successfully to the establishment of

---

[870] Jacqueline Reilly and Alan McCully, "Critical Thinking And History Teaching in A Contested Society: The Potential Influence of Social Cognitions", American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting , New Orleans. American Educational Research Association, 2011, http://eprints.ulster.ac.uk/18137/ (last visited April 2012).

[871] George Walker was the commandant in charge of the defense of Londonderry against the Jacobite troops.

[872] Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, Activities, p. 15

[873] Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, Activities, p. 15.

[874] Cole, *Teaching the Violent Past*.

[875] For instance, source 28 was the table made by George Walker to depict the food sold within the walls. Thus, horse-flesh was sold for 1s. 8d a pound ; a quarter of a dog fattened by the dead bodies of the slain Irish, 5s. 6d.; a dog's head, 2s. 6d.; a cat, 4s. 6d.; a rat, 1s.; a mouse, 6d.; greaves by the pound, 1s.; tallow. 4s.; salted hides, 1s.; and other things in proportion. Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, Activities.

[876] N. McAdam, "Battle Video Aims to Forge Closer Links among Pupils", in *Belfast Telegraph*, 4 September 1990, p. 2.

the new role education played and in as much became an official tool for implementing community relations policy.

Curriculum renewal and education reform were, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at the crux of the process of social cohesion in Northern Ireland. This belonged to the broader cultural approach of conflict management which became the new framework for community relations policy in the second half of the 1980s. This new role for education highly contrasted with what was implemented in the Republic of Ireland. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment was created in 1987 and new programmes for the Junior Certificate were established in 1989.[877] While history teaching became a tool for social reconstruction in Northern Ireland, it moved, in the South, towards more utilitarian and technical purposes.[878] The 1992 Green Paper highlighted "The need, particularly in an enterprise culture, to equip students with the ability to think and to solve problems, rather than an accumulation of knowledge".[879] In this approach, history was not crucial and the White Paper could raise in 1995 the possibility of removing History as a compulsory discipline for the Junior Certificate.[880] Although the museum had an educational officer Felicity Devlin, her role in the organization of *The Road to Independence* remained limited.[881] The very late production of an education pack for the *Road to Independence* in 2001 revealed the absence of major educational policy related to the exhibition.[882]

In sum, educational policy was intended to enhance community relations in Northern Ireland. The Ulster Museum, itself dependent on the Department of Education Northern Ireland, contributed to this process. The role of the museum was even more important since, in spite of reforms, denominational schools continued to mirror religious divisions. In 2001-2002, less than 5% of pupils attended non-denominational schools in Northern Ireland.[883] The UM's participation in educational reform and new history curriculum strengthened the presentation of two cultural traditions in Northern Ireland as well as the promotion of cultural diversity through the *Kings in Conflict*'s education pack. Nonetheless, *Kings in Conflict* was

---

[877] The Junior Certificate applies roughly for fifteen-year old pupils. An Roinn Oideachais, *The Junior Certificate, History Syllabus*, Dublin: 1989.

[878] Lee, *Ireland*, *1912-1985*, pp. 640-641.

[879] Department of Education, *Education for a Changing World: Green Paper on Education*, (Dublin: Stationary office, 1992).

[880] Department of Education, *Charting our Educational Future. White Paper on Education*, (Dublin: Stationary office, 1995), p. 48.

[881] Her wish to implement new technology within the display was not followed. Likewise, her intention to welcome the Spanish Armada in the NMI failed.

[882] Given the very late production, I do not propose to study the pack in this section. The different context of production might involve anachronism and unsound interpretations.

[883] Fionnuala O'Connor, *A Shared Childhood: The Story of the Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland.* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press Limited and the Integrated Education Fund, 2002), p. 188.

not limited to its pack. It is very important to investigate the specificity of both the pack and the display in interpreting the 1690s.

3) The Project to Debunk Myths from History and the Demobilization of History

The links between the Ulster Museum and community relations policy have been demonstrated for the second half of the 1980s onward. The production of historical narratives of the 1690s fully belonged to the general approaches of community relations supported by the Central Community Relations Unit. Nevertheless, the UM was doing much more than merely reproducing cultural policies. As a public institution, the UM mediated the past to its visitors; and as mediation it produced interpretations. I argue that the commemorations of the Battle of the Boyne were special occasions to encourage the demobilization of history. Recent works on the aftermaths of the First World War have demonstrated how cultural demobilization was an active process to end wars of the minds. In an article on wars and processes of reconciliation in twentieth century Europe, John Horne observed that, in addition to military, economic and political processes of demobilization, the post-war period (1918, 1945 and 1989 for the Cold War) witnessed processes of cultural demobilization as well.[884] Culture was used to "demobilize the mind" and reconcile communities.[885] In spite of sectarian violence, the context in Northern Ireland during the late 1980s and early 1990s was different, and the comparison with the "demobilization of the mind" in the post First World War period is not the purpose of this study. Moreover, while Horne examines the "demobilization of the mind", this research concentrates on the "demobilization of history".[886] Horne's works remain useful because they underline the process by which certain actors attempted to change cultural representations, in particular the representations of the enemy. In 1990, the Ulster Museum undertook a demobilization of history in order to participate in the politics of reconciliation.

First of all, the Ulster Museum aimed to present "objective" historical narratives. *Kings in Conflict* was organized by the Local History division of the Ulster Museum which underlined its strong commitment to historical accuracy. Among the arguments in favour of the design of a commemorative exhibition for the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne, Maguire recalled in 1985 that "Political and military history is part of the Ulster Museum's

---

[884] John Horne "Guerres et réconciliations européennes au 20e siècle", *Vingtième-Siècle*, n. 104, October-December 2009, p. 4.
[885] *Demobilizing the Mind. Culture, Politics, and the Legacy of the Great War, 1919-1933*, conference held in Trinity College of Dublin, 26-28 September 2001.
[886] In order to examine the "demobilization of the minds", it would be necessary to study the relations between the Ulster Museum and the visitors' interpretations of the exhibition.

brief and a major point of distinction between history as displayed here and in the Folk Museum".[887] The definition of history – and its distinction from folklore – underpinned the method by which the museum aimed to contribute to the commemorations. From the outset, William Maguire had highlighted the need for "objectivity". In 1985, he supported the organization of a commemorative exhibition with the argument that "It may be our positive duty to present an objective display about an event which is familiar politically but little known historically."[888] The search for "objectivity" was accompanied with a distinction between history and myths.

The Ulster Museum defined the 1990 exhibition as a manoeuvre to debunk myths regarding the 1690s. Sean Nolan, director of the Ulster Museum, explained in the preface of the catalogue that "continuing political significance combined with distance in time has created myths around these events and historical fact has become obscured".[889] Although the call for historical objectivity is a banal purpose for historical exhibitions, the distinction between history and myths revealed a wider critical approach which shaped the entire display. It also revealed a reinterpretation of the links between past and present. That is why the term demobilization of history is preferred to demythologization.

The production of historical narratives served, according to the UM's staff, to challenge the political uses of history. Sean Nolan wrote in the preface of the catalogue that the importance of the conflict "has been overtaken by their use as political symbols during the three centuries since".[890] In order to contest the political uses of the 1690s, William Maguire pointed out that *Kings in Conflict* was "commemorating rather than celebrating".[891] He thereby placed the exhibition outside the traditional celebrations organized by the Orange Order every 12 July. The intention not to celebrate the past was similar to the position of the Irish government in 1991 for the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising. Nonetheless, the way to implement the shift from celebration to commemoration was not to downplay the relevance of the historical use of violence but to provide a critical approach of the past instead. That is why I argue that a process of demobilization of history was necessary to challenge the political uses of the past.

In order to demobilize history, the Ulster Museum underlined the clear distinction between past and present. The keeper contended that "the past is really a foreign country

---

[887] William Maguire, "1690 and All that", file entitled "1990", Local history department, UMA, Cultra.
[888] William Maguire, "1690 and All that", file entitled "1990", Local history department, UMA, Cultra.
[889] J.C. Nola, "Preface", Maguire, *Kings in Conflict*, p. vii.
[890] J.C. Nola, "Preface", Maguire, *Kings in Conflict*, p. vii.
[891] Maguire's interview, in *The Christian Science Monitor*, 6 September 1990.

where the natives thought and behaved differently from their descendants and cannot be properly understood if those differences are not fully taken into account."[892] In other words, one cannot use the past and apply the present opposition between Nationalists and Unionists to the 1690s. The exhibition was designed in opposition to the memory and mythical production of 1690s interpretations and aimed at strictly contextualizing the 1690s.

In order to debunk myths from the history of 1690, the Ulster Museum collaborated with academic historians. Sean Nolan pointed out that the display "has as its main objective a review of events in Ireland in the late seventeenth century in the light of recent historical research".[893] Unlike *The Road to Independence* in Dublin, academic historians participated in the organization of *Kings in Conflict*. The discrepancy between the two displays came partly from the fact that the NMI exhibition was permanent, and, therefore, more driven by internal strategy. However, the difference also came from different relations with academia.

Historical research was, above all, present through the keeper himself. William Maguire joined the UM in 1980 and became keeper of the local history collections. Member of a Methodist family, Maguire obtained a master in medieval history at St Andrews University (Scotland) and his Ph.D. on early nineteenth-century local history in 1962 from Exeter College Oxford.[894] He subsequently published several books on the history of Ulster and the history of Belfast.[895] Hence, Maguire himself edited a collection of essays in connection with the exhibition about the 1690s which was highly reviewed in 1990.[896] That is why *the Irish Times* entitled the obituary of William Maguire "Noted history and museum keeper".[897] His history background could explain the distinction he made between the history and the myths of the 1690s.

As soon as the decision was made to mount the exhibition, Maguire embarked on a review of the literature. In November 1985, he stressed that "Preliminary contact has been made with historians in appropriate fields of interest."[898] Unfortunately, most of Maguire's personal papers are not available, and his analysis of the historiography is still unclear. In a meeting held in December 1988 at the UM, the issue of an organizing committee was raised.

---

[892] William Maguire "Digging up the Past: 1690 and all That", *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 4, n.2, 1990, p. 61.
[893] Nolan "Preface", p. vii.
[894] His research dealt with the Downshire estate from 1801 to 1845. See his obituary in the Irish Times. "Noted Historian and Museum Keeper", in *The Irish Times*, 12 March 2011.
[895] William Maguire, *Belfast: a History*, Carnegie Publishing, 2009.
[896] William Maguire, ed., *Kings in Conflict. Revolutionary War in Ireland and its Aftermaths,* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1990). See the review from W. Roosen in *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 23/4, 1991.
[897] "Noted Historian and Museum Keeper", in *The Irish Times*, 12 March 2011.
[898] William Maguire, *Boyne Tercentenary Exhibition*, 1990: position paper, 6 November 1985, 1990 papers, UMA, Cultra.

The minutes point out that "Apart from the relevant curators of the two museums, it was proposed to include designers … and historians". It pursued "The main role of the historians would be to scrutinize and advise on the text of the exhibition".[899] The fact that this proposal was only expressed in 1988 and that their role was only advisory tended to limit their impact on the display. It is nevertheless interesting to investigate who was contacted.

The minutes initially mentioned James McGuire, Ian Green and Harman Murtagh but David Harkness was substituted for Ian Green by William Maguire the month after.[900] In addition, the UM contacted Rex Cathcart in order to write the scripts for audio-guides.[901] The common point between these scholars – Cathcart was a specialist of education – was their commitment to revise the local sectarian and parochial definitions of history. In the collection of essays edited by Maguire's in 1990 to accompany *Kings in Conflict*, Murtagh dealt with the connections between Ireland and the Kingdom of France, so to say, between James, William and Louis XIV.[902] Cathcart was Professor in Science of Education at Queen's University and was fully involved in the debates regarding the teaching of history both in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.[903] He shared with David Harkness a wish for the teaching of a more inclusive Irish history, North and South. Both Cathcart and Harkness proposed to use history as a way to appease community relations. Cathcart claimed, as soon as January 1960, that Catholics and Protestants had a common national identity in Ireland.[904] It was a first indication that, through its collaboration, the Ulster Museum's intention to demobilize history was not entirely disconnected from present consideration for community relations. The purpose of the UM was not merely to present "objective" historical narratives, but also to limit the divisive political uses of history.

Consequently, community relations and the focus on two traditions were considered by the UM's staff, and this modified the manner in which historical conflicts were interpreted.

---

[899] *Boyne Tercentenary Exhibition*, minutes, 14 December 1988, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA, Dublin. Due to John Teehan's involvement in the collaboration, numerous files about the 1990 exhibition are part of the National Museum of Ireland's archives.

[900] Summary of a phone call between Maguire and Teehan, retranscribed by Teehan, 20 January 1989, A1/87/105, 1/3. NMIA, Dublin. Dr Murtagh was a lecturer in Athlone Institute of Technology (Republic of Ireland) and Honorary Editor of the *Irish Sword*, an Irish military history journal founded by Hayes-McCoy. James McGuire was lecturer in modern Irish history in University College of Dublin. Harkness professor of Irish history at Queen's University and also Chairman of the Trustees of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

[901] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, 22 March 1990, UMA, Cultra.

[902] H. Murtagh "The War in Ireland, 1689-1691" in Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict. Revolutionary War in Ireland and its Aftermaths*, pp. 61-92.

[903] He was part of the 1965 History Syllabus Committee set up in the Republic of Ireland to review the secondary school history syllabus which had been used since 1941 He was part of the 1965 History Syllabus Committee set up in the Republic of Ireland to review the secondary school history syllabus which had been used since 1941.

[904] *The Irish Times*, 12 January 1960, p. 7.

In the 1960s and 1970s, historical conflicts such as the 1690 Battle of the Boyne or the 1798 Rebellion were associated with one tradition. Conversely in 1990, the representations of the 1690s were intended for the two communities. Unlike the education pack which mostly chose to present two communities and two sets of interpretations of the past, the display was driven by the wish to provide common historical narratives. In order to implement this choice the UM endeavoured to debunk myths from history. This act of revision contrasted with the NMI's reluctance to implement historical revisionism to its collections. The discrepancy regarding critical reinterpretations of the past stemmed from the need to demobilize history in Northern Ireland and to provide new interpretations (remobilization) of the past to non-academic audiences.

4) The Organization of *Kings in Conflict* as the Consequence of New Networks which Challenged the Local Interpretations of the Past

Before analyzing the representations of the past presented throughout *Kings in Conflict*, it is necessary to stress that the organization process supported an interpretation of the Anglo-Irish relations. Much more than any previous display arranged at the Ulster Museum – or the National Museum of Ireland – *Kings in Conflict* attempted to confront visitors with history of the 1690s which transcended the (Northern) Irish framework. The organization of the exhibition revealed how the links between cultural institutions in and out of the island of Ireland participated in the reappraisal of Anglo-Irish relations.

First of all, the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne – for which *Kings in Conflict* was designed – took place in a broader context of commemorations. It is necessary to discuss the links between them and the potential consequences on the organization of *Kings in Conflict*. The second half of the 1980s belonged to what Pierre Nora calls "an era of commemorations" in which the bicentenary of the French Revolution received the lion's share of honours but was by no means the only example.[905] The bicentenary of the French Revolution was indeed a major event in France but also in many European and extra-European countries. Ireland (North and South) was no different and events were mounted all over the island, in particular in Wexford – where the links with 1789 had led to the 1798 insurrection. In addition to the commemorations of 1789, the other major event

---

[905] Pierre Nora, "L'ère de la commémoration", in Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire,* vol. 3, pp. 4687-4718.

commemorated was the 1688 Glorious Revolution.[906] This latter event had traditionally received particular attention in Northern Ireland since it had led to the opposition between James and William and therefore to the 1690 Battle of the Boyne. Thus, the 1962 memorial exhibition arranged for William of Orange at the Ulster Museum amply emphasized the struggle for the throne of England and Scotland. The multiplication of commemorations in the late 1980s enhanced the connection between the Ulster Museum and other Irish and international institutions.

For instance, William Maguire was directly involved in the commemorations of the arrivals of Huguenots in Ireland.[907] He was part of the group which met in June 1983 to "mark the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1985, by an ecclesiastical commemoration, public lectures and an exhibition".[908] In 1985, the Lisburn Museum organized an exhibition for the tercentenary of the arrival of Huguenots in Ulster.[909] William Maguire participated in the organization of the exhibition and the UM Local History department provided some artefacts from its collections.[910] The transnational links between Ireland and the kingdom of France in the seventeenth century played a role in the design of *Kings in Conflict*. Maguire stressed that the documentation produced the 1985 commemorations was a basis for *Kings in Conflict*.[911] It is hard to make clear the extent to which the 1685 commemorations helped to shape *Kings in Conflict*, but the focus on transnational relations between France and Ireland – through the migrations of the Huguenots – became a common point between the two displays. On a European scale, the transnational dimension of the 1985 display mirrored the intention within commemorations to go beyond the national frameworks.

The series of commemorations provided Maguire with international examples and models which could be used in *Kings in Conflict*. The UM's reports which asserted that "Maguire was particularly occupied with preparations for the Boyne Tercentenary exhibition scheduled for the spring of 1990 and visited some of the many exhibitions in Holland and

---

[906] The Glorious Revolution (or the Revolution of 1688) took place in 1688 when the British monarch – the Catholic James II – was overthrown by Parliamentarians and the Protestant William III of Orange-Nassau, stadtholder of Holland. This event initiated the war of the succession between Jacobites and Williamites, from which the 1690 Battle of the Boyne was one important step.

[907] After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1585, many Protestants – called Huguenots – fled and took refuge all over Europe.

[908] The Huguenots and Ulster 1685-1985. Historical introduction and exhibition catalogue, Lisburn Museum. 10 October 1985 - 30 April 1986, forewords.

[909] Lisburn welcomed indeed many French Huguenots after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1585. See E. J. Best, *The Huguenots of Lisburn: The Story of the Lost Colony*, (Lisburn: Lisburn Historical Society, 1987).

[910] He also "edited and contributed to the fine catalogue published for the occasion ". Ulster Museum, *Annual Report*, 1985-1986, p. 15.

[911] Memorandum from Maguire, files "1990" 6 November 1985, UMA, Cultra.

England".[912] For example, he pointed out that he saw the portrait of Louis XIV – which would be one of the most important pieces of *Kings in Conflict* – in Amsterdam and thought it would be perfect for the exhibition.[913] Similarly, he wrote in 1988 that he "visited the Netherlands recently, to look at William and Mary exhibitions on display this year, and hope to get the loan of a number of items seen".[914] Although, these visits resulted from Maguire's personal interests, the general context of commemorations contributed to relating the Ulster Museum into the broader European context as well.

The series of commemorations encouraged the international loans of artefacts, which was a defining attribute of *Kings in Conflict*. This was expressed through the UM's involvement in commemorating the 1588 Spanish Armada. From April 20th to September 4th an "international exhibition was presented at the National Maritime Museum (NMM) in Greenwich (London), continuing at the Ulster Museum in Belfast from October 12th to January 8th".[915] The UM's ability to collaborate so actively came from its important collections regarding the Spanish Armada. The report of the museum explained that "Holding as it does some 90% of the material excavated from the Armada wrecks off the Irish coast, it was fitting that the Museum collaborated with the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, in mounting the major international exhibition 'Armada 1588-1988'".[916] The Spanish Armada exhibition was not initiated by the UM;[917] the organization was assumed by the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.[918] Notwithstanding, the NMM's management of the exhibition, its display in Belfast gave more credibility to the UM.

It was the first temporary commemorative exhibition arranged at the UM since 1967. Therefore, the Director would ask education officer Sheila Speers to provide a special report about the exhibition. Discussing this report in 1989, the Director pointed out that "not only

---

[912] Ulster Museum, *Annual Report*, 1988-1989, p. 19.
[913] *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 April 1990, p. 9.
[914] Letter from Maguire to Teehan, 12 September 1988, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA, Dublin. The exhibition in Amsterdam was *The Glorious Revolution: The World of William and Mary*, Amsterdam, June – September 1988. Catalogue, p. 2. See William's portraits (artefacts 6 and 167)
[915] L. Jensen, "Book Review", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 20, n°1, Spring 1989, pp. 133-134.
[916] Ulster Museum, *Annual Report, 1988-1989*, p. 8.
[917] The exhibition at the Ulster Museum was under the responsibility of Lawrence Flanagan, keeper of the Department of Antiquities (to which the artefacts belonged), and not Maguire, keeper of the Local History Department. Although no evidence was found to support this hypothesis, we may assume that in 1987-1988 Maguire was already utterly committed to the organisation of *Kings in Conflict*. Another reason which explained why Maguire set back from the Spanish Armada exhibition was the fact that Sheila Speers (educational officer) was personally involved with the NMM and the mounting of the display.
[918] From the total cost of £500.000, the UM contributed up to £150.000. The National Maritime Museum was in charge of the exhibition guide and the Director of the UM received merely a "brief of the exhibition" early 1987. *Board of Trustees meeting*, minutes, 19 February 1989, UMA, Cultra.

was it a very good record, but it was an important guideline for future major exhibitions".[919] Speers explained that initially the contacted institutions were reluctant to loan their artefacts to the Ulster Museum for the Spanish Armada exhibition, this, according to her, because of the perception of Belfast as being a dangerous site.[920] After various negotiations and the personal intervention of the Director, most of the loans were secured for the Spanish Armada to be displayed in Belfast. This success contributed, according to Speers, to reassuring the institutions as to the security in the Ulster Museum, a crucial point with regards to the high number of loans requested by Maguire for *Kings in Conflict*.[921]

The international dimension in the organization of the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne was not altogether surprising. Indeed, the commemorations of the Battle of the Boyne by the Orange Order had traditionally highlighted the links between the Battle of the Boyne and the Glorious Revolution, interpreting William's victory as the defeat of James' absolutism. What was much more astonishing was the all-Ireland framework of organization supported by the Ulster Museum. The most interesting feature was certainly the collaboration between the two national museums in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Although ultimately only displayed in Belfast – mostly due to the cost of the transfer as seen below – the NMI's staff contributed to the design of *Kings in Conflict* which was supposed to travel to Dublin. On 19 June 1987, Maguire wrote a letter to the NMI in which he explained that the UM was planning a major exhibition "to mark the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne".[922] Maguire asked whether "the National Museum would be willing to be associated" with the UM in sponsoring the exhibition which "would be intended to show in Dublin as well as Belfast".[923] On the NMI's side, the issue was under the responsibility of John Teehan, head of the Art and Industry division.[924] Even more than the links with British institutions, this collaboration marked the UM's wish to go beyond the local sectarian interpretations of the past.

Teehan was very enthusiastic and recommended the exhibition as soon as August 14th 1987. In transmitting the request to the Director (Patrick Wallace), he highlighted the fact that "the particular historical events merit an exhibition" and that "the subject matter should be a

---

[919] *Minutes of the Board* of Trustees, 22 June 1989, UMA, Cultra.
[920] Personal interview with Sheila Speers, Belfast, February 2010,
[921] The 1990 section entitled "War at Sea" was mainly built with artefacts coming from the National Maritime Museum, thus using links established for the 1988 exhibition.
[922] As far as the NMI's archives show, the first document dealing with the project of collaboration between the two museums dates back to June 1987. Letter from Maguire to Teehan, 19 June 1987, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA, Dublin.
[923] Letter from Maguire to Teehan, 19 June 1987, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA, Dublin.
[924] Unfortunately, the UM's archives are very incomplete regarding the organization of the exhibition, and William Maguire's personal papers were not kept in the Local History Department's archives. Most of the process is known from the National Museum of Ireland's archives, in particular John Teehan's correspondence.

fruitful area for co-operation between the two museums and between both parts of the country".[925] In a similar tone, it was noticed that Teehan wrote to the Department of the *Taoiseach* in 1988, that the NMI's historical collections "could begin with the 17[Th] century", and he considered 1690 as part of the historical "movements and occurrences (…) which have brought the country to the present point".[926] He also suggested collaborating with the UM to design the permanent exhibition. Teehan was indeed an ardent supporter of the collaboration and launched himself in the organization of *Kings in Conflict*. By October 1988 the project was approved.[927] From 1987 until 1990, Teehan and Maguire carried on a prolific correspondence.[928]

This collaboration would prove to be historic. Teehan explained to the NMI's Director that the "exhibition would be the greatest co-operative venture so far undertaken by the two Museums".[929] This was shared by Maguire, who considered the collaboration to be a "historic occasion".[930] The museums had never worked together on any major exhibition. Only loans had been arranged, as in 1948 for the 1798 Rebellion commemorative exhibition arranged at the NMI.[931] The exhibition was supposed to be first displayed in Belfast for two months and then be transferred to the NMI for a similar period.[932] Yet, this collaboration was also providing different responsibility for the two museums. Maguire's initial letters did not invite the NMI to a strict joint exhibition but merely to collaboration. Indeed, the letter was received by Teehan in June 1987, roughly two years after the UM had decided to mount a commemorative exhibition. Although the process was incomplete – for instance no title was decided by June 1987 – the guidelines of the exhibition had already been discussed by the UM staff. When the NMI agreed to collaborate with the UM, they also "accepted the UM's plans" which, as the Board of Trustees explained, "were well advanced".[933] The collaboration resulted very much from the UM's intention to provide historical narratives going beyond the local sectarian interpretations of the 1690s.

Given the gaps in the UM's archives regarding the organization of *Kings in Conflict*, it is difficult to assert clearly the reasons why this collaboration was requested by the UM. However, some light can be shed on this question based on the arguments used by the UM

[925] Letter from Teehan to Wallace, 14 August 1987, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA, Dublin.
[926] Letter from Teehan to the Secretary of the *Taoiseach*, 26 July 1988, A1/88/027, NMIA.
[927] Letter from Teehan to the Department of *Taoiseach*, 27 April 1990, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA.
[928] See their correspondence in NMI's archives, A1/87/105, NMIA.
[929] Internal note from Teehan to Wallace, 9 March 1988, A1/87/105, NMIA.
[930] Letter from Maguire to Teehan, 9 November 1989, A1/87/105, NMIA.
[931] See above, section I.
[932] Letter from Teehan to Ann Chambers, 5 May 1989, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA.
[933] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, 15 December 1988, UMA, Cultra.

staff to justify the collaboration. Maguire was very keen to present this "crucial episode of Irish history – as it actually happened – in an all-Ireland context".[934] The letter Maguire sent to Teehan in 1987 revealed that the collaboration was part of the overall approach. Maguire wrote that the exhibition "should be the result of the kind of cross-border co-operation that has proved so successful – and agreeable – in the past".[935] *Kings in Conflict* was not intended to promote glorifying versions of William's victory for the Unionist but rather to provide historical narratives which could be displayed in the two parts of the island. In supporting cross-border collaboration, the Ulster Museum reacted both to the community relations policy which encouraged the highlighting of the two main communities, but also to cross-border relations issued from the new responsibility given to the Irish government by the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Despite the collaboration between Maguire and Teehan, *Kings in Conflict* was ultimately not displayed in Dublin. In November 1989, Maguire wrote to Teehan that "I know you will share my disappointment that an historic opportunity has been missed".[936] It is, therefore, necessary to discuss the reasons which prevented the Ulster Museum and the National Museum of Ireland from providing all-Ireland narratives of the 1690s. Political reasons were evoked by Northern Irish Unionists like David Trimble[937] who reacted in the *Orange Standard*.[938] In an article entitled "Dublin Government only interested in its own culture", he considered the absence of exhibition in Dublin as due to the "Eire Government's refusal". According to him, this censorship contrasted with "the Northern Ireland Office approach to culture and heritage to secure what they describe as 'parity of esteem' for the nationalist tradition".[939] The failure would then come from political pressure in the Republic of Ireland. Nevertheless, it appeared that the reasons were more economic than political.

The archives of the NMI give a good insight into the process and strains which took place between the various agencies.[940] John Teehan kept records of every meeting he attended regarding the exhibition. By November 1987, Mary Doyle – Assistant Principal of the Department of the *Taoiseach* – stressed that the "Department would have no objection to an involvement by the National Museum in the Exhibition as regards loan of material".[941] The

---

[934] Letter from Maguire to Teehan, 12 September 1988, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA, Dublin.
[935] Letter from Maguire to Teehan, 19 June 1987, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA, Dublin.
[936] Letter from Maguire to Teehan, 9 November 1989, A1/87/105, NMIA.
[937] Ulster Unionist Member of the Parliament.
[938] Monthly newspaper published by the Orange Order.
[939] *Orange Standard*, June 1990, p. 12.
[940] The absence of any private source regarding the issue can yet be regretted. Indeed, most of the remaining documents scarcely provide any personal view on the matter, merely reflecting organisational aspects.
[941] Letter from Doyle to the Director, 30 November 1987, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA.

Department of the *Taoiseach* pointed out in October 1988 that "It is also considered appropriate that the exhibition should be shown in Dublin in 1990".[942] As far as the archives show, the only condition required by the Department was for a "joint committee" to "facilitate the planning".[943] The first meeting of the committee took place in December 1988 and was attended by Maguire, Teehan, as well as by Eileen Black (UM) and Mary Doyle from the Department of the *Taoiseach.* As a result it was decided that a "special government indemnity would be provided to cover all loans".[944] Another element contradicts the hypothesis of political censorship. The Irish government was involved in the educational use of *Kings in Conflict*. In September 1990, the two ministers of education met to announce the production of a new video for schools about the historic battle of 1690. The film, based on *Kings in Conflict,* was funded by the Departments of Education North and South and was sent out to schools throughout the entire island. These details challenge the assumption of political censorship by the Irish government.

The reason why the exhibition was ultimately not displayed in Dublin was linked to the cost of the display. In May 1990, John Bruton (*Fine Gael*, leader of the opposition) asked the *Taoiseach* whether he would "make provision for the National Museum to accommodate … the special exhibition on the Battle of the Boyne currently on display in Belfast". The *Taoiseach* reaffirmed the "full co-operation with the Ulster Museum" in the form of loans. He went on to say that the possibility to hold the exhibition in the National Museum was examined but "that the very heavy cost involved would not be justified".[945] The economic aspect of the display provoked a reassessment in November 1989. The estimated cost of the exhibition in 1988 was one £150.000 to be divided between the two museums.[946] Yet, the cost increased due to the difficulty of finding display space.

The NMI's building in Kildare Street was to be occupied by an exhibition entitled "The Works of Angels",[947] designed in collaboration with the British Museum and with loans from the UM. Another possible space was the Royal Hibernian Academy Gallery.[948] However, in July 1989, the British Museum which participated in the *Kings in Conflict* exhibition through loans, expressed some reservation about the protection of the artefacts in

[942]Letter from Doyle to Teehan, 10 October 1988, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA.
[943] Letter from Doyle to Teehan, 10 October 1988, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA.
[944] *Minutes of the Meeting*, 14 December 1988, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA.
[945] Irish Parliamentary debates, *Dail Debates*, 1 May 1990, vol. 398.
[946] *Minutes of the organization meeting*, 14 December 1988, A1/87/105. 1/3, NMIA.
[947] Exhibition of Celtic metalworks (6th – 9th centuries A.D)
[948] *Minutes of the organization meeting*, 14 December 1988, A1/87/105. 1/3, NMIA.

the Royal Hibernian Academy gallery.[949] Teehan received a call from Maguire who explained that "It has been recommended from London that certain equipment be installed".[950] More precisely, the British Museum requested the gallery to install "an air conditioning unit necessary for the venue to be approved".[951] This installation engendered increasing costs. The Department of the *Taoiseach* agreed in early September 1989 to provide twenty-five thousand Irish pounds to adapt windows.[952] But this amount was not sufficient. In November 1989, the Secretary of the Department of *Taoiseach* explained to the Director of the Ulster Museum that the organization of the exhibition in the Royal Hibernian Academy Gallery would now cost roughly £300.000, the figure quoted by *Taoiseach* in the Parliament.[953] This augmentation of the overall costs for the transfer of *Kings in Conflict* appeared as the main reason why the exhibition was ultimately not displayed in Dublin in spite of the various loans and initial political agreement.

Hence, the new links between the two national museums suffered not from political pressure but rather from contrasting economic situations for the two institutions. Although the financial and marketing issues will be mostly detailed in the next chapter, the *Kings in Conflict* example indicated that any major shift in representing the past – and often to present new artefacts – requested important funding. In 1990, the Ulster Museum was taking advantage of substantial funding from Britain in order to enhance community relations whereas the Republic of Ireland had not entered the economic boom yet.[954] In spite of the ultimate failure, the organization of *Kings in Conflict* had been a historical collaboration between the two national museums and expressed a common wish – at least from Maguire and Teehan – to go beyond nationalistic interpretations of the past and to provide all-Ireland historical narratives.

In conclusion, from the onset the two national museums differed in their purposes for organizing the exhibitions. The NMI proposed to rearrange its collections in connection with the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Rising whereas the UM aimed at changing the representations of a divisive past and to demobilize history. A major difference was the manner the two museums considered their visitors. Part of the new political emphasis on multiculturalism, the UM was well aware of being confronted with different interpretations of

---

[949] Letter from Teehan to the Department of the *Taoiseach*, 27 April 1990, A1/87/105. 1/3, NMIA.

[950] Phone call from Maguire to Teehan, transcribed by Teehan, 5 July 1989, A1/87/105, NMIA.

[951] Letter from Reading (executive office, British Museum) to Teehan, 13 November 1989, A1/87/105. 1/3, NMIA.

[952] Letter from Stoke (Department of the *Taoiseach*) to Nolan (Director of the Ulster Museum), 15 November 1989, A1/87/105, NMIA.

[953] Irish Parliamentary debates, *Dail Debates*, 1 May 1990, vol. 398.

[954] The period of the Celtic Tiger would merely begin in 1993-1994.

the 1690s according to the communities. The plurality of publics led to the revision of the past in, supposedly, a less divisive approach. The community relations policy brought about a new framework of cultural policies in which the Ulster Museum played an increasing role. It is, therefore, necessary to explore how the new roles of the Ulster Museum materialized throughout *Kings in Conflict* and to assess which myths the staff intended to debunk and the manner in which they did so.

C) Europeanization as Cultural Demobilization of History in *Kings in Conflict*

It has been important to deconstruct the organization of *Kings in Conflict* in order to better understand its participation in the new cultural policies in Northern Ireland during the 1980s. It is also necessary to investigate the added value of the museum, in other words, to examine the specificities of the UM in constructing representations of the 1690s. The analysis of *Kings in Conflict* reveals that, through the exhibition the Ulster Museum debunked myths of the 1690s in order to foster cultural demobilization of history. John Horne's examination of cultural demobilization in post-war periods is useful to underpin the historical dimension of the process and the relevance of four categories of myths usually at stake. He argues that cultural demobilization deals particularly with the representations of heroes, the demonization of enemies, and the notion of sacrifice.[955] While Horne focuses very much on international examples – for instance the Peace conference after the Great War – this research takes into consideration to what extent a single institution (the Ulster Museum) participated in a state sponsored process of cultural demobilization of history and how this latter was expressed through *Kings in Conflict*.

Deconstructing the memory boom which started in the 1960s and 1970s, Jay Winter remarked that the "heroic narrative had done its job" and that new forms of remembrance had emerged.[956] One of these new forms, he argued, was the "need to Europeanize the discussion of the war".[957] He took the 1992 creation of the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* in Péronne – in which he was involved – as an example.[958] Unlike most previous historical narratives of the

---

[955] John Horne "Introduction", in J. Horne, ed., *Démobilisations culturelles après la grande guerre.* (Paris: Noesis, 2002). pp. 49-51.
[956] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 27.
[957] Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*, p. 193.
[958] Initiated by the council of the district of the Somme, with European funding, the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* was inaugurated in 1992. Since 1986, academic historians from different parts of the world (France,

First World War, the *Historial* set the War in a European context and gave many references to British, French and German societies between 1914 and 1918. Through the plurality of languages and approaches, the *Historial* was, according to Winter, a step in the "nascent European perspective on the War".[959] One of the main characteristics of the *Historial* was the fact that its staff – composed mostly of historians – endeavoured to avoid any triumphal versions of the War and challenged the traditional distinction between us and them in military museums.[960] Going beyond the national frameworks, the *Historial* contributed to the reassessment of heroic representations of the past. In a similar tone, the Europeanization of the framework of representations of the 1690s served to challenge the nationalistic interpretations of wars and to reaffirm that wars were international but also transnational events.

1) Presenting the Battle of the Boyne in a European Context

The first myth the Ulster Museum aimed to debunk was the over-emphasis of the Battle of the Boyne in the Unionist memory. As said above, the Battle had been celebrated every year by the Orange Order since the nineteenth century. Although, *Kings in Conflict* was arranged in relation with the tercentenary of 1690, the relevance of the Battle of the Boyne was revised, in particular with relation to the European context.

Although the title of the exhibition – *Kings in Conflict: Ireland in the 1690s* – highlighted Ireland as the general framework, the most important narrative was that the 1690s conflict was part of different Irish, British but also European conflicts. In June 1987, William Maguire explained to John Teehan that the exhibition concentrated "on the battle (Boyne) as an historical event in its contemporary European, British and Irish contexts".[961] This mention of the European context contrasted with the Ulster local prism through which the past had so far been interpreted at the UM. In 1989, the Board of Trustees went even further and indicated that "the logo and title for the exhibition had also been carefully designed to put the events in their European, rather than Irish context".[962] Although this statement was too strong since the

---

United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Australia, United States etc.) have participated in the organization. The exhibition is based on the comparison of the three main societies at war, France, Britain and Germany.

[959] Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*, p. 193.

[960] Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*, p. 187.

[961] Letter from Maguire to Teehan, 19 June 1987, A1/87/105, 1/3, NMIA, Dublin.

[962] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, 14 December 1989, UMA, Cultra.

Irish dimension of the 1690s was not absent (Ireland was mentioned in the title for instance) it revealed an intention to go beyond insular history of the 1690s.

The first image within the catalogue was a map (also hung in the entrance corridor) entitled *Europe in 1688* (Appendix 9-F). It centred on the Kingdom of France and Habsburg's possessions. These two political entities were coloured (red for Louis XIV's possessions, yellow and green for Habsburg's, purple for Prussia and Brandenburg). Astonishingly, Ireland was white and appeared as a spatial periphery, outside the field of the powerful states. Ireland's position as European periphery was no coincidence. The introductory panel of the exhibition stressed that "None of the kings in conflict cared particularly about Ireland and the Irish. James came to Ireland solely to recover his English throne. William solely to defeat James".[963] This statement was crucial in explaining that the opposition between James and William – a fundamental theme in both Unionist and Nationalist oppositions – was not primarily based on Ireland.

Ireland certainly had been a major battlefield – it was the only moment of the 1690s when both James II and William III were physically opposed to one another – but James II and William III fought for broader political reasons. They were fighting first and foremost for the English and Scottish thrones (James II had been overthrown by William III during the Glorious Revolution in 1688). On a larger scale, the opposition between the two belonged to the Nine Years' War (1688-1697) in which Louis XIV was opposed to the Grand Alliance, a European-wide coalition led by William, to contest the expansion of the kingdom of France. These were the entangled political contexts that the exhibition intended to highlight. The Director of the Ulster Museum explained in the preface to the catalogue that "folk memory has emphasized the conflict as one between two rivals (war of the two kings) reflecting a somewhat insular view of an event of major importance in European history".[964] In opposition to the memory of the 1690s war in Ireland between two monarchs, the exhibition presented *Kings in Conflict*, multiple oppositions between monarchs for political supremacy in Europe. As a consequence, the first three sections of the exhibition hardly dealt with Ireland or Irish history but highlighted European diplomacy and military strategy.

This new context directly influenced the presentation of the Battle of the Boyne itself. While the exhibition was mounted for the tercentenary of the Battle, the latter did not appear in the title. Certainly, section seven was devoted, albeit not exclusively, to 1690 and the Battle of the Boyne, and it was, in terms of artefacts, the richest of the displays. Yet, the display was

---

[963] Exhibition slides, Roy Service's personal papers (designer), UMA, Cultra.
[964] J. C. Nolan "Preface" in Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*.

far from being a celebration of the Battle. The caption of the main painting devoted to the Battle argued that "The battle fought at the Boyne (…) was not a great affair in military terms".[965] In a European diplomatic context, so to say regarding the opposition between Louis XIV and the Grand Alliance, the Battle was not at all decisive. The section about the Battle was followed by the section about "War at sea" with the "Battle of La Hogue" in 1692 which was defined as a "turning point" in the opposition between France and the Dutch Republic.[966] Similarly, section ten about "Peace in Ireland and Europe" included William's other victories (notably Namur captured by the French in 1692).[967] Recapturing Namur was even considered in the catalogue as "the triumph of his (William) military career".[968] Presenting the Battle of the Boyne in a wider context prevented an unchallenged glorification of the event.

The move from the Irish battlefield to the European context was best expressed through the space given to sea and harbours. Unlike the emphasis on the Battle of the Boyne and the role of infantry, section nine, about "War at sea" highlighted the role of maritime connections. The exhibition was an occasion to re-evaluate the role of harbours in Irish history.[969]. Also, relics and replica of warships were on display. Twenty relics of the H.M.S Dartmouth, which "played a leading part in the relief of Derry", could be seen.[970] Even more than battlefields such as the Boyne or Aughrim, the sea reflected the international dimension of the 1690s conflict. The Battle of La Hogue, in which "French naval power was devastated by a combination of English and Dutch fleets", was an illustration of the so-called "European war".[971] Maritime history was one of the main fields of trans-national history.[972] *Kings in Conflict*, therefore, proposed representations of the past enlarged to the broader European context. Although the representations were mostly limited to Western Europe, it challenged the sole relations between Ireland and Britain. As a result, the representations of the actors and the definitions of heroes and enemies were modified.

---

[965] The Battle of the Boyne, by Jan Wyck, artefact 165, Maguire, *Kings in Conflict*, p. 163.
[966] Maguire, *Kings in Conflict*. p. 260
[967] Maguire, *Kings in Conflict*. Artefact 286.
[968] Maguire, *Kings in Conflict*. p. 261
[969] Harbours such as Kinsale or Carrigfergus were represented through maps or charts. Kinsale (*Carte du Port de Kinsale*, map 251) or Carrigfergus (*Chart of Carrigfergus*, 254). Maguire, *Kings in Conflict*
[970] Maguire, *Kings in Conflict*. p. 250
[971] Maguire, *Kings in Conflict*. p. 260, Artefact 266, 267 and 268.
[972] In that sense, *Kings in Conflict* was very similar to the 1988 exhibition which commemorated the 1588 *Spanish Armada*. Interestingly, lots of artefacts dealing with these European maritime networks came from the National Maritime Museum (London) and testified to this new framework of representations.

2) William of Orange: from Mythical Hero to Ordinary Monarch Involved in European Wars

The second myth the Ulster Museum attempted to debunk was the heroic celebrations of William of Orange. This process was fostered through the presentation of the 1690s in a European context in which other monarchs played a significant role. This could be seen on the logo designed for the display and printed on every material published for the exhibition (catalogue, exhibition guide, educational pack). The logo consisted of a band on which the names of three kings were written: William III, James II, Louis XIV, from left to right (Appendix 9-D). The three crowns were added above each name.[973] The emphasis on monarchs also appeared on the poster published for advertisement.[974] Reproduced several times in the *Belfast Telegraph*, it displayed the portraits of the three kings (Appendix 9-E).[975] The predominance of the kings in the representations of the 1690s was not new. Depending on the outlook of the author, the conflicts which took place in Ireland during the years 1689-1691 were known, as "the Jacobite war", "the Williamite war" or the "war of the two kings", the latter deriving from the Irish "*Cogadh an Dá Rí*".[976] As well, the Orange Order has been devoted to the cult of William of Orange, founding father of the Orange tradition. In every event organized by Orange lodges – in particular during the parades organized on July 12th – King William had received very particular attention.[977] Neil Jarman counted that 38% of the images in the 1992 parades in Belfast represented William.[978] What was striking in *Kings in Conflict* was the plurality of kings and the space given to others besides William (Appendix 9-E).

On the logo, the central place was not occupied by William but James II. The extent to which this detail is telling is hard to appreciate. Yet, this did not seem to be purely coincidental. While, the first section of the exhibition was entitled "Louis XIV and William of Orange", sections II and III were entitled "James II and the Glorious Revolution" and "James II and Ireland". That does not mean that James received more attention than William – since some artefacts from section II and III were also devoted to William – but it reflected how

---

[973] Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Ireland in the 1690s. Educational Resource Pack*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1990), cover page.
[974] *Belfast Telegraph*, April 14th 1990, p.3
[975] See the Appendix 9-E.
[976] J.G. Simms, *Jacobite Ireland 1685-1691*, Dublin 2000 ; J. Childs, *The Williamite Wars in Ireland*, London, 2007 ; J. Kinross*, The Boyne and Aughrim* : *The War of the Two Kings*, Windrush Press, 1997.
[977] Bryan, *Orange Parades*.
[978] Neil Jarman, *Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland*, (Oxford: Berg 1997), p. 172.

James' role was not overshadowed by William. The exhibition did not make any major difference in representing James and William; in Kings in Conflict there were equal representations of the two kings, and indirectly equal representations of the Catholic and the Protestant monarchs. In addition to the space given to James – the losing side at the Battle of the Boyne – striking attention was paid to Louis XIV.

The first section of the exhibition was entitled "Louis XIV and William of Orange" and the first artefacts dealt with the life of the "roi soleil", his coming to power and his diplomatic involvement in Europe (Louis XIV as peacemaker in Nijmegen (1678) or crossing the Rhine in 1694).[979] Entering the exhibit, visitors could see how Louis XIV was relevant in order to understand the 1690s. *Kings in Conflict* focused very much on the conflicts between European monarchs, especially between the kingdom of France and the Grand Alliance led by William. After the logo and the introductory panel, the first artefact was a map entitled "The expansion of France 1662-97" which depicted, as its title indicates, military gains. Centred on the north-western part of the kingdom of France, the map highlighted the various acquisitions made by Louis XIV.[980] Visitors then passed in front of the portrait of Louis XIV – seen by Maguire in Holland during previous commemorations – by Hyacinth Rigaud.[981]

The equal amount of space given to the three kings was made possible because of the overwhelming amount of representations available for the display. For instance, of 338 artefacts on show, at least 113 were directly – in the sense that they visually represented monarchs – related to one of the three sovereigns. Although the Battle of the Boyne was traditionally remembered and represented as a conflict between the Catholic James and the Protestant William, the display was introduced through a protagonist who did not fit the opposition between Irish Catholics and British Protestants. The exhibition displayed "the war of the three kings" rather than any "Williamite wars", "Jacobite war" or "war of the two kings". The enlarged context of interpretation of the 1690s contributed to challenging the sole focus on William of Orange, and therefore, challenged the celebration of his victory at the Battle of the Boyne. Placing the wars in a European context was a potent way of challenging the construction of historical heroes.

The absence of heroic representations of William did not only come from the European context in which the 1690s were presented, but also the ways the Protestant monarch was depicted. Heroic representations were challenged by the sort of artefacts

---

[979] Item 2 and Item 4 from the first section. Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*.
[980] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, p. 5.
[981] Hyacinth Rigaud, Louis XIV en costume de sacre, 277 x 194 cm, 1702. Today in *Le Louvre*, but was part of the *Musée National du Château de Versailles*.

selected for the display. Maguire warned that "the scope of the exhibition should be restricted to the event itself and contemporary perceptions of it."[982] Maguire explained in the press that they were "trying to present a reconstruction of what happened at the time, using only contemporary material and taking no note as to what happened afterwards."[983] Indeed, except for a very small number, the artefacts on display all dated from the 1690s or early 1700s.[984] By focusing on contemporary objects and works of art, Maguire intended to dodge any strong and direct criticism. He confessed that "our comfort and defence is that all the exhibits are authentic and of the period".[985] Had they been criticized for not including anything about the celebration of the Boyne, the staff could invoke history, saying that the glorification of the king was posterior to the Battle of the Boyne. Indeed, many acts of celebration of William's victory emerged with the foundation of the Orange Order in 1795. The Order played a crucial role in diffusing images glorifying William as liberator and defender of political and religious freedom.[986] By focusing merely on artefacts dating back to the 1690s, the exhibitions limited the glorification of William undertaken by the Orange Order.

Moreover, the staff was careful not to depict William in any glorifying manner. For instance, no qualitative adjectives appear in the catalogue captions of Jan Wyck's painting of William on his white horse – one of the most famous representations of the monarch.[987] Likewise the panel introducing the year 1690 only stated that "William entered Dublin four days after his victory at the Boyne".[988] This contrasted with the 1962 William Memorial exhibition mounted at the UM in which attention was paid to the "triumphant return to the Hague in 1689".[989] Efforts were made to deconstruct the mythical representations of William of Orange. Maguire highlighted that the triumphant representations of William's crossing the river Boyne were part of the myth. He stressed that "contemporary accounts told how William of Orange's horse got stuck in the mud at the river bank. The asthmatic king had to dismount and pull his steed back to firm ground, an exercise which left him wheezing for breath".[990]

---

[982] Maguire '1690 and All that', 1985, Local history department, UMA, Cultra.

[983] D. Alhstrom, 'A Symbol of Defiance in a Sea of Turmoil', *The Irish Times*, 28 April 1990, p. 8.

[984] The more recent item was a map dated from the 1770s in the section dedicated to «war at sea ». But, this item was not celebrating any glorification of King William. It should yet be noted that a cluster of artefacts were undated in the catalogue.

[985] J. Coyle, "Belfast Remembers the Boyne", in *The Irish Times*, 5 May 1990, p. A5.

[986] See the booklet published by the Orange Order in 1990 for the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne. Kennedy, A *Celebration: 1690-1990, The Orange Institution*, Belfast 1990.

[987] The captions were confined to casual expressions such as "William on his horse". Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, artefact 167, p. 176.

[988] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*. p. 163.

[989] Outline of the exhibition, William Memorial exhibition, 1962, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

[990] William Maguire, *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 April 1990, p. 9.

The numerous depictions on murals from Unionist neighbourhoods of William on his white horse crossing the Boyne without resistance were simply historically wrong.

This was a very colourful example of the staff's activity in debunking myths regarding the 1690s. The contemporary representations of William in the display were carefully analyzed. One plate represented "the equestrian portrait of William III in ermine robes holding a sceptre and riding a prancing stallion".[991] Instead of stressing personal features or any glorious feature, the catalogue caption asserted that the image was "based on a print by Cornelius van Dalen of Charles I entering Edinburgh in 1641" and that "it provided the source for paintings on tin-glazed chargers for at least four monarchs: Charles I, Charles II (…) James II and William III".[992] This "interchangeability" of images, as noted in the caption, challenged the uniqueness of William and helped to shift from a historical hero to a seventeenth century monarch. Evidence of the non-heroic representations of William was his depiction as fallible. The section about "peace" highlighted that "William was not a great general".[993] This was obviously not the most reverential comment ever made about the monarch.

In addition to his personal features, the exhibition asserted that neither William's arrival in England, nor his reign, were as idyllic as the myths asserted. The introductory panel of section four acknowledged that William "usurped the crown",[994] his arrival in England was described as an "invasion".[995] William was even more criticized at the end of his reign "when the Dutch king with his Dutch favourites and his cold, reserved manner was deeply unpopular with his English subjects".[996] Likewise, in the section about 1690, more precisely about *The Landing of King William of Glorious Memory at Carrickfergus*, the catalogue pointed out that "The painting has considerable propagandist overtone" in the sense that the author "has made the ship much grander than it actually would have been, for dramatic effect", this "probably to emphasize the importance of the occasion".[997] Section eleven raised the hypothesis "Had James won the war, all the families which had owned estates in 1641 would have been restored".[998] The challenge to William's infallibility was written in black and white in the description of the sections sent by William Maguire to John Teehan in August 1989. About section seven, the UM keeper wrote that "The general effect to be aimed at in this section is

---

[991] Respectively item 167 and 117. Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*.
[992] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*.
[993] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*. p.261
[994] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*. p.105.
[995] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*. Section II, p. 29.
[996] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*. Section II, p. 29.
[997] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*. p. 170.
[998] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*. p. 170.

conflict and the hazard of battle".[999] Whether William won the Battle of the Boyne was not related to any good or lost cause but due to military features; in particular the fact that James's army "had few cannon and many of his infantry were ill-trained and poorly equipped".[1000] To the Unionist celebrations of William's victory, the exhibition opposed concrete materialization of strategy and hazard of battle.

Thus, the exhibition proposed a radical reinterpretation of the 1690s and of the different actors of the conflicts in which the opposition between heroes and enemies were blurred and made more complex. The display rejected the heroization of William as being a posterior phenomenon and consequently challenged the traditional Unionist celebration of the past. It should be yet noticed that the challenge of myths was partly proposed in exhibition texts and catalogue and therefore did not touch every visitor. Critical analysis was much more adapted to history teaching and much more developed in the education pack. Visually, the challenge to William's glorification resulted more from the equal representations of the three kings and the enlargement of the context to other actors, like the Pope.

3) The Revision of the Historical Opposition between Catholics and Protestants in a European Context

One interrogation about the demobilization of history in Northern Ireland is to know whether it should be reached through the equal representation of two distinct communities or through the emphasis on the common ground. At large, the existence of two distinct historical communities was not challenged in Northern Ireland community relations policies. The Ulster Museum's education pack was evidence of the presentation of at least two different interpretations of the 1690s. Similarly, the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (UFTM) mounted an exhibition for the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne (Remembering 1690: the folklore of a war"). Anthony Buckley, in charge of the display, stressed that the exhibition "dealt with the popular history as depicted in banners, bonfires, songs, dances and narratives (…) Its central materials consisted of rhetorically divergent representations of the traditional histories of Ireland".[1001] He added that "the temptation to debunk myths was resisted". Popular histories of the 1690s – among which the Unionist and Nationalist interpretations – were not incorrect, but incomplete.

---

[999] Letter from Maguire to Teehan, 3 August 1989, A1/87/105, files 1 of 3, NMIA, Dublin..
[1000] Caption for the Battle of the Boyne, Artefact 169. Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*.
[1001] Buckley and. Kenney "Culture Heritage in an Oasis of Calm", p. 142.

Kings in Conflict adopted a very different approach and this materialized in the interpretations of the existence of two distinct communities. The exhibition intended to challenge the myth of the historical opposition between Catholics and Protestants and the role played by the 1690s conflicts in building two communities. The third major mythical interpretation of the 1690s to be challenged within the display was yet more problematic because some parts had been historically attested. Thus, to some extent, the exhibition did not ignore the relevance of religious issues in the 1690s.

One reason for the deposition of James II and the ensuing Glorious Revolution was his religious policy. The exhibition acknowledged that James II was "a zealous Catholic by the time he arrived on the throne" and "appointed Catholics as officers (…) despite the laws forbidding such appointments" and that "a small number of leading figures approached William of Orange to invite him to come to England to save its religion and liberties".[1002] The second section highlighted James' behaviour, between 1685 and 1688, as one of the events leading to the Glorious Revolution. The captions associated with James's portrait confirmed that although he first "advocated toleration for all Christians and was opposed to persecution for conscience's sake",[1003] he began to use his prerogative to an even greater extent (1686), to use intimidation (1687), and he decided to incarcerate the bishops in the Tower of London in 1688. In relation to this, a reproduction of "The seven bishops on their way to the Tower" was put on display. The caption acknowledged that "Coming when it did, after a number of other moves against the exclusive power of the established church, the arrest of the bishops was a major blunder".[1004] The use of the term "blunder" was symptomatic of the language used to address James's actions until 1688. Once again perceived in a "balanced" perspective, James's behaviour was portrayed as having raised discontent, but he was nowhere defined as the absolute and authoritarian monarch.

Likewise, the consequences of William's victory for the relations between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland were mentioned. The only section whose title included the term religion was the antepenultimate section called "Religious consequences". The introduction of the section stated that "William's victory led to the restoration of the Church of Ireland as the only official church in Ireland".[1005] From now on and until 1869, the British domination in Ireland would be associated with the official status granted to the Anglican Church.[1006]

[1002] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, p. 299.
[1003] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, p. 35.
[1004] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, p. 46.
[1005] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, p. 299.
[1006] In 1869, the *Irish Church Act* disestablished the Church of Ireland.

Certainly, William's victory had religious consequences in Ireland, but the enlarged framework enabled the museum to demonstrate that the divisions were more complicated than the strict opposition between Catholics and Protestants.

The exhibition avoided any general religious identification of the opponents. One of the chief examples was embodied in the portrait of Charles Leslie who was both a member of the Church of Ireland and a leading Jacobite. In the catalogue, his biography started by asserting "Charles Leslie, an Irish Anglican Jacobite", giving to this unusual identification a high level of significance.[1007] Moreover, although the Church of Ireland and Presbyterians mostly supported King William, that was not a total union. Certainly, William's victory led to the "restoration of the Church of Ireland as the main official church in Ireland"[1008] but Presbyterians did not obtain a Toleration Act as in Scotland. Presbyterians "who had done so much to save Ulster for William (…) were very disappointed with the outcome" because they did not receive any official recognition similar to the establishment of Presbyterianism as the Church of Scotland. William was not portrayed as an uncritical saviour of religious liberties. The exhibition furnished a more "balanced" narrative of William's arrival and religious purposes. The caption which accompanied William's portrait stressed that "Although William had invaded England to rescue lost liberties and religion, acquiring the throne of England was more of a means to curtail French aggression than an end in itself."[1009] Like the introductory panel which presented Ireland as a political periphery in the European diplomacy, the religious issue was subject to more important issues: the political and military issues defined initially by William Maguire as the main approach of the exhibition.

The relations between the conflicts and the confessions were made even more complex at the enlarged European level. In line with the focus on European military and diplomatic networks, the exhibition presented artefacts regarding many European monarchs. This had a major consequence for the representations and interpretations of the religious issues. The past was more complex than the simple opposition between William the Protestant and James the Catholic. Indeed, Leopold I, elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire opposed Louis XIV and his territorial ambitions in 1658. The Emperor "entered into an alliance with the Prince of Orange" and "in 1689 he joined with William, the kings of Denmark and Spain, the Elector of

---

[1007] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, p. 303-304.
[1008] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, p. 303-304.
[1009] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, p.71.

Brandenburg and others in a grand alliance against Louis".[1010] In the Grand Alliance, the influence of Protestantism was therefore not essential.

Even more symbolic of the complex religious identification, Pope Innocent XI was rightly presented in the first section as favourable to William. The caption indicated that "he supported the anti-French league of Augsburg 1686, acquiesced in the aims of William of Orange and was unsympathetic to James II, whom he regarded as Louis' puppet".[1011] For those who celebrate the victory of the Protestant King William over the Catholic King James this was an inconvenient reminder of seventeenth century politics. This association was particularly offensive regarding the discourse of certain Unionists such as Ian Paisley – founder of the Democratic Unionist Party and vehement critic of the pope as being the antichrist. Likewise, in the late nineteenth century Unionists used the links between Irish Nationalist and the Vatican as an argument against the Home Rule. The slogan was Home Rule is Rome Rule.

The association between William and the Pope is a sensitive issue. In 1933, Stormont purchased a painting of William's arrival in Ireland. It appears to show his arrival being blessed by Pope Innocent XI. This representation of papal support provoked heavy discontent. In May 1933, two members of a Scottish Protestant League tour vandalized the painting by throwing red paint and slashing it.[1012] The painting was removed and remained out of display until 1976 when it was moved to the Belfast Public Record Office. Although this very painting was not part of *Kings in Conflict*, the alliance of the Pope – and the other Catholic sovereigns – with William indeed challenged the perception of the 1690s as a clear opposition between Catholics and Protestants. The Director could stress in the introduction that "myth has obscured the fact that behind James II stood Louis XIV, while the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic King of Spain supported William (…) whose ambitions for a time even enjoyed papal endorsement".[1013] The enlargement of the framework of representation enabled the Ulster Museum to underline the complexity of the past and to debunk the "myths" regarding the 1690s.

In conclusion, *Kings in Conflict* was an important example of the consequence of the changing framework of representations on the interpretations of the past. Although limited to this temporary exhibition – the Ulster Museum did indeed not become a museum of Europe –

[1010] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, Artefact 26
[1011] Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict*, p. 27.
[1012] M. Devenport, 'King Billy Painting a "mixed blessing"'. *BBC news*, August 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/5263210.stm (last visited October 2011).
[1013] Introduction, Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict.*

Europeanization took place before the major European cultural policy which mostly started with the development of tourism policy later in the 1990s.[1014] It is interesting to notice that the Europeanization of the past was undertaken by "local" agencies such as the Ulster Museum without any apparent request from European institutions. Europeanization was used by the Ulster Museum to demobilize history and to de-dramatize events which had so far been marked by divisive interpretations. The Europeanization of the past also allowed a change in terminology. Section ten was then entitled "Peace in Ireland and Europe". Although the term "peace" was not applied to the years following the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland, essentially due to the fact that William's victory engendered further property and political dispossessions for Catholics, the enlargement to a European framework enabled the staff to put forward the diplomatic peace between France and the Grand Alliance. The new framework of analysis deeply contributed to changing the definitions of war and peace.

Conclusion of Chapter III

While gathering allocating objects and works of art, museums work at stabilizing representations of the past. That is one of the reasons why the long-term history of museums demonstrates the strength of continuity.[1015] In spite of this overall stability, the research has shown that new processes were at stake within the National Museum of Ireland and the Ulster Museum in commemorating the 1916 Easter Rising and the 1690 Battle of the Boyne. What was striking with regard to the 1990 and 1991 exhibitions was that the major opposition between the two national museums was no longer between Unionist and Nationalist interpretations of the past – as it had been since above all since the creation of the UM in the early 1960s – but between national ethnic culture (NMI) and multiculturalism (UM). The context in which the commemorations were organized differed significantly in the two parts of the island. The political context was paradoxically more favourable in the North for the commemoration of a historical sensible conflict such as the Battle of the Boyne. Cultural strategies emphasized the need for dialogue and the cultural demobilization of history. The tercentenary of the Boyne appeared as a major occasion to improve community relations. Conversely, the official approach to the past in the Republic was keener on ignoring the 1916

[1014] See the next chapter.
[1015] Simon J Knell, Suzanne Macleod, and Sheila E. R Watson, *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and are Changed* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 19.

Easter Rising. Consequently, the UM and the history of conflicts received much more attention than the NMI and the representations of the 1916 Easter Rising.

As a result the two national museums had very different roles in the early 1990s. The Ulster Museum aimed at the cultural demobilization of history through the challenge of mythical representations of the 1690s. Its links with educational reforms derived from its roles in the social reconstruction of community relations in Northern Ireland. The chief achievement of *Kings in Conflict* was to question the construction of the us/they dissymmetry, and to propose a critical approach to the past to a non-academic public. The past was more complex than the celebratory version of William's victory in 1690 had proposed and the Catholic/Protestant split was not as crystal clear as the "myths" of the 1690s had explained. Thus, the 1990 display was much more than previous exhibitions driven by a critical approach and expressed, to some extent, the rise of "new museology" which posed questions regarding what, how and in whose interest knowledge was produced in museums.[1016] This approach was crucial since it revealed that the staff of the UM took into consideration the long construction of changing representations, usually restricted to historians. Yet, this act of revision was still uncommon in museums – particularly in national museums – in the early 1990s. This critical approach of the past came from the rise of multiculturalism.

Framed by political definitions of the nation, national museums often failed in their attempts towards representing the complexity and the transnational dimensions of wars, which are by nature civil wars, or opposing several political entities. The comparison between the two museums and the two different political contexts shows representations of the complexity of the past are better achieved in societies themselves confronted with ethnic divisions where the idea of nation is challenged. Cultural diversity was encouraged in Northern Ireland and the Ulster Museum adapted its mode of exhibition. While certain museums like the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum preferred underlining the complementarities of two distinct memories of the past, the Ulster Museum utilized the division between history and myths to revise the past. In the Republic where – in spite of divisions – the nation was still perceived as united, the NMI was not requested to adapt its collection to fit the bill of cultural diversity.

The two museums' considerations and definitions of their visiting public were crucial for creating an understanding about the changing representations of the past. Although restricted to the two main communities in Northern Ireland – Nationalists and Unionists – the awareness of the plurality of public pushed forward questions on what kinds of narratives the

---

[1016] Vergo, *The New Museology*.

museum was presenting. In the UM, the number of visitors to *Kings in Conflict* (50.102) was somehow disappointing in comparison to the exhibition mounted for the commemoration of the Spanish Armada in 1988. Marketing strategy developed in order to broaden the museum's visitor diversity. In the NMI, consideration for the audience resulted in the introduction of explanatory panels and historical context to ease the understanding of the past. Both approaches resulted in the promotion of enlarged frameworks of representation. But due to the different publics, the contexts of representation differed and produced different historical narratives. In the UM, the interest in the European context allowed the reappraisal of the Battle of the Boyne and the 1690s in Ireland. In the NMI, the international context was also added to the Irish history. While the European framework was the context in which the 1690s were understood, the NMI produced a display giving room to both 1916 *and* a wider context. In doing so, while the interpretations of the Battle of the Boyne were deeply modified by its inclusion in a European context (in which the Battle was a minor event), the significance of 1916 and the Republican leaders was not fundamentally challenged by other priorities. This discrepancy partly came from the fact the Europeanization allowed the UM to downplay the conflicting Anglo-Irish relations whereas the enlargement of the 1916 context in the Republic implied giving space to the very controversial Irish involvement in the First World War through the British Army. The enlarged context allowed going beyond division in the North but question Irish unity in the Republic.

CHAPTER IV: Reconciliation or Tourism Development: the Different Attribution to European Funding and its Impact on Museums' Marketing Strategy

One major trend in museum studies has been to assess the changing roles of museums in relation to the process of globalization of exchanges. Increasing flows of trade, migration of individuals, streams of information, images and knowledge have generated intensified exchange on every level of society on a worldwide scale.[1017] International and transnational economic, cultural and political flows have contributed to changing economic and political contexts in both parts of the island of Ireland, and have influenced the changing role of national museums. Jim Gardner, former curator at the National Museum of American History, observes that "Globalization has challenged the premises on which most national history museums were established. For national museums, the tension between the nation-state frame and transnational experience is not just an intellectual issue – it's tied up in our identity as institutions and in our collections".[1018] More specifically, as members of the European Community – Northern Ireland being part of the United Kingdom – both parts of the island of Ireland have received substantial funding from European agencies, such as the European Regional Development Fund.

It is important not to ignore the economic dimension of cultural policy and cultural institutions such as museums. As the economic historian Alan Milward contends "The memory boom has happened in part because both the public and the state have the disposable income to pay for it".[1019] Following this statement, it is necessary to set the 1990s official commemorations in the Irish economic context. In this regards, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland highly differed. Due to its economic growth similar to the East Asian Tigers (South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong), the Republic of Ireland between 1995 and 2007 has been colloquially described as the Celtic Tiger.[1020] Based on a low taxation rate (12.5%) the growth of the GDP ranged between 7 and 11% and transformed the Republic

---

[1017] M. Prösler, "Museums and Globalization", in Macdonald and G. Fyfe (eds.), *Theorizing Museums,* p. 21.

[1018] James Gardner, "Rethinking Basic Assumptions: National Museums and Transnational History", unpublished paper, conference in Prato (Italy), *National Museums in a Transnational Age*, Monash University, November 2009.

[1019] Alan Milward, "Bad Memories", *The Time Literary Supplement*, 14 April 2000, p. 8

[1020] The term was first used in 1994 by Kevin Gardiner in a Morgan Stanley report: *Ireland: Ireland and EMU. A Tiger by the Tail*.

from one of the poorest countries of the European Union to one of the wealthiest.[1021] From 1990 to 2005 employment soared from 1.1 million to 1.9 million.[1022] This boom in economic activity was fuelled by an intensification of the relations and movements at international levels. In addition to the establishment of North-American companies in Ireland, the economic growth was also sustained by European funding in the 1990s, mostly related to infrastructure and regional policies.[1023] The economic development provoked, and also benefited from, new flows of population. This economic growth allowed for the reduction of emigration and, between 1996 and 2005, the population increased by almost 15%. By 2000, Ireland was importing workers while attracting many Irish who had previously emigrated.[1024] Immigration, in particular from Eastern Europe and Asia, raised new debates about Irish identity. For instance, in June 2004, a referendum changed the Constitution and children born in Ireland from parents who are not Irish, were no-longer automatically granted Irish citizenship, or in legal jargon there was a move from *jus soli* to *jus sanguinis*.[1025] This example reveals how the relations between Irish and outsiders have changed in the 1990s and 2000s. The 1990s were, in the economic domain, a period of intense shift and opening which was accompanied by the raise of tourism activity.

Tourism activity in the world grew steadily after the 1950s, rising from 25 million in 1950 to almost 699 million reported tourists in 2000.[1026] The figures rose for the Republic of Ireland as well but in an even more impressive manner. In the world, the number of tourists increased from 457m in 1990 to 699 million (+65%) in 2000, while in the Republic of Ireland the number of visitors rose from 3.1 million people in 1990 to 6.2 million (+100%) in 2000.[1027] The growing importance of tourism to the Irish economy was measured in the total amount of foreign exchange it generates. This amounted to £1.889 million in 1996, compared to £1.220 in 1992.[1028] The revenue from their spending supported the equivalent of 115.000 full-time jobs (dependent directly or indirectly on tourism), an increase of 25.000 over the

---

[1021] Unemployment fell from 18% in the late 1980s to 4,5% in 2007. Central Statistics Office: Quarterly National Household Survey for Q4 2007.

[1022] Paul Sweeney, *The Celtic Tiger: Ireland's Economic Miracle*, (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1998), pp. 1-5.

[1023] The EU Structural funding mechanism was reformed and vastly expanded with the 1987 Single European Act in preparation for the single market in 1992. Three subsequent rounds of EU funding, 1989-1993, 1994-1999, 2000-2006 followed. Michael Clancy, *Brand New Ireland? Tourism, Development and National Identity in the Irish Republic*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), p. 41.

[1024] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. 217.

[1025] Clancy, *Brand New Ireland?* p. 96.

[1026] Quoted in K. Griffin "Recent Trends in Global and Irish Tourism", January 2002, http://arrow.dit.ie/cgi/viewcontent (last visited April 2012).

[1027] Report for the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, September 2003, http://www.transport.ie/tourism/pdfs/tourism_review_report.pdf (last visited May 2012).

[1028] McManus, "Heritage and Tourism in Ireland: an unholy alliance?", p. 91.

1992 figure.[1029] Tourism in the Republic accounts for one in twelve of all jobs.[1030] The rise of tourism was crucial for museums since cultural sites and institutions became an important element in Irish tourism policy. Already in 1991, *Bord Failte* (Irish Tourism Board) wrote a report on the Cultural Tourism Development Strategy.[1031] The Operational Programme for Tourism (1994-1999), mostly funded by the ERDF, planned to invest Ir£125 million in "Natural/Cultural Tourism" in the Republic of Ireland. The rise of tourism was particularly relevant in Ireland and raised new questions about the definition of Irish identity and Irish past, and indirectly, national museums.

In contrast to the bright economic situation in the Republic, Northern Ireland was still a place of violence where the focus lay in the development of different peacemaking strategies. A significant progression was the move from peacemaking (essentially for the end of violence) to peace-building which dealt more openly with the construction of peaceful relations. In 1993, the Irish and British governments signed the Downing Street Agreement and a Joint Declaration in December.[1032] The latter affirmed the right of people in Ireland to self-determination, and that Northern Ireland would be transferred to the Republic of Ireland only if a majority of its population was in favour of such a move. The following year, the Provisional I.R.A – and later the loyalist paramilitary groups – called for a ceasefire. Although interrupted in February 1996, the 1994 Ceasefire marked the start of the Northern Irish Peace Process and a wider move from mutual understanding to "reconciliation".[1033] The development of the peace process associated many new actors in the political negotiations, among them the U.S government and the European Union.[1034] Be it through politics of reconciliation in the North or economic investment in the Republic, both parts of the island were, therefore, increasingly connected with international networks.

In spite of very different economic and political contexts, the two national museums similarly developed marketing policies to attract wider audiences. Market rationales are now largely accepted by museums. They are presented as unavoidable because, although most

---

[1029] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish.* p. 89.
[1030] McManus, "Heritage and Tourism in Ireland: an unholy alliance?", p. 91.
[1031] *Bord Failte, Cultural Tourism Development Strategy*, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1991).
[1032] The Joint Declaration was signed by John Major and Albert Reynolds (Taoiseach) the 15 December 1993.
[1033] Although it became a buzzword in the studies devoted to Northern Ireland, (re)conciliation is not used as analytical approach in this research. First of all, the term suffers one major pitfall. It engenders a process of teleological evolution toward a final status of rapprochement without questioning the limits and possible failures. The purpose of this research is not to prove any (re)conciliation between the various interpretations of the past or even the (re)conciliation between the various communities in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The term will be restricted to the politics of reconciliation, political discourses implemented by diverse agencies through the peace process. More interesting is the study on the vectors of such policies such as museums.
[1034] Bill Clinton first visited Northern Ireland in November 1995; he played a major role in the 1998 talks for the Good Friday Agreement.

museums are rich in terms of their collections, they are usually rather short on cash for operational activities. In this perspective, tourism is an industry which brings enormous profit and artefacts are part of a heritage which can be used to attract tourism flows. The fact that Irish museums have gradually been dealing with non-Irish audiences has been a major cause for change and development. Most scholars who notice the relevance of funding and marketing in building the cultural heritage are those who criticize what they call the "marketization", the "heritage industry" or the "touristification" of the past.[1035] Heritage Centres, Interpretive Centres, Visitor Centres and Theme Parks have indeed flourished in Ireland and Northern Ireland since the early 1990s. This development has created tensions regarding the transmission of representations of Ireland and Irish. Do cultural centres promote local and national culture to international visitors or do they adapt the representations according to touristic demands? In other words, what has been at stake is the tension between authenticity and the commodification of cultural heritage.[1036] It is necessary to investigate whether the changing roles of national museums in both parts of the island resulted in a process of standardization in which the differences between the Ulster Museum (UM) and the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) would be rubbed out.

In order to examine the changing roles of the two national museums in relation to the rise of international and transnational political, economic and demographic relations, the chapter analyzes first the development of marketing strategies at the Ulster Museum and its connection with the European support for the Northern Irish peace process. This form of Europeanization will then be compared with the development of marketing policy in relation to tourism and European funding in the Republic of Ireland, and their consequences on the roles of the NMI. These two sections will permit the drawing up of conclusions on the standardization of the museum practices in the 1990s and the extent to which national museums have become global institutions. However, only the consequences on the overall management of the museums are dealt below. The impact on the representations of the past will be analyzed later through the study of temporary and permanent exhibitions from 1998 to 2006.

[1035] Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*; David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[1036] W. Nolan, "The Heritage Business: Problems and Possibilities", in, W. Nolan, ed, *The Heritage Business; Present State and Future Prospects*. Interdisciplinary Centre for Local and Heritage Studies, (Dublin: University College Dublin, 1992), pp. 1-19.

A) Marketing Strategy and the European Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland

1) The Rise of Marketing Strategy and the Creation of the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland

The management of museums became increasingly professionalized in the last three decades. The code of Professional Ethics was adopted by the International Council of Museums (ICOM)[1037] in 1986, and formalized principles for the profession including museum governance, acquisition, and disposal of collections.[1038] This process of professionalization came from the fact that while leisure had become an important field of economic activity, most museums had been struggling to survive and chronically lacked financial resources. The decrease of public funding in the 1980s and 1990s and the increasing competition for audiences, public grants and donations have fostered the professionalization of museums.[1039] The competition for new income and funding resulted in new marketing policy.

Thus, change in the Ulster Museum's management derived from reconsideration of public funding. During Margaret Thatcher's government (1979-1992), neo-liberal policy intended to disengage the state from culture and to limit public funding. From 1979 to 1989, the British Arts Council's budget from the government only rose from 0.6%.[1040] Due to neo-liberal economic theory, arts became defined according to commercial activity and every cultural institution had to justify its financial activity.[1041] A new bureaucracy emerged in cultural institutions which was responsible for the evaluation of economic results and for the search of new private sponsorships.[1042] The British government's intention to limit public funding brought about various reports about museums in the 1980s. The Museums (Northern Ireland) Act passed in 1981 required compulsory plans from institutions to obtain grant-aid. Thus, the Museums and Galleries Commission published a report in 1983 regarding museums

---

[1037] Created in 1946, ICOM is a non-governmental organization related to UNESCO.

[1038] Jerome De Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 235.

[1039] B. S. Frey and S. Meier "Cultural Economics", in McDonald (ed). *A Companion to Museum Studies*, p. 398.

[1040] G. Devlin and S. Hoyle, *Committing to Culture: Arts Funding in France and Britain*, (London: Franco-British Council, 2000), p. 15.

[1041] A. Sinclair, *Arts and Cultures: the History of the Fifty years of the Arts Council of Great Britain*, (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995), pp. 308-309.

[1042] The 1984 Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme encouraged cultural institutions to limit their use of public funding. Income generation was developed and the attendance charge increased. Devlin and Hoyle, *Committing to Culture*, p. 16.

in Northern Ireland.[1043] Requested by the under-secretary of State responsible for Education in Northern Ireland to review museums in Northern Ireland, the Commission recommended the merger of the Ulster Museum and Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.[1044] The merger was supported because it would provide "economies of scale (administration)" and "financial control centralized".[1045] Although the possibility of a merger was not pursued, pressure regarding public funding rose in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

One of the key issues requested for public funding was the development of "efficiency". In September 1989 a corporate plan was published by the Ulster Museum's Board of Trustees to "fulfil the terms of the Museums (Northern Ireland) Order 1981".[1046] Similarly to the 1983 Review of the Museums in Northern Ireland, which encouraged the cultural institutions "to bring forward an effective museums policy",[1047] the 1989 Corporate plan intended to make "the response to internal and external change (…) positive and effective".[1048] The request for efficiency was related to funding because one of the museum's weaknesses was, according to the Plan, its reliance "largely on public funding". The Plan stressed that "A grant-in-aid arrangement now in operation requires the Museum to market its operation and services in a more aggressive way". The search for new sponsors was presented as a new crucial purpose for the museum. In addition, the museum had to have "an active policy for public relations" and to develop visitors' survey in order to better respond to their need.[1049]

In consequence, the UM had to develop its marketing policy. Unlike the number of keepers which rose slightly from 1978 to 1989 (from 25 to 33 keepers), the number of administrative staff was three times higher in 1989 than it was ten years before (from 7 to 22).[1050] By the second half of the 1990s, it was clear that marketing had become a major venture for the UM. Of the seven UM's strategic objectives stressed by the 1996-1997 annual report, two were devoted to efficiency, cost effectiveness and the search of sponsorship.[1051] The role of the UM was now much more focused on income production. This ultimately led

[1043] Museums and Galleries Commission, *Review of Museum in Northern Ireland*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983). This report was part of the Commission's official duties. In the United Kingdom, advice to the national government on museum policy came from a Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries set up in 1931. It was given the responsibility of granting aid to national museums in 1963 and became the Museums and Galleries Commission.
[1044] Museums and Galleries Commission, *Review of Museum in Northern Ireland*, p. 27.
[1045] "Summary", in Ulster Museum, *Corporate Plan*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, September 1989).
[1046] "Summary", in Ulster Museum, *Corporate Plan*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, September 1989).
[1047] Ulster Museum, *Annual Report*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1985), p. 5.
[1048] "Introduction" in Ulster Museum, *Corporate Plan*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, September 1989).
[1049] Ulster Museum, *Corporate Plan*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, September 1989), measure 4.2.
[1050] Ulster Museum, *Annual Report*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1980).
[1051] Ulster Museum, *Annual Report*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1996-1997).

to the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order in 1998 which modified the status of the Ulster Museum (UM) and three other institutions.[1052] The Ulster Museum was associated with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, the Ulster-American Folk Park and the Armagh County Museum in a new institution: the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland. Although the shift did not modify the structure of the Ulster Museum, the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland was managed by a unique Board of Trustees with a common budget.[1053] So, the rise of marketing policy was an early process which spread over two decades. Arising from a need to make museums more efficient and less depending on public funding, the development of marketing catered to community relations and European involvement in the Northern Irish peace process.

2) European Funding for Peace, Community Relations and the New Roles of the Ulster Museum

European involvement in Northern Ireland evidently increased when the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland entered the European Community in 1972. Already in 1973 the Sunningdale Agreement stipulated that the Council of Ireland – which was supposed to co-ordinate British and Irish policies in Northern Ireland – should work on the consequences of the new membership on the Northern Irish issue. Likewise, the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement highlighted "The Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom" and "the close co-operation between their countries as friendly neighbours and as partners in the European Community".[1054] Europe became a common framework of reference in policies regarding Northern Ireland. To some extent, Europe also began to be perceived as a model.

European laws and economic policies became used by some Northern Irish actors as possible solutions to end the conflict in Northern Ireland. In 1992, the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) promoted the possibility to use, after some local adaptations, the model

---

[1052] Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order, 11 February 1998. The name (National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland) was suggested in the 1995 review of museums in Northern Ireland, requested by the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland. A. Wilson Obe, *A Time for Change. A Review of Major Museums in Northern Ireland*, (Belfast: Department of Education, 1995), p. 6.
[1053] The Board was composed of fifteen members nominated by the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland. The Ulster Museum is run by a managing director who reports directly to the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland's chief executive who in turn is responsible to the Board of Trustees. W5 was added in 2001.
[1054] Text of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, Conflict Archives on the Internet (CAIN) http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/aia/aiadoc.htm (last visited April 2012).

fostered by European institutions in order to make peace in Northern Ireland.[1055] The definition of the European model was essentially economic and John Hume, founding member of the SDLP and then European deputy, requested a European financial support for the resolution of the conflict.[1056] Likewise, the Opsahl Commission, created in 1993 to build a survey of Northern Irish citizens regarding their views to make peace in Northern Ireland,[1057] underlined the need to use the European example for minority laws and to adapt them to Northern Ireland.[1058] In spite of these examples, the direct involvement of European agencies in the Northern Irish crisis only appeared in 1994.

The interest of European institutions in the Northern Irish conflict rose in August 1994 due to the ceasefire expressed by the Provisional I.R.A and later also the loyalist paramilitary groups. The 2000 report on the impact of the European involvement in the Northern Irish peace process points out how, indeed, the 1994 ceasefire as a determining condition for European funding because the question was "how do we build peace?"[1059] Requested by the Irish and British governments, the European Commission created a task force to study how to support the peace and the ceasefire. It was in that context of political agreement that the European Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland (EUSSPPR) was created by the European Commission in July 1995 in order to build and sustain peace after the ceasefire.[1060] This was the first time a direct European measure was applied to the Northern Irish crisis. EUSSPPR became a major source of funding in Northern Ireland. EUSSPPR was allotted 549m ecus (£350m) for the first four years of the programme; commonly known as PEACE I.[1061] Initially planned to run until 1997, PEACE I was extended for two years until 1999. It was then extended for a second set of activities, PEACE II, from 2000 to 2006, and received more European funding (530 million Euros). PEACE III is the name of the current programme and is intended to end in

---

[1055] SDLP, *New Political Structures*, 11 May 1992, quoted in Valérie Peyronel "L'aide européenne et le programme pour la paix en Irlande du Nord", *Etudes Irlandaises*, vol. 30/2, 2005, p. 143.

[1056] John Hume, *Foreign Affairs Journal*, 1979, http://www.sdlp.ie/party/histoty70s.shtm, quoted in Peyronel "L'aide européenne", p. 142.

[1057] Composed of Irish and British community relations activists – and chaired by Professor Torkel Opsahl from Norway – the Commission made several recommendations to implement community relations.

[1058] Andy Pollack (ed.), *A Citizen's Inquiry: The Opsahl Report on Northern Ireland*, (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1993), p. 71.

[1059] D. Murrow, *Community Relations and Peace Building: What Have we Learned? Reflections by Recipients of Grant Aid from the European Programme of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, Acting as an Intermediary Funding Body for the European Union's Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, 1996-2000*, (Belfast: Community Relations Council, 2000), p. 8.

[1060] J. Hughes "Paying for Peace: Comparing the EU's Role in the Conflicts in Northern Ireland and Kosovo" in J. Hughes, ed., *EU Conflict Management*, (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 17.

[1061] The European Commission, *Peace and Reconciliation: an Imaginative Approach to the European Programme for Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland*, (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1998), p. 8.

2013. It is important to notice that, from 1994 until today, most of the Northern Irish peace process has been mainly financed by the European Union and not by the British government anymore. This played a role in the overall reconstruction of cultural identity in Northern Ireland.

First of all, the creation of the European funding for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland requires a study of the possible process of Europeanization. Indeed, the European funding was associated with an intention to promote Europe as framework of interpretation. In 1997, the UM received a leaflet regarding the ways of promoting pathways to reconciliation.[1062] The leaflet suggested that projects should "develop innovative models for community reconciliation, including international links with people working in other conflict resolution situations". It continued that projects "will locate (where appropriate) attempts to manage sectarian conflict within Northern Ireland in a European policy and practice framework drawing on the experience and activities of communities elsewhere within the EU dealing with group prejudice and social exclusion".[1063] This was a direct attempt to enlarge the local context of reconciliation to a European dimension, that is, a Europeanization of the Northern Irish peace process. The archives of the Ulster Museum do not include any example of such collaboration with other European conflicting areas. Indeed, EUSSPPR was the first European involvement in internal conflict resolution and it was hardly possible to link the Northern Irish peace process with other European involvement in building peace. EUSSPPR was considered by Jacques Delors – president of the European Commission when the decision was taken to create the EUSSPPR – as an "opportunity to demonstrate the European Union's capacity in conflict resolution".[1064] The innovative nature of the European involvement in the Northern Irish peace process could explain the absence of major collaboration with other cultural projects in Europe. The request to link Northern Ireland with other examples of conflict resolution was not the main intention of EUSSPPR which concentrated on economic issues instead.

The creation and the implementation of the European programme for peace and reconciliation did not result from major reflection on peacemaking strategies in Northern Ireland but came instead from the application of the European traditional theoretical links between economic development and peaceful relations. The view was that, in order to build

---

[1062] Promoting Pathways to Reconciliation: "Building Inclusive Communities", 1997, Trevor Parkhill's paper, Box 14, UMA.
[1063] Promoting Pathways to Reconciliation: "Building Inclusive Communities", 1997, Trevor Parkhill's paper, Box 14, UMA.
[1064] J. Hughes "Paying for Peace", p. 17.

peace in Northern Ireland, economic development and social integration had to be promoted. Therefore, while community relations had so far stressed the relevance of cultural identity for the two main traditions, EUSSPPR concentrated on economic and social relations instead. The five chief purposes were: economic growth and employment, promoting the improvement of the social and physical environment in urban and rural areas, exploiting opportunities for cross-border development, promoting pathways to reconciliation by encouraging social inclusion, enhancing existing facilities to promote productive investment and industrial development.[1065]

The promotion of pathways to reconciliation by encouraging social inclusion was the only criteria of the five main purposes to which fit the Ulster Museum. Four million pounds were available for this sub-section, over a three year period and the first grant would be allotted in spring 1996.[1066] Community projects were funded up to £3000, and more substantial funding was given to cross-community projects (up to £50.000).[1067] It was directed towards activities which offered "particular scope for bringing communities and individuals together" and included "culture and the arts, sports and leisure, the environment, education and care services".[1068] In 1997, the Ulster Museum applied for – and received – £87.500 funding from the EUSSPPR's SSP4.5 programme.

Importantly, the European funding was locally managed by the Community Relations Council.[1069] The European division of the Council was composed of Mark Adair – head of the division – and three officers.[1070] Through this programme, the Community Relations Council was "empowered to make grant award for the EU under sub-programme 4 measure 5 (pathways to reconciliation)".[1071] According to the leaflet on "Promoting pathways to Reconciliation" received by the UM, the SSP 4.5 intended to "facilitate the development of (…) responses to sectarianism" and "will enable local people to deal with the causes and effects of communal conflict and to contribute to peace-building in the longer-term".[1072] Phrases such as "to increase understanding of own/other traditions and should incorporate the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence" or "the establishment of cross-community

---

[1065] A Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland; Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM (94), 607, Brussels, 7 December 1994.
[1066] Community Relations Council, *Annual report*, 16 October 1998.
[1067] Community Relations Council, *Annual report*, 16 October 1998.
[1068] A Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland; Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM (94), 607, Brussels, 7 December 1994.
[1069] About the Community Relations Council, see section B of chapter III.
[1070] Community Relations Council, *Annual report*, 1999.
[1071] Community Relations Council, *Annual report*, 1999.
[1072] Promoting Pathways to Reconciliation : "Building Inclusive Communities", 1997.

partnerships on issues of common concern" recalled openly what had been developed by the Community Relations Council since 1990.[1073] The equal representation between the two main traditions had become even stronger in the mid 1990s.

The term "parity of esteem" had, since the Opsahl Commission, become a political buzzword in Northern Ireland. The Commission made several recommendations to implement community relations. The term "parity of esteem" was one of these recommendations and was later also included in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. Equal representations between the two main traditions, Unionists and Nationalists, were promoted as one solution to build peace in Northern Ireland. The focus on community as the main policy target was fully endorsed by the European programme. During the 1990s, most of the politics of reconciliation were top-down strategies underpinned by political agents. Politicians involved in the peace process insisted on the need for dialogue between the political parties and politicians from the two main traditions.[1074] Another conception was underpinned by EUSSPPR which focused on civic society actors and bottom-up mechanisms. The community development was defined by the European Commission as "the process of encouraging people to tackle for themselves issues which concern them".[1075] In 1997, a report from the European Commission underlined that EUSSPPR "has greatly expanded the role of civil society, by its inclusiveness and by giving non-governmental bodies the opportunity to be active agents of change".[1076]

To some extent, community relations were not a new subject for the Ulster Museum. In as much, *Kings in Conflict* had been designed, in 1990, thanks to funding related to the Community Relations Council and Education for Mutual Understanding. Nevertheless, the European funding made the focus on reconciliation a much more significant aspect of the UM's overall policy. Thanks to EUSSPPR funding, the Ulster Museum hired an outreach officer in 1997. Jane Leonard was appointed in October 1997 following a call for applications published by the UM to develop interest among community groups in the exhibition.[1077] Her work at the UM was extended twice and only ended in 2006. Historian specialist on the war commemorations in Ireland and Northern Ireland, Jane Leonard was charged to develop the

---

[1073] Promoting Pathways to Reconciliation: "Building Inclusive Communities", 1997.
[1074] See for instance Peter Hain, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in 2007, quoted in J. Hughes "Paying for Peace", p. 16.
[1075] The European Commission, *Peace and Reconciliation,* p. 17.
[1076] Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions on the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland (1995-1999), Brussels, 26 November 1997.
[1077] Call for application, June 1997, Marian Ferguson's personal paper, UMA, Belfast. The call specified that the UM was seeking candidates with a degree in history, a recent historical experience – preferably in eighteenth and nineteenth century study – and a minimum of two year experience in history teaching.

museum's community relations and help to design historical exhibitions. She depended directly on the Community Relations Council's division in charge of the European funding. Her work became crucial for the construction of historical narratives of Anglo-Irish relations and she participated in the design of the 1998 commemorative exhibition of the 1798 Rebellion, the 2001 travelling display regarding *War in Twentieth Century Ireland* and the 2003 permanent exhibition entitled *Conflict: The Irish at War*. She organized community visits, workshops and other special events directly related to community relations at the Ulster Museum. She also participated in community programmes in order to present the work of the museums outside its walls.

The role of the UM as site of dialogue between the two main communities was enhanced by the structure of the European funding. EUSSPPR funding was managed by non-governmental and locally based groups called Intermediary Funding Bodies. This gave even more relevance to the Community Relations Council – in charge of the funding – but also to the Ulster Museum. The council acted as an Intermediary Funding Body for EUSSPPR and the European Community was only indirectly involved in funding projects in Northern Ireland. The Intermediary Funding Bodies represented the EU's attempt to support sustained involvement of third-tier actors and organizations.[1078] Monika Wulf-Mathies, member of the European Commission, noted of EUSSPPR that "particular attention is paid to the decentralised approach which, we believe, may help and inspire other regions wishing to adopt similar methods to strengthen local involvement in programmes co-financed by the Structural funds."[1079] The interest in Intermediary Funding Bodies was especially important to go beyond national policy and government bodies. The European Commission highlighted the work of 45 organizations independent from governments and involved in the process of administrating EUSSPPR.[1080] This European support for decentralization contributed to downplaying the roles of British authorities and strengthened the roles of Northern Irish agencies like the Ulster Museum which became increasingly involved in the politics of reconciliation through the theme of cultural and social inclusion. The Ulster Museum's roles in community relations was not new – it had already been described within *Kings in Conflict* in 1990 – but now stretched to the overall management of the institution, embodied by the

---

[1078] The Intermediary Funding Bodies were especially responsible for working with marginalized populations, such as women, youth, ex-prisoners, victims of the Troubles, the disabled, and minority groups. The Intermediary Funding Bodies administered one-third of the total EU Peace and Reconciliation funding under Peace I, providing about £132 million to nearly 6,000 projects. Linda Racioppi and Katherine O'Sullivan "Grassroots Peacebuilding and Third-Party Intervention: The European Union's Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland" *Peace and Change*, vol. 32, issue 3, 361-390, July 2007.
[1079] The European Commission, *Peace and Reconciliation,* 1998, p. 4.
[1080] The European Commission, *Peace and Reconciliation,* 1998, p. 4.

work of Jane Leonard as outreach officer. The museum was tasked to develop "the parity of esteem" between the two main communities and to impact Northern Irish society. It is, hence, interesting to notice that the Europeanization of the funding seemed, at first, to enhance the local context of crisis much more than any Europeanization of the framework of interpretation. This focus on the local dispute between two distinct communities provoked major debates regarding the consequences of cultural diversity.

In conclusion, the changing roles of the Ulster Museum did not result from shifting audiences but from the ways in which these audiences were considered by the institution. In the wish to enlarge its public and to contribute to politics of reconciliation, the Ulster Museum's marketing strategy targeted particularly community groups. The 1990 *Kings in Conflict* exhibition had been related to wider community relations policy, and this link grew stronger with the development of EUSSPPR in the mid-1990s. The Ulster Museum was not only addressing new audiences but also new funding strategies; and one of the major sources of funding in Northern Ireland during the 1990s issued from the politics of reconciliation. The Ulster Museum participated in, and took advantage of, the bridges between communities, politics of reconciliation, and the mobilization of history. Peace had to be built more concretely just as much as historical violence had to be faced. While the main purpose of *Kings in Conflict* in 1990 was to detach the representations of the past from present political uses, therefore to demobilize history, the Ulster Museum was, in the 1990s, much more involved in new processes of mobilization of history to reconcile communities. The European funding was not directly responsible for this process of re-mobilization of history at the Ulster Museum. Indeed, the mobilization of history had been embedded in politics of community relations established by the Community Relations Council since the late 1980s. However, the rise of European funding brought about new expectations regarding the impact of cultural policy promoted by institutions like the Ulster Museum.

Due to the political need to reinterpret the past, the Ulster Museum gained relevance as site of dialogue and reconciliation. The museum was requested to be much closer to its public, in particular to community groups, and became a zone of social contacts. It is difficult to fully appraise the consequences of European funding without exploring the production of exhibitions and narratives – this will be provided in the next two chapters – but it has been demonstrated that EUSSPPR contributed to highlighting cultural diversity in Northern Ireland, and therefore, strengthened the divergence from the national narratives promoted by the NMI in the 1990s. The Europeanization of the UM's funding did not result in an enlargement of the framework of interpretation – as it was the case in *Kings in Conflict* in

1990 – but, conversely, in a focus on local distinctions between the two main communities. Neither Nationalism nor Unionism were directly challenged, instead the European funding encouraged placing them into a local context of multiculturalism. It would, therefore, be very interesting to examine the possible impact of such policies on the production of representations of historical Anglo-Irish relations in the exhibitions arranged from 1998 to 2003 at the Ulster Museum. These marketing strategies contrasted with what was supported in the Republic of Ireland.

B) The National Museum of Ireland as Touristic Destination and the Development of Marketing Strategy

1) New Cultural Policy Based on Tourism

As seen in chapter 2, interest in tourism developed early in the southern part of the island of Ireland. Partly due to the political context and the rise of violence, the increase of tourism was more limited in the 1970s and 1980s. A fundamental aspect of tourism policy growth in the 1980s and 1990s, was its association with new political interest in culture for conflict resolution. In 1982, a State Department for Arts and Culture was created in the Republic and reflected Charles Haughey's (*Taoiseach* and leader of the *Fianna Fail*) wish for State interventionism. This had direct consequences on the NMI which passed under the direct supervision of the Department of the *Taoiseach* in 1984.[1081] The political interest and control over cultural institutions was similarly stressed in the 1987 White Paper on Cultural Policy produced by the State Department for Arts and Culture.[1082] It resulted in the creation of an autonomous Department of Arts, Culture and *Gaeltacht* in January 1993 on which the NMI was now depending. This was the very first time culture was identified as a particular issue in an Irish government.[1083] The 1994 NMI Board of Visitors' report was pleased to announce that "this is the first time in history of the State that we have a cabinet minister directly responsible for the Museum".[1084] The political interest in culture, and in the NMI, contrasted

---

[1081] Between 1984 and 1992 the NMI was directly supervised by the Department of the *Taoiseach*.

[1082] Ted Nealon, *Access and Opportunity. A White Paper on Cultural Policy*, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1987).

[1083] Alexandra Slaby "La politique culturelle de l'Irlande depuis 1945", in P. Poirrier, ed, *Pour une histoire des politiques culturelles dans le monde, 1945-2011*, (Paris: La documentation française, 2011), p. 303.

[1084] Board of Visitors, *Annual Report*, 1993-1994, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland), p. 9.

with a long period in which the national institution had been at best ignored and sometimes even criticized for its lack of professionalism.

The NMI took advantage of this new political interest in culture. Under the supervision of the Department of the *Taoiseach* since 1984, the NMI was able to benefit from the National Lottery Fund. The 1986 *National Lottery Act* was adopted to support initiatives in various areas such as sports, arts, heritage and Irish language. In 1988, the *Taoiseach* Department had collected around Ir£15m.[1085] From 1988 to 1991, Ir£500.000 were given annually to the NMI as grant-aid, roughly 27% of its overall income.[1086] Moreover, in consequence of the long-term request from the museum for an increase of its space of display, new proposals were developed.[1087]

The future of the NMI took advantage of the decision from the Irish government in December 1988, to close Collins Barracks in Dublin (Appendix 5). The site, which had hosted British troops in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had, since the Irish independence, been occupied by the Irish Defence Forces.[1088] After efforts by the Department of Defence to sell the property for "a satisfactory price" failed, the Government decided in 1993 not to proceed with the sale and an interdepartmental group was established to consider possible future uses for Collins Barracks.[1089] In September 1993, the Government approved the development of a National Museum facility at Collins Barracks.[1090] The first phase of exhibitions at Collins Barracks opened in September 1997 and included 2.500 square meters of space devoted to the Arts and Industry Department of the NMI. This transfer was symbolic of the new funding granted to the museum. In September 1993, the government agreed to provide Ir£35m from the National Development Plan 1994-1999. Three-quarters of the funding provided under the programme came from the European Regional Development

---

[1085] Irish Parliamentary debates, *Dail Debates*, 24 May 1988.

[1086] A total of £988.000 coming from the National Lottery were received by the NMI in 1988. See Irish Parliamentary debates, *Dail Debates* 8 December 1991, vol. 414.

[1087] A new proposal was developed to utilise the old army buildings of The Royal Hospital, Kilmainham (Hall 1986) which had been refurbished with European Funding of over £20 million without a clear future for the building having been established. A subsequent proposal for housing the decorative arts and historical collections in the new Custom House Docks development in Dublin was explored in 1988. N. Monaghan, "The National Museum of Ireland".

[1088] Built in 1702 and called "the Barracks", the site changed in the early nineteenth century to the 'Royal Barracks' and named Collins Barracks in 1922. It covered about six hectares and included a number of eighteen and nineteenth century buildings, which for nearly three centuries housed as many as two thousand soldiers from the British garrison.

[1089] Comptroller and Auditor General, *Report on Value for Money Examination. The National Museum at Collins Baracks*, Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, (Dublin: Stationery Office, October 1996).

[1090] This was followed in 1996 by a government decision to develop a museum in the grounds of Turlough Park, near Castlebar, County Mayo to accommodate the national folklife collections.

Fund.[1091] Collins Barracks was, with many other cultural sites in Ireland, the results of new major links between cultural and tourism policies.[1092] As often, the funding for the refurbishment of Collins Barracks to be able to host the NMI, required adaptations from the museum in return.

Detailed analysis of spatial requirements had to be provided to ensure that there was sufficient space at Collins Barracks for all collections, preservation, staff accommodation, laboratories and many other functions. The transfer of the collections was seen as an occasion to rationalise the management of the national museum. However, the change was not merely due to the new site of display. The transfer "required to meet the requirements of the European Union, who were funding a substantial part of Collins Barracks development with a view to providing attractive public facilities."[1093] The requirement from the European Commission and the Irish government were purely quantitative and questioned the cost-effectiveness of the project. The higher spending demanded greater results and the NMI was encouraged to develop strategies that would attract broader audiences. As a consequence, Michael D. Higgins, Minister for Arts, Culture and *Gaeltacht* appointed in 1994 an interim board to oversee the development of Collins Barracks site. Its report published in 1995 highlighted notions like "effectiveness" and "performance" and stressed that "new emphasis must be placed on the needs of the museum's customers".[1094] Similarly to the UM, marketing was added to traditional strategic issues such as documentation, conservation and education.[1095] The two national museums hence entered into a new era in which culture had become a resource. Marketing officers became more and more important in the management of the museums and in the design of displays.

The similar development of marketing strategy should not hide major differences in the new definitions of the role of museums. The first minor difference was the chronology of change. While the marketing department was in existence at the UM by the late 1980s, it was only created at the NMI in 1997 when Collins Barracks opened.[1096] The 1994 NMI annual

---

[1091] Comptroller and Auditor General, *Report on Value for Money Examination*. p. 9.

[1092] The Chester Beatty Library received 2.25 million euro, the National Gallery 7.5 million euro, the G.A.A museum 1.5 million euro. http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/ireland_in_the_eu/benefits_of_eu_membership/leinster/county_reports_2011_pdfs/dublin.pdf (last visited December 2011).

[1093] Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, (Dublin: April 1998), p. 1.

[1094] Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland, *Report of the Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland presented to the Minister of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Mr Michael D. Higgins T.D.*, Unpublished Report, Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, 1995.

[1095] Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland, *Report of the Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland*. p. 15.

[1096] Board of Visitors, *Annual Report*, 1997-1998, Dublin, 1998, p. 15.

report did not mention any marketing or public relation officer.[1097] The second and much more important discrepancy was related to the audiences targeted by the two museums. This new political interest in culture and museums in the Republic of Ireland was directly related to new expectations in cultural tourism. To some extent, tourism was an old issue in Irish state policy. Eric Zuelow demonstrates that, in 1958, "the tourism industry received a significant stamp of approval with its inclusion in the White Paper on Economic Expansion and was allocated at least £1 million in grant". Tourism income passed from £42.4 million in 1960 to £49.5 million in 1963.[1098] However, tourism merely became a priority in the 1990s and was crucially supported by European funding.

When Ireland joined the European Community in 1973, European powers had yet to establish a unified continent-wide policy on tourism, and the European Community paid little notice to tourism until a commissioner was finally given responsibility for it in 1980.[1099] Tourism policy was, by that time, merely supported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. It was only in 1990 that the European Community began to pay serious attention to tourism, allotting 5 million euro to support its "European Tourism Year".[1100] Importantly, the rise of the Irish government interest in culture matched this new European policy. In 1987, the Irish government issued the Programme for National Recovery as an application for European funding. The Operational Programme for Tourism 1989-1993 was adopted by the European Community in 1989 in response.[1101] Thus, from the £450 million invested by the Irish government in tourism facilities between 1989 and 1993, £380 came directly from European funding, in particular the European Regional Development Funds.[1102] It led to an increase in tourism investment from £25 million in 1987 to £200 million in 1992 and expanded even more rapidly, £770 million in 1993, over five years.[1103]

Museums and cultural institutions at large benefited from European funding and tourism activity. For instance, Dublin was chosen as European capital for Culture in 1991 and, accordingly, received European funding. This allowed for the restructuring of the

---

[1097] Board of Visitors, *Annual Report*, 1993-1994, Dublin, 1994, p. 23.
[1098] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. 86.
[1099] Ulrich Kockel "Culture, Tourism and Development: A View from the Periphery" in Kockel (ed.), *Culture, Tourism and Development*, p. 1.
[1100] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. 89.
[1101] D. Gillmor "Tourism Development and Impact in the Republic of Ireland" in Kockel (ed.) *Culture, Tourism and Development,* p. 29.
[1102] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. 89. Created in 1975, the ERDF intends to contribute to the correction of the principal regional imbalances within the community by participating in the development of structural adjustments of regions whose development is lagging behind.
[1103] Bord Failte, *The Failte Business 2000: The Role of Tourism in Economic Growth*, (Dublin: Bord Failte, 2000), p. 32

Temple Bar area, the opening of the Dublin Writers Museum and the development of the Irish Museum of Modern Art.[1104] One particular type of institutions took advantage of this context. Even more than within museums, the rise of cultural tourism materialized in the multiplication of heritage, interpretative and visitor centres in the Republic of Ireland during the 1990s.[1105] This new type of institution was symbolic of new marketing policy for which adaptations to targeted audiences were fundamental. The mobilization of history for marketing purposes was at the basis of the creation of these centres. Patrick Duffy argues that "Under the European Structural Funds it appears that the only way to get money for heritage projects was if they were tourist-related".[1106] The Minister for Tourism and Trade confirmed this argument when he stated that "funding will be provided for international/heritage centres which are capable of attracting a minimum of 75.000 visitors in the third year of development" and that "the essential criteria on which these boards judge applications for assistance is their ability to attract foreign visitors, to increase tourism earnings and to create sustainable employment".[1107] For instance, the 1798 National Visitor Centre in Enniscorthy – close to the site of the Battle of Vinegar Hill, a decisive defeat for the rebels during the 1798 Rebellion – opened in June 1998. The Centre received £2.4 million from European funding but allotted by the Irish government. The 1798 Centre marketing strategy was built to attract tourism flows and to develop regional activity. The facility was intended to "become a centre widely used by tourists".[1108] The main difference between the NMI and the 1798 Centre was that, the second was created according to this marketing strategy, while the NMI had to adapt its management.

Cultural tourism policies matched the category of visitors at the NMI. In 1986 *Behaviour and Attitudes* produced a survey which already showed that only 40% of the summer visitors at the National Museum of Ireland were Irish.[1109] In 2007, the National Museum of Ireland attracted over one million visitors, of which some 60% were from abroad.

[1104] Irish Parliamentary debates, *Dail Debates*, vol. 402, 13 November 1990, col. 1107-1110.

[1105] Relying much more on interactive technologies and interpretation, heritage – or sometimes called interpretive centres – centres were not established from collections of objects. The number of tourist attractions charging an admission fee increased from 85 in 1983 to 219 in 1993. Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. 167;

[1106] P. Duffy "Conflicts in Heritage and Tourism", in Kockel (ed.) *Culture, Tourism and Development*, p. 81.

[1107] Department of Tourism and Trade, October 1995, quoted in P. Duffy "Conflicts in Heritage and Tourism", p. 81.

[1108] Comoradh '98, *Submission to South East Regional Tourism Organisation for Bord Failte Tourism Development Incentives* 1994-1999, p. 2. National 1798 Centre, Archives of the government Commemoration Committee, S110/05/10/006, Library of the Taoiseach, Leinster House, Dublin.

[1109] N. Monaghan, "The National Museum of Ireland".

Concurrently, at Collins Barracks, 55% of the 375.000 visitors were from overseas.[1110] The profile of the NMI's visitors contrasted with Northern Ireland where the Northern Irish conflict had, for a long time, prevented major tourism from developing. Although earnings from "staying visitors" rose by 27% from 1992 to 1996, the number of visitors remained largely inferior to those in the Republic of Ireland. In 1996, 1.4 million people visited Northern Ireland, so roughly 1/3 of the Republic.[1111] The General Information report about the National Museum and Galleries of Northern Ireland stressed that, in 2000, the main groups of visitors were family groups from Northern Ireland.[1112] This was confirmed by an internal survey conducted in 2002 in which 70% of the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland visitors (541.000) were resident in Northern Ireland, and only 30% (233.000) were non-resident.[1113] Consequentially, tourism did not appear as a major aspect of the UM's marketing strategy. Although the 1995 Review of Museums in Northern Ireland encouraged that "the importance of museum for tourism should be more fully recognised", the statements remained very vague and still to be implemented.[1114] Mostly due to the context of violence, Northern Ireland did not become a tourism destination until the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Thus, like the Ulster Museum, the National Museum of Ireland underwent a major reappraisal of its marketing policy and its management. Nevertheless, the intention to make their audiences more diverse was implemented in radically different ways. Whereas the UM focused on community relations, the NMI took into consideration the significance of new tourist audiences. The context in which the NMI reassessed its management expressed the tension in which many national museums had to adapt to global flows of people and funding. Therefore, the Europeanization of funding differed in the Republic from Northern Ireland. In the South, European funding matched the development of tourism and was, therefore, much more committed to go beyond the frontiers of the island of Ireland. Tourism strengthened the situation of the NMI. The 1994 Lord report stressed that "with the rise of tourism as the world's leading industry, and with cultural tourism as the most dynamic sector of that industry, there are now important economic as well as social and cultural reasons for the development of museums".[1115] It is now necessary to investigate the impact of tourism policy

---

[1110] R. Ó Floinn "The National Museum of Ireland" *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 22, no. 2, Summer, 2008, pp. 44-45

[1111] McManus, "Heritage and Tourism in Ireland: an Unholy Alliance?" p. 91.

[1112] *General Information on the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland*, undated, Local History Department's archives, UMA, Cultra.

[1113] Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland, surveys, undated, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, Box 33, Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1114] Obe, *A Time for Change.* p. 5.

[1115] LORD, *National Museum of Ireland Strategic Plan,* unpublished Report, National Museum of Ireland, 1994.

on the definition of Irish identity. Even though this section has demonstrated that culture has been mobilized to match the development of tourism, the consequences on the representations of the past can be detailed more precisely.

2) Definitions of Irishness, International Audiences and the Relevance of the Irish Diaspora

The boom in tourism activity played a fundamental role in the re-definitions of national identity and national history in Ireland. At the risk of being simplistic, tourism policies reacted to three categories of audience: British, non-British Europeans, and North Americans. The British audience has long dominated Irish tourism planning.

Visitor Numbers and Foreign Revenue Earnings 1990 - 2002

	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002
Britain	1,785	2,285	3,428	3,340	3,452
Mainland Europe	744	1,101	1,435	1,336	1,378
France	198	234	283	280	298
Germany	178	319	319	285	288
Other Europe	368	548	834	771	792
North America	443	641	1,056	903	844
USA	402	587	958	829	759
Canada	41	54	98	74	85
Other Overseas Areas	124	204	261	261	245
Total Overseas	3,096	4,231	6,181	5,840	5,919
Foreign Revenue Earnings (€million)	1,112	1,749	2,824	3,115	3,267
Receipts paid to Irish air and sea carriers (€million)	334	383	813	807	718
Total Foreign Revenue Earnings	1,446	2,132	3,637	3,922	3,985

In 2002, for example, almost 3.452 million (57%) British tourists visited the Republic of Ireland, while just under 1.378 million (23%) arrived from mainland Europe and 0.844 million (14%) came from North America.[1116] Since the 1960s, the British had always represented between half and 2/3rd of international tourist demographic in Ireland. This proportion was even higher in Northern Ireland since 68% of non-resident visitors to the national museums in Northern Ireland came from Great Britain.[1117] Although tourism deriving from mainland Europe and coming to the Republic has become more important than North America – this was not the case in the 1960s – the United States of America –are still the second origin behind Britain (14% in 2002). By contrast, in 2003 only 5% and 4% from non resident visitors in national museums in Northern Ireland came from North America and

---

[1116] Report for the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, September 2003, http://www.transport.ie/tourism/pdfs/tourism_review_report.pdf (last visited April 2012).
[1117] Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland, surveys, undated, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, Box 33, Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

mainland Europe respectively.[1118] These categories of tourism are important to clarify an understanding of tourism strategies and their impact on cultural practices.

In order to assess the consequences of the mobilization of history in relation to the rise of tourism, it is necessary to identify specific representations of Ireland's past. Many surveys of the ways Ireland has been advertised by tourist agencies show that emphasis had been made, since the 1950s, on rural, pre modern, non-industrial landscapes. This was particularly undertaken by official agencies. The brochures spread by *Bord Failte* (the Irish Board of Tourism) have highlighted Ireland's natural environment where traditions and old world values have remained intact, in particular in the western part of the island.[1119] Paul Henri, Irish painter, provided many depictions of Irish landscapes in the 1920s and 1930s, used as Ireland Travel Posters by Tourism agencies. Bernadette Quinn observes: "The promotional message is that Ireland is a world apart from modern society and offers vast open spaces of unspoiled 'genuine' landscapes (…) the chance to rediscover old world values".[1120] This version of Irishness has been particularly visible in *ad-hoc* centres like Heritage and Interpretative centre. Many of them are related to Early Christian sites like Glendalough or Celtic traditions like Céide Fields or farm-houses related to the Diaspora like the farm of John Kennedy's ancestors in County Wexford.[1121] Promoting Ireland in this way was used to differentiate Ireland in the pool of tourism competition.[1122] Interestingly, tourism policy enhanced a version of Irishness which had been on display in the NMI for most of the twentieth century. Thus, a 1994 report on exhibition strategy recommended that "the Archaeology department should be encouraged to develop its continental European collections of prehistoric and Celtic artefacts in order to place its rich Irish collections in better context".[1123] What this overall presentation of the Irish tradition did, however, was hide a plurality of narratives.

The focus on a traditional, rural, romantic Ireland also derived from the weight of British audiences. Given the dependence on tourists across the Irish Sea, Eric Zuelow argues that "it is hardly surprising that Irish tourist promoters have not gone out of their way to

---

[1118] Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland, surveys.
[1119] Clancy, *Brand New Ireland*, p. 83.
[1120] B. Quinn "Images of Ireland in Europe: A Tourism Perspective" in Kockel (ed.), *Culture, Tourism and Development*, p. 64.
[1121] Glendalough is a glacial valley in County Wicklow, renowned for its early medieval monastic settlement founded in the sixth century. Céide Fields is an archaeological site on the north Mayo coast. It is the most extensive Stone Age site in the world and contains the oldest known field systems. Other visitor and heritage centres opened in relation to Newgrange and the Giant's Causeway.
[1122] It has also been somehow different from other European peripheries (Portugal, Spain, Poland for instance) which have rather highlighted their modern and cosmopolitan traditions. Clancy, *Brand New Ireland*, p. 93.
[1123] LORD, *National Museum of Ireland Strategic Plan,* p. 20.

emphasize conflict with Britain."[1124] He demonstrates how the Irish Tourist Association (the official agency for tourism) already highlighted, in 1925, the "new and stronger ties of friendship" between Ireland and Britain to move away from historical conflicts.[1125] Regarding the last decades, Zuelow supports his point through the site of Kilmainham Jail – associated with Republican history – which had largely been ignored by Irish tourism agencies until the 1990s. Activities or projects that would dredge up memories of past Anglo-Irish hostility or contemporary political problems were avoided by the state tourism organizers.[1126] It is true that the focus on the Irish Golden Age and later the Irish rural traditions provided a safer environment than the history of Anglo-Irish conflicts for British audiences. However, Zuelow's argument is undermined by the fact that part of the "British" tourists in Ireland were, in fact, Irish who had emigrated to Britain but who came back for holidays. Moreover, as seen above, a significant part of tourists came from North America and belonged to the Irish Diaspora. The attitudes of the Northern American Irish Diaspora regarding Irishness and the Irish past were also relevant in building representations.

Interest in the Irish Diaspora was well established in the 1990s and was embodied in Mary Robinson, President of the Republic of Ireland from 1990 to 1997, who became an effective instrument in the process identifying and embracing Ireland's Diaspora. Robinson travelled overseas promoting Ireland's heritage and connecting with the Irish Diaspora. This interest in Irish Diaspora took advantage of the rise of tourism. Thanks particularly to the development of air transport, the number of North American tourists rose significantly. The number of North American tourists in the Republic of Ireland doubled between 1990 and 2002.[1127] Because of this, the Irish Diaspora received major attention from politicians in charge of the development of tourism. While the Diaspora was a major target for tourism policy, they were also more politically and economically involved in Ireland. American authorities were gradually involved in the Northern Irish peace process, and the Irish government established many contacts.[1128] More importantly, the economic links with North America had increased. One major aspect of the economic boom in the 1990s was the development of American companies in Ireland (mostly related to computer technology). Although North American funding cannot be strictly associated with Irish-American

---

[1124] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. 150.
[1125] Zuelow, "Enshrining Ireland", p. 183.
[1126] Zuelow, "Enshrining Ireland", p. 180.
[1127] See the previous table.
[1128] Conor O'Clery, *The Greening of the White House: the Inside Story of how America Tried to Bring Peace to Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1996).

Diaspora, it was true that many cultural projects in Ireland took advantage of these new relations.

The involvement of Diaspora and the attention paid to this sort of audience was crucial for the representations of Ireland and the mobilization of history. To some extent, the presentation of a traditional and romantic Ireland matched the Diaspora's perceptions, especially from North America. For the North American Irish Diaspora, Ireland was related to family roots and the image of Ireland as a fixed imagined culture embodied by John Wayne in *The Quiet Man* in 1952. This also materialized through the rise of genealogical research in the National Archives of Ireland and the National Library of Ireland. However, the interpretations of Irish history among the Diaspora also encompassed more critical narratives on British responsibility. While defining "long-distance nationalist", Benedict Anderson observes that "the most strongly 'Irish nationalist' supporters of the IRA live out their lives as 'ethnic Irish' in the United States. The same goes for many Ukrainians settled in Toronto, Tamils in Melbourne, Jamaicans in London, Croats in Sydney, Jews in New York, Vietnamese in Los Angeles, and Turks in Berlin."[1129] Not only are migrations not the end of nationalism, but they may also result in the strengthening of nationalistic links between the migrants – here the Irish Diaspora in North America – and homeland. The nationalistic interpretations of Irish history were easily found in many representations.

Although it may be simplistic to directly associate North-American Diaspora with the production of movies, it appears that the most successful movies about Ireland and produced in cooperation with American funding, were supporting the Nationalist cause. *The Crying Game* (Neil Jordan, 1992) and *In the Name of the Father* (Jim Sheridan, 1993) were nominated five and seven times respectively for the Oscars. Most of the commercial successes in the 1990s focused on the Nationalist community in Northern Ireland.[1130] *In the Name of the Father* was, thus, received with harsh opposition by the Unionist community in Northern Ireland.[1131] Widely acclaimed in the United States, *The Devil's Own*'s presentation in the United Kingdom was postponed due to the context of threatening Republican bombing campaign in 1997.[1132] Andrew Hunter, president of the Conservative Northern Ireland Committee stated in May 1997 that "I am thoroughly opposed to the way American films

---

[1129] Benedict Anderson, "The New World Disorder", *New Left Review*, n. 193, p. 13.

[1130] *The Crying Game* focuses on a member of the I.R.A and *In the Name of the Father* dealt with four Northern Irish Catholics falsely convicted for a bombing.

[1131] Richard Deutsch, "In the Name of the Father: Réinterpréter l'histoire?" Actes du Colloque de la SOFEIR, Tours, *Visions & Révisions*, (Tours: Presses Universitaires de Tours 1998), pp. 113-126.

[1132] A member of the I.R.A's journey to the United State to purchase weapons. Richard Deutsch "Guerres de mémoires et memoires des guerres", *Etudes Irlandaises*, 22, 1997 p. 178

have lauded the IRA's campaign over the years. It is not acceptable that films which distort reality should have a free run. It is highly unfortunate that there are demented minds which believe that the IRA's cause is admirable".[1133] The discrepancy between the interpretations of the past in Ireland and in the Diaspora was particularly visible during the commemorations of the Great Famine.

The centenary of the Famine in the late 1940s and early 1950s passed off extremely quietly but the sesquicentenary was much more important. On the one hand, Mary Daly notices that the Irish government's official agenda of commemoration for the Great Famine played down any element of sectarianism; "References to blame and responsibility were either absent or such as to suggest that we were all to blame".[1134] The interpretations of the Great Famine in the United States differed, notably on the responsibility of the British authorities. In the context of the commemorations of the end of the Second World War, the Great Famine was, in some circles, compared to the Holocaust. Mary Daly shows that there were campaigns in several states "to include the Irish Famine in the syllabus for Genocide and Holocaust studies".[1135] English misrule and colonization were depicted as causes of starvation in Ireland. The anti-British narratives of the past contrasted yet with less inflammatory interpretations in Ireland where there was little support for the association between Famine and Genocide. The more nationalistic perceptions of the past in the Diaspora played a role for the organization of certain events.

During the commemorations, much of the official narratives focused on those who emigrated; the commemorations remembered Irish emigrants as refugees, people forced from their homelands to escape death and starvation. President of the Republic of Ireland, Mary Robinson's speech in February 1995 at the Parliament was entitled "Cherished the Irish Diaspora". She argued that the "imaginative way of interpreting the past" was something that could be shared with "our Diaspora".[1136] The Irish government's Commemoration Committee organized a lecture tour in Australia and a visit from the Minister to Liverpool. Moreover, certain commemorative projects were largely financed by Irish-Americans. Irish-American money has funded Famine-related events and memorials, such as Strokestown Museum of the Great Famine, and the construction of replicas of two "coffin ships", named as such because of the supposedly high mortality rate on transatlantic voyages during the famine.[1137] Situated

---

[1133] Richard Deutsch "Guerres de mémoires et memoires des guerres", p. 178
[1134] Daly "Histoire à la carte ?", in Bort, *Commemorating Ireland*, p. 39.
[1135] Daly "Histoire à la carte ?", in Bort, *Commemorating Ireland*, p. 43.
[1136] Daly "Histoire à la carte ?", in Bort, *Commemorating Ireland*, p. 40.
[1137] Daly "Histoire à la carte ?", in Bort, *Commemorating Ireland*, p. 44.

at the foot of Croagh Patrick Mountain in the west of Ireland, the National Famine Monument depicts a coffin ship at the base with skeletons and bones as rigging, and clearly demonstrated the focus on the Diaspora as the "victims" of the past.[1138] The political and marketing focus on the Irish Diaspora and their increasing involvement in cultural projects in Ireland contradict the argument that the British audiences prevented any emphasis on Anglo-Irish conflicting history. The statement should be less unilateral. The involvement of Irish Diaspora contributed to the development of other representations of Irishness.

An example of tourism policy related to Anglo-Irish conflict was the 1798 National Visitor Centre which opened in Enniscorthy (County Wexford in 1998). The 1798 Centre was a clear example of the mobilization of history in relation to tourism policy. The centre bore the mark of the Europeanization of the past issued from European funding. A board at the end of the display explained – on a blue European flag – that:

> The Vision of the United Irishmen was founded on the great Enlightenment ideals of democracy and the rights of the citizen. Today these values are central to the concept of a modern European Union, a sisterhood of democratic states in which all citizens can live peacefully with each other. If we, the present generation can achieve their objectives by working together towards a common prosperity, while respecting each other's cultural differences and national rights the sacrifices of the men and women of '98 will not have been in vain.[1139]

The link established between the United Irishmen and the European Union derived from the fact that the funding came from the European Regional Development Funds. It was a vivid example of how funding could impact the representation of national history and modify the interpretations of the historical links between Ireland and Britain. The 1798 Rebellion transformed from a national insurrection against the British domination to a step of the European history of democracy ending with the European Union. The 1798 National Visitor Centre also reflected the focus on Irish Diaspora. For instance, Avril Doyle – Minister of State in charge of the Commemoration of the Great Famine and later the 1798 Rebellion – stated about the 1798 National Visitor Centre in Enniscorthy that "the section of the Centre entitled 'Europe in Revolution' might be more accurately be entitled 'Atlantic Revolution' to

---

[1138] Sculpted by John Behan, it is Ireland's largest bronze sculpture. The "Coffin Ship" was unveiled by then President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, in 1997 to mark the 150th anniversary of the Irish Famine.

[1139] Personal photograph taken by the author, 2008.

incorporate the American revolution". The Minister explained that "The story of 1798 would then begin in America which is also good for marketing reasons".[1140]

Thus, when the organizing committee of the 1798 National Visitor Centre decided to re-create a Wexford Senate[1141] in which individuals could, after having donated at least £2.0000, seat during the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion, it resulted that the Senators were "350 nominees from all over the Irish Diaspora".[1142] The process of targeting the Diaspora as a new market and their own involvement in commemorating the past in Ireland made the representations of historical Anglo-Irish relations much more complex that what has been supported before. The origins of tourists entailed tensions between the wish not to offend British audiences and the wish to include the Irish Diaspora better. To some extent, this tension was the continuity of the long term tension between Irish governments and Republican groups attested since the 1930s. The major difference was that the new tension was bound with marketing policy and economic development thanks to tourism.

To conclude, the two national museums were part of an overall development of marketing policy which attempted to attract a broader and larger public. However, this global process was adapted to local contexts which differed greatly. The roles of the two museums resulted from their consideration for different audiences. While the focus was put on community relations in the North, marketing policy openly targeted tourism as major resource in the Republic of Ireland. This discrepancy also entailed a more passive role in the South where the NMI was intended to work for new audiences whereas the UM had to work with new audiences. The NMI increasingly mediated the past to non-Irish audiences while the UM aimed at including both communities in its space. The changing roles of the two national museums had, therefore, consequences on the general consideration for Anglo-Irish relations. In Belfast, neither Nationalism nor Unionism was directly challenged since "parity of esteem" had to be respected. In Dublin, the NMI faced a more complicate reappraisal due to the plurality of Irish and foreign audiences. The globalization of marketing strategy and the local adaptations resulted in new modes of display.

[1140] January 1998, archives of the government Commemoration Committee, S110/03/005, Library of the Taoiseach, Leinster House, Dublin.

[1141] Although its existence is debated, the Wexford Senate is supposed to be the institution, composed of rebels, which ran the Wexford Republic during the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford.

[1142] Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of '98'?* p. 134.

C) Standardization of Management and Exhibiting practices in the Two National Museums to Reach Broader Audiences

New marketing strategies brought about new exhibiting strategies and the overall reconsideration of the relations between the two museums and their collections. Although the changing roles of the two museums differed due to the different audiences, the overall organization of the two institutions became closer. Before analyzing in the next chapters the impact of marketing strategies on the representations of the past promoted through exhibitions, this section explores the consequences on the overall design of displays.

1) Museums as Sites of Income Generation

The list of annual budgets of the UM shows an almost constant rise since its creation in 1962.[1143] While constant, it should be noted that the budget doubled between 1987 and 1993, it passed from £2.25m to £4.43m.[1144] It corresponds to the period in which the Ulster Museum began to benefit from community relations funding. The evolution is much more difficult to appraise for the National Museum of Ireland whose annual reports did not mention the overall budget before the year 2000. The rare mentions of the budget in the parliamentary debates indicate that the budget passed from Ir£1.8m in 1987 to Ir£2.25m in 1992.[1145] It was substantially less than the UM's budget and expressed the contrasting political interest in cultural policy demonstrated in the previous chapter. The budget of the NMI only matched its Northern Irish counterpart in the late 1990s. The NMI's budget reached Ir£10.12m in 2000.[1146] The rising budgets of the two national museums expressed the new political interests in culture, be they for politics of reconciliation or tourism strategy.

The rise of budgets was associated with an intention to develop income generation within the two national museums.[1147] As a consequence, the two museums have incorporated

---

[1143] The budget rose from £100.000 in 1962 to £5 million in 1998.
[1144] Annual reports of the Ulster Museum.
[1145] Irish Parliamentary debates, *Dail Debates*, 18 December 1991, vol. 414.
[1146] Board of Visitors, *Annual Reports*.
[1147] The 1989 UM Corporate Plan pointed out that "income generation" was a task of the Marketing and Development Service Officers. Ulster Museum, *Corporate Plan*, Belfast, September 1989. In January 1995, the Northern Irish Minister for Education appointed Alistair Wilson Obe to review the government's policy towards the three major museums in Northern Ireland. The report was entitled *A Time for Change. A Review of Major Museums in Northern Ireland* and was even clearer regarding income generation since it suggested the UM "maximising income from the widest possible range of sources (…) through admission, merchandising, sponsorship." Obe, *A Time for Change*, p. 4. Likewise, the report published in 1994 by the Interim Board regarding the future development of the NMI at Collins Barracks made clear that "It is also essential that the

many of the activities of other cultural institutions, including the development of museums'
space as sites for events, education, shopping and visual consumption. At the NMI, the
display cases of the Rotunda were removed in the mid-1990s to make way for the museum
shop, followed by the opening of a gallery-café/restaurant. As early as 1990, the *Kings in
Conflict* exhibition arranged at the UM proposed many commercial incomes.[1148]
Commemorative medals, for instance, produced by a local goldsmith (Graham Harron), were
sold for £50 each and the UM received a royalty of £7.5 for each sale.[1149] Income generation
and its materialization through commercial activity symbolized the new variety of roles
attributed to the national museums in the 1990s. The national museums had to adapt to the
political wish to limit the dependence on public funding and to attract new sources of funding.

Although shared by both institutions, the development of income generation went
further at the Ulster Museum. Given that the two museums were public institutions, however,
the question arose as to whether or not free admission ought to be provided.[1150] While the
principle of free admission to national cultural institutions, especially museums, has prevailed
in Britain and Ireland for over two centuries, the issue was more ambiguous in the 1990s.[1151]
Both museums provided free admission for their permanent collections.[1152] However, the
policy differed for temporary exhibitions. Unlike the NMI where every temporary exhibition
has been free of charge, 8 out of the 13 temporary exhibitions arranged at the UM between
1988 and 2000 requested admission charges. *The Spanish Armada* in 1988, *Kings in Conflict*
in 1990 and *Up in Arms* in 1998 did so.[1153] For instance, for *Kings in Conflict* in 1990,
admissions were £2 for adults and £1 for concessions.[1154] This discrepancy expressed a
sharper interest in income generation at the Ulster Museum.

Museum should generate a significant proportion of its ongoing expenses through the generation of own
resources including sponsorship, merchandising, catering, hire of facilities, replication etc." Interim Board of the
National Museum of Ireland, *Report of the Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland Presented to the
Minister of Arts,* p. 10.

[1148] In addition to the sale of catalogues, three hundred and fifty educational packs were sold, between £3.5 and
£7 each.

[1149] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, 15 February 1990, UMA, Cultra.

[1150] There has been an extensive discussion about whether to charge or not to charge. See J. W. O'Hagan
"National Museums: to Charge or not to Charge?" *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 19, 1995, pp. 33-47.

[1151] The principle of free admission to national cultural institutions, especially museums, has prevailed in Britain
and Ireland for over two centuries. J. O'Hagan and C. Duffy "Access and Admission Charges to Museums: A
Case Study of the National Museum", *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, vol. 28,
1994, p. 125.

[1152] Admission charges were experimented for the Treasury section at the NMI – while the rest of the collections
were free of charge – from 1986 but abandoned in 1990. O'Hagan and Duffy "Access and Admission Charges to
Museums", p. 140

[1153] *General Information on MAGNI*, undated, local history department's archives, UMA, Cultra, p. 16.

[1154] Admissions: £2 for Adults, £1 for concessions and £5 for family. *The Belfast Telegraph*, 13 April 1990, p.
15.

Income generation played a more significant role in the organization of exhibitions at the Ulster Museum. The *Spanish Armada* exhibition was defined in the UM report as one of the "finest and largest exhibitions".[1155] In particular, the report pointed out that the display "in financial terms proved to be a considerable success".[1156] Indeed, for the *Spanish Armada* exhibition, the UM showed an income of £51.786 for "sponsorship and Marketing" and £124.534 for "admission charge".[1157] This prompted the 1989 Corporate Plan to expect £30.000 as net profit for *Kings in Conflict* and £80.000 from admission.[1158] Profit also played a role in defining successful events. Although *Kings in Conflict* attracted half of the visitors who came to the UM for the Spanish Armada,[1159] the exhibition was also defined as "very successful".[1160] Indeed, with *Kings in Conflict*, the UM earned £111.039 from "exhibition sponsorship and marketing" and £82.984 from "admission charges".[1161] The UM Trustees were pleased to announce that "because of the generous sponsorship of the catalogue by the Belfast City Council, all income from sales would be clear profit for the Museum".[1162] The Board of Trustees still regretted that "it has not been the most profitable".[1163] Although *Kings in Conflict* only attracted half the visitors of the *Spanish Armada*, the Trustees preferred to highlight the marketing success of the display. The UM was more influenced by the general context of consumption of culture, and to some extent by different targeted publics. The rise of funding and new marketing strategy both allowed the museums to develop new exhibiting strategies and forced them to endeavour to attract more visitors. The two aspects explain the gradual uses of new technology.

2) Museums as Site of Interactive Technology

One way for museums to target broader audiences has been to associate exhibition with leisure activity and to develop the concept of experiencing the past. This process was underpinned by the development of interactive technology in museums in the 1990s. The

---

[1155] Ulster Museum*, Annual report*, 1988-1989, Belfast: Ulster Museum, p. 8.

[1156] Ulster Museum*, Annual report*, 1988-1989, Belfast: Ulster Museum, p. 8.

[1157] Trustees of the Ulster Museum, *Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 1990*, Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1990, p. 10.

[1158] Ulster Museum, *Corporate Plan*.

[1159] The *Spanish Armada* attracted 110.000 visitors, *Kings in Conflict* only 50.100.

[1160] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, 27 September 1990, UMA, Cultra.

[1161] Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon, *Accounts of the Ulster Museum*. 1990-1991, Belfast, HMSO, 1992, p. 11.

[1162] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, 15 February 1990, UMA, Cultra.

[1163] *Minutes of the Board of Trustees*, Evaluation report on 'Kings in Conflict', 13 December 1990, UMA, Cultra.

association between media – movies, television, internet, video games, cultural institutions and so on – and history is now a major source of research in cultural studies. In his book entitled "Consuming History", Jerome de Groot analyses the variety of ways in which history is "consumed, understood and sold".[1164] Through re-enactments, history games, television programmes, films, novels, comics or museums, de Groot demonstrates how history has moved from academia and how the lines between professional historians and other practitioners of communication became blurred. In addition to the traditional presentation of artefacts, museums increasingly put forward the use of technology to attract visitors.

The use of interactive technology has been particularly important in the creation of heritage and interpretative centres in the 1990s since most of these sites had few artefacts on which they could rely. For instance, the 1798 National Visitor Centre which opened in June 1998 had only a couple of artefacts in the Battle of Vinegar Hill room. Instead, the permanent exhibition was driven by interactive projects.[1165] Since the two national museums had many artefacts resulting from long-term collections, the development of technology was more limited, but it nonetheless provoked a re-appraisal of the roles of artefacts and material culture.

The focus on technology occurred relatively early at the Ulster Museum. Already in 1989, the Ulster Museum Corporation Plan stressed that since "television (is) the biggest counter-attraction (…) the museum must therefore address in a more fundamental way the nature of its displays, exhibition and other means of interpretation and communication to take account of a rapidly changing technology."[1166] The mention of television is interesting but should not mislead. The UM did not intend to directly compete with television programmes but rather to adapt its display to new technology. Six years later, the 1995 report on museums in Northern Ireland acknowledged that the UM had already made some progress. In particular, the report quoted the UM's collaboration with the Northern Ireland Centre for Learning Resource which resulted in "innovative work on production of multi-media and audio-visual materials for use in the classroom".[1167] Despite certain projects, the report

---

[1164] De Groot, *Consuming History*, p. 2.
[1165] Among the diverse inter-active mechanisms, the Centre provided a "Great Debate" between Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine regarding the revolutionary context in Europe. This debate was inspired by Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) and Thomas Paine's response in 1791 in the *Rights of Man*. However, the reenactment of this debate on a screen – played by two actors – in the 1798 Visitor Centre and the "experience" provided to visitors was debatable since the debate actually never materialized outside the pamphlet war. What is at stake is not only the contents of exhibitions but the manner in which they are conceptualized, designed and implemented.
[1166] Ulster Museum, *Corporate Plan*.
[1167] Obe, *A Time for Change,* p. 47.

encouraged the UM to go further since "the museum has to compete for its share of visitors with many alternative attraction, heritage and display centres, leisure centres".[1168] Much more than television, the UM had entered in competition with other cultural institutions in order to attract new visitors. Technology became a major tool to diversify the audiences.

The intention to develop the use of new technology at the UM first materialized in temporary exhibitions. For *Kings in Conflict*, the focus was deliberately put on experience and re-enactment. This even became a major argument for advertising the display. The *Belfast Telegraph* highlighted the three major features of the exhibition, namely the "'Living images' (first time in Ireland), A 'Battlefield Video Presentation, *Soundalive* (The Stereo Walkman Guide)".[1169] The front page of the *Belfast Telegraph* asserted that "a first time in Ireland will be a 'living images' presentation which uses animation technology to bring characters from the period 'to life'".[1170] Interestingly, advertisement was not about what was displayed, but about how it was displayed.

The move toward inter-active technology was not so clear at the National Museum of Ireland. In 1990, a series of audiovisual suggestions were made for the new permanent 1916 exhibition.[1171] The lay-out was composed of a couple of ambitious technological projects, mostly audio-visual (Appendix 7).[1172] This included a "pyramid display" in front of the main entrance, a "video-wall outside the museum" to promote the display, a screen at the entrance of the museum "to look like the entrance of the GPO", a "screen-large flag suspended from the ceiling" whose image would form a giant "fluttering Tricolour" and a screen at the exit showing "footage of the executed leaders, prisoners being led away, bombed out O'Connell Street".[1173] Had these projects been carried out, the *Road to Independence* would have been the most audiovisual exhibition ever arranged in Ireland, North and South. The audio visual programme was entrusted to Windmill lane Pictures which established a project in November

---

[1168] Obe, *A Time for Change*. recommendation 2.9.

[1169] In the Living Images, various mannequins represented the main protagonists of the signature. The characters were, from front and left, General Ginkel (William's C-in-C), George Clark (secretary), two assistants and Patrick Sarsfield (Earl of Lucan and representative of Jacobite troops). The mannequins were animated through "living images", *i.e.* video spot broadcasted on the mannequins' faces. The other multimedia structure was a video screen which was dedicated to the strategic moves during the day Battle of the Boyne and the opposition between the Jacobite and the Williamite Armies. The video screen was arranged in the section about 1690 and occupied a prominent position in the room. See RTE News Bulletin, *The Battle of the Boyne,* broadcasted 4 September 1990, Reporter Brendan Wright, BN 90/247, RTE archives, Dublin.

[1170] *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 April 1990, p. 1 and 9.

[1171] The pyramid consisted in an armoured car of the period, figures of the British Army Troops and Republicans at the G.P.O. The entrance clip would have been dedicated to the background of the Rising. The second film would have been about the G.P.O, the Republican flag and the leaders and the final screen would have been about the aftermath of 1916. Anonymous document, between 1989 and 1991, A1/90/108, NMIA, Dublin.

[1172] *Road to Independence*, Layout, Office of Public Work archives, Dublin. According to Michael Kenny, the document may be attributed to John Teehan (personal interview with Michael Kenny, March 2010, Dublin).

[1173] Audio-visual Suggestion, anonymous but certainly from John Teehan, A1/90/108, NMIA.

1990 and evaluated the cost at hundred Ir£100.000.[1174] However, the company pointed out that "the National Museum requires a sponsor to meet the cost of the audio visual production".[1175] In January 1991, *The Irish Times* revealed that the Museum was "still seeking £150.000 sponsorship to ensure the best in audio visual presentation."[1176] The museum failed to collect enough funding and the display opened in April 1991 with no audio-visual structure.

The NMI was encouraged not to stop at failure. The government took advantage of the transfer of the collections to Collins Barracks to redefine the museum's organization and the overall exhibiting policy.[1177] The role of technology was stressed in the report on the National Museum provided in 1995 by *LORD Cultural Resources Planning and Management*, a company entirely devoted to communication. The fact that this company was, from the outset, contacted by the Interim Board in charge of reviewing the site and the Museum's management for the transfer of the collections to Collins Barracks, was telling of the political wish to develop the communication role of the national museum. Unsurprisingly, LORD produced a report which highlighted the organization of exhibitions "with the aid of audio-visual or electronic media, providing inter-active experiences".[1178] The transfer of the collections was, according to the report, the opportunity to reconsider and reshape the museum's institutional structure in order to be more responsive to the markets, with the assistance of contemporary communication technology.[1179] The report stressed that "The Museum must not miss the opportunity to fit the post appropriate method of communication to each component of the exhibit, in order to provide visitors with as varied and interactive an experience as possible".[1180] The intention to provide visitors with an "experience" of the past was therefore also supported by the 1995 report. More than knowledge or truth, it was, therefore, the communicative dimension of history which was put forward through the new marketing strategy. It was part of the overall process through which academic history was transposed to public institutions like museums.

The need to develop technology was also supported by Sears & Russell Consultants which was hired to define the exhibiting strategy for Collins Barracks. The firm, based in

---

[1174] Windmill Media Skills, "Proposal for Sponsorship of 1916 Rising Exhibition for the National Museum of Ireland", November 1990, A1/90/108, NMIA.
[1175] Windmill Media Skills, "Proposal for Sponsorship of 1916 Rising Exhibition".
[1176] "What's in the Pipeline ?", *The Irish Times*, 29 January 1991, p. 11.
[1177] *Recommendation made by the Report of the Interim Board of the NMI presented to the Minister for Arts, Culture and Gaeltacht*, unpublished report, May 1995, p. 2.
[1178] LORD, *National Museum of Ireland Strategic Plan*, p. 43.
[1179] LORD, *National Museum of Ireland Strategic Plan*, p. 5.
[1180] LORD, *National Museum of Ireland Strategic Plan*, p. 44.

Toronto (Canada) had expertise in museum design and in interpretive planning of exhibition. The museum was further considered as a site of communication and not only a site of preservation and education. The report recommended that "all the appropriate techniques of modern museum communication (such as audio-visual presentations, live interpreters, interactive exhibits and recreated environments) will be used to assist telling the stories".[1181] The successive reports show how the new marketing strategy increasingly intended to use technology to transform the NMI from a site of artefacts on display to a site of communication, armed for the competition on experiencing the past. As a consequence, the first exhibition to include audio-visual interactive was the temporary exhibition designed by the NMI in 1998 for the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion.[1182] Designed by Martello Multimedia, a CD-Rom was produced for the exhibition and available on four inter-active screens within the exhibition.[1183] One of the four divisions of the CD-Rom was entirely devoted to the various battles which took place in 1998. The gradual inclusion of technology in exhibitions in the two museums expressed the standardization of marketing policy and the need to diversify audiences. This move enhanced the representations of historical battles.

It is crucial to take not of the links between new technology and the representations of the past, especially for military history. It can be argued that the development of multimedia and interactive technology has enhanced the representations of warfare, and in particular the consideration for battlefields. The development of re-enactment of battles also contributed to this evolution. Through re-enactment, participants can recreate some aspects of historical events on a personal level.[1184] Re-enactments have been uses to re-create battles in all kinds of different media; cinema, television broadcast, and museums. *Kings in Conflict* was notably composed of a giant screen which displayed the re-enactment of the Battle of the Boyne.[1185] Likewise, one of the main attractions of the 1798 National Visitor Centre was "the Vinegar Hill experience". The film showed the re-enactment of the opposition between the rebels and the British troops at Vinegar Hill (21 June 1798). Three hundred volunteers recomposed the army of pikemen and re-enacted the Battle. This kind of representations matched perfectly the

---

[1181] LORD, *National Museum of Ireland Strategic Plan*, p. 5.

[1182] The video-screen included in *The Road to Independence* was in fact a transfer from the exhibition arranged in 1991 at the General Post Office and was, therefore, not designed by the NMI.

[1183] *Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and 1798*. CD-Rom, (Dublin: Martello Multimedia, 1998).

[1184] Re-enactments have a long history from Antiquity to the present. The most numerous re-enactments deal with historical battles.

[1185] The other multimedia structure was a video screen which was dedicated to the strategic moves during the day Battle of the Boyne and the opposition between the Jacobite and the Williamite Armies. The video screen was arranged in the section about 1690 and occupied a prominent position in the room. See RTE News Bulletin, *The Battle of the Boyne,* broadcasted 4 September 1990, Reporter Brendan Wright, BN 90/247, RTE archives, Dublin.

museums' wish to provide an "experience" of the past. The headline of the two-page article dedicated to *Kings in Conflict* was "Fighting the Battle of the Boyne all over again – every five minutes!"[1186] This need to provide experience could be used to target new publics who usually did not go to museums but who would be attracted by the presentation of warfare as a spectacle and particularly the use of a more passive and modern medium. Even though not every technology depicted battles, and technology was much less utilized in museums than in interpretative centres, technology mostly entailed a focus on dramatic and impressive aspects of military history, namely battlefield and pitched battles.

The use of audio-visual technology contributed to strengthening the links between past and present in museums. Mechanisms of "living images" or processes which aimed to "bring the past to life" assumed that the past could be reached by visitors. It is striking to notice the contrast between the intention of the Sean Nolan (director) and William Maguire (keeper) to fight any political uses of the history of the Battle of the Boyne, and the design of the exhibition in which technology brought the past to life. This came from the different aspects of the mobilization of history. *Kings in Conflict* was designed not to foster any direct political use of history, but accepted the mobilization of the dramatic aspects of the past such as battles to provide "experience" to visitors.

The introduction of technology within the NMI did not go unchallenged. On the one hand, the 1993-1994 annual report of the museum's Board of Visitors acknowledged that "Museum must acknowledge and respond to cultural tourism by developing its policies as part of an overall culture and heritage strategy." On the other hand it warned that "The recent hostility is an understandable reaction to the emergence of interpretive centres."[1187] The wave of heritage centres – not only in Ireland – has indeed fostered criticism regarding the cultural "commodification" or the cultural "packaging". In his research on tourism in Ireland, Eric Zuelow regretted that "Today sites must be designed to match the tastes of tourists raised on Disney-like heritage centres featuring flashy multi-media presentations, holograms, and interactive displays." He demonstrated how, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, "the tourist authorities began considering new ways in which to present heritage, including the use of interactive media systems to 'enhance interest and understanding.'"[1188] The consequences of marketing and tourism policy were also at the source of worries from members of the NMI.

[1186] *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 April1990, p. 9.
[1187] Board of Visitors, *Annual report*, Dublin, 1993-1994, p. 12, 13.
[1188] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. 166, 167.

The link between the NMI and tourism policy was pointed out by the Board of Visitors which stated:

> Tourism is important but it needs to be put and kept in context (…) The primary focus must be cultural. There is an apprehension that a tourist focus, if applied as the primary policy funding criteria from the National Museum would have disastrous consequences. Be aware of the warning of anthropologists that tourism corrupts. The recipient culture suffers as it responds to meet the demand and accommodate the expectations of the donor culture (the tourist).[1189]

It is extremely difficult to assess further the museum's staff reactions to these different reports. Reactions were not mentioned in official publications, and the signs of disagreement merely emerged through curators' comments that the museum was first and foremost devoted to objects, and this should not be ignored by new strategies.[1190] The different reactions and adaptations of the two museums reflected the plurality of roles attributed to national museums. Still storing and collecting materials related to national history, the two museums were increasingly forced to become site of communication in which history was also mobilized for marketing purposes. The more rapid development of technology mechanisms at the UM may be explained by the integration of the marketing department in the museum's policy since the late 1980s while the NMI did not have a marketing officer before 1998. This standardization of the mode of representation fully questioned the relations the museums had with their collections. Technology participated in a move from object-oriented display to interpretative strategy.

3) Museums as Sites of Interpretation

The use of technology in museums derived from a re-assertion of the links between the institutions and their collections. The NMI and the UM were no longer merely sites of preservation and display. Museums in the 1990s became increasingly defined as sites of interpretation. Already in 1989, the Ulster Museum Corporation Plan stressed that since "television (is) the biggest counter-attraction (…) the museum must therefore address in a more fundamental way the nature of its displays, exhibition and other means of interpretation

---

[1189] Board of Visitors, *Annual report*, Dublin, 1993-1994, p. 13.
[1190] Comments from Michael Kenny, minutes of meeting, 17 November 1994, A1/95/017, NMIA; Comments from Michael Kenny, minutes of meeting, March 1995, A1/95/017, NMIA.

and communication to take account of a rapidly changing technology."[1191] The institutions had to be aware of the fact that they not only mediated objects but were also providing meanings and messages to visitors.

It has been seen before that consideration for frameworks of representations had been a long process within the museums. Already in the 1960s, the director of the NMI encouraged the keeper of the 1916 collections to provide a story for the visitors, and in some extent, to move away from the simple display of relics.[1192] Likewise, in 1991, Michael Kenny had for the first time introduced text panels to provide the context of the Irish *Road to Independence*. In spite of these examples, the move from object-oriented displays to processes of interpretation was fostered by marketing strategy in the mid-1990s. Even though interpretation became a key issue for both the NMI and the UM, the ways the process of interpretation was implemented in the two museums revealed the impact of different audiences.

In the Republic of Ireland, the NMI launched a major re-assessment of its strategy and developed interpretation as a major policy. While presenting the mission statement of the NMI regarding the new site of display at Collins Barracks, the Interim Board used, in its 1994 report, the "mission" described in the 1927 Lithberg report. However, two new purposes were added: "the documentation and interpretation of collections".[1193] The reports requested a deeper move from the display of object to the communication of narratives. This was implemented by the 1998 Exhibit Strategy which explained that "Artefacts and specimens will be the primary medium for telling the appropriate stories but they are not <u>themselves</u> the stories".[1194] A fundamental move was proposed from the specificity of local contexts and artefacts to overall logics of communication.

In their report, Sears & Russell develop the "overall interpretive approach" defined as "a set of general principles, applicable to all methods of communicating with visitors, and independent of content or context".[1195] Interpretation was considered as a way to give general meaning to local history and targeted the new international audience at the museum. International visitors should be able to understand and interpret the narratives provided by the National Museum of Ireland. Supposedly, the museum ought to apply general communication strategy also applied in other countries and other types of institutions. More than objects what

---

[1191] Ulster Museum, *Corporate Plan*.
[1192] See chapter II.
[1193] Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland, *Report of the Interim Board of the National Museum*, p. 8.
[1194] Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, April 1998, p. 6.
[1195] Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, April 1998, p. 3.

mattered, now, was how they were communicated. This move towards communication required the involvement of new and trained staff members.

This emphasis on interpretation modified the organization of exhibitions. The interim board recommended that a museum's interpretive designer be added to the team of designers.[1196] His or her role was defined as someone who "leads the team in the process of creating a Communications Plan to define and sequence the key ideas of the exhibit, and is closely involved in the selection of appropriate media to communicate those ideas". The plan stressed that the interpretive planner "is usually involved in the writing or editing of text for the exhibit, and may also design and carry out evaluation studies that the team has identified as necessary".[1197] It was fundamental since the keepers had now to submit the selection of artefacts and their arrangement to the overall communication of ideas. The move towards interpretation shifted the power relations in the NMI. New permanent exhibitions were accordingly arranged with the help of an interpretive planner. Paul Martinovic – from Blue Sky Design and former member of Sears&Russell, the company which produced the 1998 Exhibiting Strategy report – collaborated with the NMI's history department for the choice of artefacts, the text panels and the overall organisation of displays.[1198]

Part of the move from object-oriented displays to interpretation included the motto "tell the story of Ireland".[1199] The 1998 Exhibiting Strategy pointed out that in order to tell the story of Ireland, the staff had to display "objects with a context".[1200] This request is crucial to understanding the new relations established by the NMI with academic historians in the late 1990s and 2000s. Until the 1990s, the collaboration with academic historians had been limited to the correction of text panels and publications. The need to interpret the past and to provide historical context opened new possibilities of collaboration between the NMI and academic historians, especially for the forthcoming 1998 and 2006 exhibitions. The interest in history was particularly obvious for more recent periods.

A direct consequence for the history division was the suggestion to focus on the twentieth century. The 1994 LORD report advised to start and end the collections on display

---

[1196] Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland, *Report of the Interim Board of the National Museum,* p. 14.
[1197] Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland, *Report of the Interim Board of the National Museum,* p. 14.
[1198] Paul Martinovic was part of the company (Sears and Russell) who undertook the 1998 exhibit strategy. For the 2006 display, Martinovic established strategy for grouping images (email 26 October 2004, A1/04/274, NMIA) or selecting some images as "conveying our fundamental message better". 22 April 2005, email to Lay Joye, A1/06/296, NMIA.
[1199] LORD *National Museum of Ireland Strategic Plan,* p. 20.
[1200] Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, April 1998.

with twentieth century artefacts, so to say, to provide "the visitors with something known".[1201] The report carried on "Visitors without university qualifications may not carry a sense of history in with them, but they do carry a sense of their own biography (…) if the exhibits in the new building can begin and end in the present day, the visitor can have the experience of first recognizing his or her own world and timeframe".[1202] The focus on present day was symbolic of a general turn in museums which have increasingly provided space for immediate past.[1203] This statement contradicts the overall tourism policy in Ireland which tended to promote a traditional and pre-modern version of Irishness. The presentation of Ireland as a traditional, romantic, and rural space was merely one narrative of the past. Another was to connect international visitors to Irish history through modern times.

Conclusion of Chapter IV

This chapter has demonstrated that both the national status of museums and the general mode of exhibiting have been shaped by the changing relations between the institutions and their publics. Being invited to better target their audiences, museums developed their awareness of the plurality of publics, from different communities or/and from different countries. This awareness was part of Eileen Hooper-Greenhill's argument that the future of museums exists in the acknowledgment of the public interpretations of narratives and their involvement in the construction of display.[1204] The two museums attempted to diversify their publics and had, therefore, to adapt their collections. This first resulted in new similar modes of display much more driven by communication strategy and relying on audio-visual activity. This revealed that what was a stake was the way objects and works-of-art were presented to audiences. In order to adapt to new audiences, the two museums modified their approach of collections and moved from site of preservation to site of communication, site of interpretation, site of shopping, and, as far as the UM was concerned, as site of dialogue. In the 1990s, the demands to which museums had to answer increased significantly.

Nevertheless, this global trend was not received in a passive manner by museums. The general marketing strategies were adapted to local context and museums' audiences. For

---

[1201] Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland, *Report of the Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland,* p. 43.

[1202] LORD, *National Museum of Ireland Strategic Plan,* p. 43.

[1203] In the Imperial War Museum North, one of the first objects visitors see is the twisted wreck of a car. It was destroyed by a bomb in a Baghdad marketplace on 5 March 2007. The car's title, "Baghdad, 5 March 2007", refers to the day a suicide bomber drove a truck down Mutanabi Street and blew it up, killing 38 people and injuring over 100 others.

[1204] Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture.*

instance, the rise of European funding had contrasting consequences in the two national museums since they were applied to different audiences, community groups in the North and international tourists in the Republic of Ireland. EUSPPR enhanced cultural diversity in the North and the ERDF contributed to set Irish history in an international context of representation. The different adaptation was even clearer regarding the involvement of visitors within the two museums. Even though the NMI had more consideration for the plurality of its audiences, visitors remained passive agents in the overall experience. Conversely, the support to focus on community and to involve audiences resulted in the participation of groups and individuals in the interpretations of the past in the exhibition organized by the UM in 2003. This expressed the distinct definitions of the national status of the two museums. In the Republic, the NMI was still representing national unity to an increasingly foreign audience. The presentation of Irish history to non-Irish audiences was made easier through the development of communication, interpretation, and technology. In Northern Ireland, community relations and European funding entailed a focus on the local cohabitation of the two main traditions. The national status of the UM referred to this common space in which neither Nationalism nor Unionism as such were challenged. The Ulster Museum took advantage of the relevance given by British and European authorities to intermediary agencies in Northern Ireland to improve community relations. The different roles of the two national museums and their different links with audiences were fully tested during the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion in 1998 which revealed two different approaches to the past, both designed to effect reconciliation.

CHAPTER V: National Museums and the Contrasting Politics of Reconciliation during the Bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion

Encouraged by the development of marketing strategies in the early 1990s, the two national museums launched several projects of exhibitions devoted to historical conflicts. From 1998 to 2006, six major exhibitions devoted partly or entirely to Anglo-Irish historical conflicts were arranged by the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) and the Ulster Museum (UM).

Exhibitions about Anglo-Irish Historical Conflicts at the Two National Museums

Year	Site	Title	Subject	Commemoration
1998	UM	Up in Arms: the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland	1798 Rebellion	Bicentenary of 1798
1998	NMI	Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and the 1798 Rebellion	1798 Rebellion	Bicentenary of 1798
2001	UM	War in Twentieth Century Ireland	World Wars and NI conflict	60th anniversary of the Belfast Blitz
2003	UM	Conflict: The Irish at War	Military History of Ireland	N/A
2006	NMI	Soldiers and Chiefs: The Irish at War at Home and Abroad	Military History of Ireland	N/A
2006	NMI	Understanding 1916	1916 Easter Rising	90th anniversary of the Easter Rising

The two last chapters of this dissertation (chapter V and chapter VI) are devoted to the analysis of this series of exhibitions and their context of production. At first sight, the comparison of the exhibitions seems to highlight a similarity of the topics put on display. Thus, both museums designed exhibitions for the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion in 1998 and exhibitions with similar titles in 2003 and 2006 about the military history of Ireland.

Nevertheless, these similarities hid different processes of mobilisation of history. This chapter demonstrates the consequences of the politicization of the commemorations during

the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion which took place in the particular context of the Good Friday Agreement. Signed in Belfast in April 1998, hence also known as the Belfast Agreement, it was a major step in the Northern Ireland peace process. The Agreement signed by the British and Irish governments and most – but not all – Northern Irish political parties, aimed at establishing a power-sharing executive and a Northern Ireland assembly.[1205] Since most of the political authorities in Britain and in the island of Ireland were involved in the Good Friday Agreement, the Agreement was a fundamental step towards creating context for the present Anglo-Irish relations. Importantly, because the Good Friday Agreement took place the same year as the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion, the Agreement was also a major context for the re-interpretation of the Anglo-Irish relations in the past. The conjunction of the Agreement and the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion offer, therefore, a major case study to examine the connection between the representations and interpretations of the past and of the politics of reconciliation.

It is striking to notice that the Ulster Museum (UM) opened its exhibition devoted to the 1798 Rebellion on 3 April 1998, so just a week before the Good Friday Agreement was signed (April 10th). In Dublin, the National Museum of Ireland opened its commemorative exhibition on 25 May 1998, two days after the Good Friday Agreement had been approved by voters in a referendum in Northern Ireland and approved by voters in the Republic of Ireland at a referendum to change the Constitution in conformity with the Agreement (May 23rd). In Belfast, the display was called *Up in Arms: the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland* and was on view from April to September.[1206] In Dublin, the exhibition was entitled *Fellowship of Freedom: the United Irishmen and the 1798 Rebellion*; it was on view from May to December. Moreover, the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion offered the first example of simultaneous commemorative exhibitions at the two national museums. It was also the first time the Belfast institution mounted a temporary display concerning directly the 1798 Rebellion.[1207] The different parallel events organized by the two museums,[1208] as well as the amount of materials they published make the commemorations important case studies for comparison.[1209]

[1205] The previous Assembly was suspended in 1972 and abolished in 1973.

[1206] "Are you up?" was the colloquial expression used in the 1790s to ascertain support for the rebels.

[1207] However, the two museums had already displayed artefacts of the 1798 Rebellion in their permanent collections. In the NMI, the United Irishmen and the 1798 Rebellion were part of the historical collections since the 1930s. In Belfast, the UM's local history gallery which opened in 1978 contained windows regarding the United Irishmen as well. However, the latter was mostly restricted to the United Irishmen and avoided major controversies about the use of violence and the meaning of the political dissidence.

[1208] The Ulster Museum hosted one of the two major conferences organized for the bicentenary (the second was held in Dublin castle) from the 20 to the 23 May 1998. Many workshops were held by the Outreach officer (Jane Leonard) in the UM (see the list in the chapter devoted to the community relations in Northern Ireland). In Dublin, the NMI arranged lecture series every Sunday from May 24th (Kevin Whelan was the first speaker) to

Hundreds of projects were organized in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland for the bicentenary. In Northern Ireland, 19 out of the 26 District Councils mounted commemorative events.[1210] This meant that the commemorations were not limited to nationalist areas as it had been the case for previous commemorations, notably the sesquicentenary in 1948. In addition to the many exhibitions staged,[1211] television documentaries were produced.[1212] In particular, *Rebellion*, a three-episode documentary produced by Radio Television Eireann in the Republic of Ireland was watched by half a million people. By its size and the number of events arranged all over Ireland, the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion was one of the most impressive commemorations in Ireland and Northern Ireland during the twentieth century.

The purpose of this chapter is not only to address the different representations of the 1798 Rebellion in the two national museums, but also to examine to what extent they revealed broader processes of commemoration North and South. This will also help to set the museums' exhibition in a broader context of remembering. In addition to political actors, attention will be paid to the roles of Historians as vectors of representations and interpretations of the past between politics and cultural institutions like museums. It will be necessary to investigate the contrast between the absence of politics of commemorations in the 1980s and early 1990s and the creation of official narratives for the bicentenary of 1798.

October 4th. List of lectures, Helen Beaumont's papers, archives of the Department of Education, box 6, NMIA, Dublin. (Appendix 9-I)

[1209] The publications are fundamental since the remaining descriptions of the text panels are incomplete. Every text panel was reported in the catalogues, in longer versions. Maguire was the editor of the catalogue collectively written by the staff and published by the UM. William Maguire, ed. *Up in Arms. The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland.* (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1998). Kevin Whelan wrote and edited the Fellowship of Freedom's companion volume which was published by the Cork University Press in 1998. Kevin Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and 1798*, Cork: Cork University Press, 1998. The guide to *Up in Arms* was written by Parkhill (keeper), whereas *Fellowship of Freedom's* copy was edited by Whelan, the historical adviser in charge of scripts. Composed of Twenty-one pages, the A4-sized *Up in Arms'* guide introduced all twelve sections of the exhibition in images and texts. In contrast, the NMI published a five page equivalent that provided a historical overview of the Rebellion. The *Up in Arms* guide included forty-three black and white images with captions, linked to the supporting text. *Fellowship of Freedom*'s guide included five coloured pictures without captions, or reference to the supporting text. Trevor Parkhill, *Up in Arms, Exhibition Guide*. (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1998); *Fellowship of Freedom, Exhibition Guide*. (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1998).

[1210] Peter Collins wrote a well detailed survey of the events organised for the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion. Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of '98'?*.

[1211] Among the main exhibitions, the Linen Hall Library arranged "The United Irishmen and the Government of Ireland, 1791-1801" which opened in March 1998. The Down County Museum mounted "1798 in County Down" from March to December 1998.

[1212] *1798 Agus O' Shin* was directed by Louis Marcus for *Telefis na Gaeilge* (TnaG) ; *A Patriot's Fate* was a two part programme narrated by Brian Keenan and directed by Moore Sinnerton for BBC Northern Ireland ; *Rebellion* was a three episode series fronted by Cathal O'Shannon and produced Kevin Dawson for RTE. G. Beiner, in T. Brotherstone, A. Clark, and K. Whelan (eds.), *These Fissured Isles: Ireland, Scotland and British History, 1798-1848*, Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers, 2005, p. 232.

In order to investigate these issues, the chapter first explores the roles of the Ulster Museum in the bicentenary of 1798 in relation to the politics of reconciliation. Then, it is intended to question the consequences of the process of reconciliation on the political mobilization of history in the Republic of Ireland, particularly through the activity of the government Commemoration Committee. The chapter will subsequently detail the roles of Historians as intermediary between politics and culture and how they contributed to the design of the exhibitions in the two national museums. Finally, the results of the commemorative process will be analyzed through the two exhibitions arranged by the UM and NMI in 1998 in order to demonstrate the contrasting application of the politics of reconciliation.

A) The Ulster Museum as a Space of Reconciliation

1) The Bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion and the Process of Reconciliation in Northern Ireland

The commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion in Northern Ireland were occasions to perform a politics of reconciliation. The historical conflict was utilized to demonstrate that the two main communities shared a common history and could live together. This was expressed through the chief cross-community organization involved in the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion; the United Irishmen Commemoration Society. The United Irishmen Commemoration Society was issued from the Society of the United Irishmen Commemoration Society, founded in the late 1980s to prepare the bicentenary of the French Revolution and of the foundation of the Society of the United Irishmen in Belfast in 1791.[1213] The Society was renamed United Irishmen Commemoration Society in June 1996 and was composed mainly of those involved in 1991.[1214] The constitution of the United Irishmen Commemoration Society stressed that the "Society is established (…) with the object of encouraging a balanced understanding and

---

[1213] Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of '98 ?*, p. 77.
[1214] Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of '98 ?*, p. 80. The patrons of the United Irishmen Commemoration Society were Marianne Elliott (Historian of the 1790s), two former moderators of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Principals of Union Theological College, Rev. John Barkley and Finlay Holmes and the local Historian Fred Heatley. Eamon Hanna was chairman from 1996 to 1998 and was replaced by John Gray in 1998. For a complete list of the members of the United Irishmen Commemoration Society, see the minutes of the first meeting, 27 June 1996, United Irishmen Commemoration Society Belfast, archives of the government Commemoration Committee (hereafter GCCA), S110/05/10/0056, Library of the *Taoiseach*, Leinster House, Dublin.

appreciation of the aims and ideals of the United Irishmen".[1215] The focus on the United Irishmen allowed for a balance between the two communities. On the one side, the United Irishmen represented the contest of British policy (close to the nationalist tradition). On the other side, the Society of the United Irishmen was initially composed mostly of Protestants like Theobald Wolfe Tone or Henry Joy McCracken.

Among numerous events,[1216] the United Irishmen Commemoration Society organized a regular, well-attended and cross-community programme of lectures at the Linen Hall Library.[1217] In particular, the United Irishmen Commemoration Society arranged a commemorative exhibition at the Linen Hall Library in 1998.[1218] The exhibition was "an opportunity to explore the role of the United Irishmen and its relevance to today. (…) It will explore community identity dispassionately, sensitively, and with inclusiveness".[1219] In order to highlight cross-community relations, attention was also drawn to the display about counter-rebellion forces, both the British troops and the different groups which fought the rebels like the Orange Order, the yeomanry and the militia.[1220] Consequently, the present-day Unionists could also find out that their support for political union was also embedded in the 1798 Rebellion. The commemorative activity of the United Irishmen Commemoration Society was symbolic of the cross-community events sponsored by the Community Relations Council with the financial support from the European Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland (EUSSPPR). The Community Relations Council financed many cultural projects related to the commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion to secure cross-community relations and non-sectarian interpretations.[1221] Many events arranged for the bicentenary of 1798 were, therefore, embedded in community relations and politics of reconciliation in Northern Ireland which focused on the two main traditions. In that framework, it was necessary that Unionists participated in the commemorations.

[1215] Constitution of the United Irishmen Commemoration Society, 27 June 1996, United Irishmen Commemoration Society Belfast, S110/05/10/0056, GCCA.

[1216] See the '98 News: Newsletter of the United Irishmen Commemoration Society. For a list of the United Irishmen Commemoration Society conferences, see Collins, Who Fears to Speak? p. 95-97.

[1217] Founded in 1788, the Linen Hall Library was the oldest library in Belfast and encouraged cross-community projects. John Gray – secretary of the United Irishmen Commemoration Society from 1996 to 1998 – was curator of the Linen Hall Library.

[1218] The exhibition was entitled The United Irishmen and the Government of Ireland, 1791-1801 and opened in March 1998.

[1219] John Gray to the Commemoration Committee, March 1997, Linen Hall Library, S110/05/10/046, GCCA.

[1220] See the exhibition catalogue, John Killen, The United Irishmen and the Government of Ireland, 1791-1801, (Belfast: Linen Hall Library, 1998).

[1221] The re-enactment of the Battle of Antrim (Ulster Heritage Museum Committee), Four day workshop incorporating music and storytelling on the history of 1798 ; Heritage Lectures (Religious Affairs Committee) ; The Educational Programme of the Art in the Environment Group ; the Henry Joy McCracken play (Centre Stage). See the list of projects in the Community Relations Council, Annual Report 1999, (Belfast: Community Relations Council, 1999).

As stressed above, the major specificity of the 1998 commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion in Northern Ireland was the involvement of Unionist groups in the bicentenary. Traditionally, Unionists had remained aside from the commemorations of 1798 which was perceived to be a Republican event. During the centenary of 1798, members of the Orange Order advocated forgetting the event.[1222] In 1948, for the 150th anniversary of the 1798 Rebellion, celebrations only took place in Republican areas while the Unionist-dominated Belfast Corporation banned a 1798 commemorative event from being organized at the Ulster Hall.[1223] Even in 1991 for the bicentenary of the creation of the Society of the United Irishmen – an issue less divisive than the 1798 Rebellion itself since it had more local connection and did not include the scenes of violence perpetrated during the insurrection – the participation of Unionists remained rare. The situation shifted in 1998 because community relations policy and the equal representations of the two major traditions encouraged Unionists to participate in the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion.

The new participation of Unionist groups in the commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion was associated with particular purposes. First, Kennaway wanted to mobilize the Unionist community to commemorate the 1798 Rebellion. In the *Orange Standard,* the official newspaper of the Orange Order, he published a list of arguments to convince "Unionists and Loyalists" to commemorate the 1798 Rebellion. He explained that the 1798 rebellion "was not black and white or should I say, Orange and Green". He argued that "the Orange institution can trace its history to both sides", that is, the counter-rebellion troops but also the rebels and the United Irishmen.[1224] The re-enactment of the Battle of Antrim on 6 June 1998 was organized by the Ulster Heritage Museum Committee, a cultural body with close links to the Orange Order. The Battle of Antrim was a victory of the British and counter-rebellion troops, and a fatal blow to the rebels in Northern Ireland. It shows that commemorations in 1998 were, by no means, only celebrating the rebels. Interestingly, the event was also funded by EUSSPPR through the Community Relations Council. The politics of reconciliation, which favoured the equal representations of the two main traditions, enhanced the presence of Unionists in the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion and contributed to the contrast between 1998 and previous commemorations of the Rebellion.

However, Kennaway's claimed intentions to support inclusive narratives of 1798 were contradicted by the Orange Order's reissuing of two old and very critical interpretations of the

---

[1222] *The Belfast Newsletter*, 10 and 21 May 1898.
[1223] Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of '98'?* p.70.
[1224] Brian Kennaway, "Why Commemorate 1798?", *The Orange Standard*, February 1998.

1798 Rebellion. In 1998, the Education Lodge of the Orange Order re-issued Robert Gowan's *Murder Without Sin*, *the Rebellion of 1798* published initially in 1859.[1225] The second was *The Sunshine Patriot: The 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down*, extracted from R.M. Sibbett's *Orangeism in Ireland and Throughout the Empire*.[1226] While Sibbett's work might be called a history of the Orange Order, Gowan presented very critical interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion and massacres of Protestants by supposedly Catholic rebels. In the introduction of the new publication of Gowan's book, Kennaway argued that "news of the atrocities against the Protestants of Wexford reached the North, the Protestants of Ulster discovered that they must draw closer together as they had more in common than they had realized".[1227] According to Stephen Howe who reviewed the bicentenary publications, this selection of new publications proved that "no substantial new Orange or Loyalist interpretation of 1798 seems to have appeared for the bicentennial".[1228] Attention was still paid to the acts of violence against Protestants in 1798 rather than the political messages of the Rebellion. Kennaway's positions expressed a tension within Unionist groups who intended to participate in the bicentenary also to draw attention to other non-Republican interpretations of 1798. Kennaway asserted in an interview that the centenary of the Rebellion had been monopolized by the Republicans, and that he wanted something different for the bicentenary.[1229]

The exhibition at the Ulster Museum was, therefore, arranged in a context of greater participation from the two main traditions in the commemorations. Even though it derived from broader politics of reconciliation, it did not mean general agreements on the interpretations of the past, but it meant new dialogue between communities. Interestingly, the Ulster Museum intended to situate itself at the crossroads of communities, to become a space of dialogue in Northern Ireland.

[1225] O.R. Gowan, *Murder Without Sin. The Rebellion of 1798*, first published 1859, reprinted by the Education Committee of The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Belfast, 1998.

[1226] R.M. Sibbett, *The Sunshine Patriot: The 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down* , Belfast, Educational Lodge of the Orange Order, 1997 ; The R.M. Sibbett, *Orangeism in Ireland and Throughout the Empire*, Belfast: 1914.

[1227] O.R. Gowan, *Murder Without Sin.*

[1228] S. Howe, "The Politics of Historical 'Revisionism'", p. 232.

[1229] Personal interview with Brian Kennaway, Belfast, November 2008.

2) The Significance of Community Relations in the Organization of the Ulster Museum's Exhibition

The organization of *Up in Arms: the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland* mirrored this overall context of commemorations in which community relations came to the foreground. The organization was marked by long-term policies and more recent adaptation to the politics of reconciliation. On the long-term, the exhibition derived from the marketing policy and the community relations policy which had emerged since the late 1980s. The design of an exhibition about the 1798 Rebellion had already been suggested by William Maguire in 1985. While presenting the issues at stake in mounting an exhibition about the Battle of the Boyne in 1990, he stressed that "If we do the Boyne tercentenary on one side, we may be expected to do the 1798 bicentenary".[1230] William Maguire was still working on the organizing committee of the 1998 exhibition.[1231] He retired in 1997 but stayed at the UM in order to help Trevor Parkhill – new keeper of the local history collections – to organize the 1998 display. At large, the 1998 exhibition bore many similarities with *Kings in Conflict*.

From the outset, *Up in Arms* was to be compared to *Kings in Conflict*. Whilst presenting the UM's project to the Irish Government in 1996, Maguire defined the display as being "similar in size and scope to '*Kings in Conflict*'".[1232] *Kings in Conflict* did not only become a model for its scenography but also for its scheme of collaboration. Although *Kings in Conflict* was ultimately not displayed in Dublin, the NMI and the Irish government had played a role in the construction of the exhibition. Thus, when Trevor Parkhill went to Dublin in 1997 to discuss the possibility of collaboration for the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion with representatives of the Irish government, members of the latter were convinced that cross-border projects similar to *Kings in Conflict* should be supported.[1233] These links between the two exhibitions were expressed in the intention to debunk myths about 1798. Marian Ferguson, education officer of the UM, reported about the first exhibition organization meeting that it had been agreed that a commemorative exhibition would be created in "a fair handed way" and "avoid all the common uses" of 1798.[1234] Trevor Parkhill, the UM keeper of

---

[1230] Maguire "1690 and All that", 1985, local history department, UMA, Cultra.

[1231] William Maguire chaired the committee in February 1997. See Marian Ferguson's paper, February 1997, 1798 Exhibition, archives department of Education, UMA, Belfast. The first meeting of the committee took place in June 1996.

[1232] Letter from W. Maguire to A. Kearnet, 4 June 1996, Northern Ireland, S110/05/03/020, GCCA, Dublin.

[1233] This was particularly supported by John McGinty. Letter from Parkhill to A. Kearney, 24 November 1997, Trevor Parkhill's paper, box 5, UMA, Cultra.

[1234] The 1798 Exhibition, Marian Ferguson's diary, 19 June 1996, Marian Ferguson's paper, Department of Education, UMA, Belfast

the local history collection in charge of the 1998 exhibition, stated that "we want to set the historical record straight and to help people understand more about their own history". The term "straight" was further explained when he pointed out that "much of 1798 has been shrouded in mystique".[1235] The distinction from myths was a common feature for *Kings in Conflict* and *Up in Arms* and materialized the continuity of the UM's exhibiting strategy in attempting to demobilize history. This did not mean the two displays applied the same approach to debunk myths.

Part of the UM's community relations policy established in the 1980s, *Up in Arms* was also the result of new politics of reconciliation. More than *Kings in Conflict*, *Up in Arms* was intended for two distinct communities. In 2003, Parkhill asserted that the 1798 Rebellion "left long memories in the nationalist community and something akin to a cultural amnesia among the Unionists".[1236] Parkhill opposed two misinterpretation of the past which reflected the opposition between Protestants and Catholics. He proceeded:

> neither community, however, appeared aware of their own nor shared '1798' heritage. The Protestant point of view did not see the subject of the 1798 Rebellion as part of their history. (...) For their part, Nationalists were unaware of the European and American context of the 1798 Rebellion and of broader links with other attempts to replace oligarchies with some means of democratic and accountable governments.[1237]

Parkhill was convinced that there were "elements of a shared historical contribution to the 1798 Rebellion, in which both communities could take a justifiable pride".[1238] The display was, therefore, intended to break the Unionist amnesia and to set the Nationalist interpretations in a broader framework. *Up in Arms* emphasized more than *Kings in Conflict* the different parts in which each community could be associated. This was partly explained by the increasing weight of community relations funding.

The UM's community relations policy was driven by the European Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (EUSSPPR) and included some particularities. In April 1997, the UM applied successfully for £85.000 from EUSSPPR regarding the commemorative

---

[1235] U. Bradley "Museum Injects Life into Rebellion" *The Irish News*, 3 April 1998, p. 10.
[1236] Trevor Parkhill "The Curator as Interpreter, Interlocutor and Facilitator: the 1798 Rebellion and the Conflict Exhibition 2003", in *Effective Presentation & Interpretation in Museums. Proceedings of the Symposium,* 7 November 2003, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, p. 32.
[1237] Trevor Parkhill "The Curator as Interpreter", p. 34.
[1238] Trevor Parkhill "The Curator as Interpreter", p. 34.

exhibition of the 1798 Rebellion.[1239] Part of the fund served to allow free tickets for community groups' visits, and another part was reserved for the employment of an outreach officer from November 1997 to August 1998. On the one hand, the European funding was not directly associated with the decision to hold the commemorative exhibition since the first meeting of the organizing committee took place in June 1996. On the other hand, the funding had major consequences on the manner in which the past was presented to the audiences, and the mobilization of history embodied by the work of Jane Leonard.

Leonard was appointed following the call for application published by the UM which stressed that the primary duty of the outreach officer would be to develop interest among community groups.[1240] Even though the position was strictly related to the organization of the 1998 commemorative exhibition, the focus of the call and the funding application was not on the historical narratives – in that case about the 1798 Rebellion – but how these narratives could be utilized for better community relations. In the application form for EUSSPPR funding, the museum proposed to enhance community access to the exhibition and to work for "a better understanding of a crucial event in Irish history (…) which has played a significant role in the development of the two main traditions".[1241] It was argued that the "exhibition will also seek to explain how the revolutionary feeling of the 1790s was counter-balanced by a significant conservative and loyalist factor. In this regard, the origins and role of the Orange Order will be featured".[1242] Community relations and politics of reconciliation drove the presentation of the past in the UM in 1998. In that sense, the exhibition also served as a bridge between community relations in 1998 and the construction of identity in the past. It will be interesting to analyze the interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion in the display since the community in 1998 and the opposite sides in 1798 did not fully match.

Another specificity of *Up in Arms* in comparison with the organization of *Kings in Conflict* was its focus on present violence. Recommendations came from the Community Relations Council, in particular the Europe division which was in charge of the allocation of EUSSPPR funding. Its head officer, Mark Adair, was directly in contact with Jane Leonard who stated, in January 1998, that Mark Adair "suggested that a debate/discussion session

---

[1239] Marian Ferguson's diary, 16 April 1997, Marian Ferguson's paper, archives of the education department, UMA, Belfast.
[1240] Call for application, June 1997, Marian Ferguson's personal paper, archives of the UM's education department. The call specified that the UM was seeking candidates with a degree in history, a recent historical experience – preferably in eighteenth and nineteenth century study – and a minimum of two year experience in history teaching.
[1241] Application to European Funding, 16 April 1997, Marian Ferguson's personal papers, 1798 Exhibition, Education Department, UMA, Belfast.
[1242] Application to European Funding.

might be added (…) to look at the contemporary significance of the rebellion".[1243] The interests in the links between past and present, between the 1798 Rebellion and the Northern Iris context in 1998, contrasted with what had been the green line in 1990 for *Kings in Conflict*. In the latter, the staff had been very careful to distinguish past from present, to debunk myths embedded in community memories from the historical narratives of the 1690s, and to demobilize history. The new links between past and present resulted from an overall intention to use history in order to entail better community relations in the present.

In an article about the work of the Ulster Museum, and particularly about the work of the outreach programme funded by EUSSPPR, Trevor Parkhill – UM's keeper of local history collections and in charge of *Up in Arms* – acknowledged that the museum was encouraged to change the representations of violence in Northern Ireland's communities.[1244] The UM's outreach programme was part of a wider reappraisal of the past in Northern Ireland where historical violence had to be displayed in order to come to terms with bitter sectarian relations between communities. The report on the impact of EUSSPPR stressed that "the need to tell stories is essential. Through stories, the scale of pain which must be accommodated and healed in the future has become much more visible".[1245] This statement expressed an evolution in politics of reconciliation towards the use of the past to "heal" the present. For instance, *Healing Through Remembering* is a cross-community group created in 2001 to investigate the possibility and the usefulness of remembering the Northern Irish conflict. In that spirit, history has been mobilized to support the peace-building strategies in Northern Ireland. It contrasted somehow with the exhibiting strategy of the UM for *Kings in Conflict* in which the past was constructed as disconnected from the present context of remembering. In 1998, the mobilization of history has been developed further.

The need to deal with the present consequences of violence also influenced the target audience. The focus on "areas which had previously experienced violence and polarisation" was requested by EUSSPPR and the SSP4.5 concerning the pathways to reconciliation.[1246] Thus, Trevor Parkhill explained that most of the people welcomed at the museum during the community groups' visits had never been to the UM before. He stressed that the exhibition

[1243] Minutes of the meeting, 22 January 1998, Trevor Parkhill's papers, UMA, Cultra.
[1244] Trevor Parkhill, 'That's Their History. Can a Museum's History Exhibitions Inform a Reconciliation Process in a Divided Society?' *Folk Life. Journal of Ethnographic Studies* Vol. 41, 2002, pp. 37-44.
[1245] D. Murrow, *Community Relations and Peace building: What Have we Learned? Reflections by Recipients of Grant Aid from the European Programme of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, Acting as an Intermediary Funding Body for the European Union's Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, 1996-2000*, p. 29.
[1246] Promoting Pathways to Reconciliation: "Building Inclusive Communities", 1997, Trevor Parkhill's paper, Box 14, UMA, Cultra.

"included community groups from areas characterized by higher than normal levels of violence and polarisation. (…) The visits brought staff and the Museum into closer contact than ever before with groups from marginalised communities whose influence had increased with the unravelling of the problems that have lain at the heart of 'The Troubles'".[1247] This policy was new but the results should not be overly emphasized. During the course of the outreach programme, 1.500 members of community groups visited the exhibition, representing 6,6% of the total visitor figures of 22.500.[1248] Even though the figures showed a still limited impact on overall audiences, they expressed a wish from the museum to widen its publics. This demonstrated that, notwithstanding the continuous relevance of community relations, the UM had been influenced by an increased request of mobilization of history in the Northern Irish peace process. In order to answer this request, the UM had to become a public space of dialogue and reconciliation.

3) The Ulster Museum as Agent and Space of Reconciliation

Through the organization of the 1998 exhibition, the Ulster Museum underpinned politics of reconciliation. This was first expressed through the new networks created around the institution. In its application for EUSSPPR funding, the UM indeed pointed out that the funding would "enable us to work with the wide range of bodies, including local historical societies, (…) language, community and church groups".[1249] This mainly derived from Jane Leonard's work. Outside the UM, she attended "community relations training seminars" in which she shared practical experiences with other community officers.[1250] In addition, she attended lots of community talks about the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion. For instance, on 29 April 1998, she went to the Craigavon Civic Centre to deliver a talk entitled "Remembering '98: How the Centenary of the 1798 rebellion was marked".[1251] Through Jane Leonard's activity, the Ulster Museum spread its interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion out of its traditional circles. Attention was paid to the manner in which the violence perpetrated in 1798 was interpreted in 1998.

[1247] Parkhill "The Curator as Interpreter", p. 33.
[1248] Parkhill, "The Curator as Interpreter", p. 36.
[1249] Application to European Funding, 16th April 1997.
[1250] Minutes from the *Up in Arms* exhibition, 3 June 1998, Trevor Parkhill's papers, UMA, Cultra. These seminars were compulsory for the institutions which benefited from European funding. For instance, every recipients of EUSSPPR funding were "invited to attend a short two-three hour seminar in which they participated in groups of reflections on the process". In D. Murrow, *Community Relations and Peace building*, p. 10.
[1251] Collins, *Who Fears to Speak* ? p. 156.

An important part of Jane Leonard's work inside and outside the Ulster Museum was to deal with historical violence of the 1790s. The traditional Unionist criticisms towards the 1798 Rebellion underlined the massacres of Protestants that took place in 1798, in particular in County Wexford. In 1859, Robert Gowan published *Murder Without Sin. The Rebellion of 1798* in which he depicted the atrocities perpetrated by Catholic rebels on Protestant civilians.[1252] Gowan emphasized the violence perpetrated by rebels in Scullabogue and Wexford (city) as evidence of what was presented as the fundamentally sectarian dimension of the rising. On 5 June 1798, in Scullabogue rebels set a barn on fire where more than one hundred prisoners, mostly Loyalists, with several women and children had been locked. Likewise, rebels gathered prisoners – mainly Protestants – on Wexford Bridge on June 20th 1798; the prisoners were tied and piked to death. These two scenes became major images of Unionist psyche and were accordingly at the centre of the UM's concern. The works of Jane Leonard regarding these two events exemplified the role of the Ulster Museum in challenging the divisive aspects of history.

Jane Leonard devoted much of the community activities to deal with the interpretations of violence during the 1790s. She wrote the section of the exhibition's catalogue dealing with 1798 scenes of violence, in particular the captions and interpretations of the massacres at Scullabogue and Wexford Bridge. In the seminars and talks inside and outside the Ulster Museum, she utilized a twelve slide-pack about artefacts on view in the exhibition.[1253] Four of the twelve slides dealt with 1798 scenes of violence, notably Scullabogue.[1254] Leonard's presentations were oral and no materials – except the slides – remain from them.[1255] It is, therefore, difficult to examine how violence was dealt with. Only two aspects can be addressed from her captions in the different publications. Her interpretation highlighted the propaganda dimension of the depictions of Scullabogue. She used the most famous representations of Scullabogue by George Cruikshank (Appendix 9-M).[1256] The slide caption of Cruikshank's *Massacre at Scullabogue* stressed that it was a

---

[1252] O.R. Gowan, *Murder Without Sin*, p. 105.
[1253] *Up in Arms: The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland. A Bicentenary Exhibition*. Slide pack, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1998).
[1254] J. Gillray "Horrors of the Irish Union. Botheration of Poor Pat-Or. A Whisper across the Channel", slide n° 11 ; J. Carey "The Hanging of Henry Joy McCracken", slide n° 9 ; T. Robinson, "The Battle of Balinahinch", n° 7 ; G. Cruikshank "The Massacre at Scullabogue", slide n° 6. *Up in Arms: The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland. A Bicentenary Exhibition*. Slide pack, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1998).
[1255] Moreover, she has always refused to meet the author and to be interviewed
[1256] George Cruikshank (1792-1878) was a British caricaturist and book illustrator. He was the author of many political satires, in particular against the royal family and leading politicians. He was also extremely hostile to the enemies of Britain and provided very critical and racist representations of the 1798 Rebellion in which Irish were characterized by their simian features.

"highly partisan depiction" in which rebels "invariably have prognathous features (i.e. with projecting ape-like-jaws)".[1257] More interestingly, while presenting the massacres in Scullabogue and Wexford Bridge (Appendix 9-N), Leonard mentioned the victims but ignored altogether the perpetrators. In two pages of comments, she only used passive sentences regarding the prisoners who were "burnt alive".[1258] The purpose was not to target responsibility but to challenge the sectarian interpretations of the past. Jane Leonard was careful that the interpretations of the acts of violence perpetrated in 1798 did not undermine the broader politics of reconciliation which stressed that 1798 was relevant for the two main traditions.

The new role of the UM in politics of reconciliation was obviously not limited to projects out of the institution. The museum became a major space, in its concrete meaning, devoted to the dialogue between communities. In order to reach this status, the staff was confronted with two challenges. First, the Ulster Museum had to attract more members from the Catholic community. Trevor Parkhill highlighted that *Kings in Conflict* had been "a very successful exhibition, attracting some 40.000 paying visitors. However, its audience tended to be of 'a single identity' in so far as they came mostly from the protestant community".[1259] This was not particular to *Kings in Conflict* since, in 1990-1991, 52% of the overall visitors were Protestant and only 24% were Catholic.[1260] Catholics were underrepresented, the 1991 census counting 38% of the population in Northern Ireland as being Catholic[1261]. An additional survey asked visitors about their comments and suggestions. The report explained that some visitors thought "there was a disappointment expressed that the historical content of the Ulster Museum was unnecessarily slanted in favour of the Protestant heritage".[1262] No similar feedback was provided regarding the Catholic bias of the exhibition. Although the religious identity of visitors was no longer asked in latter surveys, these figures confirmed Parkhill's arguments and explained his wish to attract more visitors from Catholic communities.

The second challenge was to bring Unionist groups to an exhibition commemorating an event traditionally associated with the history of Nationalism. In order to do so, the UM was very careful to include elements of the past in which Unionists could be associated. This

---

[1257] *Up in Arms: The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland. A Bicentenary Exhibition*. Slide pack, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1998).
[1258] Maguire, ed., *Up in Arms*, p. 218.
[1259] Parkhill, "The Curator as Interpreter", p. 32.
[1260] R. Velure Roholt, *Evaluation of the Conflict exhibition at the Ulster Museum*, Belfast: Interim Report 1, November 2004.
[1261] Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, *1991 Census*, Belfast.
[1262] Roholt, *Evaluation of the Conflict exhibition*.

was done notably thanks to community-based projects and activities arranged at the UM.[1263] Jane Leonard arranged workshops and activities in which children could "paint a battle" (16 May 1998) or "paint banners" (10 August), and sessions in which musicians sang and discussed the ballads of the 1798 Rebellion (31 May).[1264] The activities were directly related to the outreach programme which presented the past for both communities. For instance, on 31 May 1998, the workshop included songs about "the United Irishmen but also those (songs) which praise the yeomanry".[1265] The yeomanry was a counter-rebellion force composed of civilians armed by the British troops; as counter-rebellion force, the yeomanry was, therefore, more easily associated with the Unionist tradition.[1266] Likewise, in a school activity devoted to Thomas Robinson's painting "The Battle of Ballynahinch" – on loan from the residence of the President of Ireland – Leonard used two sides of the painting (Appendix 9-L).[1267] The left hand side was centred on the prisoner – the United Irishman, Hugh McCullough – the right hand side focused on Captain Evatt, member of the British troops.[1268] School children had to associate each side of the painting to a military side in 1798. Every workshop and activity organized by Leonard was very careful to preserve space for both communities. These examples show that, in 1998, the UM focused not only on the exhibition but also on the manner in which its narratives were presented and provided to the different audiences. The display was only one aspect of the museum's activities. These activities were based on the definition of the UM as a space of meeting and dialogue between communities.

In 1998, the Ulster Museum was, hence, much more than a site of preservation and display of objects and works of art; it was a concrete space of dialogue. This was dramatically expressed in April 1998. On 25 April 1998, a young Catholic student, Ciaran Heffron (22 year old), was murdered in the village of Crumlin by the Loyal Volunteer Force (LVF), a loyalist paramilitary organization. Crumlin belonged to these areas described in the peace process as particularly touched by violence. This came from the fact that its population had reversed

---

[1263] Over 7000 members of community groups took part in the linked activities and community-based projects of the UM. T. Parkhill, "The Curator as Interpreter", p. 36.

[1264] Trevor Parkhill "The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland", talk given the 5 April ; "Depicting '98", conference about the visual legacy of '98 held the 25 April ; "Paint a Battle", workshop in which children over eight years of age could come along and paint a mural based on Thomas Robinson's painting "The Battle of Ballynahinch", held the 16 May ; "Who fears to sing?" in which musicians sang ballads of '98, held the 31 May ; "Painting banners" for children over eight years of age, held the 10 August. List of activities, Marian Ferguson's papers, 27 January 1998, Department of Education, UMA, Belfast.

[1265] List of activities, Marian Ferguson's papers.

[1266] The same was done about banners in August 1998, since children could paint banners about the United Irishmen, the yeomanry or the French.

[1267] The Battle of Ballynahinch, County Down, was a major victory for the British Troops on 12 June 1798.

[1268] Look at the Battle of Ballynahinch by Thomas Robinson, Marian Ferguson's paper, the 1798 Exhibition, UMA, Belfast.

since the 1970s, from 70% Protestants to a majority of Catholics in the 1990s. Interestingly, Brian Kennaway – head of the Orange Order Education Committee – was reverend of the Presbyterian Church in Crumlin. He explained that "the whole Protestant population of Crumlin came out for the funeral (…) and afterwards, as they cast around for ways to convey their solidarity with their stricken Catholic neighbours, he was struck by the possibilities of a visit to the Ulster Museum's *Up in Arms*".[1269] He justified his choice saying that "I thought of it as something we could do together, as something that would compromise no-one's principles – theological or otherwise – something that offered a shared history".[1270] The origins of the project are still unclear and Kennaway acknowledged that he met Leonard in order to arrange a visit.[1271] Whatever the origins of the project, it remains important that 60 Catholics and 40 Presbyterians from Crumlin boarded a couple of buses paid by the borough council and headed for the UM. They were led by Reverend Brian Kennaway and the Catholic priest, Father David Delargy. Among them were also the bereaved parents of Ciaran Heffron.[1272] They were welcomed by Leonard for a night session visit of the UM's *Up in Arms*.

It is very difficult to evaluate the consequences of the disciplinary process on the members of the two communities, but it can be noticed that the visits of the exhibition devoted to the 1798 Rebellion were also requesting a self-evaluation of present community relations. Reactions collected after the visits promoted such a vision. Father Delargy, who led the Catholic community, confessed that he "knew virtually nothing about the 1798 Rebellion beforehand and a lot of the people on the trip were in the same position". However, he "had his eyes opened" by the exhibition. He argued that "We talk about 3.500 deaths in nearly 20 years but here we were talking of 30.000 in a few short weeks".[1273] Brian Kennaway, who led the Protestant group, agreed with this interpretation and saw parallels "between the folks who were disaffected then and the people who are disaffected now".[1274] Father Delargy continued by explaining his surprise on that:

> it was the Anglicans who had all the power and that the Presbyterians were
> nearly as badly off and disenfranchised as the Catholics, that they weren't just
> fighting for Catholics Emancipation but their own and also – to my own great
> surprise – for separation from the Crown. What came across was that, at one

---

[1269] K. Sheridan, "Farewell to Arms", *The Irish Times*, week end edition, 13 June 1998, p. 1.
[1270] K. Sheridan, "Farewell to Arms",
[1271] Interview with the author, Belfast, September 2008.
[1272] K. Sheridan, "Farewell to Arms", p. 1.
[1273] K. Sheridan, "Farewell to Arms", p. 1.
[1274] K. Sheridan, "Farewell to Arms", p. 1.

stage in our history, the Catholic and Presbyterian people were quite clearly united in a common search for justice.[1275]

The comparison between past and present, and its positive consequence on community relations, was one of the main objectives for the mobilization of history for politics of reconciliation. The visits by two communities supported the process of comparison between community relations past and present. Notwithstanding these statements of clear re-interpretation of the past in less divisive ways, the visit which followed Ciaran Heffron's murder remains but one example and should not be overstated since both Catholics and Protestants had already agreed to come together to the UM; in other words, they were somehow already sharing a wish for appeasement. Much more than the difficult assessment of the impact of the exhibition on the general interpretations of community relations in the past and in the present, this example demonstrates that the Ulster Museum was utilized as a public space of cross-community meeting. The public exhibition was a space of crowds who were invited to think of themselves as spectacle to each other and as self-regulating civilized individuals. The visit of the two communities in 1998 appeared as a rite of citizenship.

To conclude, *Up in Arms* was arranged in an overall context of intense participation in the commemorations. Throughout the politics of reconciliation which favoured the parity of representations for the two main traditions, the purpose of the Ulster Museum was not to challenge the distinct interpretations of the past but to provide opportunities of dialogue. In order to avoid the simple juxtaposition of different interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion, the Ulster Museum adapted the historical narratives of 1798 to include both Nationalists and Unionists. The museum acted as a public space of reconciliation where visitors could come to terms with the past. Evidence has been provided that present considerations – and therefore the local context of community relations – had crucial impact on the ways the past was represented within the museum. The relevance of the local context of display explains why the overall bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion in Northern Ireland differed from what was organized in the Republic of Ireland.

[1275] K. Sheridan, "Farewell to Arms", p. 1.

B) The Irish Government's Commemoration Committee and the Politics of Reconciliation in the Republic of Ireland during the Bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion

1) The Commemoration Committee, Sign of New Official Politics of the Past (1994-1998)

Three years after the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising, the Irish government proposed a totally different commemoration policy. In 1994, the Republic of Ireland prepared the sesquicentenary of the Great Famine (1845-1851). Depending on the department of the *Taoiseach* the Commemorative Office was created to oversee the Government's programme of commemoration, to co-ordinate the commemoration of the Great Famine and the 1798 Rebellion.[1276] Concretely, the Office was intended to service the work of another newly created group: the Inter-Departmental Commemoration Committee.[1277] The Commemoration Committee was established on 4th May 1994 by the *Fianna Fail* government to co-ordinate the commemoration of the Famine.[1278] As early as the 26 July 1994, the government agreed that "the Committee should also co-ordinate at national level the 1798 Bi-Centenary commemoration in 1998".[1279] Accordingly, it became the Commemoration Committee of the Great Famine and 1798 Rebellion. The creation of this commemoration committee was relatively new. Although the committee had been organized for the Golden Jubilee of the Easter Rising in 1966, its roles were more limited.[1280]

The Committee was created by *Fianna Fail* (FF) in 1994, but it was modified by the new political majority issued from the coalition between *Fine Gael* (FG), Labour and Democratic Left elected in December 1994. The impact on the composition of the Committee concerned mostly the chairperson.[1281] Alice Doyle (FG) replaced Michael Kitt (FF) as chairperson on 27 January 1995, and was herself replaced in June 1997 by Seamus Brennan (FF).[1282] Nevertheless, the representatives of the departments hardly changed.[1283] Composed

---

[1276] Draft, Commemoration Committee, Department of the *Taoiseach*, 1995, <u>second draft</u>, p. 2. Famine Committee, S110/05/10/0007, GCCA.

[1277] Draft, Commemoration Committee, Department of the *Taoiseach*, 1995, p. 17. S110/05/10/0007, GCCA.

[1278] It was chaired by Michael Kitt, Minister of State. Draft, Commemoration Committee, Department of the Taoiseach, 1995, p. 2. S110/05/10/0007, GCCA.

[1279] Draft, Commemoration Committee, Department of the *Taoiseach*, 1995, p. 2. S110/05/10/0007, GCCA.

[1280] No committee was created for the 150th anniversary of the 1798 Rebellion in 1948.

[1281] Likewise, the Committee continued its work after June 1997 when *Fianna Fail* returned to power in a coalition with the Progressive Democrats.

[1282] Avril Doyle, Minister of State was deputy for the Wexford constituency, a crucial element for the commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion which mainly took place in Wexford.

of a dozen of representatives – the number varied slightly according to the availability – of the diverse departments and public institutions, the Committee worked continuously from 1994 to 1998.[1284] The department of the *Taoiseach* was represented notably through two important permanent secretaries to the Committee, Alice Kearney and Stephen Lalor.

Importantly, the Committee was also episodically composed of experts from different institutions, notably the National Museum of Ireland. Anne O'Dowd represented the National Museum of Ireland for the commemoration of the Great Famine.[1285] Later, Michael Kenny participated in several meetings of the Commemoration Committee regarding the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion. Furthermore, several Historians participated in the Commemoration Committee's meetings. Most of them were consulted by the Committee, such as Cormac O'Grada (University College Dublin, UCD), Mary Daly (UCD), David Fitzpatrick (Trinity College Dublin, TCD) and David Dickson (TCD) for the Great Famine in October 1994. Unlike the commemorations of the Great Famine for which Historians were occasionally contacted, two historical advisers worked permanently for the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion: Thomas Bartlett and Kevin Whelan. The number and the different status of the actors make the Commemoration Committee an outstanding case study to examine the construction of official policy regarding the 1798 Rebellion. The centrality of the official policy in the Republic of Ireland contrasted with the organization of the bicentenary in Northern Ireland where the UM had more room to manoeuvre. In the Republic of Ireland, the State became a major actor of the commemorations.

The Committee dealt with the programme of events sponsored by the State for the two commemorations.[1286] Through the funding allocated, the Commemoration Committee was

---

[1283] In 1997, nine out of fifteen representatives were already present in 1995: Mr. Maurice Coughlan, Dept. Environment ; Mr. Seamus Lynam, Office of Public Works ; Mr. John McGinty, Dept. Education ; Mr. Tom McCarthy, Dept. Agriculture, Food and Forestry ; Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, Dept. Foreign Affairs ; Dr. Anne O'Dowd, National Museum of Ireland ; Ms Margaret Daly, Dept. Agriculture, Food and Forestry ; Mr. Stephen Lalor, Dept. *Taoiseach* and Mrs Alice Kearney, Dept. of the *Taoiseach*. Other representatives such as M. Nash (department of Finance), S. Hare (department of the *Taoiseach*), P. Kelly (department of Tourism and Trade), N. Daly (department of Tourism and Trade), C. Marshall (department of Finance) participated in some meetings in 1995. See the files about the first meetings about the commemoration of the Great Famine.
[1284] In March 1997, the Committee was constituted of : Mr. Maurice Coughlan, Dept. Environment ; Mr. Denis Colfer, Dept. Tourism and Trade ; Mr. Seamus Lynam, Office of Public Works ; Mr. John McGinty, Dept. Education ; Mr. Tom McCarthy, Dept. Agriculture, Food and Forestry ;Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, Dept. Foreign Affairs ; Dr. Anne O'Dowd, National Museum of Ireland ; Ms Sue Blood, Dept. Finance ; Representative of Dept. Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht ; Ms Muriel Cleary, Dept. Social Welfare ; Mr. Anthony Murphy, Dept. Tourism and Trade ; Mr. Michael O'Mathuna, Dept. Education ; Ms Barbara Jones, Dept. Foreign Affairs ; Ms Margaret Daly, Dept. Agriculture, Food and Forestry ; Mr. Stephen Lalor, Dept. *Taoiseach*. Irish Parliamentary debates, Dáil Éireann - Volume 475 - 05 March, 1997.
[1285] She was curator and responsible for the folk collections. She now works at the cuntry life section of the NMI in Mayo.
[1286] In 1998 the Committee sponsored, among many local events, the Dublin/Belfast Choral festival, the two international conferences held at the Ulster Museum and Dublin Castle in May, the publication of Wolfe Tone's

connected with lots of groups and associations which intended to participate in the bicentenary in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Committee met or corresponded with Historians, politicians, local and national associations – particularly representatives of the Orange Order – museums, television programmers, school programme executive, in Ireland, Northern Ireland and many other countries such as Britain, France, the United States and Australia. The Committee had Ir£250.000 at its disposal for the commemoration of the Great Famine and Ir£250.000 plus Ir£50.000 for the commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion.[1287] Among the projects funded by the Committee was the National Museum of Ireland's exhibition arranged for the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion. It is, hence, necessary to investigate both the links between the NMI and the Commemoration Committee and the official narratives supported by the latter.

The archives of the Commemoration Committee offer a major source of understanding.[1288] So far, these documents have hardly been examined, notably, due to archives' regulation. The only mention of them can be found in Guy Beiner's work on the folk memory of the 1798 Rebellion.[1289] The Commemoration Committee expressed a new political interest in the past and should be connected to the development of the peace process in the North which started similarly in 1994 with the I.R.A ceasefire. The end of violence in the North was somehow perceived as giving new possibility to commemorating the past. While EUSSPPR was created in Northern Ireland, the Irish government launched a major process of official commemorations. In 1996, Bertie Ahern, leader of *Fianna Fail* and of the opposition, claimed in the *Dail* that "Now that some of the difficulties that prevented us from commemorating the Rising of 1916 over the past 25 years have ceased, will he (the *Taoiseach*) agree that we should honour the true founders of this State, take pride in their

---

Diaries, the 1798 National Visitor Centre in Enniscorthy, school competitions, the Humbert Summer School in Mayo, the International Conference at Notre-Dame University (Indiana), a Lecture Tour in the United States (composed of Alice Kearney, Thomas Bartlett and Kevin Whelan) and the National Museum of Ireland's commemorative exhibition. A. Kearney, Briefing note, 13 November 1997, S110/05/22/0005, GCCA.

[1287] Draft, p. 3. S110/05/10/0007, GCCA. Guy Beiner contends that the Committee had Ir£350.000 for the commemoration of 1798. G. Beiner in T. Brotherstone, A. Clark, and K. Whelan (eds.), *These Fissured Isles: Ireland, Scotland and British history, 1798-1848*, Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers, 2005, p. 223. However, an internal note from the Department of the *Taoiseach* mentioned Ir£250.000 in July 1997. Memento from Brian McCarthy, 1 July 1997, 1798 Miscellaneous, S110/05/03/0001, GCCA. The addition of Ir£50.000 was mentioned in November 1997. Meeting of the AIIC Working Group on Education and Culture, departmental Foreign Affairs, 14 November 1997, S110/05/22/0005, GCCA.

[1288] 241 files are sorted out regarding the activity of the Committee for the commemorations of the Famine and the 1798 Rebellion between 1994 and 1998. The work of two particular members of the Committee was crucial in collecting documents: Alice Kearney and Stephen Lalor. The former was secretary of the Commemoration Office, the latter was secretary of the Committee and worked in the Department of the *Taoiseach*. Both were in charge of the correspondence of the Commemoration Office and Commemoration Committee.

[1289] G. Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French*. In particular, the final chapter about the bicentenary of the Rebellion.

courage and revert to annually honouring their endeavours?"[1290] Although the question dealt with the 80th anniversary of the Easter Rising, it expressed a shift in the political interest in the past. Due to the development of peace in the North, there were new possibilities to commemorate events such as the 1916 Easter Rising or the 1798 Rebellion. Interestingly, the peace process in Northern Ireland made the commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion not only possible, but it was also necessary to avoid any counter-productive celebration of the past.

2) Political Unity and the Need for Reconciliation

In spite of changes of government in 1994 and 1997, the period of commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion was marked by political continuity. The similarity between *Fianna Fail* and *Fine Gael's* speeches was noticed by several scholars who examined the discourses of the bicentenary.[1291] Roy Foster singled out Avril Doyle's initial announcement made on 24 November 1995 as identical to the speech given by Síle de Valera (*Fianna Fáil*) almost three years later.[1292] This continuity had several reasons. First of all, the 1798 Rebellion was not linked to the political divisions which emerged regarding the struggle for independence in the early twentieth century. Furthermore, the continuity was provoked by the common involvement of the three main political parties – *Fianna Fail*, *Fine Gael* and Labour – in the organization of both the Great Famine and the 1798 Rebellion. Created by the *Fianna Fail* government in 1994, the Committee was chaired by Avril Doyle (*Fine Gael* deputy) from 1995 to 1997 due to the changing government, and Seamus Brennan (*Fianna Fail* deputy) after 1997. The official narratives of the Commemoration Committee could, therefore, not be attributed to one political party in particular. The official interpretations of the Commemoration Committee were made public through a Mission Statement.

In April 1997, the Commemoration Committee issued a Mission Statement regarding the organization of the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion. It became the official guideline when dealing with the objectives of the bicentenary.[1293] The official document highlighted six

---

[1290] Irish Parliamentary debates, Bertie Ahern, *Dail* Debates, 7 February 1996, col. 416.
[1291] Guy Beiner took example of the Dail debates to argue that *Fianna Fail*, *Fine Gael* and *Labour* agreed on the resonances and political connections between 1798 and 1998. G. Beiner, in T. Brotherstone, A. Clark, and K. Whelan (eds.), *These Fissured Isles: Ireland, Scotland and British history, 1798-1848*, Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers, 2005, p. 225.
[1292] Roy Foster, "Remembering 1798", in McBride (ed.), *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, p. 229.
[1293] It was distributed to every institution which benefited from governmental funding for the commemorations, and accompanied the correspondence the Committee had with the diverse groups and institutions during the preparation of the bicentenary. For instance, it was sent to Comoradh '98 for about the project of the 1798 Visitor Centre in Eniscorthy, and sent to Brian Kennaway, head of the Orange Order Educational Committee.

points: 1) To commemorate the ideals of the United Irishmen and the 'Fellowship of Freedom' that inspired them in 1798; 2) The recognition of the 1798 Rebellion as a forward looking, popular movement aspiring to unity, acknowledging that what happened in Dublin and Wexford was part of what happened in Antrim and Down; 3) Attention should shift from the military aspects of 1798 and be directed towards the principles of democracy and pluralism which the United Irishmen advocated; 4) A focus on the international perspective of the United Irishmen and the enduring links which 1798 forged with America, France, and Australia; 5) To acknowledge the Ulster dimension and particularly the contribution of the Presbyterian tradition, with its emphasis on justice, equality and civil liberty; 6) To focus attention on the ideals of the leaders of 1798 which still live in Irish history.[1294]

The first and sixth points demonstrated that the Commemoration Committee intended to highlight the ideals of the United Irishmen more than the act of insurrection itself. The move from the military aspect to the political dimensions of the 1798 Rebellion was clearly supported by the third point. Likewise, Bertie Ahern (*Taoiseach,* Appendix 4) explained in the *Dail* in July 1998 that commemorations should centred on the United Irishmen's ideals of pluralism and non-sectarianism "rather than focus exclusively on their ultimate defeat on the bloody battlefields of 1798".[1295] The distinction between the political movement and the 1798 insurrection had a long history in Ireland. It came from the fact that the Society of the United Irishmen was created in 1791 to support political reform in Ireland. Due to the arrest of many United Irishmen leaders in March 1798, their influence in the insurrection (May-September 1798) was undermined. One of the major debates had, therefore, been to establish whether the insurrection in 1798 was led by the non-confessional United Irishmen or by local rebels and Catholic priests. The focus on the programme of political reforms from the United Irishmen took away attention from the more divisive aspects of the insurrection, in particular the variety of acts of violence perpetrated between May and September 1798. Presented in this manner, the 1798 Rebellion appeared as an unproblematic event within Irish history. This approach of the 1798 Rebellion also allowed for the defence of unity. Point two and five stressed the all-Ireland dimension of the Rebellion in a united framework. On the one hand, this could be praised for avoiding the triumphal and celebratory statements about armed conflicts. On the other hand, the Mission Statement authoritatively dismissed certain aspects of the past.

[1294] *Mission Statement*, April 1997, S110/05/03/011, GCCA.
[1295] Irish Parliamentary debates, B. Ahern, *Dail* Debates, 3 July 1998.

The focus of the official commemorations on the political ideals of the United Irishmen and the definition of the 1798 Rebellion as driven by tensions engendered by political progress. In his 3 July 1998 speech, Ahern stressed that "we have laid special emphasis on … the living principles of the United Irishmen – their pursuit of democracy, of pluralism, of non-sectarianism, their optimism about Ireland's economic potential".[1296] Although the green line did challenge the celebration of violence, the official Mission Statement openly celebrated the United Irishmen. They were no longer celebrated for their military deeds and the overall insurrection, but still celebrated for their support of democracy and pluralism. While criticizing the Mission Statement, Roy Foster argued that "it is tempting to add a seventh [aim]: 'Don't talk about the war'".[1297] The Committee openly intended to silence the dark sides of the 1798 Rebellion, especially the use of physical force against political enemies. This choice was yet not problematic and could be justified by an intention to avoid any celebration of war.

More problematic was the fact that while focusing on the United Irishmen in an all-Ireland framework, the official commemorations silenced the part of the population who opposed the Rebellion. The fifth point invited "to acknowledge the Ulster dimension and particularly the contribution of the Presbyterian tradition", but the presence of Protestants was solely related to their participation in the insurrection as members of the United Irishmen. The Protestants who took part in the counter-rebellion – and with whom most of the Unionists associated in 1998 – were mostly ignored. The focus on the United Irishmen reminded of what was arranged for the sesquicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion in 1948 when Protestants and Irish unity were mentioned by the Anti-Partition league only as example of the absence of legitimacy for the partition. Essentially due the wish from the Commemoration Committee not to celebrate the military dimension of 1798, the bicentenary appeared less triumphalistic but not less celebrative. The Mission Statement provided a nationalist interpretation in which the past to be commemorated excluded the Unionist tradition.

The political interest in commemorating the 1798 Rebellion and the design of clear and strict official narratives of the past were enhanced by the particular context of reconciliation. The links between the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion and politics of reconciliation in Northern Ireland were clearly evoked in 1998. On 3 July 1998, in the *Dail*, Bertie Ahern (*Taoiseach*) made an important statement about the bicentenary. Ahern stated that "By an extraordinary conjunction of circumstances, part of the background to the

---

[1296] Irish Parliamentary debates, B. Ahern, *Dail Debates*, 3 July 1998.
[1297] R. Foster, "Remembering 1798", p. 226.

bicentenary this year has been the negotiation and achievement of the first ever comprehensive peace settlement on this island".[1298] The *Taoiseach* openly connected the Rebellion and the Good Friday Agreement, although he implied the absence of political perspective and highlighted "the conjunction of circumstances" rather than political intention. He claimed that "Given the evolving peace process, it was inevitable that the vision of the 1790s would serve as an inspiration for the 1990s".[1299] It was true that the comparison was facilitated by the simultaneity of the revolt's first outbreak – the 22nd and 23rd of May 1798 – and the referendum asking the Irish to validate the Good Friday Agreement (22 May 1998). Many media and political commentators suggested that a two-centuries-old failed promise was finally being redeemed – that the United Irishmen's programme of bringing together the island's rival traditions in a "Brotherhood of Affection" was now renewed, even triumphant.[1300] However, the association between the 1798 Rebellion and the Good Friday Agreement was all but a coincidence and stemmed from political uses of the past.

The comparison between the 1798 Rebellion and the 1998 Agreement is, at the first sight, astonishing. The latter was a peace settlement supposed to close thirty years of the Northern Irish conflict, whereas the 1798 Rebellion was an insurrection for Ireland's independence. Ahern attempted to clarify the ambiguity. He pointed out that "The best possible commemoration of the United Irishmen's struggle would be the consolidation of a stable and inclusive settlement in the North".[1301] The Good Friday Agreement was not strictly compared to 1798, but was presented as the natural end of the insurrection. This had the advantage of transforming the 1798 military failure into a political success, and enveloping the 1998 peace process with the values attributed to the United Irishmen. This was a clear mobilization of history to support present approaches of reconciliation.

The move from the focus on the physical force to the pluralist and democratic ideals of the United Irishmen also came from the government's fears to see Republican parties such as *Sinn Fein* monopolize the bicentenary. In 1996, Avril Doyle – chairperson of the Commemoration Committee – explained that "The Rebellion for some is a sore not healed, many feel that there is unfinished business. It is our job to prevent the commemoration of the

---

[1298] Irish Parliamentary debates, Bertie Ahern, Dail Debates, 3rd July 1998, vol. 483, col. 1440. The date is noticeable. In the wake of the Good Friday Agreement, elections were held in Northern Ireland (25 June 1998). The Assembly met in the shadow form for the first time the 1 July and appointed David Trimble and Seamus Mallone as First Deputy and First Deputy Ministers respectively.
[1299] Irish Parliamentary debates, Bertie Ahern, Dail Debates, 3rd July 1998, vol. 483, col. 1440.
[1300] *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1998, p. 2.
[1301] Irish Parliamentary debates, Bertie Ahern, Dail Debates, 3rd July 1998, vol. 483, col. 1440.

Rebellion falling into the hands of people with their own axe to grind".[1302] This fear was addressed notably to *Sinn Fein* whose meeting in 1998 was given its title by *The Echo*, a local Wexford newspaper "Heroes of 1798 hijacked by *Sinn Fein* leadership".[1303] Gerry Adams – leader of *Sinn Fein* – had addressed a crowd of 5.000 people at Vinegar Hill (County Wexford) in January 1998.[1304] *Sinn Fein*'s posters used images of the 1798 Rebellion and the hunger striker Bobby Sands, creating therefore a close link between the use of violence in 1798 and during the Northern Irish conflict in Northern Ireland.[1305] The article concluded that "the rally has certainly created the impression that this entire year of commemoration and celebration has much to do with honouring murderers and bombers who have been part of the current armed struggle as it has with remembering the United Irishmen of two hundred years ago".[1306] This was part of the old competition between Irish governments and Republican parties such as *Sinn Fein* to impose their interpretations on historical armed conflicts such as the 1798 Rebellion or the 1916 Easter Rising. This explained why the official politics of commemorations were not only seen as possible – in comparison with the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising – but also seen as necessary. In 1998, there was a need to prevent the commemoration from being a pure celebration of Republicanism and of the use of physical force against Britain.

Hence, the impact of the politics of reconciliation was also visible in the Republic of Ireland and contributed to the general mobilization of history for present purposes. The similarity was limited due to the different approaches of reconciliation North and South. While the equal representations between the two communities were requested in the North, the official narratives in the Republic of Ireland preferred to highlight all-Ireland unity through the celebration of the United Irishmen. The Irish government mobilized the history of the United Irishmen to highlight common past Irish identity. The central structure of the Commemoration Committee and the absence of interest in counter-rebellion legacy in the South explained why the bicentenary was much more celebratory. In the Republic of Ireland where the politics of reconciliation prevented any glorification of historical violence, the celebration focused on the United Irishmen and their ideals of pluralism. This new type of celebration was issued from both the need to reconcile and to praise the Irish past. The

---

[1302] Avril Doyle, minutes of the meeting, 27 February 1996, United Irishmen Commemoration Society Belfast, 1798, S110/05/10/0056, GCCA.
[1303] "Heroes of 1798 Hijacked by Sinn Fein Leadership", *The Echo*, 25 February 1998.
[1304] Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of '98'?* p. 130.
[1305] Robert Gerard (Bobby) Sands was a member of the Provisional Irish Republican Army who died on hunger strike in the Prison Maze (Northern Ireland). He was the leader of the 1981 hunger strike in which Republican prisoners protested against the removal of their special category status.
[1306] "Heroes of 1798 Hijacked by Sinn Fein Leadership", *The Echo*, 25 February 1998.

contrasting approach to reconciliation had an impact on the cross-border policy of the Commemoration Committee.

3) The Commemoration Committee and the North-South Relations

One major dimension of the politics of reconciliation in which the Commemoration Committee was involved was the relationship between the two sides of the border. The archives of the Commemoration Committee reveal that many contacts were established with groups and institutions in Northern Ireland. In 1996 and 1997, the Committee sent numerous letters to groups and institutions which could be interested in participating in the bicentenary.[1307] In October 1997, Conor O'Malley member of the Committee as representative of the Department of Arts, Culture and Gaeltacht advised that "cultural bodies North and South do not communicate well with each other" and that "it may be best to invite a number of individuals from the North".[1308] Following this suggestion, the Committee invited several individuals and representatives from the North in November 1997. These links revealed both the wish to participate in politics of reconciliation but also the limits of the rapprochement due to contrasting political mobilization of history on both sides of the border.

The all-Ireland framework of commemorations matched the Mission Statement's support for the united interpretations of 1798. It was striking to notice that the Community Relations Council in the North attempted to create links between communities in Northern Ireland while the Commemoration Committee developed links between the two sides of the border. In November 1997, representatives from the Linen Hall Library and the United Irishmen Commemoration Society were invited by the Commemoration Committee.[1309] The Linen Hall Library received Ir£6.000 to organize an exhibition called *The United Irishmen and the government of Ireland, 1791-1801*[1310] which was presented as "an opportunity to explore the role of the United Irishmen and its relevance to today. (…) It will explore

---

[1307] A substantial number of files are sorted according to counties. See for instance the file about County Down. Another critical file for this section is devoted to the commemoration in Northern Ireland. S110/05/03/020, GCCA.

[1308] Transcription of the meeting, Alice Kearney, 1 October 1997, Joint Education Pack, S110/05/22/0005, GCCA.

[1309] Dr Mary O'Dowd (Queen's University Belfast), John Killen (Linen Hall Library), Declan McGonagle (Chairman North/South Director Forum), Trevor Parkhill (Ulster Museum), Jane Leonard (Ulster Museum), Peter Collins and Eamon Hanna (United Irishmen Commemoration Society) were invited. Minutes of the meeting, 17 November 1997, 1798 Commemoration Committee, archives of the Office of Public Works (OPW), Dublin, A31/3/136.

[1310] Letter from Alice Kearney to the finance unit, 12 January 1998, Linen Hall Library, S110/05/10/0046, GCCA.

community identity dispassionately, sensitively, and with inclusiveness".[1311] This focus on the United Irishmen and their ideals matched perfectly the Mission Statement produced by the Commemoration Committee.

Interestingly, the Commemoration Committee also received Trevor Parkhill and Jane Leonard as representatives from the Ulster Museum. It was the Commemoration Committee which contacted the UM on 28 May 1996 in order to enquire about their plans for the commemoration.[1312] Parkhill explained in a note that Alice Kearney "rang on Monday 17 February" to inform him that "Avril Doyle had said that it would be very worthwhile to have an exhibition in the Republic commemorating the 1798 Rebellion".[1313] Throughout the November 1997 meeting, Trevor Parkhill was asked about the possibility of touring the *Up in Arms* exhibition in the Republic.[1314] The context in which the meeting took place is important to understand the Committee's wish to push forward for the UM's exhibition to travel in the Republic. A few days before, the Commemoration Committee had learned that the National Library of Ireland could no longer host the commemorative exhibition of the 1798 Rebellion due to security issues. The possibility to arrange the exhibition at the National Museum of Ireland had only been evoked. The absence of a major commemorative display in the Republic of Ireland prompted the Committee to seek collaboration in Northern Ireland.

The Commemoration Committee was also very keen to develop cross-border educational projects.[1315] Reporting on the November 1997 meeting, Parkhill underlined that Sean McGinty – Chief History Inspector in the Dublin Department of Education – raised "the educational potential of 1798, very much along the line of '1690'".[1316] According to Parkhill, McGinty "and others" were convinced that there could be a cross-border project based on *Up in Arms* and that it would be similar to what was established for the *Kings in Conflict* exhibition.[1317] Notwithstanding these contacts, the collaboration on a joint education pack failed. Likewise, no project of a travelling exhibition emerged. Even though practical reasons

---

[1311] John Gray to the Commemoration Committee, March 1997, Linen Hall Library, S110/05/10/046, GCCA.

[1312] Letter from W.A. Maguire to Alice Kearney in which he acknowledged the reception of the first letter, 4 June 1996, Northern Ireland, S110/05/03/0020, GCCA.

[1313] T. Parkhill, "Taoiseach's Office Interest in 'Up in Arms' 1798 exhibition", 19 February 1997, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, archives of the local history department, UMA, Cultra.

[1314] Minutes of the meeting, 16 December 1997, *Up in Arms'* committee, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1315] Letter from Parkhill to Alice Kearney, 24 November 1997, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, Box 5, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1316] Memo from Parkhill to Sally Montgomery and Marian Ferguson, 21 November 1997, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, Box 5, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1317] Letter from T. Parkhill to A. Kearney, 24 November 1997, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, Box 5, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

were evoked, the absence of further collaboration derived from contrasting processes of political mobilization of history in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

On the one hand, collaboration between the Commemoration Committee and the Ulster Museum was not pursued due to practical issues. The exhibition could not travel before early September since it was planned to be on view in Belfast until late August.[1318] Moreover, the later agreement between the National Library of Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland (NLI) to collaborate in mounting an exhibition for the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion undermined the Commemoration Committee's intention to attract a travelling display from Northern Ireland. More importantly, disagreements over the interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion emerged from the projects of collaboration.

Divergence of interpretations appeared regarding educational programmes. In order to foster all-Ireland educational collaboration, the Irish Commemoration Committee had financed a CD-Rom published by the NLI, and designed by Martello Multimedia. Entitled *Fellowship of Freedom*, the CD-Rom was built upon the exhibition mounted at the NMI in 1998.[1319] In March 1998, during a meeting between representatives from the Irish and Northern Irish Departments of Education, the possibility was discussed to include the CD-Rom in a joint education pack.[1320] Thus, Department of Education Northern Ireland provided £10.000 for the production of the CD-Rom "on the understanding that a copy was sent to every school".[1321] However, some criticisms were raised against the development of the project. During a meeting at the Ulster Museum, Parkhill pointed out that he had been contacted by Dan McCall, Senior History Inspector at Department of Education Northern Ireland, "with news that DENI was making up to £100.000 available to fund research and production of a CD-Rom about 1798 and its aftermaths". Parkhill also underlined that "the idea appears to have been triggered by the *Fellowship of Freedom* CD-Rom produced by the National Museum of Ireland and the National Library of Ireland".[1322] This was no longer a collaboration with a unique CD-Rom for schools on both sides of the border but a different project. The Northern Irish Department of Education "wanted a response to the CD-Rom

---

[1318] Moreover, the cost of the travel plus insurance exceeded £100.000. Minutes of the meeting, 17th November 1997, 1798 Commemoration Committee, archives of the Office of Public Works (OPW), Dublin, A31/3/136.

[1319] The Cd-Rom was on view at the NMI on four screens. It included a general introduction and four sections: The Irish Volunteers, the Trial of William Orr, the Military Campaigns and the United Irishmen.

[1320] Transcription of the meeting, Alice Kearney, 6 March 1998, Joint Education pack files, Commemoration Committee archives, S110/05/22/0005, GCCA.

[1321] Memorandum from T. Parkhill, 9 June 1998, Marian Ferguson's personal papers, 1798 CD-Rom project, archives of the department of education, UMA, Belfast. The figure was confirmed by the minutes of the meeting in NICLR on 26 June 1998.

[1322] Minutes of the meeting, 3 June 1998, *Up in Arms committee files*, archives of the Local History Department, UMA, Cultra.

produced by the National Library and National Museum of Ireland". One major reason was, as McCall had argued to Parkhill, that "the message embodied in this CD-Rom (published by the NLI and NMI) is greener than green".[1323] In the *Briefing Paper for a Northern Ireland Commemorative 1798 CD-Rom*, McCall argued that the *Fellowship of Freedom*'s CD-Rom

> views the 1798 rebellion largely from the perspective of the insurgent forces and the Republican leadership (…) Limited attention is given to the role of the anti-Republican groups in opposing the United Irishmen movement and ultimately quelling the rebellion, including the rise of the Orange Order, the role of yeomanry, and the militia.[1324]

He was therefore interested in producing a CD-Rom which would take the story of 1798 beyond the rebellion, up to and after the Act of Union and question "how 1798 helped to change Protestant attitudes to a firm support for the British connection and the Act of Union and how sectarian unrest in, for instance, County Armagh in the 1780-90s, still carries echoes today".[1325] McCallan's report was supported by Department of Education Northern Ireland during a meeting in the Northern Irish Centre for Learning Resources (NICLR) in June 1998 and *Up in Arms* was considered as the visual basis of the project.[1326] From an initial collaboration with the Republic of Ireland regarding the promotion of the *Fellowship of Freedom's* CD-Rom in Northern Ireland, the project moved to a complementary project to include alternative views.

Through its funding, the Commemoration Committee helped to develop cross-border commemorative projects. The focus on the United Irishmen's political ideals and the challenge of sectarian interpretations of 1798 favoured the rapprochement of the representations of 1798 North and South. The rapprochement was yet limited to the projects which matched the Commemoration Committee's mission statement. The Committee's absence of interest in the counter-rebellion side was not transferable in Northern Ireland where the equal representations requested a plurality of narratives.

[1323] Memorandum from T. Parkhill, 9 June 1998, Marian Ferguson's personal papers, 1798 CD-Rom project, archives of the department of education, UMA, Belfast.

[1324] D. McCallan, Briefing Paper for a Northern Ireland Commemorative 1798 CD-Rom to Complement the 1798 Commemorative CD-Rom 'Fellowship of Freedom' Produced in ROI", 18 May 1998, Marian Ferguson's personal papers, 1798 CD-Rom project, archives of the department of education, UMA, Belfast.

[1325] 18 May 1998, Marian Ferguson's personal papers, 1798 CD-Rom project, archives of the department of education, UMA, Belfast.

[1326] Meeting in NICLR, 1798 Rebellion CD-Rom project for DENI, 26 June 1998, 18 May 1998, Marian Ferguson's personal papers, 1798 CD-Rom project, archives of the department of education, UMA, Belfast.

4) The Commemoration Committee's Roles and its Impact on the Representations of the Past in the Republic of Ireland

The roles of the Commemoration Committee and its impact on the organization of events in the Republic of Ireland are crucial because they were connected to broader debates on the political uses of the past. According to politicians, the impact was limited. In his speech in July 1998, Bertie Ahern – then *Taoiseach* – explained that "The Government, working through the 1798 Commemoration Committee … has assisted a large array of projects. However, it must be emphasized that the initiative has come mostly from local communities and organizations with the Government playing a more supportive and co-coordinating role".[1327] Ahern's definition of the Commemoration Committee's roles was supported by Guy Beiner's major survey of the events arranged for the bicentenary. For instance, Beiner notices that, in the West – that is, mainly the Connacht – there was no sign of top-down policy. He proved his argument by the fact that the organization of the events began before the constitution of a national programme by the Commemoration Committee. He concluded that "the planning of a nation-wide commemoration was intentionally responsive and aimed to accommodate local initiatives rather than to dictate a preconceived programme".[1328] This view was not shared by every Historian.

These views were contested by Roy Foster who argued that the Irish government imposed a romanticized and sanitized version of 1798 for present purposes.[1329] More recently, he has contended that the "plutocratic Irish government" was responsible for "neonationalism", reinforced by the "commodification of Irish history".[1330] Foster's criticisms were, therefore, twofold. First, he underlined the political interpretation of the 1798 Rebellion which focused on an idealistic presentation of the United Irishmen and their ideals while silencing the fact that 1798 was also punctuated with bloody events and major scenes of violence. His second point was that the Commemoration Committee, and through it the Irish government, entailed a top-down process of interpretations which influenced the different acts of commemorations. This second issue is crucial because it encourages the investigation of relations between the Commemoration Committee and the National Museum of Ireland. Most of the actors of the debates regarding the top-down politics of commemorations based their

---

[1327] Irish Parliamentary debates, Bertie Ahern, *Dail Debates*, 3 July 1998, vol. 483, col. 1440.
[1328] Guy Beiner, in T. Brotherstone, A. Clark, and K. Whelan (eds.), *These fissured isles: Ireland, Scotland and British history,* p. 231.
[1329] Foster, "Remembering 1798", pp. 67-95.
[1330] Roy Foster, *Luck and the Irish. A Brief History of Change from 1970*, (Oxford: Oxford Universty Press, 2008), p. 144.

analysis on newspapers and speeches from politicians. The present research could, by contrast, explore in details the materials of the Commemoration Committee to question the impact of the Committee on local events.

The commemoration of the Rebellion provoked an upsurge of activity all over the country and the Commemoration Committee was one agency among many others. It was true that the Commemoration Committee was merely financing projects and did not directly participate in any commemorative event. Hence, questioned about the commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion, Kevin Whelan – one of the two historical advisers of the Commemoration Committee – could state that "Conspiracy theorists like Roy Foster think that there was a coercive or top-down political sense of what should be done. My experience was nothing like that: we were primarily responding to the huge amount of project suggestions that came in".[1331] Nevertheless, that does not mean the hypothesis of political influence can be dismissed since funding is rarely devoid of counter-parts. In November 1997, the Commemoration Committee sent application forms in which it assured that it "will make small grants available to suitable local projects of a non-sectarian nature". The forms were associated with the six-point Mission Statement which stressed the particular aspects of the 1798 Rebellion to be commemorated.[1332] Funding was allocated to many events all over Ireland.

In addition to the commemorative exhibition at the NMI, many other events were sponsored in Dublin like the Dublin Civic Museum's exhibition, the Film Institute of Ireland's film festival, and the Croppies' Acre Garden of Remembrance. Many events also took place outside Dublin in three counties: Mayo, Wicklow and above all Wexford where most of the insurrection took place. This latter fact raised certain tensions. Dublin was, in 1798, the "dog that did not bark". Indeed, most of the leaders were arrested in Dublin in March 1798 and this undermined any plan for a rising in the capital city. So, in Dublin in 1798 the commemorative events of the insurrection itself were limited and focused more on the United Irishmen and their ideals. This was not the case in other counties where the commemorations were more connected with the act of insurrection and therefore confronted with the historical use of physical force. Local commemorative events were much more related to local pride for the rebels who defied the British troops in 1798. This was problematic for the Commemoration Committee which intended to shift the attention from the

---

[1331] Guy Beiner, unpublished interview with Kevin Whelan, 9 October 2002, Dublin (I thank Kevin Whelan for the hard copy of the interview). The author historical adviser was Professor Tom Bartlett. Their roles will be analyzed below.
[1332] Copy, 13 November 1997, Joint Education Pack, S110/05/22/0005, GCCA.

battlefield to the political ideals of the United Irishmen. Negotiations for the interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion emerged about events in County Wexford.

For county Wexford alone, Stephen Howe counted at least 102 local proceedings (from scholarly conferences to mock battles).[1333] There was a long tradition of local pride regarding 1798 in Wexford where rebels were nicknamed pikemen, due to the use of pikes. The enthusiasm regarding the commemorations of the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford was supported by the Commemoration Committee, but it also provoked some worries. The rebellion in Wexford, lasting from May 27th to June 21st 1798, was the most destructive episode of the Rebellion, punctuated by many battles.[1334] In addition, the violence perpetrated by rebels in Scullabogue (Co. Wexford) and Wexford (city) was upheld by Unionists as evidence of what was presented as the fundamentally sectarian dimension of the rising. The government was therefore particularly careful about the ways Scullabogue was commemorated. In September 1997, the Commemoration Committee agreed about Scullabogue that "discussions would take place with *Comoradh '98* and members of the Protestant community in Wexford with a view to finding an appropriate way of commemorating the events that took place in Scullabogue". It was made clear that "It is essential that wording of any plaque erected at the site be cleared in advance by the Commemoration Committee and relevant local bodies".[1335] The Committee intended to play a role of control for sensitive issues. Another major example of the government commemoration policy was expressed through the links between the Commemoration Committee and the 1798 National Visitor Centre in Enniscorthy.

The project was initiated by *Comoradh '98*, an organization founded in the late 1980s in order to plan the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford. Composed of local representatives and Historians, *Comoradh '98* requested funding from the Irish government in 1995. The project received Ir£2.3m, from which Ir£1.6m came from the European Regional Development Fund. Allocated by the Irish government, the European funding allowed the Commemoration Committee to take part in the decision making process. Bernard Browne, manager of the 1798 Centre project, had been in contact with the Commemoration Committee since 1995. In January 1997, he met Avril Doyle (chairperson of the Commemoration Committee) to stress the progress of the construction. It was agreed that "in view of the status

---

[1333] Howe, "The Politics of Historical 'Revisionism'", pp. 227-253.

[1334] "As many as thirty thousand may have fallen" in 1798. Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. 55. The most important battles took place at Oulart hill (27 May, United irish victory), at New Ross (5 June, counter-rebellion victory), and at Vinegar Hill (21 June, final counter-rebellion victory in County Wexford).

[1335] Minutes of the meeting, 25th September 1997, Archives of the OPW, A31/3/136, 1798 Commemoration Committee.

of the project as a 'national centre', the Government's 1798 Commemoration Committee would have 'signing off' rights on the text proposed (…) to be used at the centre".[1336] Although the Commemoration Committee was not directly involved, the funding created links of dependence.

In line with its Mission Statement, the Commemoration Committee was careful to highlight the unity of the 1798 Rebellion and not the local particularities of the insurrection. During the meeting between Avril Doyle and Bernard Browne in January 1997 a number of points were "agreed" but others raised doubts. The first issue raised was the national scale of the project and the fact that "other counties of Ireland might justifiably feel left out".[1337]. Already in a meeting in 1996 between Avril Doyle, Bernard Browne and Bartlett to "discuss the contribution of *Comoradh '98* to the commemoration of the Rebellion of 1798", the Minister had asked Browne about what was planned to put the Rebellion in its national context".[1338] The Commemoration Committee was careful the 1798 Centre did not only focus on the Wexford rebellion. In addition, to match the broader context of commemoration, the shift from local to national framework limited the risk of highlighting local pride in the rebels and the act of insurrection itself.

The correspondence between the Commemoration Committee and the organizers of the 1798 National Visitor Centre revealed wider tensions in commemorating the 1798 Rebellion. One particular issue demonstrated the tension between the Commemoration Committee and Wexford actors of the 1798 bicentenary: pike and pikemen.[1339] In her response to Browne after their meeting in January 1997, Avril Doyle explained that one of the agreed points during the meeting was "the excessive use of pikes and the imagery of pikes will be avoided".[1340] In his report about the meeting, Tom Bartlett – second historical adviser of the Commemoration Committee – said some reservations were voiced regarding the "entrance".[1341] He pointed out that "Passage over the bridge through a corpse or thicket of

---

[1336] Letter from Doyle to A. Sherwood, 5 February 1997, Application for funding IV, archives of the 1798 Visitor Centre, Enniscorthy.

[1337] Tom Bartlett, report on the meeting, 9 January 1997, Comoradh 98, S110/5/3/0045A, GCCA.

[1338] Minutes of the meeting, 27th February 1996, United Irishmen Commemoration Society Belfast, S110/5/10/0056, GCCA.

[1339] Pikes were the principal weapon used by the insurgents in Wexford, called pikemen. Regarded as an effective weapon especially in close combat, the original pike head was six inches long and spear shaped. The handle was approximately six feet long. www.1798centre.ie/weaponry.htm (last visited June 2011)

[1340] Minutes of the Meeting, 26 February 1996, United Irishmen Commemoration Society files, S110/05/10/0056, GCCA.

[1341] A native of Belfast, educated at Queen's University in Belfast, Thomas Bartlett taught at University College Galway from 1978 to 1995 and became Professor of Modern History at University College Dublin. He was a Historian of eighteenth century Ireland and specialist in military history, especially the 1798 Rebellion. Among numerous books and articles : Tom Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation: the Catholic Question, 1690-*

pikes (a forest had been proposed before) was felt to be ill-advised". His own view was that "the use of the pikes, in this fashion, is a mistake. It is clichéed, triumphalist, divisive and intimidatory". According to him "something more restful, reflective (…) is needed".[1342] Already during a meeting in February 1996, Bartlett explained to Browne that "the bridge shown on the drawing resonates with the Massacre on Wexford Bridge in 1798".[1343]

1798 National Visitor Centre: Project, Entrance and Ground Floor[1344]
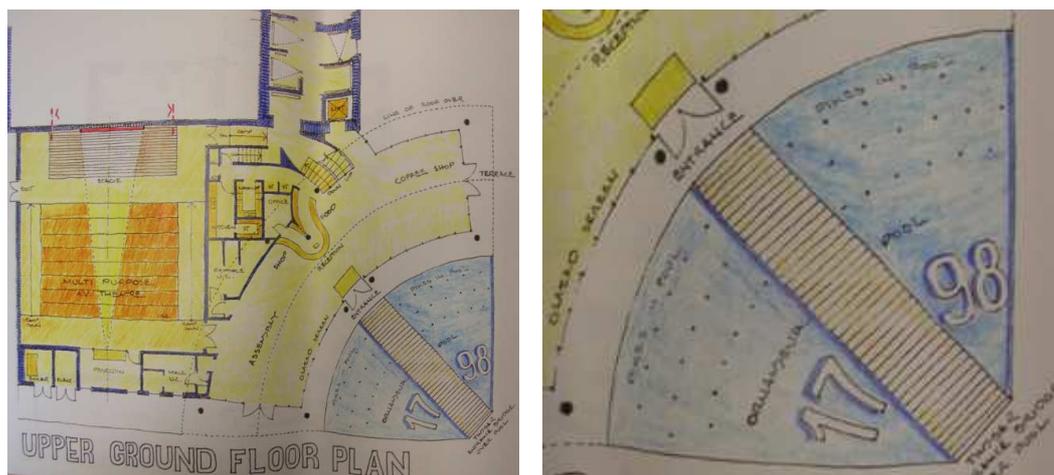
The Commemoration Committee's worries dealt with the entrance pool on which the bridge of democracy was suspended. The drawings of the project demonstrate indeed that a series of pikes were planned to be erected in the entrance pool.

1830, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1992) ; Tom Bartlett and K. Jeffery (eds.), *A Military History of Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) ; Tom Bartlett, ed., *The Life of Wolfe Tone*, arranged and compiled by William T.W. Tone, Dublin, 1998.

[1342] T. Bartlett, report on the meeting, 9 January 1997, Comoradh 98, S110/5/3/0045A, GCCA.

[1343] Minutes of the Meeting, 26 February 1996, United Irishmen Commemoration Society files, S110/05/10/0056, GCCA.

[1344] Comoradh '98, Submission to South East Regional Tourism Organisation for Bord Failte Tourism Development Incentives 1994-1999, undated (probably 1995), *National 1798 Centre Enniscorthy*, S110/05/10/006, GCCA.

Ornamental Pool and "Pike Structure"[1345]
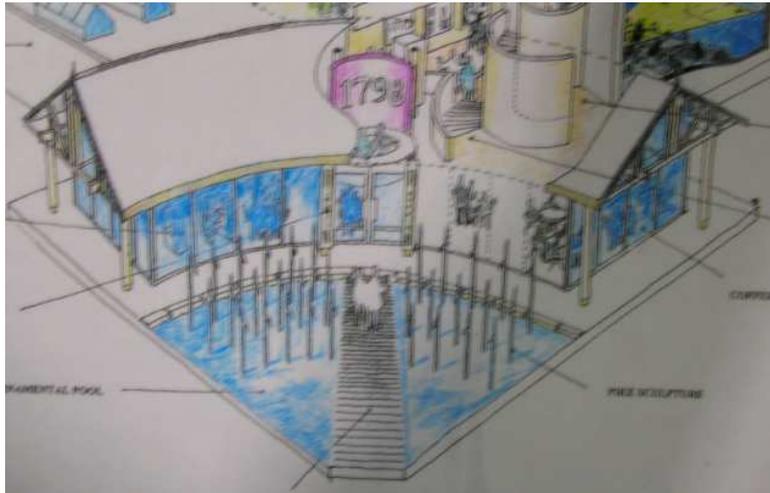
As the image shows, visitors were supposed to enter the centre between two series of roughly fifteen pikes. What the Commemoration Committee feared was the celebration of pikes and use of physical force could especially fuel Unionist interpretation of the Rebellion. The fact that the series of pikes was ultimately not erected showed the impact of the official narratives of the 1798 Rebellion on local projects, even though the members of the Committee were not directly organizing the commemorations. However, it would be simplistic to consider that local actors passively underpinned the Mission Statement. The issue of weapons and historical use of physical force was a continuing topic of negotiation between the different actors.

Comoradh '98, the institution responsible for the commemoration in Wexford and particularly the 1798 Centre disagreed regarding the representations of pikes and pikemen. The badge of the newly created *Comoradh '98* consisted of a shield carrying the Wexford colours bisected by a pike and bearing the dates 1798 and 1998 together with the Tree of Liberty – symbol of the French revolutionaries. It was explained that the pike, "symbol of resistance and courage, was the favoured weapon of the rebels of 1798. Fitted to a long handle, it was a formidable weapon in the hands of brave men".[1346] Still, in 1995, the pike was considered during a *Comoradh* meeting as "a symbol of revolution and determination".[1347] Ultimately, the use of the pikes in the 1798 National Visitor Centre was the result of deep negotiations between the Commemoration Committee and *Comoradh '98*.

[1345] Comoradh '98, S110/05/03/0045, GCCA.

[1346] Press release, undated but certainly July 1989 or 1990 since Dr Hillery is quoted as President and Charles Haughey as *Taoiseach*, Committee, archives of Comoradh '98, 1798 National Visitor Centre, Enniscorthy.

[1347] New logo, meeting minutes, December 1995, archives of Comoradh '98, 1798 National Visitor Centre, Enniscorthy.

However, in her letter to the organizers of the 1798 National Visitor Centre, Avril Doyle underlined that "the logo for the centre should be appropriate and dignified and it would be a welcome change if it proved possible to avoid relying on the pike one more time".[1348] Having received Doyle's comments on the 1798 Visitor Centre project, Bernard Browne presented them to the *Comoradh '98* Committee chaired by Nicholas Furlong who was also responsible for the storyline of the 1798 Centre.[1349] He specified that a "Logo minus a representation of the Wexford pike seems to me to border on the ridiculous".[1350] In as much, and in spite of the Committee suggestion, a logo displaying not only a pike but also a pikeman was adopted:

Logo of the 1798 National Visitor Centre and the Pikeman Statue in Wexford

The logo depicted a statute called the Pikeman, erected by Oliver Sheppard in 1905 in Wexford to celebrate the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford. This exemplified the fact that, while the Commemoration Committee could take advantage of its funding to lead the commemorations, it was never unchallenged or passively received by other actors of the commemorations. These examples are relevant to examine the links between the Commemoration Committee and the National Museum of Ireland, although the institution was in Dublin and, therefore,

---

[1348] 1798 Interpretative Centre, observations, letter from A. Doyle to B. Browne, 14 January 1997, S110/05/03/0016, GCCA.
[1349] Minutes of the meeting, 22 January 1997, Archives of Comoradh '98, 1798 National Visitor Centre, Enniscorthy. Journalist, writer and Historian Nicholas Furlong was a well-known Wexford figure of the *Wexford Echo* and regularly wrote in the *Irish Press*. He was specialist of Wexford in the eighteenth century and wrote a biography of Father John Murphy. Nicholas Furlong and Daire Keogh, eds., *The Mighty Wave: the 1798 Rebellion in County Wexford*, (Dublin: Four Courts press, 1996) ; Nicholas Furlong, *Father John Murphy of Boolavogue, 1753-1798*, (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1991).
[1350] Letter from Nicholas Furlong to Avril Doyle, 30 January 1997, 1798 Miscellanous, S110/05/03/0001, GCCA.

mostly disconnected from the local pride in the Rebellion. The fact that the insurrection did not take place in Dublin strengthened the implementation of the Mission Statement at the NMI even more.

The organization of the commemorative exhibition at the National Museum of Ireland cannot be understood without the links with the Commemoration Committee. Even though the NMI hosted the main exhibition arranged for the bicentenary in the Republic of Ireland – apart from the 1798 National Visitor Centre – the roles of the museums were extremely limited. The project of exhibition was initially planned not by the NMI but by the National Library of Ireland (NLI). As late as November 1997 – six months before the opening of *Fellowship of Freedom* – the exhibition was still supposed to be located at the NLI from January 1998 to the end of the year.[1351] For security reasons, the exhibition could not be designed at the NLI.[1352] The possibility of arranging the exhibition at the NMI was only raised on 24 November 1997 during a meeting of the Commemoration Committee.[1353] Importantly, the NMI as venue was merely a choice by default which had to be validated by the Commemoration Committee.[1354]

The role of the NMI in designing a commemorative exhibition in 1998 was also undermined by the structural change of the sites of display. In 1997, the historical collections as well as the overall Arts and Industry department were transferred from the Kildare Street building to Collins Barracks which opened on 18 September 1997.[1355] However, the space available in 1998 was still limited and the staff encountered various difficulties following the calendar of the transfer.[1356] *Fellowship of Freedom* was among the first exhibitions arranged at the new site and therefore suffered some delays.[1357] Moreover, the opening of the new site

---

[1351] Briefing note, 1798 Commemoration Committee, in Joint Education Pack, 13 November 1997, S110/05/22/0005, GCCA.

[1352] During the meeting "the chairman took the opportunity of outlining the Ministers concern regarding the difficulties that have arisen resulting from the Fire Officers decision that it would be unsafe to hold the 1798 exhibition in the National Library". Accordingly "a number of alternative venues were discussed"; among them was the NMI. Note from Alice Kearney regarding the Committee meeting, 24 November 1997, 1798 Exhibition, S110/05/10/0049, GCCA.

[1353] The staff of the NMI was not totally taken aback since M. Kenny (curator in the history department) had participated in Commemoration Committee meetings in 1996. March 1996, A1/98/029, NMIA, Dublin. Moreover, the NMI had been in informal contacts with the NLI since April 1996 (A1/98/029, NMIA).

[1354] The NMI received Ir£30.000 from the Commemoration Committee to mount the commemorative exhibition. Meeting of the AIIC Working Group on Education and Culture, Department of Foreign Affairs, 14 November 1997, p. 2, in Joint Education Pack, S110/05/22/0005, GCCA.

[1355] The barracks had previously housed the British garrison in Ireland until 1921 and had since belonged to the Irish Defence Forces.

[1356] For instance, the 1916 collections were still in the Kildare Street building in the early 2000s.

[1357] The first historical display was devoted to the United Nations and the Irish involvement in peacekeeping. The organization of the 1998 exhibition was perturbed by the ongoing strikes in 1997 among the national museum's staff. See the next chapter on the political organization of the bicentenary.

of the NMI was troubled by a dispute. Although Bertie Ahern (*Taoiseach*) was supposed to open the new site he "felt inappropriate" going through the picket organized by the staff at the entrance of Collins Barracks.[1358] The opening was attended instead by Sile de Valera, Minister for Arts, Heritage and *Gaeltacht.* The dispute had more complex consequences. Responding to the Committee's suggestion to move the display to the NMI, Michael Kenny added that the museum "enthusiastically welcomes the exhibition but because of the present dispute cannot give absolute guarantees".[1359] The dispute between the "professional and technical members of the National Museum staff and Museum management" was considered as possibly affecting the 1998 museum's exhibiting policy.[1360] That is why, while deciding to mount the exhibition at the NMI, the Commemoration Committee stressed that "it would be necessary for the current dispute by staff in the Museum to be resolved in the very near future".[1361] The difficult and long transfer of the collections from the Kildare Street building to Collins Barracks partially explained the limited commitment of the NMI in arranging a commemorative exhibition in 1998. This particular context also entailed the dependence on external actors.

The organization of *Fellowship of Freedom* was mostly in the hands of Kevin Whelan. In 1997, Whelan was employed by the NLI on contract for the organization of the 1798 bicentenary exhibition.[1362] He was, therefore, at the origins of the project. Although the decision to hold the exhibition at the National Museum was not yet taken – it was taken in November 1997 – Whelan and Catherine Fahy from the National Library provided an outline of the exhibition to receive funding from the Irish government.[1363] The narratives of the exhibition were framed before the NMI's staff became officially involved in the organization.

[1358] *The Irish Independent*, 19 September 1997, p. 11.

[1359] Discussion between M. Kenny, M. Dunleavy (NMI) and C. Fahy (National Library), 17 November 1997, A1/98/038, NMIA.

[1360] Internal note, 26 September 1997, A1/98/038, NMIA. Indeed, Ragnall O Floinn – head of the union – stated that actions would be developed "in relation to the government's failure to settle a number of staffing and structural issues" for instance, "the suspension of work on exhibitions at Collins Barracks, non-cooperation with future development plans for the National Museum". R. O Floinn, Industrial Dispute at the National Museum of Ireland, 29 September 1997, Local history department archives, UMA, Cultra.

[1361] Note from Alice Kearney regarding the Committee meeting, 24 November 1997, 1798 Exhibition, S110/05/10/0049, GCCA.

[1362] Note from M. Dunlevy to the NMI directo, Pat Wallace, 18th March 1997, A1/98/038, NMIA. The work of Whelan as historical consultant was already stated in January 1997, see letter from Catherine Fahy to Alice Kearney, 14 January 1997, AIIC files, GCCA. Fees were attributed by the NLI especially for his contract. See Discussion on National Library and National Museum exhibition on 1798, 17th November 1997, A1/98/038, NMIA.

[1363] Proposal for additional funding for the commemorative 1798 exhibition hosted by the National Library in January 1998, 1798 Exhibition, S110/05/10/049, GCCA. Although the document was undated, the fact that the proposal was destined to the exhibition to be held at the National Library indicates that the decision to hold it in the NMI was not taken yet.

Sometimes defined as "curator of the exhibition", sometimes as "researcher and script writer", Whelan was the mastermind of the exhibition.[1364] When it was decided to mount the exhibition at the NMI, he was in charge of the text panels, the exhibition's companion volume and the selection of artefacts.[1365] Michael Kenny, keeper in the Arts and Industry Department at the NMI, only "read the text when completed".[1366] Crucially, Kevin Whelan was also the historical adviser of the Commemoration Committee.

In conclusion, the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion expressed a strong political mobilization of history in the Republic of Ireland. The different interpretations of the means to reach reconciliation in Ireland and Northern Ireland mostly explained the distinct attention paid to the United Irishmen and counter-rebellion troops in the commemorative events. The strict analysis of the interpretations proposed by the Commemoration Committee demonstrates that nationalistic interpretations continued to have an impact on the representations of the past and the celebration of the United Irishmen as models for the present. The influence of official interpretations of 1798 also came from the particular process of commemoration in which the Commemoration Committee had a central role. The importance of political actors contrasted with the more fragmented framework of commemorations in Northern Ireland and also explained why the bicentenary was more celebratory in the Republic. In Northern Ireland, the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion matched the community relations policy. Thus, the Ulster Museum could extend and adapt the exhibiting policy already presented through *Kings in Conflict*. Conversely, the consequences of the politics of reconciliation were new in the Republic of Ireland and contrasted with previous limited official commitment. The two national museums had therefore to provide different efforts to adapt their exhibitions. In order to do so, they were helped by Historians involved in the commemorations. In 1998, through the involvement of Kevin Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom* could be considered as the only project in which members of the Commemoration Committee were directly taking part. It is all the more important to examine the roles of Kevin Whelan, and Historians at large, as vector of political mobilization.

[1364] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, and, Credit Panel, *Fellowship of Freedom*, 1998, A1/98/051, NMIA.
[1365] In October 1997, Lahr Joye wanted to "get a final list of objects off Dr Whelan" so that they "can start preparing them for the exhibition". Note from L. Joye to M. Kenny 16 October 1997, A1/98/038, NMIA. In November 1997, the NMI requested the "final listing of NMI objects from K. Whelan". Discussion on National Library and National Museum exhibition on 1798, 17 November 1997, A1/98/038, NMIA.
[1366] Planning meeting for 1798 exhibition, 26 September 1997, A1/98/038, NMIA.

C) The Roles of Historians as Vectors of Political Mobilization of History: Kevin Whelan as "Mister 1798".

While reviewing the bicentenary of the Rebellion, Stephen Howe defined Kevin Whelan as "Mister 1798" because he was omnipresent during the commemoration.[1367] The links between the National Museum of Ireland, Kevin Whelan and the Commemoration Committee were central to the understanding of the political mobilization of history in 1998. Through this example, the section also explores the changing roles of Historians in constructing official narratives of the past in the Republic of Ireland.

1) The Public Roles of Kevin Whelan and the Profile of Public Historians in the Politics of Reconciliation

Historians were crucial agents in the Commemoration Committee. Two Historians worked as advisers for the commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion: Tom Bartlett and Kevin Whelan. Professor of Modern History at University College Dublin, Tom Bartlett participated in most of the meetings and – with Kevin Whelan – in the Lecture Tour organized by the Committee in the United States where he presented his article "1798 in Perspective".[1368] Bartlett played a major role in the Commemoration Committee's relation with the 1798 National Visitor Centre but he appeared far less important than Kevin Whelan for the design of official narratives, notably implemented at the NMI.

Officially, Kevin Whelan only became historical adviser of the Commemoration Committee in October 1997.[1369] Nonetheless, his true involvement was much older and he acknowledged in an interview that he had been historical adviser to the Department of the *Taoiseach* from 1994 to 1998.[1370] Indeed, in a financial statement in January 1997, it appeared that Whelan was paid as historical consultant to Avril Doyle – chairperson of the

---

[1367] Howe, "The Politics of Historical 'Revisionism'", p. 227.

[1368] A 1798 Commemoration lecture tour of America will take place over a seven day period in late March of this year. Professor Tom Bartlett of University College Dublin and Professor Kevin Whelan of Notre Dame University, Dublin will participate in all five of the lectures planned. It is also intended that papers will be given by academics from each of the host universities. The first of these lectures will take place in New York University, New York, on 25 March followed by lectures in Georgetown University, Washington, on 26 March, Boston College, Boston, on 28 March, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, on 29 March, and, finally, Notre Dame University, South Bend, Indiana, on 30 March. Irish Parliamentary debates, Bertie Ahern, Dáil Éireann - Volume 487 - 17 February, 1998.

[1369] See the *Dail Debates*, 1 October 1997.

[1370] Guy Beiner, unpublished interview with Kevin Whelan, 9 October 2002, Dublin.

Commemoration Committee – in 1996 and 1997.[1371] Unlike Thomas Bartlett who was occasionally consulted – and as far as the sources show, not paid – Whelan was at the heart of the official narrative construction.[1372] Edna Longley, literary critic and sharp opponent of anti-revisionism, defined Whelan as the "scriptwriter and translator of 1798 into peace-process language for the Irish government".[1373] This was confirmed by the archives of the Commemoration Committee. Part of Whelan's activity as historical adviser consisted of writing speeches for the Committee's chairperson. For instance, in May 1998, Whelan made additions to Seamus Brennan's article to be published in the *Irish Independent*.[1374] His work was extended to the speeches of the *Taoiseach*. Thus, he wrote the speech delivered by Bertie Ahern at the opening of the Croppies Acre memorial in November 1998.[1375] Whelan embodied the profile of public Historians requested during the commemorations.

It was no coincidence that Kevin Whelan and Jane Leonard, two Historians, became involved almost simultaneously in the national museums in Ireland and Northern Ireland.[1376] They were both specialists in the history of conflict. Whelan's interest in military history was more gradual. A Wexford-born scholar, he was a specialist of the eighteen and early nineteenth centuries. He undertook his doctorate on Wexford regionalism in 1981 in University College of Dublin.[1377] He then began to concentrate on the 1798 Rebellion.[1378] In 1987, he published two articles on the role of religion in the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford.[1379] Whelan was interested in the sectarian dimension of the Rebellion and the politicization of the Wexford

---

[1371] Respectively Ir£5.000 and Ir£10.000. Irish Parliamentary debates, Dail debates, 22 January 1997, vol. 473.

[1372] Whelan was the sole person directly remunerated in the committee since other members were part of the different departments. See the statement for non remuneration, Irish Parliamentary debates, Dail debates, 5 March 1997, vol. 475.

[1373] E. Longley, "Northern Ireland: Commemoration, Elegy, Forgetting" in McBride (ed.), *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, p. 234.

[1374] Letter from Elaine Duffy to Seamus Brennan, 20 May 1998, 1798 Miscellanous, S110/0503/0001, GCCA.

[1375] Note from the Commemoration Office, 12 November 1998, Croppies Acre site, S110/05/30/0027A, GCCA. The text bore the mark of Whelan's linguistic construction of the 1798 Rebellion. Indeed, the opposition between two sectarian interpretations – one Catholic Nationalist and the other Protestant and Loyalist – was challenged in the speech which suggested "elevating politics out of the sectarian rut".

[1376] The first meetings at the NMI took place in November 1997. Likewise, Marian Ferguson – education officer of the UM – wrote that Leonard arrived in November 1997. Marian Ferguson's diary, Marian Ferguson's papers, archives of the UM's Department of Education, Belfast.

[1377] His thesis dissertation was entitled *A Geography of Society and Culture in Ireland Since 1800*.

[1378] Kevin Whelan and William Nolan, eds, *Wexford: History and Society. Interdisciplinary Essays in the History of an Irish County, (Dublin:* Geography Publications, 1987) ; Patrick Flanagan, Paul Ferguson and Kevin Whelan, eds., *Rural Ireland 1600-1900* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987) ; Kevin Whelan, "The Role of the Catholic Priest in the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford", in Kevin Whelan and William Nolan, eds., *Wexford History and Society*, (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1987) ; Kevin Whelan "The Religious Factor in the 1798 Rebellion in County Wexford' in Patrick Flanagan, Paul Ferguson & Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Rural Ireland 1600-1900*, Cork, Cork University Press, 1987, pp. 60-74. The political aspects of the Rebellion were examined in Kevin Whelan, "Politicisation in County Wexford and the Origins of the 1798 Rebellion' in Gough & Dickson (eds.), *Ireland and the French Revolution*, Dublin 1990, pp. 156-78.

[1379] Whelan and Nolan, eds., *Wexford History and Society* ; Flanagan, Ferguson and Whelan, eds., *Rural Ireland.*

population.[1380] In the 1990s, Kevin Whelan was one of the most prominent specialists of the 1798 Rebellion and had published many books and articles on the subject.[1381] As for Jane Leonard, she was a specialist of war in twentieth century Ireland.[1382] She began a thesis on Ireland and the First World War at Trinity College Dublin under the supervision of David Fitzpatrick. Although not completed, her thesis resulted in several articles in journals and book chapters.[1383]

The resemblance between Jane Leonard and Kevin Whelan not only came from their interest in the history of wars but also from their capacity to work outside of academic circles. Before working for the Ulster Museum, Jane Leonard had been involved in community relations programmes. From January 1996 to March 1997 she was sponsored by the Community Relations Council for research on commemorative practices in Northern Ireland.[1384] During her activity within the Community Relations Council, Leonard was in contact with many Irish and Northern Irish institutions and associations such as the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the British Army, the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, the National Graves Association, the Northern Ireland Office, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, and the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The links with non academic institutions were shared by Kevin Whelan.

Kevin Whelan was even more representative of the new type of public Historian. First of all, he had an interdisciplinary training. He was initially not trained as a Historian but as a Geographer. He received a B.A in Geography and English in 1978 and finished his Ph.D. on Wexford Cultural Geography in 1981.[1385] He only moved to historical research in the 1980s during his stay at the Memorial University (Newfoundland, Canada, 1981-1982) as visiting fellow.[1386] This interest in both History and Geography resulted in an original approach to sources and archives for regional studies. Thus, in 1993 he wrote *The Bases of Regionalism*

[1380] Whelan, "The Role of the Catholic Priest in the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford"; Whelan "The Religious Factor in the 1798 Rebellion in County Wexford'.

[1381] Kevin Whelan, D. Dickson and D. Keogh, eds., *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism, and Rebellion*, (Dublin: Lilliput, 1993) ; Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism, and the Construction of Irish Identity, 1760-1830*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996).

[1382] Application for Outreach Officer, *Up in Arms* (October 1997 –August 1998), June 1997, Marian Ferguson's paper, the 1798 exhibition, UMA, Belfast. The call specified that the UM was seeking candidates with a degree in history, a recent historical experience – preferably in eighteenth and nineteenth century study – and a minimum of two year experience in history teaching.

[1383] Leonard, "The Twinge of Memory: Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday in Dublin since 1919", pp. 99-114.

[1384] Through this sponsorship she published *The Culture of Commemoration: The Culture of War Commemoration* in 1996 and *Memorials to the Casualties of Conflict: Northern Ireland 1969-1997*, (Belfast: Community relations Council, November 1997).

[1385] Whelan's curriculum vitae, 1998, 1798 Lecture Tour, S110/05/22/0002, GCCA.

[1386] Tony Graham, "The Colossus of Clonegal : Interview with Kevin Whelan", *History Ireland* , ix, n. 4, winter, 2001, www.historyireland.com/volumes/volume9/issue4/features/?id=113588, (last visited December 2010).

which ranged across ancient and modern history, social structures and European debates on regional policy, sport and poetry.[1387] Whelan's interdisciplinary training was also encouraged by his work at the National Library of Ireland where he was employed as assistant keeper from 1983 to 1989. He became familiar with both the management of historical collections and the contact with a non-academic public.[1388] The NLI was, according to him, where his "real education began".[1389] Both Whelan and Leonard embodied the rise of public Historians whose works went beyond academia.

In addition to his knowledge of the 1798 Rebellion, two aspects contributed to making Whelan's collaboration with the NMI possible. First of all, Whelan – like Jane Leonard – had no fixed academic position.[1390] In the 1990s, while Leonard worked for the Community Relations Council, Whelan multiplied the fellowships – Newman scholar at University College Dublin from 1989 to 1992, 1798 Bicentennial Research Fellow at the Royal Irish Academy from 1992 to 1995 and visiting Scholar at Boston College from 1995 to 1996.[1391] His academic teaching experience was limited to some positions as assistant professor in 1994 in University College Galway, and two visiting professor positions in 1995 and 1997, at New York University and Notre-Dame University respectively. Independent scholar, he was flexible to commit himself to the long process of exhibition building. Public history had similarly developed in North America during the 1970s due to a lack of career prospect for young Historians. By conviction or by necessity, both Whelan and Leonard had to work with non-academic audiences.

A final similarity between Whelan and Leonard was their interest in the remembrance of historical conflicts. Jane Leonard attempted – in the steps of David Fitzpatrick – to demonstrate the relevance of the First World War in Irish history.[1392] Leonard's PhD focused on the remembrance of the First World War and in 1986 she wrote an article about the commemorations of the war.[1393] In 1995, she became senior research fellow at Queen's

---

[1387] Kevin Whelan, "The Bases of Regionalism", in P. Ó Drisceoil (ed.), *Culture in Ireland: Regions, Identity and Power*, Belfast, IIS, 1993. For a rapid survey of this article, see Howe, "The Politics of Historical 'Revisionism'" pp. 227-253.
[1388] Whelan's curriculum vitae, 1998, 1798 Lecture Tour, S110/05/22/0002, GCCA.
[1389] Graham, "The Colossus of Clonegal".
[1390] He obtained a permanent position at the Dublin Notre-Dame Keough Centre in 1998, roughly in the same time as the NMI's exhibition opened in May.
[1391] Whelan's curriculum vitae, 1998, 1798 Lecture Tour, S110/05/22/0002, GCCA ; Graham, *The Colossus of Clonegal*
[1392] Fitzpatrick, *Ireland and the First World War.*
[1393] Jane Leonard, "Lest we Forget: Irish War Memorials", in Fitzpatrick, *Ireland and the First World War.*

University of Belfast – where she is still part of the Department of Irish studies[1394] – and moved from her initial interest in the legacies of the Great War to the more general issue of commemorations of the dead in twentieth century.[1395] Hence, she was commissioned in 1995 to write a background document on options for a peace memorial, which surveys the landscape of conflict commemoration in contemporary Northern Ireland. Even though the significance of memories and remembering was not as prevailing in Kevin Whelan's works, he published a book in 1996 about the political and sectarian dimension of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in which a large part was devoted to the analysis of the memories of the 1798 Rebellion.[1396] The work of Leonard and Whelan expressed new applications for memory studies. They were both interested in the manner in which Irish had memorialized their past and used that expertise in order to provide new interpretations. In post-conflict societies such as Northern Ireland – and to a lesser extent the Republic of Ireland – the main task of these Historians was to question the previous divisive interpretations of the past and to provide new historical narratives to enhance reconciliation.

In conclusion, both Leonard and Whelan was representative of new public roles for both History and Historians in Ireland and Northern Ireland in the 1990s. Academically, they represented how new scholars were more used to working with non academic publics and willing to participate in community and cultural projects with diverse media such as museums, centres of interpretation, radio or television. More importantly, their positions stemmed from a need to reappraise the interpretations of the past in less divisive and less sectarian manners. This did not mean the interpretations promoted by Leonard and Whelan through the two museums were similar or uncontested.

2) Kevin Whelan, Post-Revisionism and the Political Need to Reinterpret the Past

Kevin Whelan's work on the 1798 Rebellion has to be set in the historiographical context of the 1970s and 1980s. In 1969, Thomas Pakenham published *The Year of Liberty*, which was for a long time the most authoritative account of the 1798 Rebellion.[1397] In a revisionist tone Pakenham challenged the nationalist idealization of the Rebellion and highlighted the

---

[1394]http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPoliticsInternationalStudiesandPhilosophy/Research/ResearchStudents/Leonard/ (last visited April 2011).
[1395] The title of her research on the QUB's website is "Legacies of the Great War in Ireland: Political Constructions and Social Realities".
[1396] Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*.
[1397] T. Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty: the Story of the Great Irish Rebellion of 1798*, London, 1969.

atrocities perpetrated by rebels, depicted as an anarchic and apolitical peasant mob.[1398] The consideration for the sectarian aspects of the insurrection became the *marque de fabrique* of revisionist Historians. Another characteristic of new versions of the 1790s was the distinction between the United Irishmen and the insurrection itself. For Marianne Elliott, the 1798 Rebellion "was not a United Irish one as it would have been a year earlier, but a protective popular uprising which a spent United Irish leadership failed to harness".[1399] Roy Foster, perhaps the most famous representative of historical revisionism, similarly considered that the 1798 Rebellion bore little relation with United Irishmen's ideology. He pointed out that the insurrection "rapidly adopted a sectarian rationale", that "local pressures rather than ideological attitudes seem to have brought about enlistment".[1400] Like Pakenham, Foster explained that "Mass atrocities were perpetrated in circumstances of chaos and confusion, symbolized by the oddly assorted icons of the rosary and the 'cap of liberty'".[1401]

Another wave of interpretations of the late 1790s emerged in the mid-1980s. The green line of these re-interpretations was the ideals of the United Irishmen as process of politicization of the masses which united the insurrection in a wider network of protest. This historiography criticized revisionist versions and highlighted much more complex networks of the United Irishmen. This new current was spearheaded by Louis Cullen who, in 1985, emphasized how intensely politicized Wexford had become well before 1798, and how extensive the United Irish organization was.[1402] Cullen developed his argument more in depth in 1987 by presenting a detailed picture of the networks of the United Irishmen in Wexford and therefore argued that the insurrection in Wexford was not an anarchic peasant affair but an integral part of the United Irishmen's plans for a national revolution.[1403] Importantly, he did so in a collection of essays edited by Kevin Whelan. Indeed, by the late 1980s, Whelan had become part of the wave of interpretations of 1798 and opposed revisionist Historians.

Kevin Whelan's works were particular in the sense that, in addition to an interest in the late eighteenth century, he became one of the fiercest opponents to historical revisionism. He supported what he called "post-revisionism". In spite of the distinction made by Whelan,

---

[1398] For an analysis of Pakenham's new interpretations, see Howe, "The Politics of Historical 'Revisionism'", pp. 227-253.
[1399] Marianne Elliott, *Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 166.
[1400] Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 279.
[1401] Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 280.
[1402] Louis M. Cullen, 'The 1798 Rebellion in its Eighteenth-Century Context', in Patrick J. Corish (ed.), *Radicals, Rebels and Establishments. Historical Studies* 15, Belfast, 1985, pp. 91-4, 104-8,110.
[1403] Louis Cullen, 'The 1798 Rebellion in Wexford: United Irish Organisation, Membership and Leadership', in Whelan and Nolan, *Wexford: History and Society.*

"post-revisionism" was very much part of anti-revisionism which developed in the 1980s. As early as 1991, he advocated post-revisionism as a way to challenge the imperfect historical revisionism.[1404] He did so in *The Irish Reporter*, a journal created in 1990/1991 "by a group of journalists, academics and community and political activists who felt that a central element was being censored from public discussion of social and political life in Ireland – the national question."[1405] The journal voiced the Republican and anti-revisionist interpretations of the past and Anglo-Irish relations. The introduction complained/lamented that "there seemed to have emerged a new orthodoxy in the mainstream media and academic life that this issue (Ireland's colonial past, and its continuation in the form of the prolonged crisis in the North) … were to be ignored, or demonised and marginalised."[1406] *The Irish Reporter* was close to the Field Day group and anti-revisionists like Declan Kiberd. The debates were fundamental since they raised questions about the interpretations of the history of Anglo-Irish relations, and also about the roles of history and Historians in the Irish society.

Kevin Whelan's interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion were utterly embedded in his opposition to revisionism. In 1996 in his book on radicalism and Catholicism, Whelan criticized 1980s revisionist accounts of 1798, and particularly Roy Foster's synthesis, "with its crudely reductionist dismissal of the origins of the 1798 rebellion as being due to 'an increase in taxes, land-hunger and sectarianism'".[1407] Whereas revisionist Historians had intended to challenge the nationalistic celebration of the 1798 Rebellion by demonstrating that the event was embedded in the eighteenth century context of agrarian revolts and sectarianism, Whelan attempted to put forward two main positive aspects of the United Irishmen and the 1798 Rebellion: the politicization of the Irish people and the unity of the movement. New emphasis was made on the modern, secular and democratic character of the United Irishmen and on the clarity, sophistication and liberating potential of their ideas. Following Louis Cullen's initial arguments in the 1980s, Whelan stressed the essential unity of the 1798 insurrection, both the coherence of what happened on different parts of the island and its place within a wider history of Atlantic and European revolutions. In doing so, Whelan colourfully contended that through post-revisionism "The United Irishmen have been restored to their 1790s context and thereby rescued from the manipulative manoeuvres of their post-

---

[1404] Kevin Whelan, "Come All You Staunch Revisionists: Towards a Post-Revisionist Agenda for Irish History" in *The Irish Reporter*, n. 2, 1991.
[1405] *The Irish Reporter*, introduction, 1991. Quoted in http://cedarlounge.wordpress.com/2011/08/01/left-archive-irish-reporter-issue-16-fourth-quarter-1994/ (last visited May 2012).
[1406] *The Irish Reporter*, introduction, 1991.
[1407] Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty,* p. 174.

rebellion interpreters".[1408] The term "rescue" expressed Whelan's intention to have a "positive" impact on the manner in which the past, in this case the United Irishmen, was interpreted. The work of Whelan during the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion was as much motivated by a re-interpretation of 1798 as by the wish to challenge historical revisionism. This explained why he focused on the roles of the United Irishmen and sectarianism.

The issue of sectarianism in the 1798 Rebellion was perhaps the major academic debate during the bicentenary. A.T.Q. Stewart, one the most prominent Historians of the 1798 Rebellion in the North, was sceptical about both the unity of the movement in 1798 and the absence of sectarianism.[1409] In 1998, he wrote "The more closely one studies the last decade of the eighteenth century, the less easy it becomes to establish a strong connection between the principles of the founding fathers of the United Irishmen and the rebels of 1798 (…) The insurrection was a forlorn hope from the outset and, far from ending sectarian animosities, it fomented them".[1410] Likewise, James Donnelly Jr. argued that the rising of 1798 showed the persistence of sectarian idioms and popular beliefs at local level in spite of the United Irishmen policy.[1411] However, the criticisms of Whelan's interpretation of the absence of sectarian dimension in the 1798 Rebellion mostly emerged from Historians based in Northern Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland, his narratives shaped the official narratives of the Commemoration Committee for which he was the historical adviser.

Kevin Whelan's wish to "rescue" the United Irishmen explained why the Mission Statement focused so little on sectarianism and so much on the 1798 leaders and their political ideals. Whelan argued in an article published in 1996 that "what happened in Wexford was of a piece with what happened in Antrim and Down" and that the 1798 Rebellion had a "forward looking, democratic dimension".[1412] Those terms were exactly the same as those utilized by the Commemoration Committee in its 1997 Mission Statement which established the guide line for the funding of local projects. He provided the Irish government and the Commemoration Committee with new interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion. Expressions about the 1798 Rebellion like "while the past cannot be restored, memory can" was used by the *Taoiseach* in order to explain the need to reinterpret the 1798 rebellion in a les divisive

---

[1408] Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty,* p. 175.

[1409] A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Hidden Roots of the United Irishmen*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1993) ; A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Summer Soldiers: the 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1995).

[1410] A.T.Q. Stewart, "The Ghost of Betsy Gray", in M. Hill, K. Dawson and B. Turner (eds.), *1798 Rebellion in County Down,* Newtonards, 1998, pp. 256-7.

[1411] J. Donnelly Jr "Sectarianism in 1798 and in Catholic Nationalism Memory", in L.W. Geary, ed., *Rebellion and Remembrance in Modern Ireland*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 15-37.

[1412] Kevin Whelan, "Reinterpreting the 1798 Rebellion in County Wexford", in Daire Keogh and Nicholas Furlong, eds., *The Mighty Wave*, pp. 34-36.

way. This expression came directly from Whelan's vocabulary presented in his book.[1413] This correspondence between the politicians' speeches and Whelan's publications dated back to the 1995. Most of Avril Doyle's speeches were based on Whelan's approach to the 1790s. For instance, in her speech at the launch of the Friends of *Comoradh '98*, in November 1995, Doyle said that "considerable energy was invested in portraying the 1798 Rebellion as a mere sectarian and agrarian revolt of ignorant Catholic peasants" but that "by retrieving the Rebellion of its oppressive weight of misrepresentation, 1798 ceases to be divisive".[1414] Similar expressions were utilized by Whelan in his 1996 publication.[1415]

Finally, Whelan was responsible for the Mission Statement assertion to move away from the military elements of 1798. In the debate which opposed the Commemoration Committee to the 1798 National Visitor Centre regarding the use of the pike, Whelan wrote a text where he argued that "we must relinquish our obsession with the purely military aspects of 1798, with pikes and death, murder, mayhem and martyrdom (…) the gory details of 1798 and an overemphasis on the pike as the sole symbol of the period can only distract us from the enduring legacy of 1798".[1416] He concluded that "If we wish to rescue 1798 from these propagandists, we must be very careful indeed not to glorify the pike as the sole and only symbol of 1798, or to overemphasize its military aspects".[1417] The Mission Statement was built to "rescue" the United Irishmen and to propose a supposedly united version of the past on which both Catholics and Protestants could agree.

Kevin Whelan's definitions of post-revisionism were not only issued from his interpretations of the 1790s but also from his conceptions of the links between past and present, and the public roles of Historians as vectors of change. Whelan was openly calling for new bridges between past and present. Questioned in 2001, Whelan contended that he was not enthused by a history divorced from the present. He pointed out that "Living in Ireland, one lives in multiple times, constantly engaged in a dialogue between past and present ».[1418] He acknowledged in another interview that "I do not think any Historian could legitimately argue that you can actually separate yourself from your subject matter, or separate past and

---

[1413] Written version of Bertie Ahern's speech, Croppies Acre site, S110/05/30/0027A. GCCA. Whelan used this expression in the exhibition catalogue. Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. x.
[1414] A. Doyle, Speech at the launch of the Friends of Comoradh '98, 24 November 1995, Orange Order, S110/05/10/0053, GCCA.
[1415] Whelan, "Reinterpreting the 1798 Rebellion in County Wexford", pp. 34-36.
[1416] Kevin Whelan's response began "The Deputy is poorly informed" and continued "Let me assure the Deputy that we are not taking the pike out of 1798". Kevin Whelan, Adjournment Debate 13 May 1997, Taking the pike out of 1798, 13 May 1997, 1798 Miscellaneous, S110/05/03/0001, GCCA.
[1417] The Pike, 15 May 1997, 1798 Miscellaneous, S110/05/03/0001, GCCA.
[1418] Graham, "The Colossus of Clonegal".

present", according to him, it was not possible "to cordon off what you are doing as academic from an engagement with the wider society".[1419] It was both an answer to revisionist Historians who had called for a history disconnected from politics, and the support for a public use, or mobilization, of history in the service of the present. Debates about the use of the past were not limited to Ireland and had taken place in many other countries. Challenging what David Lowenthal had argued about the past being "a foreign country", Whelan was closer to the public Historians who had developed their discipline in Britain and in the United States since the 1970s.[1420] Ireland was at the crux of the debate about the use of history and the diverse questions raised about the lessons to be drawn from the past.

Whelan went further and confessed that he could be criticized for his lack of objectivity, but he did not think Historians could otherwise break from their own preoccupations. Comparing nationalist and Unionist interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion, he considered that "the difference is that my perspective offers redemptive potential".[1421] In 1996, he explained that "1798 ceases to be divisive", its commemoration can be "open, inclusive and dynamic" and we "can use the 1790s as a vision and inspiration for the 1990s".[1422] Not surprisingly, Whelan's interpretations aroused sharp reactions, primarily from the Historians he targeted through post-revisionism. In addition to criticisms made regarding the processes of "rescuing" the United Irishmen from sectarian interpretations, attention was paid to the links between Historians and the political mobilization of history.[1423] Roy Foster engaged in a vivid dialogue with Whelan and Bartlett whom he blamed for repacking 1798 to fit the 1998 political context rather than considering the intentions of the 1798 actors.[1424] Foster linked post-revisionism with the new nationalist policy of the Irish government. According to Foster, post-revisionism belonged to "a very diffuse movement (…) composed of a growing number who identify with a neo-nationalism that compensates for the ennui of what they experience as a standardization of cultural identities and who espouse a new

---

[1419] G. Beiner, unpublished interview with Kevin Whelan, 9 October 2002, Dublin.

[1420] Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*.

[1421] Graham, "The Colossus of Clonegal", p. 44.

[1422] Whelan, 'Reinterpreting the 1798 Rebellion in County Wexford', pp. 34-5

[1423] Roy Foster, who increasingly became the target of Whelan's argumentation, acknowledged that sectarianism was encouraged by the British government after 1798 but impugned that it was "invented". Foster, "Remembering 1798", in McBride (ed.), *History and Memory*. He was joined by Tom Dunne, Professor at University College Cork and a specialist of the eighteenth century Ireland, who argued that "The overwhelming evidence on both sides is of chaos, arbitrary death and sectarian-inspired atrocity. A commemoration that does not confront such realities is not worthy of the name". Tom Dunne, "'Wexford's *Comoradh '98*: Politics, Heritage and History", *History Ireland* 6: 2, 1998, pp. 51-52.

[1424] Foster, "Remembering 1798" p. 85. For another harsh criticism of Whelan's political involvement, see Dunne, *Rebellions: Memoir, Memory and 1798*. Thomas Bartlett responded to Foster in the *Times Literary Supplement*. T. Bartlett, "Sticking to the Past", *Times Literary Supplement*, 25 January 2002, pp. 27-8.

commitment to national peculiarity".[1425] Similarly, Tom Dunne attacked Whelan for his "nationalist versions of the current peace process".[1426] Whelan answered the political mobilization of history by providing interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion which matched the need for reconciliation. This role was crucial in understanding the links between the NMI, Kevin Whelan, and the Commemoration Committee.

According to Kevin Whelan, post-revisionism challenged the gap between academia and general public. He intended to transcend the academic frontier. He made clear that "There is no contradiction between scholarly integrity and reaching as broad an audience as possible" because he "never wanted to limit (himself) to just being an academic".[1427] Far from the isolated work of history writing, public Historians have indeed been part of collective projects with large audiences such as historical associations, museums, television or radio broadcasts.[1428] Although the public roles of Historians were not new in Ireland, the approach defended by Whelan is crucial to understanding the new collaborations between Historians and museums, exemplified by Whelan's work with the NMI to produce the 1998 bicentenary exhibition.

Fellowship of Freedom materialized Whelan's interpretations of the past and the political mobilization of the history of the 1798 Rebellion in the context of reconciliation. Whelan acknowledged in the exhibition's catalogue that "it is this political vision that this volume reclaims, not the physical defeat of the revolution on the bloody battlefields of '98".[1429] This was clearly what the Commemoration Committee's Mission Statement had encouraged in 1997. Moreover, the exhibition bore the mark of Whelan's wish to rescue the United Irishmen and to provide reinterpretation of the past. For instance, the last panel of the exhibition was devoted to "'98 after '98: the politics of memory" and was an exact reproduction of the last chapter of Whelan's 1996 book.[1430] Similar to the Commemoration Committee, *Fellowship of Freedom* stressed that the United Irishmen should be seen as model for the present negotiation of a political structure.

[1425] Foster, *Luck and the Irish.* p. 176.
[1426] Tom Dunne, "Dangers Lie in the Romanticising of 1798", *The Irish Times*, 6 January 1998. Regarding the debates between Tom Dunne and the official Historians, see The Irish Times in April (8th, 13th, 15th, 20th, 23rd, 24th, 28th) and May (1st and 5th).
[1427] Graham, "The Colossus of Clonegal".
[1428] The term Public History has been yet essentially used in the United States and partly in other English-speaking countries such as Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Serge Noiret, "'Public History' e 'Storia Pubblica' nella rete", *Ricerche Storiche*, n. 40, maggio-agosto, 2009, p. 298.
[1429] Kevin Whelan, "Catholics, Politicisation and the 1798 Rebellion' in Réamonn Ó Muirí, ed., *Irish church History Today* (Armagh, 1990), pp. 63-83.
[1430] Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty.*

In addition to the exhibition, Kevin Whelan contributed to associate the National Museum of Ireland with anti-revisionism. The NMI organized Lecture series every Sunday from May to October in which many Historians were invited to speak (Appendix 9-I).[1431] No major supporter of revisionist interpretations of 1798 was invited. Importantly, Seamus Deane was invited (June 28th) to talk about Edmund Burke and Ireland. Deane was one of the major figures of anti-revisionism in the 1990s and edited the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*. The mention of Deane was no coincidence. In September 1998, Whelan informed the NMI that "Seamus Deane and Field Day would like to have a 'travelling 1798 exhibition' from the National Museum and National Library to be held in the Orchard Gallery, Derry, in November/December".[1432] M. Dunleavy – keeper in the Arts and Industry Department of the NMI – went further and, in her letter to the Director, argued that "Considering our experience with Dr Whelan, a great scholar, I would recommend that we draw-up a contract with him / the Orchard Gallery / Field Day / Seamus Deane agreeing enthusiastically to the travelling exhibition".[1433] Although the travelling exhibition was ultimately not arranged, this demonstrated how Kevin Whelan's collaboration with the NMI resulted in new links between the museum and anti-revisionist groups.

In conclusion, this section has demonstrated the crucial role played by Historians during the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion and more broadly in the construction of new relations between past and present in both sides of the border. Trained preferably as interdisciplinary scholars willing to work with wider audiences, those Historians had interests in Military History and Memory Studies. The work of these public Historians contributed to explaining the changing constructions of representations in the two national museums in the 1990s. Through his post-revisionist interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion, Whelan provided the Commemoration Committee with a framework in which both reconciliation and celebration of national unity could be reached. The development of post-revisionism (or anti-revisionism) was made easier thanks to the organization of commemorations in which the bridges between past and present were favoured. As a direct consequence, the NMI's exhibition was, for the very first time, managed by a Historian and was directly involved in historiographical debates.

[1431] Lecture series every Sunday from 24 May to 4 October. List of lectures, Helen Beaumont's papers, Department of Education, the 1798 Rebellion, box 6, NMIA, Dublin.
[1432] Letter from M. Dunleavy to P. Wallace (director of the NMI), 7 September 1998, A1/98/047, NMIA.
[1433] Letter from M. Dunleavy to P. Wallace (director of the NMI), 7 September 1998, A1/98/047, NMIA.

D) *Up in Arms* **and** *Fellowship of Freedom*, **Two Different Expressions of the Mobilization of History to Achieve Inclusive Narratives**

The different processes of political mobilization in Ireland and Northern Ireland were embedded in the commemorative exhibitions designed by the National Museum of Ireland and the Ulster Museum in 1998. The two exhibitions resulted from the new roles of the national museums and the overall processes of commemorations in which Historians, politicians and politics of reconciliation contributed to shaping the representations of the 1798 Rebellion. *Up in Arms*, organized by the UM, was composed of 338 artefacts, and was therefore the most important display on the whole island. The UM's display was chronologically arranged and visitors embarked on a path which led them to the various steps of the 1790s. In comparison, the NMI's exhibition was more modest (Appendix 7). It was composed of 118 artefacts displayed in a much more limited space. Although the chronology of the 1790s was respected in Dublin as well, the exhibition spaces were less clearly divided than in Belfast. In Dublin, the exhibition was divided into two rooms; the first contained sections dealing with the international context, death masks of 1798 leaders and walls were covered by quotes "from a variety of sources, including Herman Melville, Milan Kundera and the Yoruba people of Africa".[1434] The second room was devoted to the development of the Rebellion but, while reviewing the exhibition, Mary Ann Williams confessed that she "wasn't quite sure which way to go".[1435] Much more than the chronological order, the two displays disagreed on two particular issues: the relevance of the United Irishmen and the representation of historical violence.

1) Multiculturalism or National Unity, Two Different Approaches of the United Irishmen

The representations and interpretations of the United Irishmen were major red lines of disagreement between the two exhibitions. The titles of the two displays provided clues about the contrasting significance granted to the leaders of the 1798 Rebellion. The UM's exhibition was called *Up in Arms: The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland,* with an obvious military meaning that stressed the insurrection dimension of 1798.[1436] The exhibition displayed at the NMI was

---

[1434] M. A. Williams "The National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks", *Museum Ireland*, vol. 8, 1998, p. 56.
[1435] M. A. Williams "The National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks", *Museum Ireland*, vol. 8, 1998, p. 56.
[1436] *Up in Arms* was an expression of support for the insurrection.

called *Fellowship of Freedom*: *The United Irishmen and the Rebellion of 1798*, thus highlighting much more the leaders and political unity during the Rebellion. The distinction was reinforced by the logo produced by the Ulster Museum.[1437] Associated with every publication and advertisement regarding the display, the logo highlighted two crucial issues concerning the identity of the rebels and the mode of insurrection. First of all, the rebels were faceless and remained unknown; only shadows could be distinguished. No visual reference to the Society of the United Irishmen could be found in the logo. Wrapped into the title ribbon, raising hands, the compact crowd of faceless schematic brown forms was armed with pitchfork and a couple of pikes defined in the *Up in Arms'* exhibition's guide as "the rebels' main, and in most cases only, weapon".[1438] The logo highlighted the overall act of rebelling, the fact of being "up in arms". There was a discrepancy regarding the focus on the United Irishmen as political leaders and the rebels as actors of insurrection.

The contrasting significance given to the United Irishmen had consequences on the definitions of the Rebellion itself. Even if the legacy of the 1790s was stressed in the UM, the exhibition openly recognized the failure of the Rebellion. Less centred on the United Irishmen and giving more room to the insurrection itself, the display did not ignore the military failure of the rebels. While presenting the exhibition in a symposium, Trevor Parkhill did not forget to add that "the failure of the Rebellion led directly to the Act of Union of 1800".[1439] In its 1998 news sheet, the UM stressed that "the immediate legacy of the failure of the rebellion, the introduction of the Act of Union in 1801 (…) demonstrates the role the rebellion has in the political origins of the two major traditions – nationalist and Unionist – in our community".[1440] The UM intended to shed light on the relevance of the 1790s for both communities, and the Act of Union was the political root of Unionism. The need to provide narratives for the two communities explained why much was designed around counter-rebellion troops.

The cover of the UM exhibition's catalogue was composed of Thomas Robinson's painting *The Battle of Ballynahinch* which was also the centrepiece of the display (Appendix 9-J).[1441] The painting depicted the battle which took place on 12 June 1798 between rebels

---

[1437] According to the exhibition meeting minutes, James Hanna was in charge of the design. Minutes, 27 February 1997, Box 5. James Hanna was in charge of both the 1990 *Kings in Conflict* and 1998 *Up in Arms'* catalogue design.

[1438] Trevor Parkhill*, Up in Arms. The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland*, Exhibition guide, Belfast, Ulster Museum, 1998, p. 12.

[1439] Parkhill, "The Curator as Interpreter", p. 32.

[1440] Ulster Museum News Sheet, *Up in Arms ! The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland*, Belfast, Ulster Museum, 1998.

[1441] The battle which occurred at Ballynahinch, county Down, now in Northern Ireland, ended the rebellion in the North, 12 June 1798. The rebels were defeated by the Government and British forces. The centrepiece was

under the command of Henry Munro and the counter-rebellion force led by Major-General Nugent in charge of the local yeomanry, militia and units of Britain's standing army. The main figures in the foreground were those of government troops – not the United Irishmen. According to the catalogue, "the central expiring figure is certainly that of Captain Henry Evatt, of the Monaghan Militia".[1442] The centrepiece of the exhibition depicted therefore not the United Irishmen but officers of the counter-rebellion. Moreover, the sixth section dealt with sectarian issues in the 1790s and the counter-rebellion through the yeomanry, the militia and the Orange Order. Interestingly, Robinson's painting was re-dimensioned to fit the cover of the catalogue, and the image opposed more directly the United Irishman as well as the leader of the counter-rebellion force. In *Up in Arms*, the United Irishmen were, therefore, actors among others.

By contrast, the counter-rebellion was largely ignored in Dublin. It was mentioned briefly in the sixth section named "The Battle for Minds and Hearts 1797-1798" which included one (over six) sub-section on the Orange Order. In the companion volume, the Orange Order was only presented as a response to the rise of the United Irishmen, and no artefact represented the group.[1443] The published materials reinforced the subtitle of the display which highlighted the United Irishmen.[1444] The flyer handed out for the opening of the exhibition presented an image of Theobald Wolfe Tone, which occupied almost half the space (Appendix 9-I).[1445] Likewise, the cover was almost entirely devoted to Theobald Wolfe Tone.[1446] Although the focus on Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen was not new in the National Museum, it contrasted with the leaflet devoted to the 1798 collections of the NMI

---

mentioned in Ulster Museum News Sheet, *Up in Arms ! The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland*, Belfast, Ulster Museum, 1998. The painting took 16 over 27cm, *i.e.*, around 60% of the whole page. In the display, Robinson's painting was part of the major section of the exhibition – called *Up in Arms* – and benefited from its own space. This history painting was not part of the museum's collection but was on loan from the Irish Office of Public Works based in Dublin. In January 1944, the President of Ireland, Dr. Douglas Hyde decided to assemble a small collection of historic items in *Aras an Uachtaráin* to illustrate important events in the history of Ireland. Robinson's painting is catalogued as follows: Battle of Ballinahinch, Co. Down, 13 June, 1798.

[1442] Maguire, *Up in Arms*, p. 248.
[1443] See "The Orange Response", Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. 44.
[1444] Except the cover of the exhibition book.
[1445] The image is ten-centimetre high and four-centimetre wide. The same image was used to produce the flyer for the accompanying lectures at the NMI. Although the advertised lectures were neither exclusively about Wolfe Tone nor the United Irishmen. Sunday Lecture Series, Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, 1998, (Appendix 9).
[1446] The image was taken from a drawing entitled *the unfortunate' Theobald Wolfe Tone* drawn at his trial in 1798, which pictures Wolfe Tone in the French officer's uniform he insisted on wearing. Anonymous engraving, 17,6x10,8 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

published in 1996, whose cover was devoted to the insurgents in Wexford, in particular Father Michael Murphy.[1447] The focus on the United Irishmen served several purposes.

Theobald Wolfe Tone was not only a bridge between Catholics and Protestants, he was also presented as the link between the United Irishmen in Belfast and Dublin, that is, between North and South.[1448] Born and based in Dublin, he created the Society of the United Irishmen in Belfast in 1791. The emphasis on Wolfe Tone and the Society of the United Irishmen allowed for the celebration of the unity in the past without supporting the use of violence. The catalogue acknowledged that "it is this political vision that this volume reclaims, not the physical defeat of the revolution on the bloody battlefields of '98".[1449] The move from the battlefield to the United Irishmen and their political ideals also allowed for a move from military defeat to political victory. The United Irishmen were celebrated, in *Fellowship of Freedom*, for having "succeeded, if only briefly, in bringing together Protestants, Catholics and Presbyterians".[1450] The Dublin exhibition's catalogue was apologetic in portraying the "enduring legacy" of the United Irishmen and argued that their ideas "did not die with the events of 1798, but are still potent, valid and unrealized (…) the United Irishmen are very much our contemporaries".[1451] While considering the "potent afterlife" of the United Irishmen, the Dublin exhibition turned a military failure into a long-term victory in promoting pluralist political ideals. In Dublin, the United Irishmen were the symbol of the national unity, while they were part of multicultural narratives in *Up in Arms*. This discrepancy also appeared regarding the definition of the religious issues.

In addition to the contrasting space given to the United Irishmen, the two exhibitions produced distinct narratives of their confessions. The efforts undertaken by the UM to highlight the multi-confessional dimension of the rebels were blatant. In Belfast, the introductory paragraph about the United Irishmen pointed out that "In 1791 a group of Presbyterian radicals (…) formed a secret committee" and that "The idea of such a body (…) came from a Belfast-born Presbyterian".[1452] The use of religious identification to depict the actors was not limited to the founding fathers. The paragraph mentioned the Dublin Society

---

[1447] Michael Kenny and National Museum of Ireland, *The 1798 Rebellion: Photographs and Memorabilia from the National Museum of Ireland* (Dublin: Country House in association with the National Museum of Ireland, 1996).

[1448] Outline of the exhibition, A1/98/047, NMIA. Born in Dublin, Wolfe Tone was involved in radical networks in Belfast, where he found with William Drennan and Thomas Russell the Society of the United Irishmen in 1791.

[1449] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. x.

[1450] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. 3.

[1451] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom,* pp. ix, x.

[1452] Maguire (ed.), *Up in Arms*, p. 85.

"where membership included adherents of the Established Church and Catholics as well as Presbyterians".[1453] More than any socio-economic, political or cultural features, religious identification was used to highlight the multi-confessional status of the Society, which was one of the main purposes of the exhibition.

On the contrary, in *Fellowship of Freedom*, the religious identity of the founding fathers was hardly underlined. Of course, the biographies of the United Irishmen included the confession, but the introductory panels of both section II and III on the United Irishmen did not consider religious identification as appropriate for the general definition of the rebels. This trend was confirmed by looking at the preface of the exhibition book which stated that "The United Irish movement had, as its central aim, the demolition of a political system rooted in sectarian privilege and its replacement with a secular democratic politics" and carried on by quoting "The project of creating a secular republic".[1454] The presentation of the secular ideals of the United Irishmen contributed to the general absence of sectarian policy in the display.

The rejection of sectarianism as relevant issue of the 1798 Rebellion was expressed in the manner in which Father John Murphy was represented in the NMI.[1455] John Murphy was a Catholic priest who took part in the insurrection in Wexford. On the one hand, he had been praised in the Nationalist narratives of the Rebellion as a hero symbolizing the Catholic revolt against colonial rule.[1456] On the other hand, he was used in the Unionist narratives of the 1798 Rebellion to demonstrate the sectarian aspect of the insurrection. In Dublin, the exhibition was careful not to emphasize too much the role of the Catholic priest. For instance, on the TV screens dedicated to the leaders of the United Irishmen**,** Father Murphy occupied the bottom left corner, far from the central position occupied by Theobald Wolfe Tone.[1457] Interestingly, this image came from a 1908 poster dedicated to the leaders of the United Irishmen; on this initial version Father Murphy occupied the central column.[1458] These two copies showed perfectly how Father Murphy was driven back from the heart of the Rebellion in *Fellowship of Freedom*. In 1998, this would derive from the wish to repress any emphasis on the sectarian dimension of 1798.

[1453] Maguire (ed.), *Up in Arms*, p. 85.

[1454] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, preface, p. ix.

[1455] Father John Murphy was a Catholic priest who took part in the Rebellion in Wexford. He was a crucial character in the late nineteenth century remembrance of the Rebellion, both for Nationalists and Unionists.

[1456] One of the best examples of the nationalist remembrance of Father Murphy was 1907 Oliver Shepherd's statute in Enniscorthy on which the priest, as a guide, laid his hand on a rebel's shoulder and showed the road to follow.

[1457] *Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and 1798*. CD-Rom, (Dublin: Martello Multimedia, 1998).

[1458] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. 138.

Notwithstanding a general agreement to display the 1798 Rebellion as a major event in Irish and Northern Irish history, the disagreements regarding the actors of the Rebellion and counter-rebellion reflected the different interpretations of Irish and Northern Irish history. The United Irishmen were the framework and model in which the past was represented at the NMI but were merely one side of the story at the UM. The particularity of the exhibitions regarding the overall official narratives during the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion appeared to be more about the manner in which the acts of violence were represented.

2) Between History and Memory: the Different Interpretations of Violence

In addition to the representations of the United Irishmen, the two exhibitions diverged on the issue of historical violence. The Ulster Museum's exhibition acknowledged that the 1798 Rebellion was a "bloody" event in Irish history.[1459] The chief category of artefacts related to the act of violence perpetrated in 1798 was the different weapons put on display. The logo designed for *Up in Arms* showed a crowd of rebels armed with pikes and pitchforks (Appendix 9-K). The pike has been commonly associated with the 1798 Rebellion; in fact another nickname for the rebel*s* has been *pikemen*. Pitchforks were much less associated with the rebels; they were weapons of reaction, *i.e.,* weapons used only in the first stages of uprisings.[1460] Pitchforks symbolized the agrarian dimension of the 1798 Rebellion which could therefore be re-contextualized as one of the long-term agrarian revolts of the eighteenth century. The 1798 Rebellion was not merely associated with the defence of pluralism and democratic rights embodied by the United Irishmen, but was also presented as deriving from the local social tensions.

Likewise, the acts of violence perpetrated by the rebels were not silenced. The 1998 exhibitions included two etchings from George Cruikshank: *Massacre at Scullabogue* and *The Rebels Executing their Prisoners on the Bridge at Wexford* which stressed the atrocities perpetrated by rebels against Protestant prisoners (Appendix 9-M).[1461] The two depictions

---

[1459] Trevor Parkhill, "Preface", in Maguire, ed., *Up in Arms*, p. 1.

[1460] With the spread and organization of the protest, this sort of weapon tended to be replaced by more sophisticated arms. For a study of the use of different weapons according to the revolts see Jean Nicolas, *La Rébellion Française: mouvements populaires et conscience sociale, 1661-1789*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002).

[1461] Both images initially illustrated William Maxwell's *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798*, published in London in 1845. In *Massacre at Scullabogue* (Appendix 9-L), Cruikshank promoted a pro-Loyalist narrative of 1798 by portraying civilians trapped in a barn, surrounded by a crowd armed with pikes, swords and muskets. No military feature was associated with the victims. The image illustrated Maxwell's account of the "massacre" of "unfortunate prisoners, who by their loyalty or their difference in religious faith" had fallen into the hands of the rebels. William H. Maxwell, *History of the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland,* 1845, p. 123. On the other image, Cruikshank depicted prisoners executed by the rebels on the Wexford Bridge in the midst of the crowd. Maxwell

were very critical of the rebels, considered more as animals – with ape-like faces – than patriots.[1462] Regarding Scullabogue and the prisoners locked in the barn, Jane Leonard, writing the caption for the *Up in Arms'* catalogue, described the victims as "Protestant civilian prisoners, and a few Catholics associated with them".[1463] Once again, the division between two religious communities was highlighted. Regarding the perpetrators, the explanation of the "massacre" remained rather unclear. For example, in the hundred-word paragraph caption, Leonard neither mentions the rebels nor the United Irishmen, nor any individual perpetrator. Passive constructions were used to describe what happened, for example: "more than one hundred (…) were burnt alive".[1464] Similarly for *The Rebels Executing their Prisoners*, the captions stated that "One victim is being (…) piked aloft as exultant women dance and cheer".[1465] The only reference to perpetrators remained in the original title - *The Rebels executing their Prisoners*. The absence of perpetrators in this narrative of 1798 can be explained by the fact that, in order to promote present reconciliation between opposite memories – and therefore opposite groups – the Ulster Museum did not wish to reproduce previous critical loyalist interpretations.

Interestingly, the term "bloody" was used in the initial synopsis to introduce the 1798 Rebellion in the Dublin exhibition as well. An undated document found in the NMI's education department began that way "The Rising of 1798, one of the bloodiest and most dramatic events in Irish history".[1466] Likewise, the collection guide published in 1996 by Michael Kenny – keeper of the Art and Industry Department – defined the 1798 Rebellion as the "bloodiest event in Irish history".[1467] Contrastingly, the final version of the 1998 exhibition guide did not include the term bloody and only referred to 1798 as a "dramatic event".[1468] The overall display in Dublin was driven by the wish to avoid a focus on sectarian violence. It is interesting to explore how this approach materialized within the display.

---

described the "sanguinary pikemen butchering the poor victims on the bridge (and) while the miserable victim writhed in extreme of agony (...) they exulted round him with savage joy". William H. Maxwell, *History of the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland,* 1845, p. 154.

[1462] Robert Gowan used Cruikshank's image in 1859 to illustrate "the inhuman butchery at the Bloody Bridge of Wexford" which was presented as a major instance in his history of the Rebellion: "In their camps, and on their marches and retreats, the same execrable barbarities were constantly committed". OGowan, *Murder Without Sin. The Rebellion of 1798*, p. 55.

[1463] Maguire, *Up in Arms*, p. 218.

[1464] Maguire, *Up in Arms*, p. 218.

[1465] Maguire, *Up in Arms*, p. 218.

[1466] *The Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and the 1798 Rebellion*, undated paper, Box 6, 1798 Exhibition, Helen Beaumont's personal papers, Education department, NMIA, Dublin..

[1467] Kenny, *The 1798 Rebellion.*

[1468] *1798 Fellowship of Freedom*, exhibition leaflet, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1998), p. 1.

In order to understand how the acts of violence during the 1798 Rebellion were presented at the NMI in *Fellowship of Freedom*, it is necessary to examine the general approach of the past. Kevin Whelan wrote, in the companion volume that the display intended to "help release the circle of repetition: the endless calendrical Protestant memory or the mythic theology of nationalist narrative".[1469] One of the three "themes" of the exhibition was, according to Whelan, "to examine the 'Politics of Memory', which will show how the same events were interpreted over subsequent periods of Irish history".[1470] Whelan called for a process of "rememoration" of the past, defined as a "retrieving of memory which has been deliberately suppressed". By contrast, Whelan intended to "restore" an "enabling memory" of 1798.[1471] To some extent, this intention reminded of the UM's aim to debunk myths regarding the 1690 Battle of the Boyne or the 1798 Rebellion. This approach of the representations of the past as being constructed was utterly new at the NMI. Never before were myths and memory considered in temporary or permanent exhibitions.

The particularity of exhibitions in representing the past comes from the relations between artefacts and spatial arrangement. To implement his interpretations of the past, Kevin Whelan transcribed his approached in spatial and textual narratives. An interesting distinction was made between the history and the memories of the 1798 Rebellion. Unlike the previous sections which dealt with the history of the 1790s, the final section was entitled *Memory: '98 after '98* and assessed not what happened in 1798 but how it had been remembered. Artefacts about the commemorations of 1798, popular songs and snapshots of movies composed the last section.[1472] This distinction between history and memory was associated with the particular design of the exhibition. A distinction appeared between the inner and outer spaces of the two rooms. Artefacts were disposed at the centre of the rooms while texts and reproduction panels were erected all around.[1473] While in Belfast texts were limited to captions and twelve short introductory panels, walls of the Dublin exhibition were covered with 47 boards associating texts and visual reproductions.[1474] In the second principal room, 38 boards (1.2 meter-wide) covered 45 meters, that is, 4/5 of the overall perimeter.[1475] The space allocated to texts was such that reviews of the display raised sceptical comments. John Turpin, art Historian, pointed out that the exhibition was "an illustrated book on walls" and

---

[1469] *1798 Fellowship of Freedom*, exhibition leaflet, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1998), p. 1.
[1470] Kevin Whelan and Katherine Fahy, *Request for Additional Funding to the Department of Arts, Culture, and the Gaeltacht*, 1997, A1/98/038, NMIA.
[1471] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. x.
[1472] List of artifacts, A1/98/047, NMIA.
[1473] Layout of the exhibition, *1798 exhibition*, archives of the Office of Public Works, Dublin.
[1474] Layout of the exhibition, *1798 exhibition.*
[1475] Perimeter was 55-meter long.

used images as "tangential illustrations to a textual treatment".[1476] The use of text allowed for the critical presentation of artefacts. Some documents were considered as "fanciful" or "imaginary". This overall presentation of the past intended to "rescue" the United Irishmen from the association made with sectarianism and sectarian acts of violence perpetrated in 1798.

In Dublin, the distinction between the history and memories of the 1798 Rebellion was directly and strictly linked to the representations of violence. Split between the Unionist version of a "sectarian bloodbath" and its Catholic nationalist matching piece defining the Rebellion as a "struggle for faith and fatherland", the memory of 1798 was the prism through which the images of violence had to be perceived. For instance, the section contained an image which depicted a rebel and, in the background, villages on fire. The caption of this *Portrait of an Irish Chief* pointed out that it was "published in London (…) designed to exploit the commercial possibilities of the war in Ireland".[1477] With these words, the exhibition argued that the image told more about the use of the Rebellion as a political tool in Britain than about the situation in Ireland. This approach of the representations of violence was even clearer regarding Cruikshank's depiction of the massacre at Scullabogue. It was used to demonstrate "the early Victorian emergence of racial stereotyping with the rebels portrayed as simian Celts".[1478] Included in the final section about memory, the images were defined as "entirely fanciful".[1479]   It was true that Cruikshank did not experience the 1798 Rebellion and published the images in William Maxwell's *History of the Rebellion* in the 1840s, however this description – and the fact that the representations of violence were gathered in the memory section – led to think that sectarianism was (false) memory more than history.

Whelan's contextualization of artefacts was a major step in moving away from object-oriented displays towards interpretations of the past. Whelan's omnipresence in the organization of the exhibition resulted in a strict control of artefacts in wider historical narratives of the 1798 Rebellion. It also resulted in a text-oriented display. Interestingly, the initial message produced by the image was then totally controlled and included in another narrative explaining how the image was constructed to justify political discourses. Images were shrewdly subordinated to a powerful narrative that aimed at changing the interpretations of 1798. Notwithstanding the benefit of this critical approach, the NMI's display was

---

[1476] John Turpin, "Three 1798 Bicentenary Exhibitions Compared", *Eire-Ireland*, vol. 32-33, 1997-1998, p. 264.
[1477] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. 100.
[1478] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. 123.
[1479] Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom*, p. 137.

undermined by two controversial aspects. First, this critical approach was limited to the previous depictions of the 1798 Rebellion and nothing was said about current narratives. The critical approach was not applied to the manner in which the history of 1798 was constructed in the previous sections, as if the scientific historical production was totally disconnected from political utilization. The intention to debunk myths was limited to the two issues in which Whelan had been involved to oppose revisionist Historians: the role of the United Irishmen and sectarianism.

Conclusion of Chapter V

The late 1990s saw the rise of military history in the two national museums in Ireland and Northern Ireland. While the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising remained low-key commemorations regarding the official involvement, the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion benefited from an upsurge of events all over the island. The chapter has demonstrated that the political mobilization of history was a major reason for the new interest in historical conflicts. Thus, the simultaneity of the commemorative exhibitions at the two national museums was a consequence of the need to present more inclusive representations of the past to contribute to the politics of reconciliation. Official narratives regarding historical conflicts emerged thanks to favourable context of diminution of violence and due to the need to support peace by way of cultural projects. Historical conflicts were, paradoxically, utilized to create unity in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Irish government moved from a silence about 1916 to avoiding division to the commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion to supporting the politics of reconciliation. Although the politics of reconciliation had started previously, the context of the Good Friday Agreement – and its connection with the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion – participated in the high level of political mobilization of history. A common purpose in Ireland and Northern Ireland was, hence, to change the divisive representations of the past, in that case, of the 1798 Rebellion. It is striking to notice that the intention to debunk myths about the past emerged in the NMI's exhibiting strategy not due to historiographical influence – although Kevin Whelan was deeply involved in academic debates – but due to the political need to provide new interpretations of the past which could better match the official politics of reconciliation.

The similar purpose of reinterpretation also hid disagreement about the ways in which to reach unity best. The standardization of the representations of the past was limited to the persistence of divergences regarding national unity. The NMI openly promoted national unity

from the 1798 Rebellion whereas the UM highlighted the cultural and political diversity between the various actors of the insurrection and counter-insurrection. In doing so, the NMI voiced the official interpretations supported by the Commemoration Committee which played a major role in the overall bicentenary. Put on standby during the Northern Irish conflict, the polite emphasis on national unity in the Republic of Ireland was largely expressed in 1998. In order to match the peace process, the national model was no longer the armed conflict to reach independence, but the pluralist unity between Irish people. Conversely, the Ulster Museum defined the 1798 Rebellion as a civil war in which the two sides – rebels and counter-rebellion – were openly connected to the two main traditions of Northern Ireland, Nationalists and Unionists. The bicultural policies of the 1990s encouraged the interpretation of 1798 as being more complex than merely about the sole fight for political freedom supported by the United Irishmen. The two models, although similar on certain points, were, therefore, not transferable North and South, and this explained the limited cross-border collaboration.

It can be argued that the process of commemorating strengthened the comparison between 1798 and 1998, the bridges between past and present. As a consequence of the emphasis on the present to understand the past, the different political context in Ireland and Northern Ireland resulted in different means to reach reconciliation. On the one hand, the commemorations were built, in the South, on the positive assertion and celebration of unity. On the other hand, the bicentenary was more humbly defined as a possibility for dialogue between communities in the North. In a decentralized and bottom-up process of commemoration, the Ulster Museum obtained more duties than the NMI, which merely voiced the central and official interpretations of Kevin Whelan through the Commemoration Committee. While the process of reconciliation was essentially political in the Republic, it had become based on popular projects and creating new public spaces in the North. The impact was much more significant for the Ulster Museum which appeared as a new space for dialogue. The NMI was supposed to speak about, as well as to, a united nation while the UM was well aware of the plurality of its audiences.

The political mobilization also had different impacts in the two museums due to the contrasting marketing policy. In Northern Ireland, as seen in the previous chapter, the politics of reconciliation were not new and the UM's marketing strategies had been built on community relations since the late 1980s. The political mobilization of history was much newer in the Republic where marketing had targeted international tourism more openly. This discrepancy resulted in the fact that *Up in Arms* was part of a long involvement of the UM in

community relations, while *Fellowship of Freedom* and the political uses of the past in 1998 differed from the long term exhibiting strategy of the NMI. The different paths described, on which the two national museums embarked became clearly visible in the years of the early 21st century.

Chapter VI: The Development of Military History as the Result of Present-Centred Roles of National Museums

The representations of 1690, 1798, and 1916 have been part of the recent development of Military history. Military history is about war and is, therefore, one of the oldest forms of historical writing. In the nineteenth century, military history was a major field and closely associated with theoretical analysis of warfare, focusing on battles, campaigns, and strategy, embodied by authors like Antoine Henri Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz.[1480] However, academic military history was eclipsed in the wake of the World Wars and became associated with conservative approaches to the past based on purely factual history. The renewal of military history took place due to reinterpretations of warfare at large. The old drums-and-bugles approach which focuses on regiments and battlefields has been increasingly challenged by new factors such as the economy, culture, home front and so on. More than historical heroes, much more attention is now paid to "ordinary soldiers", women, and civilians. Military historians have emphasized the links between war and society in a more complex approach.[1481] The impact of war on social structures, on culture, and on science has become part of what is broadly defined as a "new military history".[1482]

Ireland is no exception to this development and Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery remarked in 1994 "the enormous growth in serious military history which has occurred in the last three decades".[1483] More than a new movement, it appeared as a revival. In 1949, the Military History Society of Ireland was founded and has aimed to promote the study of military history. The flagship of the Society, *The Irish Sword*, is a twice yearly publication, renowned for its scholarly treatment of military history. In 1996 Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery edited *A Military History of Ireland* in order to "redress" the fact that military history "has never properly been integrated into the academic historical mainstream".[1484] Military history had been, for a long time, limited to few areas of study.

The history of the Bureau of Military History is a good example of the recent development of Military History in the Republic of Ireland. The Bureau of Military History

---

[1480] A. H. Jomini, *The Art of War*, 1938 ; C. von Clausewitz, *On War*, 1873.

[1481] War and Society, Open University course in 1973, Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 8.

[1482] The new military history appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s. See for instance, John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, (London: Viking Press, 1976).

[1483] Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, Preface, in Bartlett and Jeffery, eds., *A Military History of Ireland*.

[1484] Bartlett and Jeffery, eds., *A Military History of Ireland,* p. xxi.

was established in January 1947 by Oscar Traynor, Minister of Defence and former Captain in the Irish Volunteers. The rationale for the establishment of the Bureau was to give individuals who played an active part in the events which brought about Irish Independence a chance to record their own experiences.[1485] However, in March 1959, the archives were locked in the strong room in Government Buildings, not to be released to researchers and the general public until after the death of the last recipient of the military-service pension who had testified to the Bureau. On 11 March 2003, the Bureau of Military History collection of Witness Statements was formally made available to the public.[1486] The public interest in military history in Ireland increased in the 1990s and 2000s. Since 2008, research centres for war studies have opened in the two main universities in Dublin.[1487]

Interestingly, military history is one of the few historical fields in which much of the works and projects are undertaken by non-academic actors. Military history appears in many different media today, in addition to the traditional printed formats. Battlefield tours, historical re-enactments, radio and television broadcasts, movies, novels, museums and more recently the internet as well as computer games, have contributed to the spread the knowledge of military history beyond academic circles.[1488] Military history has become one of the most important markets as referred to by the British journal *Publishing News* in 2003.[1489] The development of military history in museums has been at the crux of the relationship between the institutions and their audiences.

The development of military history also appeared in the two national museums in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The two national museums opened two new military history exhibitions in 2003 and 2006. In 2003, the Ulster Museum (UM) presented its new temporary exhibition called *Conflict: The Irish at War* which remained on view until the museum closed in 2006 for its refurbishment. In 2006, the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) opened its new permanent exhibition entitled *Soldiers and Chiefs: The Irish at War at Home and Abroad from 1550* (Appendix 7). The similarity of the titles was evidence of a rapprochement of the discourses surrounding the historical conflicts on display. It was the first time the two

---

[1485] It recorded those who took part included members of groups such as the Irish Volunteers and subsequently the Irish Republican Army, *Cumann na mBan*, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, *Sinn Fein*, the Irish Citizen Army, and relatives of deceased not associated with any organisation.

[1486] Copies of the Statements (less the Contemporary Documents (CDs), still held at Cathal Brugha Barracks), were deposited at the National Archives of Ireland where they can now be examined by all.

[1487] Both University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin have now a *Centre for War Studies*.

[1488] The popularity of military history extends beyond the written words. For instance, the programming of *The History Channel* is now dominated by military history. S. Morillo and M. F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), p. 2.

[1489] *Publishing News,* 24 January 2003.

museums arranged exhibitions with similar galleries about the conflict in the 1690s, the 1798 Rebellion, the First World War, the 1916 Easter Rising, the Second World War and conflicts since 1945. It is, therefore, necessary to explore whether the two museums presented warfare as a fundamental characteristic of Irish history. However, this rapprochement of the past displayed within the two national institutions hid different representations of wars. The purpose is not to examine in details the representations of every historical conflict throughout the two displays, but to analyse whether and how the representations of Anglo-Irish conflicts were modified, and to discuss to what extent the shift derived from the new roles for national museums in the 2000s.

In a first section, the research will consider to what extent the exhibitions arranged by the Ulster Museum in the 2000s corresponded to the changing politics of reconciliation. Particular attention will, therefore, be paid to the construction of representations of the Northern Irish conflict in the displays. The aim will, then, be to appraise the changing relations between the redefinitions of war and national identity through the exhibitions mounted by the NMI. The focus will be on the new collaboration between the NMI and the Irish Defence Forces as well as its consequences on the representations of the past.

A) Representing the Recent Past and the Emphasis on Victims: the New Roles of the Ulster Museum

1) Exhibiting the Northern Irish Conflict

The new orientations of the peace process in Northern Ireland and the focus on remembering the recent Northern Irish conflict played a role in the organization of exhibitions at the Ulster Museum. Before analyzing the impact on the representations of the past, it is necessary to highlight that the 2000s UM's exhibiting policies belonged to a process which started in the 1990s. The UM mounted two exhibitions in 2001 and 2003, named *War and Conflict in Twentieth Century Ireland* and *Conflict: The Irish at War* respectively. These two exhibitions were funded by the European Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland (EUSSPPR) and resulted from the work of the outreach officer, Jane Leonard (in collaboration with Trevor Parkhill, keeper of the local history collections). The elements of continuity were, therefore, potent between 1997 and 2006, particularly while Jane

Leonard worked as outreach officer and liaison officer for EUSSPPR. This continuity took place in spite of initially disappointing results.

In terms of visitor numbers, the figures regarding *Up in Arms* had been lower than expected. While *Kings in Conflict* attracted 50.102 visitors in twenty weeks of display, *Up in Arms* merely attracted 21.931 people.[1490] This discrepancy could not be totally attributed to the lower general attendance in 1998.[1491] Indeed, merely 22% of the overall visitors of the UM came to see the temporary display *Up in Arms*, while the proportion was 42% for *Kings in Conflict*.[1492] In spite of these results, Trevor Parkhill assured that "from the Community Relations Council's point of view, our Outreach initiative has proved effective".[1493] This perception was confirmed when, in December 1998, Mark Adair (head of the European Division of the Community Relations Council) wrote to Trevor Parkhill that the Ulster Museum's request for an extension of Jane Leonard's activity funding was successful.[1494]

The extension of Leonard's contract was associated with the UM's intention to move from the project of exhibiting the 1798 Rebellion to "one whose primary aim will be to address issues arising from the development of conflict in Ireland from the early twentieth century to the present day".[1495] The UM local history exhibiting policy between 1997 and 2006 was hence marked by the continuous aim to deal with military history of Ireland. Jane Leonard wrote that *Conflict: The Irish at War* (displayed at the UM from 2003 to 2006) was the final exhibition of "four temporary exhibitions staged between 1998 and 2006" which "explored the legacies of political violence in Ireland".[1496] In January 2003, the Outreach Initiative was awarded £106.000 from EUSSPPR, measure 2.1 "Reconciliation for a Sustainable Peace", for a three-year project including *Conflict: the Irish at War*.[1497] The

---

[1490] General Information on the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland, *General and Major Exhibition Figures, 1988-1997*, undated, local history department, UMA, Cultra.
[1491] While 277.784 people visited the Ulster Museum in 1990, the museum only attracted 235.694 visitors in 1998. (Appendix 10).
[1492] General Information on the Museums, *General and Major Exhibition Figures, 1988-1997*.
[1493] Letter from Trevor Parkhill to Richard Warner, 30 November 1998, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1494] Letter from Mark Adair to Trevor Parkhill, 16 December 1998, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1495] Letter from Trevor Parkhill to Richard Warner, 30 November 1998, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1496] Jane Leonard "Towards an Oral History of the Troubles: *Conflict* at the Ulster Museum" in Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, *What Made Now in Northern Ireland*, (Belfast: Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, 2008), p. 126. The four exhibitions were: *Up in Arms: The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland* (1998); *Icons of Identity* (2001); *War and Conflict in Twentieth Century Ireland* (2001); *Conflict: The Irish at War* (2003).
[1497] Tim Cooke, Grant Application Form (PEACE II), August 2005, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

development of military history at the Ulster Museum was the consequence of the museum's role in the peace process.

Unlike previous displays, the 2001 exhibition was mounted by the UM but travelled to 15 venues all around Northern Ireland and in some border counties (Strabane, Banbridge, Lurgan, Newry, Dundalk, Monaghan, Letterkenny, Coleraine, Derry, Omagh) before returning to display in Belfast.[1498] The Ulster Museum pursued its role of spreading historical narratives of conflicts initiated by Jane Leonard in 1998 for the commemorative exhibition of the 1798 Rebellion. Similarly to the 1998 commemorative exhibition of the 1798 Rebellion, the 2001 display was used for community relations in Northern Ireland. The first duty mentioned by Leonard in the draft of the display was "to make contact and develop a relationship with community groups throughout Northern Ireland".[1499] Notwithstanding these overall similarities with previous displays, the 2001 and 2003 displays reflected a change in the manner in which the past was interpreted.

Unlike *Kings in Conflict* in 1990 and *Up in Arms* in 1998, the 2001 and 2003 exhibitions were not commemorating specific events in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, but dealt with longer periods of times. The 2001 exhibition entitled *War and Conflict* was entirely focused on the twentieth century and considered "the 1912-1922 decade of civil unrest, rebellion and partition; the two World Wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945; conflict in Northern Ireland from 1969 to the Good Friday Agreement, 1998."[1500] Of particular importance was the fact that the 2001 and 2003 exhibitions included sections on the Northern Irish conflict. In the grant application for the EU funding, Leonard explained that the display had to contain "a balanced approach (…) This will be particularly important in telling the story of the recent past and in particular the post-1969 'Troubles'".[1501] It was the first time the UM dealt with the Northern Irish conflict (the "Troubles") in a temporary exhibition.[1502]

Very few exhibitions had been mounted about the Northern Irish conflict. In 1993 the Tower Museum in Londonderry opened the first permanent museum display dealing with the

---

[1498] Letter from J. Leonard to John Wilson (Managing Director), 19 June 2001, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1499] Jane Leonard, *Draft of the Exhibition: The Making of Two Irelands 1912-1922*, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1500] Letter from Trevor Parkhill to the Department of the *Taoiseach*, Application for funding, 11 November 1998, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1501] Grant Application Form, August 2005. Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1502] The term "Northern Irish conflict" is preferred by the author since it reflects the wartime relations in Northern Ireland much more than the term 'Troubles' which served initially to limit the issues at stake.

period of conflict.[1503] Most of the displays arranged around the conflict have been temporary exhibitions like *Troubled Images* organized by the Linen Hall Library in 2001.[1504] Other community projects have emerged in the 2000s, such as the Free Derry Museum which opened in 2007 in the Bogside area.[1505] The museum proposes to present the experiences of the local area as "a microcosm history of the entire Troubles and the background to the Troubles and the causes of the Troubles".[1506] These projects embedded the *Healing Through Remembering's* project to organize a Living Memorial Museum which had not materialized yet. From July to September 2006, *Healing Through Remembering* organised a call for ideas about what form a Living Memorial Museum surrounding the conflict could take. The group "is now (2012) considering all the submissions received".[1507] In designing exhibitions dealing partly with the recent conflict, the Ulster Museum was attempting to fill a void of official representations of the recent past.

Different reasons were invoked to justify the inclusion of the Northern Irish conflict in the exhibitions of the twenty-first century. In the application form for further funding in 2005, it was stressed that "The Ulster Museum, in common with almost every other museum, has never done this before partly because our contemporary history is divisive and has painful memories".[1508] This statement argued that the peace process had brought more possibilities to display a history of conflicts in Northern Ireland. While this was true community relations appeared less violent in the 2000s than they had been in the 1980s or 1990s, the inclusion of the Northern Irish conflict reflected the context of reappraisal of the recent past. The application highlighted that "the increasing number of visitors to the Ulster Museum will emerge with a better understanding of the past, including the recent past and the 'Troubles' (…) In particular, it is most visitors' expectation to have the historical narrative brought right up to date".[1509] More precisely, Trevor Parkhill supported that:

> Visitors arriving in Northern Ireland expect, not unreasonably, to be provided
> with an historical context for 'the Troubles' which does not stop at the 'Thirty

---

[1503] Elizabeth Crooke "Dealing with the Past: Museums and Heritage in Northern Ireland and Cape Town, South Africa" *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 11:2, 2005, p. 133-134.

[1504] *Troubled Images: Posters and Images of the Northern Ireland Conflict from the Linen Hall Library*, (Belfast: Linen Hall Library, 2001).

[1505] The museum is to take its name from a mural that indicated the Bogside was a 'no go' area for British forces.

[1506] Crooke "Dealing with the past", pp. 133-134.

[1507] http://www.healingthroughremembering.org/living_memorial_museum/current_projects/ (last visited May 2012).

[1508] Grant Application Form, August 2005. Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1509] Grant Application Form, August 2005. Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

Year Rule' barrier but which brings the story right up to, say, the first IRA cease-fire of 1994 or even the last great atrocity, the Omagh bomb of 15 August 1998, or the latest suspension of the Legislative Assembly in early October 2002.[1510]

In other words, the focus on recent history was also responding to the assumption that international tourists would want to know about the three decades of sectarian and paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland. This is true that tours of murals organized by the Belfast taxis have become one of the main attractions of the city. In spite of this marketing approach, the inclusion of the Northern Irish conflict in the UM's exhibiting policy derived mostly from an overall interest in mobilising the recent past to improve community relations in the present.

A major change in the role of the Ulster Museum was its aim at dealing with the very recent past. In addition to the project "to improve understanding among both major traditions of the historical developments which preceded and succeeded the establishment of the state of Northern Ireland", Trevor Parkhill highlighted that "an important feature will be its (the exhibition's) concern with the recent past".[1511] The 2001 and 2003 exhibitions were arranged according to the theory that the past could be used for present purpose, in this regard, the balanced history of the past conflict would serve the reconciliation. In the application made for PEACE II,[1512] the UM pointed out that "Understanding the historical past as a context for, as well as a means of coming to terms with, the dislocating events of the recent period of civil strife has been a constant theme of the Outreach Initiative since its inception in 1997".[1513] The past, highly influenced by the three decades of violence, was mobilized to change the present situation. Trevor Parkhill underlined that "From the museum's point of view, the public history route appears to be taking us inevitably towards a removal of the distinction between 'current affairs' and 'history'".[1514] A major aspect of the development of public history – mentioned by Parkhill – had indeed been the use of the past in the present. The Ulster Museum intended to historicize the present, in other words, to show how the present situation was the result of historical evolution. The main reason for including sections about the recent past was the need to stop more potential violence in the present.

[1510] Parkhill "That's their History", pp. 37-44.

[1511] Letter from Trevor Parkhill to the chairman of the exhibition planning committee, 26 February 1999, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1512] PEACE II (2000-2006) was the second round of funding from EUSSPPR.

[1513] Tim Cooke, Grant Application Form (PEACE II), August 2005, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1514] Parkhill, "That's their History".

This new role of the Ulster Museum requested certain adaptations of the collections. The Ulster Museum had built their collection about the past, but not about the recent past. Besides a series of photographs, the Local History gallery which opened in 1978 did not include any artefacts for the period after Partition. So, in November 1998, Parkhill pointed out that the new Outreach programme on "the history and impact of conflict in Northern Ireland which will cover the entire twentieth century until the 1998 Good Friday Agreement" would "contribute to the development of the History Department's policy on contemporary collecting".[1515] This process contributed to the redefinition of the Northern Irish cultural heritage. The Ulster Museum launched a campaign of contemporary collecting for which the period of "living experience" was favoured. A draft policy clarified that "In chronological terms, this would involve the (sic) collecting of material items within the last eighty years, say from 1918".[1516] A major field was the collecting process related to the Northern Irish conflict. Parkhill explained that "the logical interest in Troubles-related specimens that has arisen in the wake of the 1994 cease-fire has seen the emergence of material that would not otherwise have been accessible. This will clearly be an area where an agreed Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland strategy will seen an enhancement of the military and paramilitary material already collected across the three sites".[1517] This example shows how the UM extended its definition of the past to include the more recent past, and thus enhanced the presence of military history. This resulted in the design of the 2003 exhibition, entirely driven by military history.

Conflict: the Irish at War was a much more important project than the 2001 display for the Ulster Museum. Planned initially for six months from December 2003 to mid-2004, the display was extended until the refurbishment of the entire building in 2006.[1518] This extension was explained by Trevor Parkhill by the large success of the exhibition.[1519] In the Irish Museum Awards, the exhibition was voted the Best Exhibition of the year 2004.[1520] The display was also more significant in size. Spanning a period of 10.000 years, the exhibition dwelled on events from the prehistoric era, through Viking and Norman conquests, the

---

[1515] Memorandum from Parkhill to the Director, 18 November 1998, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1516] Trevor Parkhill, *MAGNI contemporary collecting: draft policy*, in Contemporary Collecting, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 17, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1517] Parkhill, *MAGNI contemporary collecting: draft policy*.
[1518] Letter from Parkhill to John Clarke, 11 November 2005, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1519] Letter from Parkhill to John Clarke, 11 November 2005.
[1520] Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland, *Annual Report*, 2004-2005, p. 7. The Heritage Council, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Museums Council run the Museum Awards biennially.

Plantations, the 1798 Rebellion, Irish Revolution and Civil War of 1919-1923, and the two World Wars. Recent periods cover the experiences of people involved in the Northern Irish conflict and those in the United Nation peacekeeping forces and services abroad.[1521] It is important to notice that military history was not limited to Anglo-Irish conflicts but also went back to "Conflict in the Mesolithic (7000-4500 BC)".[1522] This raised the problematic issue of an exhibition representing "Irish at war" with periods when Ireland and Irish as cultural constructions did not exist. The display provided visitors with a military history based on contemporaneous definition of the Irish identity. This difficulty was not specific to the UM, and many museums nowadays apply national definitions of people to the past. Many museums began displays of "national history" with prehistoric times when any idea of nation was anachronistic.

Another difficulty stemmed from the unilateral focus on military history. The leaflet of the exhibition underlined that "Warfare has, throughout our history, been a painful and often tragic fact of everyday life for many people and has hugely influenced the development of society".[1523] While the Irish military characteristics were not strictly defined as particular in comparison to other populations in Europe, the sole focus on wars and the extensive period of representation – 10.000 years – fostered the impression than the Irish identity was defined by its bellicose behaviour. In an article in the *News Letter* entitled "Tracing our long and bloody past", Ross Smith highlights that the "Museum looks back to 9,000 years of conflict".[1524] This gave the impression that conflicts had been continuous in Ireland since prehistoric times. The picture of Irish as a particularly bellicose people was, according to Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, "in large measure a caricature" since "there was scarcely a society in medieval Europe in which endemic warfare was not a feature".[1525] The present need to come to terms with a violent past resulted, therefore, in the over-representation of the specific military history in Ireland. Ross Smith's article reflected this connection between past and present. The title of his article "Tracing our long and bloody past" stressed a process between "us" (the inhabitants of Northern Ireland in 2003) and the roots of violence. In order to exemplify his argument, he used a picture of the "montage of photographs of RUC members who were

---

[1521] *The Conflict Exhibition: Assessment*, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1522] *Conflict, the Irish at War, exhibition leaflet*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 2003).
[1523] *Conflict, the Irish at War, exhibition leaflet*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 2003).
[1524] R. Smith "Tracing our Long and Bloody Past" *News Letter*, 13 December 2003, p. 13.
[1525] Bartlett and Jeffery, *A Military History of Ireland*, p. 6.

killed during the conflict".[1526] Although the past was intended to "heal" the present, it was the latter which was at the core of the exhibition.

Finally, a difficulty emerged from the theme of the display: the history of conflicts. While agreement could be found regarding the selection of conflicts and their consequences on people in Ireland, much more divisive was any attempt to provide interpretations of the causes and responsibility. Indeed, little attention was paid to the causes of conflicts in the exhibition. The latter emphasized weapons from all periods, the many representations of wars, the victims of the conflicts, but did not provide major information regarding why these conflicts emerged. For instance, the role of British authorities in conflicts in Ireland was mostly ignored. This was the case for the sections on the Northern Irish conflict in which the paramilitary activities were much more highlighted than the presence of British troops in Northern Ireland. On the one hand, this came from the particularly divisive dimension of identifying responsibility for the many acts of violence perpetrated in Northern Ireland. The point is not to judge the political courage of the institution in dealing with the past but to understand the process of construction of representation. In this regard, the absence of interest in the causes of conflicts was entailed by the sole relevance given to victims. As seen below, the museum did not intend to participate in the process of reconciliation by stressing clear interpretations regarding perpetrators, but by giving voices to all the victims.

As a result, the 2000s exhibitions were both marked by the continuous role of the UM in the process of reconciling communities in Northern Ireland, and the new remit to deal more openly with the present and the recent past. The new marketing policy and outreach project contributed to the development of links between the Ulster Museum and its audiences. As a consequence, the UM adapted its collection (the post-partition period became a field of collect and display) and developed military history as a major theme of representation. The present-centred policy of display and the need to deal with the recent and divisive past like the Northern Irish conflict proposed very militaristic definitions of the Irish and mostly ignored the role of Britain in the escalation of violence in the twentieth century. In doing so, *Conflict: the Irish at War* reflected Bill Rolston's criticism regarding the policy of *parity of esteem* and the equal representations of the two main communities. As seen in chapter IV, he argued that *the parity of esteem* could result in the absence of consideration for the historical and political

---

[1526] The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was the name of the police force in Northern Ireland from 1922 to 2000. In spite of legislation regarding the position of Catholics, their percentage in the RUC had always been very limited. Depending on the Northern Ireland's government until direct rule, the RUC had a pro-Unionist role. During the Troubles, the RUC fought heavily the I.R.A.

roots of the conflicts, namely, the consequences of Britain's colonization of Ireland.[1527] Although this argument was confirmed by the 2003 exhibition at the Ulster Museum, the inclusion of interpretations of responsibility for the conflict and the definition of perpetrators as category would have surely provoked bitter reactions. The exhibition chose rather to focus on victims as the central node for interpretation; this contributed to the inclusion of audiences more in the organization of the display and to encourage pluralist views of the past.

2) The Ulster Museum as a Site to Hear the Voices of Victims: National Museum and Fragmentation of Historical Narratives

Definitions of victims have received increasing attention since the nineteenth century.[1528] While the initial definition was created by the International Red Cross' Henri-Jean Dunant. This definition focused on military victims, but today the terminology also includes civilians.[1529] This shift was mostly due to the transformation of warfare. The percentage of civilian victims grew from 5% during the Great War to 50% during the Second World War and to 90% in the 1990s.[1530] The 1990s have been marked by the fact that victimhood migrated from the private to the public sphere.[1531] One element of this evolution was the development of the processes of reconciliation and transitional justice used by states to address violations of human rights. Although the initial focus of transitional justice was on criminal justice,[1532] the process moved in the late 1980s and early 1990s towards victims and the reconstruction of social links in post-conflict societies. One particular appearance has been the multiplication of truth commissions (Argentina (1983), Chile (1990), and South Africa (1995)).[1533] Among the various objectives and strategies of transitional justice, two elements are particularly relevant for this research: the place given to victims (through testimonies and reparation) and sometimes perpetrators (requesting amnesty), and the interest

---

[1527] Bill Rolston "What's Wrong with Multiculturalism? Liberalism and the Irish Conflict", in David Miller, ed., *Rethinking Northern Ireland. Culture, Ideologyn and Colonialism*, (New York: Longman, 1998). pp. 253-275.

[1528] Michel Wieviorka "L'émergence des victims", *Sphera Publica*, 3, 2003, pp-19-38.

[1529] Shocked by the number of casualties at the Battle of Solferino (between the troops of Napoleon III and the troop of Emperor Franz Jozeph I), Henri-Jean Dunant created the International Red Cross in 1863.

[1530] Simon Chesterman "Introduction : Global norms, Local contexts", in Simon Chesterman, ed., *Civilians in War*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), pp. 1-6.

[1531] Wieviorka "L'émergence des victims", p. 25.

[1532] The first wave of this form of justice emerged at the end of the Second World War through the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg and the trials of Nazi leaders. Other trials were organized in the 1980s about members of the military juntas in Greece (1975) and Argentina (1983).

[1533] Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) are restorative-justice body. Witnesses identified as victims of human right violation give statements of their experience. In certain cases, perpetrators also testify and request amnesty. TRC have been seen as transition towards democracy.

in the past experiences and memories of violence. Memories and memorials have been a major issue dealt with by transitional justice in order to prevent denial and help societies move forward.[1534] For instance, the *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos* (Museum of Memory and Human Rights) created in 2007 in Chile is devoted to the memory of the victims of the State between 1973 and 1990.[1535] The request to deal with the violent past in order to reconcile communities was also experienced in Northern Ireland.

Evidence of the links between the different processes of reconciliation was the visit of Alex Boraine in February 1999 in Northern Ireland. Alex Boraine was Deputy Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in South Africa. During his visit, Boraine met associations and groups involved in the Northern Irish peace process to "discuss the lessons learnt from the TRC and to consider any bearing they may have on the conflict in Northern Ireland".[1536] A working group was formed with the people who had coordinated the visit of Alex Boraine with representatives from the Community Relations Council.[1537] Funded by the Council, the group produced a report of the discussions which had taken place, entitled *All Truth is Bitter*.[1538] The group worked at another report and a project to be proposed to the British and Irish governments and to the First and Deputy First Minister's Office in Northern Ireland.[1539] The project was named the *Healing Through Remembering Project*. Created in June 2001, *Healing Through Remembering* intended to "redress to those who suffered the consequences, and to resolve the social, economic and political causes for the conflicts in ways which transform relationships and structures at all levels of society".[1540] The group embodied the links to be established between violent past and reconciliation. *Healing Through Remembering* launched a major consultation of people and groups in Northern

---

[1534] The International Center for Transitional Justice, http://ictj.org/ (last visited May 2012).

[1535] http://www.museodelamemoria.cl/ (last visited May 2012).

[1536] Despite the links with South Africa – Paul Murphy, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, went to South Africa in 2004 to discuss further the possibility of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) – no TRC was ultimately created in Northern Ireland. In March 2005, the decision was officially taken not to develop a TRC in Northern Ireland. The TRC for Ireland and Britain was only created in 2006 by the International Institute of Peace Studies and Global Philosophy. The purpose of the Commission is to create a forum for the reconciliation through the examination of historic wrongs that different communities within Britain and Ireland feel were committed during the period of history in Ireland known as the 'time of Troubles', particularly concerning the split between Catholics and Protestants and their paramilitary wings.

[1537] Healing Through Remembering, *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project*, June 2002, http://www.healingthroughremembering.org/images/assets/htrreport.pdf (last visited April 2012)

[1538] Alex Boraine returned to Northern Ireland in March 2000 to launch the report and to engage in further discussions.

[1539] Following the Good Friday Agreement, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister were created as two equal positions responsible for the executive in Northern Ireland.

[1540] Ruth Moore, Bill Rolston, *Healing Through Remembering: Conversation Guide on Dealing with the Past*, (Belfast: 2008), p. 21.

Ireland,[1541] and asked "How should people remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and in so doing, individually and collectively contribute to the healing of the wounds of society?"[1542] The *Healing Through Remembering*'s website stressed that "While remembering and attempting to deal with the past can be, and is, often divisive, remain an important part of reconciliation."[1543] While the past had been a major issue of community relations since the late 1980s, the direct use of the past, in particular the recent past' to "heal" the present was new and shaped the overall process of mobilization.

The *Healing Through Remembering* report was launched in June 2002 and highlighted the following six recommendations: 1) Network of Commemoration and Remembering Projects; 2) Day of Reflection; 3) Collective Storytelling and Archiving Process; 4) Permanent Living Memorial Museum; 5) Acknowledgement; 6) Healing Through Remembering Initiative.[1544] Two recommendations are particularly relevant for this research. The report stressed that "A permanent living memorial museum will serve as a dynamic memorial to all those affected by the conflict and keep the memories of the past alive."[1545] Although the Living Memorial Museum has not seen the light of day yet, the link established between a museum and "those affected by the conflict" became a major cultural issue in Northern Ireland.

Responses to victims in Northern Ireland have been heavily populated with both official and civil-society initiatives. In October 1997 the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland commissioned Sir Kenneth Bloomfield – head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and governor of BBC Northern Ireland – to examine the feasibility of providing greater recognition for those who have become victims in the last thirty years as a consequence of events in Northern Ireland. The focus on victims of the Northern Irish conflict also marked the Good Friday Agreement, signed in April 1998 which played a part in the increasing focus on victims and grievance.[1546] In the sixth part of the Agreement, entitled *Rights, Safeguards, and Equality of Opportunity*, the parties determined that it would be necessary to

---

[1541] Adverts were placed in 56 local newspapers, 5000 project leaflets were distributed, over 400 organisations were personally invited by letter to make a submission and 14 groups availed of the offer of facilitations carried out by *Healing Through Remembering* staff and Board Members. Healing Through Remembering's website, (last visited May 2012).
[1542] Healing Through Remembering, *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project*, June 2002.
[1543] Healing Through Remembering, *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project*.
[1544] 2) the Annual day of reflection will serve as a universal gesture of reconciliation, reflection, acknowledgment and recognition of the suffering of so many arising from the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Healing Through Remembering, *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project*.
[1545] Healing Through Remembering, *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project*.
[1546] Mike Morrissey and Marie Smyth, eds., *Northern Ireland after the Good Friday Agreement: Victims, Grievance, and Blame* (London; Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 2002).

"acknowledge and address the suffering of the victims of violence as a necessary element of reconciliation".[1547] At the House of Commons, the Secretary of State welcomed the Good Friday Agreement and hoped that "Ken Bloomfield's Victims' Commission will soon be in position to provide us with some practical suggestions as to how we can best recognise the suffering endured by the victims of violence and their families".[1548] Sir Kenneth Bloomfield's report was published in May 1998 and was entitled "We Will Remember Them".[1549] Its recommendations were accepted in full by the British Government. A Minister for Victims was appointed and in June 1998 the Victims Liaison Unit was established and became part of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in June 2000. Victims had become one of the main concerns for the official politics of reconciliation which provided new funding. Used between 2002 and 2004, the Strategy Implementation Fund (SIF) made a total of £3 million available to government Departments and agencies to proliferate projects to assist victims.[1550]

The focus on victims has lately been expressed in the Saville Report. In January 1998, Tony Blair officially announced a new public inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday.[1551] A first inquiry had already been provided by the tribunal set up under Lord Widgery in April 1972 which had denied any responsibility of the British troops. The inquiry opened in 1998 was led by Lord Saville – former judge of the High Court – and auditioned various witnesses until 2004. However, the publication of the Saville Report was postponed several times until June 2010. The various reports on Bloody Sunday demonstrate how, unlike the focus on victims, the definitions of responsibility – and, therefore, perpetrators – have been much less openly addressed by official policies in Northern Ireland. The responsibility of paratroopers who shot the participants of the civic demonstration was merely acknowledged by David Cameron in the House of Commons in June 2010.

Victim groups also became major actors of the civic society in Northern Ireland. The number of victims groups partly derived from the disagreements surrounding the definitions of victims. Through the Good Friday Agreement, no difference was made between victims who suffered from paramilitary attacks and those who were killed or wounded by the security

---

[1547] *Belfast Agreement*, Section 6, paragraph 11.
[1548] Michael Cox, Adrian Guelke, and Fiona Stephen, *A Farewell to Arms? Beyond the Good Friday Agreement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 17.
[1549] Kenneth Bloomfield, *We Will Remember Them*, Belfast, April 1998.
[1550] http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/victimsbrochure-3.pdf (last visited January 2012).
[1551] Bloody Sunday took place on 30 January 1972 during a civil-rights demonstration in Londonderry, in the nationalist neighbourhood of the Bogside. Unarmed protesters were shot by soldiers of the British Army. Thirteen people died from this assault. The killing immediately received major attention from Irish, British, and international press.

forces. Mary Smyth noted the increased reliance on terms like "innocent victims" or "real victims" in the aftermaths of the Good Friday Agreement.[1552] In addition to the tensions between Nationalists and Unionists, disagreements emerged about the facts that "all those affected by the conflict" – as the Living Memorial Museum intended to include – could also include perpetrators. What was the status given to members of the I.R.A killed by loyalist paramilitary groups? Should casualties within the British forces belong to the victims remembered? The official vacuum in defining victims contributed to the multiplication of victims groups in the 1990s.[1553] This multiplication also resulted in new agents of public remembrance.

The rise of victims groups had consequences on the gender balance in representing the past. Many members of victims groups were wives, mothers, or sisters who had lost a relative.[1554] This was not particular to Northern Ireland, and women groups have become major agents of remembering in post-conflict societies.[1555] In an article published in 2008 Sarah McDowell questions whether or not "peace" has occasioned the renegotiation of wartime gender identities.[1556] Although she observed that women "have been absent from much of the commemorative process even in instances which involve the commemoration of 'their' men", she also noticed the discontent at the absence of women from the contemporary representations of the conflict.[1557] This was first raised by a feminist and political activist in the city of Derry, Nell McCafferty, in 1995 in an article which she wrote for the Irish magazine Hot Press: "You are now entering Women-Free Derry".[1558] Following McCafferty's criticisms, murals were painted to include representations of women.[1559] The increasing attention paid to victims contributed to the production of new kinds of representations of the

---

[1552] Morrissey and Smyth, *Northern Ireland after the Good Friday Agreement*. pp. 8-9. For instance, *Give Innocent Victims Equality* group, or the *Families Acting for Innocent Relatives* group.
[1553] For a list of victims groups, see the *Conflict Archive on the Internet* website, http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/victims/victimgroups.htm (last visited May 2012).
[1554] L. Dowler, "The mothers of the warriors: women in West Belfast, Northern Ireland" in R. Lenit (ed.), *Gender and catastrophe*. (London: Zed Books, 1997), pp. 77-91.
[1555] In Argentina, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is an association of mothers whose children disappeared during the military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983. The name of the organization comes from the Plaza de Mayo in Bueno Aires, where the bereaved mothers and grandmothers first gathered.
[1556] S. McDowell, "Commemorating Dead 'Men': Gendering the Past and Present in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland" *Gender, Place & Culture*,15:4, 2008, pp. 335-354.
[1557] McDowell, "Commemorating Dead 'Men'", pp. 346-347.
[1558] Quoted in McDowell, "Commemorating Dead 'Men'", pp. 346-347.
[1559] The first mural depicted a local Republican woman, Bernadette Devlin, who played an integral role in the Troubles agitating for civil rights and galvanising Republican protests. The mural reproduced the familiar scene of Devlin, who later became a Member of Parliament, shouting through a loudspeaker. In the background the artists included an image of a woman on her hands and knees clashing a bin-lid to alert the local community of the British Army's presence. McDowell, "Commemorating Dead 'Men'", pp. 346-347.

past; a reason for which the study of the exhibitions arranged by the UM in that context was both meaningful and necessary.

The production of historical representations in the twenty-first century bore the mark of new processes of interpretations in which the category of victims played a major role. As direct agents of remembering – through victims groups – or as a purpose for funding strategy, the concept of victims was essential to understanding how the past was being reinterpreted. This focus on victims encouraged not only the clarification of the conflicting and sensitive events of the past through official enquiries linked to transitional justice (Saville's report), but also influenced the ways in which the past was represented. One consequence was the increasing mobilization of history to build new social links in the present. The recent past, namely the period of the Northern Irish conflict, received much more attention in cultural centres like the Ulster Museum. Another consequence of victims' policy was the focus on the local context of violence. At large, the definition of victims was restricted to what had happened in Northern Ireland, and the significance of the southern part of the island became limited. Finally, these policies strengthened the process of pluralisation of narratives, since each victims' group bore particular messages and interpretations of the past. Although the two main traditions remained a large framework of reference, the focus of victims contributed to their fragmentation. It is, therefore, very interesting to explore how and to what extent the Ulster Museum took victims' policy into consideration to build representations of the past in its exhibitions arranged during the twenty-first century.

This process of pluralisation of interpretation was visible in Europe, and was particularly expressed through the multiplication of commemorative events devoted to victims. For instance, from 1999 to 2008 the number of official national commemorations in France doubled (from six to twelve). Six are devoted to victims such as the Second World War deportees (April 14th), the soldiers who fell in the Indo-Chinese War (June 8th), the victims of racist and anti-Semitic policy of the French State during the Second World War (ca. July 16th), the Algerian soldiers who fought for the French Army during the Algerian War (September 25th), the deceased of the First World War (November 11th), the deceased of the wars with Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco (December 5th).[1560] The tendency to give more representations to victims in the public space was made easier in Northern Ireland due to the absence of agreement on any national narratives.

[1560] Rapport de la Commission de Réflexion sur la Modernisation des Commémorations Publiques, 2008, http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/084000707/0000.pdf (last visited May 2012).

One major difference between *Conflict: the Irish at War* and the previous exhibitions of conflicts mounted at the Ulster Museum was the inclusion of victims' group in the organization. The assessment of the exhibition in 2005 stated that "The exhibition and its community outreach programme is funded, in part, by the Victims Strategy Implementation Fund and the European Fund for Peace and Reconciliation, channelled through the Community Relations Council of Northern Ireland."[1561] In a note regarding a meeting with John Clarke, from the Victims' Unit of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Trevor Parkhill explained that "the Victims' Unit funded the Conflict exhibition in 2003; £80.000 resourced the research and practical arrangement".[1562] As far as the archives of the UM show, nothing similar occurred in 2000-2001 for the organization of *War and Conflict in Twentieth Century Ireland*.[1563] These relations with the official agency for victims were pursued in 2005 and 2006. Parkhill proposed to John Clarke "To develop a mutually advantageous relationship between the Ulster Museum and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's Victims and Good Relations Unit" following the existing good relationship established during the planning and delivery of the "Conflict exhibition".[1564] The Ulster Museum reflected the general development of victims' policy in Northern Ireland in the twenty-first century, and this materialized through major collaborations.

This funding from the Victims unit had several consequences on the organization of the exhibition and the representations of the past. Victimhood emerged as a new category of representation in the displays. Thus, the cover of the exhibition leaflet pointed out that "The generations of violence in Ireland have also left uncountable numbers of victims, some of whose 'voices' and images we have included."[1565] The association between victims and "voices" reflected a more general shift in history. Military history – and history at large – has recently been marked by a focus on individual memories and oral sources. Thus, war memoirs constitute an important part of military history publishing.[1566] Oral history and memoirs also testify to the public and commercial appeal of the "war and society" approach, as they are open to civilians as well as combatants. In 2003, the BBC launched "The World War Two

---

[1561] *The Conflict Exhibition: Assessment*, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1562] T. Parkhill, *Briefing notes*, January meeting with John Clarke, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1563] *Application form for the Irish government funding*, November 1998, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1564] The Ulster Museum was about to close for refurbishment, and new historical galleries would be designed. The Ulster Museum reopened in 2009. Letter from Trevor Parkhill to John Clarke, April 2006, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

[1565] *Conflict, the Irish at War, exhibition leaflet*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 2003).

[1566] Black, *Rethinking Military History*, p. 42.

People's War website" urging people to "Write your story directly on to the BBC website".[1567] Due to the particular context of civil war in Northern Ireland, many oral history projects were developed in relation to community, members of paramilitary groups, and victims. For instance, the Falls Community Council – a nationalist neighbourhood – helped to develop *Dúchas* collection of oral testimonies. Defined as an oral history collection about the experience of the Northern Ireland conflict in nationalist West Belfast, the archive contains 60 interviews.[1568] In museums, the staff has utilized more and more eyewitness accounts, initially through exhibitions on the Holocaust.[1569] Oral history and testimonies from witnesses were particularly interesting in the museum field, because it matched the increasing marketing request to include audiences in the design of exhibitions. At the Ulster Museum, this trend contributed to the focus on the victims of the Northern Irish conflict.

Victims groups participated in the organization of the exhibition. The Ulster Museum collaborated with Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, who had published his report on the victims of the conflict, "We will remember them" in April 1998.[1570] Bloomfield chaired a Voices advisory panel which worked at persuading bereaved individuals to take part in the exhibition.[1571] Thanks to the Victims' Unit funding, the Ulster Museum worked at providing audio handsets to accompany the display.

Parkhill explained that "A number of people whose experience of the post-1969 Troubles reflected the many categories of victimhood that were acknowledged in the Belfast/Good Friday 1998 Agreement, provided us with their testimony and their reflections on the various levels of 'conflicts' that were apparent to them in the exhibition".[1572] The staff of the UM was careful the voices should "represent the diversity of experiences of conflict". In order to do so, curators compiled a list of categories of victims.[1573] The list was very large but in spite of their objectives, some categories proved impossible to fill. For instance, "no

---

[1567] Black, *Rethinking Military History*, p. 46.
[1568] Research and Special Collections Available Locally (Ireland), RASCAL, http://www.rascal.ac.uk/index.php?CollectionID=205&navOp=locID&navVar=39 (last visited May 2012).
[1569] T. Kushner, "Oral History at the Extremes of Human Experience: Holocaust Testimony in a Museum Setting", *Oral History*, 29:2, 2001, pp. 83-94.
[1570] The commission he presided was created by the British government in 1997 to examine the different possibilities to deal with victims in Northern Ireland, notably through the construction of a memorial. Victims strategy was dealt directly by the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland. Bloomfield, *We will remember them*, p. 8.
[1571] Leonard "Towards an Oral History of the Troubles: *Conflict* at the Ulster Museum", p. 127.
[1572] Letter from Trevor Parkhill to John Clarke, 11 November 2005, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra. *Conflict, the Irish at War, exhibition leaflet*.
[1573] Leonard "Towards an Oral History of the Troubles", p. 127. The list included "bereaved, wounded, ex-service personnel, ex-paramilitaries, civilian victims, medical staff, clergy, peace activists, police officers, prison warders, trauma counsellors and war correspondents. It was decided to include children. It was ultimately also decided to include young farmers' clubs, women's centres, and migrant workers.

serving or former prison officer or former loyalist paramilitary prisoner took part in the project".[1574] These absences reflected the fact that victimhood was less spread in Unionist communities, and could have contributed to distort the narratives, although the number of Catholics and Protestants was almost similar.[1575] Furthermore, the inclusion of voices reflected the gender reappraisal issued from the development of victims' groups. From the 61 "voices", there were 35 female and only 26 male. This balance was reinforced by the project expressed by victims groups to include art works in the display to "convey the perspective of bereaved families". In consequence, a stained-glass window was designed by women members of WAVE Trauma Centre.[1576]

The process of including voices of victims also shaped the historical narratives of conflicts. Selected individuals were brought to the preview exhibition and requested to select three artefacts of the display and to record what those objects evoked. Ultimately, artefacts were accompanied by "recorded commentaries from 61 individuals whose personal perspectives on warfare and on political violence attempted to contextualize the past". This inclusion of voices from victims contributed to shaping representations of the past. Although individuals could select any artefact of the display, the "majority of these (commentaries) focused on the post-1969 display".[1577] Thus, individual memory became part of the past on display and strengthened the focus on the very recent past.

It should be noted that the "voices" belonged to victims of the conflict, but had an impact on the overall historical narratives of the past in the exhibition. For instance, Jane Leonard observed that comments were also provided about the 1916 Easter Rising and the struggle for independence.[1578] It is a major example of how the present context could contribute to shaping representations of the past. In a letter written in January 2006, Parkhill stressed "The aim of supporting initiatives that create the context for reconciliation and which might contribute to work with victims' group on how we deal with the past and build for the future."[1579] The wish to work with victims' group in order to find a way to come to terms with the past enhanced the use of victims' voices to provide particular interpretations of objects, and through them, of the interpretations of conflicts.

[1574] Leonard "Towards an Oral History of the Troubles", p. 128.
[1575] There were 16 Catholics and 24 Protestants. J. Leonard "Towards an Oral History of the Troubles", p. 129.
[1576] J. Leonard "Towards an Oral History of the Troubles", pp. 128-129.
[1577] J. Leonard "Towards an Oral History of the Troubles", pp. 126-128
[1578] J. Leonard "Towards an Oral History of the Troubles", pp. 128-130.
[1579] Letter from Trevor Parkhill, 13 January 2006, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

The mode of personifying history was accelerated by the use of interactive devices. The use of museum websites, new interactive technologies created potential for enabling the visitors to tell their own stories. One consequence of the focus on victims and personal interpretations was the fragmentation of the narratives. Reviewing the exhibition, Jane Leonard stressed that "Eschewing a narrative approach, it instead offered snapshots of different conflicts within Ireland and of wars elsewhere in which Irish people served".[1580] She asserts that these "multiple versions of political history" was well received by visitors.[1581] The voice project embraced the diversity of experiences of conflict and the difficult display of the Northern Irish conflict in museums. The assessment of the exhibition in 2005 underlined three major issues raised by audiences: the presentation of multiple versions of political history; the way in which *Conflict* actively invites reflection; the exhibition's attempt to diverse audiences by innovative use of technology, different media and user-friendly, interactive materials.[1582] Interestingly, a committee of representatives from the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland corrected the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council's draft of the strategic plan they had received.[1583] Instead of being "to promote an objective view of local history", the objective was corrected in the wish "to promote within and across communities a more informed, objective and fact-based approach to our history, including an acknowledgement that there are many competing versions of past events, in order to facilitate a greater respect for cultural difference."[1584] The plurality of interpretations was part of the exhibiting policy and was intended to serve as a means to deal with sensitive pasts. This fragmentation of the discourse through the "voices" of victims was considered by Trevor Parkhill as "a new and challenging approach to deal with the sensitive issues prevalent in our society."[1585]

The collaboration with victims groups was crucial to the UM, belonging to its new role, and the new role of museums at large, and so it included audiences in the design of exhibition. In particular, the Ulster Museum designed "contemplation areas" where audiences could "record their own comments, engage with archival film material, newsreels and

---

[1580] Leonard "Towards an Oral History of the Troubles", p. 126.
[1581] Grant Application Form, August 2005, Grant Application Form, August 2005, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1582] *The Conflict Exhibition: Assessment*, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1583] The consulting team was composed of Jane Leonard (UM), Trevor Parkhill (UM), Catherine McCullough (Armagh County Museum), Arlene Bell (Ulster Folk and Transport Museum), Marian Ferguson (UM), Linda Balland (Office of the Chief Executive, MAGNI), and Brian Lambkin (Ulster American Folk Park).
[1584] NI Community Relations Council, *Strategic Plan 2001-2004*, draft for consultation, Response on behalf of MAGNI, report compiled by Linda Balland, 2001, Grant Application Form, August 2005, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.
[1585] Letter from Parkhill to John Clarke, 11 November, 2005, Grant Application Form, August 2005, Trevor Parkhill's personal papers, box 5, local history Department, UMA, Cultra.

reference materials in order to reflect upon the nature of conflict and to think critically about related issues".[1586] The fundamental aspect was that visitors could write – many messages were posted on the notice boards of the contemplation areas[1587] – or record their feelings, memories, and interpretations of the history of conflict. The fact that the comments were available for subsequent visitors resulted in the participation of audiences in the building of the exhibition's narratives. Parkhill asserted that "The Contemplation area has been particularly successful as a means of providing community groups with the space they require to continue their discussion on what they have just seen and its implications both on a broader community level and for their own group and its activities".[1588] Even though the "successful" dimension of such a design cannot be verified, it is striking to notice to what extent the process matched the museum's attempt to become a site of dialogue between communities, already attested in 1998 with community visits of *Up in Arms*.

To conclude, the exhibitions in the twenty-first century at the Ulster Museum belonged to an overall development of military history in Ireland. This process was, in Northern Ireland, influenced by the need to come to terms with the recent violent past. The focus on the local context of violence contributed to presenting the Irish as particularly bellicose, defined by a succession of conflicts over 10.000 years. Although also present through the sections about the 1690s, the 1798 Rebellion or the 1916 Easter Rising, historical Anglo-Irish conflicts belonged mostly to local history which concentrated on victims and the consequences of warfare. It is true the focus on victims and the absence of consideration for the roots of the conflicts could lead to depoliticized representations of the past in which the colonial relations between Ireland and Britain were missing. However, the choice was made to avoid the traditional charge against perpetrators, and to reconcile through the space granted to personal experiences, pluralism and the plurality of interpretations. Peaceful relations were not displayed through artefacts but emerged from the dialogue between victims of conflicts.

In Europe, the common focus on victims did not yet result in an internationalization of the history on display at the Ulster Museum. Despite certain sections which included the history of Irish soldiers "abroad" – notably the section on Mercenaries 1400-1600 – the display drew much attention to the historical opposition between two sides in Ireland. For instance, also the 1990 *Kings in Conflict* exhibition promoted an interpretation of the conflicts in the 1690s as entirely related to the international context and the opposition between Louis

---

[1586] *The Conflict Exhibition: Assessment.*
[1587] Letter from Parkhill to John Clarke, 11 November 2005.
[1588] Letter from Parkhill to John Clarke, 11 November 2005.

XIV and the League of Augsburg and for which Ireland was merely "a theatre of War", the 2003 exhibition focused on "the war of the two kings", in other words, the opposition between the Protestant William of Orange and the Catholic James II. Ironically, the Europeanization of the representation was more attested in *Kings in Conflict* in 1990, when the UM had no European funding. Likewise, the 1798 Rebellion was mostly interpreted through local struggle – in particular through Henry Joy McCracken – and much less (than in 1998) was provided about the international networks of the United Irishmen.[1589] This discrepancy came from contrasting approaches of reconciliation. While the Europeanization of the past was thought to be one way to deal with divisive issues in 1990, the evolution of peace-making strategies in the twenty-first century supported a focus on the victims of the conflict and therefore, anchored the display in local and recent past through the voices of victims. The Ulster Museum reflected the new roles of museums in giving space – and voices – to their audiences. The last section of the exhibition – contemplation area – served to display audiences themselves. Audiences had to think about their memories, their personal experiences, and interpretations of the past. This approach is part of a positive evolution of museums which increasingly intend to move from a didactic pedagogy to the presentations of questions and debates to increase reflection from audiences.

B) The National Museum of Ireland and the Challenging International Representations of Warfare

The National Museum of Ireland has undergone many changes since the mid 1990s. In 2001 it opened a new division about country life in Castlebar, county Mayo (West of the island) which housed the Irish Folklore collections. Moreover, the art and industry divisions – which included the historical collections – had moved to Collins Barracks in 1997. One major impact of the transfer of the collections to Collins Barracks was the new attention granted to history as a discipline in the national museum. First of all, the transfer of the arts and history collections reduced the structural domination of the antiquities collections. While in the Kildare Street building, the historical collections had always been under the supremacy of archaeology displayed in the central hall. On the contrary, Collins Barracks was entirely

---

[1589] The section about "United Irish Rebellion, 1798" began by mentioning "Henry Joy McCracken was a leader of the failed Rebellion of 1798". *Conflict, the Irish at War, exhibition leaflet*, p. 20.

devoted to Irish Arts and History.[1590] This was the first time in the history of the NMI the term "history" was highlighted as specific division.

The development of military history also touched the National Museum of Ireland which proposed two new permanent exhibitions in 2006. In line with the 1941, 1966 and 1991 commemorative exhibitions of the 1916 Easter Rising, the NMI arranged a new permanent display devoted to the 1916 insurrection and entitled *Understanding 1916*.[1591] Limited to two rooms, *Understanding 1916* was, in many aspects, similar to previous permanent exhibitions and was designed by Michael Kenny. The other display was entitled *Soldiers and Chiefs: the Irish at War at Home and Abroad* and dealt with military history from the sixteenth century to the present (Appendix 7). Military history was by no means the only field of display at Collins Barracks. For instance, in 2008, the permanent exhibitions at Collins Barracks were composed of display about textiles (*The Way We Wore*), ceramics, coins and furniture (*Curator's Choice, Irish Silver, A Thousand Years of Irish Coins & Currency, Out of Storage, What's in Store*?). However, the two permanent historical exhibitions –*Understanding 1916*; *Soldiers and Chiefs: the Irish at War at Home and Abroad* – were exclusively dealing with conflicts.[1592] Although the association between the Irish and warfare was similar to what was proposed at the Ulster Museum, the framework of representations and the reasons for developing military history significantly differed. Unlike the Ulster Museum which increased the focus on the insular history of conflicts in order to deal with community relations, the National Museum of Ireland presented historical narratives which went far beyond the island of Ireland. This shift matched a general reappraisal of military history in which events like the First World War were rediscovered.

1) The Rediscovery of the First World War in the Republic of Ireland

In 1999, Charles Townshend noted, "the memory of the (Great) war was marginalised for a long time. A kind of collective amnesia discarded it as a British experience, dwarfed by an event that was, in physical comparison with the titanic battles on the western and eastern fronts, tiny".[1593] Instead of the presence of almost 200.000 Irish soldiers on the front, the past to be officially remembered in the Republic of Ireland had been the 1916 insurrection in

---

[1590] The name of the site was: National Museum of Ireland: Decorative Arts and History
[1591] The exhibition coincided with the 90th anniversary of 1916.
[1592] http://web.archive.org/web/20080831192214/http://www.museum.ie/en/exhibition-list/arts-and-history-permanent-exhibitions.aspx (use of the web archives website, www.archives.org) (last visited May 2012).
[1593] Charles Townshend, *Ireland: The 20th Century*, (London: Arnold: 1999), p.68.

Dublin which initiated the struggle for Ireland's independence. In spite of episodic mention of the First World War, as for instance within F.X. Martin's article "1916 – Myth, Fact and Mystery" the rediscovery of the Irish participation in the Great War merely took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[1594]

"In recent years there has been a significant growth of historical interest concerning Ireland and the First World War". Thus, Keith Jeffery observed in *Ireland and the Great War*, published in 2000, that "there has been a historiographical revolution involving the ways in which we regard the Great War years in Ireland."[1595] *Ireland and the First World War,* one of the first academic works which contributed to the rediscovery of the Irish involvement of the Great War was edited by David Fitzpatrick in 1986 and derived from a course he taught at Trinity College Dublin.[1596] This word followed a previous work from Fitzpatrick on *Politics and Irish Life: 1913-1921.*[1597] The new wave of academic works belonged to a "rediscovery" of the Great War in Ireland.[1598] To some extent, this trend belonged to a wider revival of studies for the Great War, notably expressed through the creation in 1992 of the *Historial de Péronne* in France in the region of the Battle of the Somme. In spite of the general new interest in the Great War, the rediscovery had particular relevance in the Republic of Ireland. This particularity was embedded in Sebastian Barry's book *A Long Long Way.*[1599] In this novel published in 2005, Barry tells the story of Willie Dunne, a young recruit to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers during the First World War. Through its main character, the novel expresses the tension between the involvement on the front and the news of the insurrection in Dublin. The relationship between the First World War and the 1916 Easter Rising became a major issue of official politics of reconciliation in the 1990s and 2000s.

The rediscovery of the Great War reflected a re-appraisal of Anglo-Irish historical relations. New political participation in commemorating the Great War in the Republic of Ireland appeared in the 1990s. For instance, the Irish National War Memorial (Islandbridge, west of Dublin city) had been planned in 1919 to honour the memory of the Irish soldiers killed during the war.[1600] However, the official opening being delayed several times, only forty-six years later, in 1995was the Islandbridge memorial officially opened in a public

---

[1594] Martin, "1916 – Myth, Fact and Mystery", pp 7-124.

[1595] Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, p. 1.

[1596] Fitzpatrick, *Ireland and the First World War.*

[1597] David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life: 1913-1921. Provincial Experience of War and Revolution*, (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan 1977).

[1598] See the conference, *Rediscovering the Great War in Ireland*, Yale, April 2011.

[1599] Sebastian Barry, *A Long Long Way*, (London: Viking, 2005).

[1600] John Turpin "Monumental Commemoration of the Fallen in Ireland, North and South, 1920-1960", *New Hibernia Review*, 11, n. 4, Winter 2007, p. 116.

ceremony by *Taoiseach's* John Bruton.[1601] The date was not a coincidence; the official rediscovery of the Great War in the Irish history matched the 1990s politics of reconciliation. In November 1998, for the 80th anniversary of the end of the war, the Island of Ireland Peace Park was opened by Mary McAleese – President of Ireland – and Queen Elizabeth. Situated in Messines, close to Ypres in Flanders, the Park was a common memorial to all Irish who died during the War. Likewise, the commemorations arranged by the Irish government in 2006 related both to the 1916 Easter Rising (April 16th) and the 1916 Battle of the Somme (July 1st).

While the presence of the Great War in the historical collections of the National Museum of Ireland had been extremely limited until the 1990s, the 2006 new permanent exhibition mirrored the overall rediscovery of the Irish participation. The sixth section of *Soldiers and Chiefs* was entirely devoted to the First World War which was no longer a piece of the international context – like in The *Road to Independence exhibition* – but also part of the history of the Irish (Appendix 7). The analysis of the organization of *Soldiers and Chiefs* reveals that the reappraisal of the past at the NMI was much wider than the simple rediscovery of the Irish involvement in the Great War.

2) The Irish Defence Forces as Agents of Internationalization of the Military History Displayed at the NMI

While it opened in 2006, *Soldiers and Chiefs* resulted from decisions taken in the mid-1990s; in order to understand the rationale of the exhibition it is necessary to explore the long process of organization. Already evoked by new marketing policy regarding tourism in the mid-1990s, the internationalization of the past on display at the NMI also resulted from the transfer of the collections to Collins Barracks. The decision to arrange a military history of Ireland was connected to the transfer of part of the collections from the site in Kildare Street to Collins Barracks. The 1998 exhibiting strategy report about the transfer pointed out that "As part of the agreement by which Collins Barracks was turned over by the Defence Forces to the National Museum, a significant military component was identified as part of the future permanent exhibition galleries".[1602] Founded in 1924 by the Irish Free State, the Irish Defence

---

[1601] Turpin "Monumental Commemoration of the Fallen in Ireland", p. 117.
[1602] Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, April 1998, p. 33. This agreement was mentioned by Lahr Joye as one of the reason for a permanent military history exhibition at the NMI in 2006. "When the Barracks was handed over in 1996, an agreement was made with the Irish Defence Forces that a military exhibition would

Forces encompasses the Army, Naval Service, Air Corps and Reserve Defence Force.[1603] Until they moved in 1996, the Irish Defence Forces were hosted by Collins Barracks. In order to move to Collins Barracks, the NMI had to agree on certain issues.

The transfer of the collections to the site of Collins Barracks was accompanied with an agreement between the National Museum and the Defence Forces. This agreement consisted, for the NMI, in the accommodation for the Military archives of the Irish Free State and for a military museum of the Defence Forces.[1604] In May 1994, Patrick Wallace, Director of the NMI, "stated that the National Museum accepted that the Defence Forces Museum would form part of the overall National Museum Project".[1605] Although space was allocated by the NMI in 1997 to the transfer of the archives from Cathal Brugha Barracks to Collins Barracks,[1606] the project ultimately failed mostly due to the cost of the transfer and refurbishment of the space allocated. The second agreement was carried through to its conclusion, and the military history exhibition opened in 2006. Unlike the UM where the development of military history came from policy regarding victims, the new military history at the NMI was the consequence of the involvement of the army. This discrepancy provoked contrasting interpretations and representations of wars.

From the outset, members of the Defence Forces were part of the exhibition team and participated in the new exhibiting policy. The 2006 brief design pointed out that "The National Museum of Ireland is co-operating with the Irish Defence Forces in the preparation and planning of the Military History Exhibition".[1607] Indeed, representatives of the Defence Forces took part in organising meetings from 2001 to 2006.[1608] Thus, Colonel Declan O'Carroll and Commandant Dan Harvey attended the August 2001 meeting with the museum's curator and head of services (Lahr Joye and Noel Delaney).[1609] This initial meeting assured that two representatives of the Defence Forces would be part of the Design Team for the permanent military exhibition. In a note regarding the meeting, Dan Harvey explained that the reunion intended to clarify the objects requested from the Irish Defence Forces and the

---

open in the new museum". Lahr Joye and Paul Martinovich, *Challenges of context and content: Finding Solutions in a Storyline*, unpublished report, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2006).

[1603] Although under the command of the President of Ireland, they are in practice under the management of the Minister for Defence.

[1604] Minutes of meeting, 12 October 1995, CB/97/081, NMIA, Dublin.

[1605] Minutes of meeting, 31 May 1994, CB/95/011, NMIA, Dublin.

[1606] Letter from Mairead Dunleavy to Major Gen. P. Nowlan, 10 July 1997, CB/97/081, NMIA, Dublin.

[1607] Lahr Joye and Paul Martinovoich, *Design Brief for the Military History Galleries at the National Museum of Ireland*, unpublished, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2006).

[1608] See the files A1/03/141 and A1/01/133, NMIA, Dublin.

[1609] August 2001, A1/01/133, NMIA, Dublin.

role of the Irish Defence Forces in the exhibition organizing committee.[1610] The collaboration was indeed expressed through artefacts; the Irish Defence Forces "made its military history collection available" to the NMI.[1611] Already in 1998, the exhibiting strategy report written by Sears & Russell pointed out that "The Defence Forces have guaranteed that they would locate and acquire required artefacts not currently in either the Museum's of the Forces' possession, but essential to tell the military story."[1612] The Irish Defence Forces were therefore major actors in the selection of artefacts to be put on display in the new military permanent exhibition. This had an impact on the historical narratives on display.

This collaboration was fundamental and the characteristics of the Irish Defence Forces participated in the redefinition of Irish military history. The description of their archives gives a summary of the topic they intended to support for the military history displayed at the National Museum. As Commandant Peter Young explained to the Minister of Defence, the Irish Free State was "responsible for the military history of Ireland since 1922. The documentation comes from three sources (Department of Defence, the Defence Forces, and from private donations). Every subject relating to military life is included. Collections of the Civil War period (Departmental papers, operational and intelligence reports, with a large collection of captured Anti-Treaty papers)".[1613] It is crucial to notice that the history of the Irish Defence Forces started with the creation of the Irish Free State, therefore, after the 1916 Easter Rising with which the Irish Defence Forces had no particular connection. Much more than any definition of an Irish nation, the Irish Defence Forces were associated with the Irish State.

The 1998 report concluded that "The military history Gallery will combine appropriate artefacts from the National Museum (...) with items selected from the Defence Forces' extensive holdings of twentieth century equipment and memorabilia."[1614] Like the UM, the NMI developed its collection about the twentieth century and the more recent past. The collaboration with the Irish Defence Forces was also supposed to respond to the tension created from the different marketing policy reports. In order to respond to the increasing international tourism, the reports intended to highlight the twentieth century artefacts whereas the NMI had not collected this period intensively. The 1998 exhibiting strategy report had encouraged "collecting Twentieth-Century material" since "the origins and history of the Art

---

[1610] Letter from D. Harvey to O'Carroll, A1/01/133, NMIA, Dublin.
[1611] 26 April 1997, CB/97/081, NMIA, Dublin
[1612] Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, April 1998, p. 33.
[1613] Letter from Comdt Peter Young to the Minister for Defence, August 1996, CB/97/081, NMIA, Dublin.
[1614] Sears & Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, April 1998, p. 33.

and Industrial Division at the National Museum have left it with a limited and patchy coverage of objects made and used in the twentieth century".[1615] Thus, in August 2001, Commandant Dan Harvey informed Lahr Joye, keeper at the NMI in charge of the exhibition, that pieces from the Defence Forces collection had been identified as being of likely interest for inclusion. The list was composed of an Anti-Aircraft cannon used by the defence of Dublin in the Second World War, a Landsverk Tank, a 1941 Bren carrier from 1941 and a U.N. painted Panard APC.[1616] All of them were ultimately included in the 2006 exhibition.

The Irish Defence Forces' focus on the twentieth century was accompanied by a changing definition of the geographical framework of representation. The Irish Defence Forces mostly participated in military operations outside Ireland, notably through the United Nations since 1945. In consequence, the Irish Defence Forces never fought against British troops, a very symbolic aspect of the changing definition of Irish veterans in the twentieth century. Thus, the collaboration of the NMI with the Irish Defence Forces fostered a redefinition of the relevance of Anglo-Irish historical conflicts. This involvement of the Irish Defence Forces outside Ireland was a crucial reason for the internationalization of the past on display at the NMI. The links between the Irish Defence Forces and the international context was symbolic of the new Irish external relations and influenced the representations promoted in the new 2006 permanent exhibition. The proposal for a military exhibition submitted by the Irish Defence Forces in 1997 also included a section entitled the "U.N. section".[1617] It was composed of sub-sections about "Lebanon, Observer Missions, Historical U.N. Missions (Congo, Sinai, Cyprus)".[1618]

This changing framework of representations rapidly materialized through the design of an exhibition to mark the 40-year Defence Forces' activity as peace-keepers. The first temporary exhibition arranged in 1997 by the NMI was devoted to Irish Defence Forces. The exhibition was entitled *Peacekeepers. 40 years of the Irish Defence Forces with the United Nations* (Appendix 9-H). It was symbolic that the first exhibition of the national museum was devoted to an international organization (the United Nations) and the involvement of the Irish soldiers. Again, the material on display came from the collections of the Irish Defence Forces

---

[1615] Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, p. 50
[1616] August 2001, A1/01/133, NMIA, Dublin.
[1617] A Proposal for a National Military Museum, letter of Mairead Dunleavy, 4 December 1996, CB/97/081, NMIA, Dublin.
[1618] A Proposal for a National Military Museum.

and the exhibition was defined as "a joint project between the National Museum of Ireland and the Defence Forces."[1619]

In conclusion, like the UM, the NMI developed military history in exhibition. This was mostly due to the agreed collaboration with the Irish Defence Forces who played a major role in the construction of representations. The collaboration was so tight between the NMI and the Irish Defence Forces between 1996 and 2006 that Colonel Fitzgerald (Irish Defence Forces) considered that the new 2006 permanent military exhibition "will show the development of the Defence Forces throughout the ages".[1620] In contrast to what the colonel thought, the exhibition which opened in 2006 was not entirely devoted to the Irish Defence Forces. It was true, however, that the characteristics of the Defence Forces had an impact on the display. The twentieth century became a field of representation at the NMI and military history went beyond the sole history of Anglo-Irish conflicts. Although this latter point matched the development of the military history displayed at the UM, the reasons and the expressions differed. Instead of a focus on local divisions, the NMI was encouraged to give space to the presence of the Irish in international frameworks. While the interest in victims in the North resulted in a focus on the local history of the civil war, the collaboration with the Irish Defence Forces encouraged going beyond the territory of the island of Ireland without challenging Irish unity. The association between the Irish Defence Forces and the Irish State contrasted with the pluralisation of narratives issued from the collaboration with victims' group in the North. This discrepancy resulted in particular representations of Irish at home and abroad.

3) The Impact of the New Site of Display: Collins Barracks as an Artefact

The transfer of the collections from the building in Kildare Street to Collins Barracks (Appendix 5 and 6) was also a redefinition of the exhibition space, in which the type of building mattered. Collins Barracks significantly contrasted with the neo-classical style of the Kildare Street building with its rotunda and colonnade. In the correspondence between the NMI and the Irish Defence Forces, the staff of the museum underlined that the institution was

---

[1619] National Museum of Ireland, *Peacekeepers. 40 years of the Irish Defence Forces with the United Nations. Leaflet, (*Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1997).
[1620] Letter from colonel R. Fitzgerald, August 2006, A1/01/133, NMIA, Dublin.

"conscious that the Barracks is the longest continuously occupied one in Europe".[1621] The site of Collins Barracks was a major cause in the development of both the military history as distinct field in the museum and the reappraisal of conflicts. Lahr Joye, curator of the 2006 exhibition, explained that Collins Barracks was a military artefact in its own right.[1622] According to him, from talking to visitors it was clear there was an understandable public expectation that a museum housed in a barracks would offer a military exhibition.[1623] The proposal for a military exhibition submitted by the Irish Defence Forces in 1997 also included a section on Collins Barracks.[1624] The site was part of the overall narratives proposed to visitors and, therefore, participated in the development of the military history at the NMI.

Importantly, Collins Barracks had been the site hosting the British armed forces which participated in the repression of Irish insurrections, notably in 1798 and 1916.[1625] The 1998 Exhibiting Strategy was well aware that "the museum's story will be told outside the buildings as well as within them". It continued "Collins Barracks is set between several sites of great importance which should be included in the interpretive scheme: 'Croppies Graves', the site of a mass grave of rebels from the 1798 Rebellion, the site of the first public soup kitchen in Ireland during the Great Famine, and Arbour Hill, a shrine to the martyrs of the 1916 Rising".[1626] The geography of the new site of display was taken into consideration and highlighted the military dimension of the Irish past.

More importantly, the transfer also provoked a reappraisal of the actors of military history. Since Collins Barracks was an artefact in itself, information was provided about its history. Thus, the first section of *Soldiers and Chiefs* was devoted to the British Garrison in Ireland and dealt with the life of soldiers in the barracks and their relations with the local population (Appendix 7). The site encouraged the move from leaders to ordinary people and their everyday life. Thus, the design of the 2006 exhibition stressed that "Where possible Collins Barracks will be used as a specific example of the way in which military occupation influenced the lives of local men and women".[1627] Information was provided about "the

---

[1621] 26 April 1997, CB/97/081, NMIA, Dublin. Indeed, Collins Barracks was the world's oldest continuously occupied military establishment. A. J. English, *Irish Army Order of Battle, 1923-2004*, (Takoma Park: Tiger Lily Book, 2008, 1st ed. 2004), p. 79.
[1622] Joye and Martinovich, *Challenges of Context and Content*.
[1623] Joye and Martinovich, *Challenges of Context and Content:*.
[1624] A Proposal for a National Military Museum, letter of Mairead Dunleavy, 4 December 1996, CB/97/081, NMIA, Dublin.
[1625] During the 1916 Easter Rising, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were deployed from the Royal Barracks.
[1626] Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, April 1998. Arbour hill cemetery is the site where fourteen of the executed leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising were buried. The Croppy Acres is a site where 1798 Irish rebels were buried.
[1627] Joye, Martinovoich, *Design Brief for the Military History Galleries*.

economic and social impact of military activities on a primarily agricultural society", the "officers and private soldiers (who) married local women" and other aspects of everyday life for British soldiers in Dublin.[1628]

This focus also matched the marketing strategy of the NMI. In a document about the "Challenges of context and content" Lahr Joye and Paul Martinovic (curator and interpretive planner) stressed that "The problem of attracting people who are not specifically interested in military history is a familiar one". In order to attract visitors, the exhibition had to highlight "the experience of the enlisted soldier (with whom the visitor can often identify more easily than the general)".[1629] In consequence, the document concluded that "Opportunities can be taken to look at the role of women and children and to discuss the effect of war upon civilians generally." Like in the Ulster Museum, the focus on audiences and the assumption that the more the representations match the visitors' profile, the more people visit the display was evidence of the importance of the present strategy on the definitions of the representations of the past. In consequence, although the selection of objects on display contained a number of items belonging to key personalities, there were a large number of objects which represented the experience of ordinary rebels and soldiers. The section on the War of Independence drew on a number of witness statements given by veterans of the period in the 1940s, further emphasizing the role of rebels on the ground. This turn was implemented to make the exhibition as accessible as possible to its public and was therefore also a consequence of the new marketing strategy.

Another method to make *Soldiers and Chiefs* accessible to wider audiences was to implement the marketing request to develop interpretation. The need to set artefacts into context explained the creation of an academic committee "assisting the Exhibition Planning Team to ensure that the historical interpretation is informed by the most recent scholarly research on the subject, and accurately reflects the perspective of all the Irish communities."[1630] The advisory committee was composed of specialists on military history and episodically sent comments about the display texts.[1631] The relevance given to the process of interpretation was embodied even more in the work of the interpretive planner.

Following the exhibiting policy reports from Lord and Sears&Russell in 1995 and 1998, the NMI had decided to build the 2006 exhibition with the help of an interpretative

---

[1628] Joye, Martinovoich, *Design Brief for the Military History Galleries.*
[1629] Joye and Martinovich, *Challenges of Context and Content.*
[1630] Joye, Martinovoich, *Design Brief for the Military History Galleries.*
[1631] Profs. Thomas Bartlett, Keith Jeffery, Kevin Whelan, Eunan O'Halpin, Thomas O'Connor, Dr. Harman Murtagh and Dr. Marian Lyons. Thank you panel. Provided by Lahr Joye. Letter to Lahr Joy, 24 April 2006, A1/6/249, NMIA, Dublin.

planner, Paul Martinovic (Blue Sky Design and former member of Sears&Russell). The work of Martinovic was to enhance the public understanding of the display. He played a role in the selection of artefacts and their arrangement in the exhibition.[1632] Similarly to the Ulster Museum, audiences had received increasing attention from the NMI. One of his duties was to involve the public in the selection of a title for the display; as a result surveys of visitors were undertaken.[1633] It is interesting to notice the criteria of selection of the proposals. It was thought that the title "clearly signals the essential information about the exhibition: it's about Irish military history over the last 400 years", "suggests the inclusive nature of the story (not just battles and soldiers, also peacetime life and wives and children; different armies and different causes"; "a balance that conveys enthusiasm for the subject without seeming to celebrate war".[1634] The second recommendation about the title reflected the distinction between the organization of *Soldiers and Chiefs* (NMI) and *Conflict: The Irish at War* (UM). The UM did not hesitate to provide fragmented narratives of the historical conflicts through the direct involvement of audiences in the display (voices and the area of contemplation). Conversely, the NMI underlined "the inclusive nature of the story". Contrary to the Ulster Museum where community relations and the collaboration with victims had fostered a plurality of voices, the NMI still represented national unity through the Irish past. Whether testimonies were included in *Soldiers and Chiefs*, they primarily belonged to the story. That is also why, among the five titles suggested, three referred directly to unity: "Step Together", "Soldiers Are We", and "Everywhere and Always Faithful".[1635]

4) *Soldiers and Chiefs* and the Re-Territorialization of the National Past

One of the major problems of military history has been a focus on state-to-state conflict, rather than on the use of force within states or the transnational relations during wars.[1636] The major success of Soldiers and Chiefs was to go beyond the framework of the nation-state. One of the five titles selected by the interpretative planner from the public consultation was "From

---

[1632] For instance, he selected a representation of the 1691 Siege of Limerick for the second section on "warfare in Ireland" and explained that "it conveys our fundamental message better than any of the more sedate battle pictures". Email to Lahr Joye, 22 April 2005, A1/06/296, NMIA, Dublin. He was also in favour of "grouping some images". Email 26 October 2004, A1/04/274, NMIA, Dublin.
[1633] A1/06/312. Titles like "Peace and War", "Marching Through Times", "Soldiers of Destiny", A1/06/312, NMIA, Dublin.
[1634] 1 December 2004, A1/06/312, NMIA, Dublin.
[1635] 1 December 2004, A1/06/312, NMIA, Dublin.
[1636] Black, *Rethinking Military History*, p. ix.

Pikeman to Peacekeepers".[1637] Although it did not become the final name of the display, the proposal revealed the intention to present the move from a local insurrection – Pikeman was the nickname given to the rebel in Wexford during the 1798 Rebellion – to the international duties of the Irish Defence Forces. A manuscript for the exhibition text was written in 2002 by Lahr Joye and Dan Harvey, the liaison officer of the Irish Defence Forces. Entitled "Soldiers: a history of Irish soldiering", the text had the very same structure as the exhibition which opened in 2006.[1638] Six out of the eleven galleries were devoted to the period post-1914.[1639] In 1998, it was asserted that "In the twentieth century the main focus will be on the origins of the Irish Defence Forces (…) and their subsequent history to the present. The engagement of Irish forces over the last forty years in a large number of United Nations peacekeeping operations will be highlighted."[1640] An ambitious move beyond the insular frontiers of Ireland was undertaken.

Importantly, the sub-title of the display demonstrated that the focus was not on Ireland – be it the Republic or the whole island – but on Irish "at home and abroad". The design brief highlighted that "In the past, Irishmen have worn uniforms, fighting for a variety of reasons in foreign armies in distant countries. Today, Irish men and women serve all over the world in Irish uniform as an important part of the United Nations peacekeeping forces."[1641] Indeed, as Bartlett and Jeffery argue "From earliest times, Irish warriors, mercenaries and swordmen found employment abroad … There were Irish soldiers at Calais and Agincourt in the fourteenth century".[1642] The need to include the history of the Irish Defence Forces in the new permanent exhibition entailed the rediscovery that Irish soldiers had had a long history going beyond the island of Ireland. Therefore, Soldiers and Chiefs were included in galleries about the Irish in European armies, Irish in the American Civil War and – this has been a long controversy – Irish in the British army. Contrary to the previous permanent historical collection which merely quoted the First World War as part of the international context of the 1916 Easter Rising, those Irish who fought on the Western Front became part of the official history displayed within *Soldiers and Chiefs*.

[1637] 1 December 2004, A1/06/312, NMIA, Dublin.

[1638] The three sections were: Garrison soldiering, strategic soldiering (about soldiering in Ireland), foreign soldiering and Twentieth Century soldiering with a strong focus on the Defence Forces. Lar Joy and Dan Harvey "Soldiers : a history of Irish soldiering", 2002 . A1/01/133, NMIA, Dublin. In a letter to Lahr Joy, Harvey asked to confirm that this would be the official text for the exhibition but no answer could be found.

[1639] The First World War; 1916: the Easter Rising; the Irish Wars; Claiming the Future; the Emergency: the Second World War; Defending the Peace. National Museum of Ireland, *Soldiers and Chiefs: Irish Soldiers at Home and Abroad*, leaflet, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2009).

[1640] Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, April 1998, p. 33.

[1641] Joye, Martinovich, *Design Brief for the Military History Galleries*.

[1642] Bartlett and Jeffery, *A Military History of Ireland*, p. 10.

The new frameworks of representations also had consequences on the general presentation of historical conflicts such as the 1916 Easter Rising. *Understanding 1916* was designed for the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising and very much issued from the long tradition at the NMI to rearrange the 1916 collections. This had been done in 1941, 1966, and 1991 as well. Similarly to the 1991 display (*the Road to Independence*), the background information provided in the exhibition – tracing key events in the history of Irish nationalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – firmly situated the 1916 Rising within the narrative of struggle for independence. The similar focus on leaders of 1916 could be found in 2006 as well, since there were individual text panels for each of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation. In spite of certain new dimensions – a panel on the Great War provided a context for the 1916 Rising rarely acknowledged in previous exhibitions and another panel highlighted divided opinion on the Easter Rising – *Understanding 1916* was very much in line with the traditional display of historical conflicts at the NMI.

Although *Understanding 1916* has been, like *Soldiers and Chiefs*, part of the permanent collections at Collins Barracks since 2006, its relevance should not be over-emphasized. While the former was merely composed of two rooms, *Soldiers and Chiefs* was displayed in ten rooms on two floors.[1643] In *Soldiers and Chiefs*, the Easter Rising is juxtaposed with the section on the Great War, bringing the reality that many more Irish participated to the latter. In the new military history of Ireland driven by the collaboration with the Irish Defence Forces, the Easter Rising appeared to be less in tune with the general reinterpretation of the past. As Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery wrote in their introduction to a *Military History of Ireland*, the 1916 Easter Rising lacked military components like "battles, rash charges" to belong fully to military history.[1644] It is striking to notice that merely four pages (394-397) were devoted to the 1916 Easter Rising in the 459-page publication.[1645] The enlargement of the definition of military history challenged the relevance of the 1916 Easter Rising in the historical narratives presented by the NMI.

The reappraisal of historical conflicts reflected new definitions of the Irish nation. The enlargement of the framework of representation did not mean national unity was ignored in *Soldiers and Chiefs*. The design brief of the 2006 exhibition pointed out that the display "will also promote, at home and abroad, a greater awareness of the contribution of the Irish Soldier,

---

[1643] Exhibition Information, leaflet, *Soldiers and Chiefs*.
[1644] Bartlett and Jeffery, *A Military History of Ireland*, p. 22.
[1645] Bartlett and Jeffery, *A Military History of Ireland*, pp. 379-382.

not only to his homeland but also to the adopted homelands of so many."[1646] This first demonstrated that Irish national history was no longer constructed in isolation. Unlike the national history promoted in the NMI in the 1930s and 1940s as an opposition – military or even more powerfully as the exact opposite, rural, pre-industrial and Catholic – to Britain, national history in the twenty-first century was designed in relation to a wider context. The existence of the Irish identity was by no means contested, but was disconnected from the sole relation with the island of Ireland. The Irish nation was more defined as a group of people who participated in different conflicts – and lived – all over the world. One cannot but underline the connection between this version of Irishness and the role played by the Diaspora in Irish history. Throughout its sections about conflicts in Europe, North America, South Africa, *Soldiers and Chiefs* included the spaces of Diaspora in the historical narratives of the national past. The focus on Irish soldiers did not contest national unity but provided new territorial representations. Already in 1948, John A. Costello (*Taoiseach*) stated that:

> Though we are a small nation, we wield an influence in the world far in excess of what our mere physical size and the smallness of our population might warrant … Our exiles have gone to practically every part of the world and have created for their motherland a spiritual dominion which more than compensates for her lack of size or material wealth. The Irish at home are only one section of a great race which has spread itself throughout the world.[1647]

This enlargement of narratives explained why the opening date was initially planned on 11 May 2005. In contrast with every opening of new historical collections which coincided with the 1916 Easter Rising (1941, 1966, 1991), the new permanent military history collections were supposed to open for the anniversary of the Battle of Fontenoy (11 May 1745), important battle of the War of Austrian Succession and true European battle in which Dutch, British, French, Austrians and six battalions of the Irish Brigade.[1648] The changing representations of territory also modified the end of the story. The last section was not, as in previous permanent exhibition, Ireland's independence but a section about "Defending the Peace" worldwide in which the Irish Defence Forces and the United Nations were central. Moving from the national struggle for independence to international peacekeeping, the 2006 exhibition provided a celebration for Irish soldiers without glorifying war. This was one of the

---

[1646] Joye, Martinovoich, *Design Brief for the Military History Galleries*.

[1647] Quoted in Mary Daly "Nationalism, Sentiment, and Economics: Relations between Ireland and Irish-America in the Postwar Years", in K. Kenny, ed., *New Directions in Irish-American History*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p. 267.

[1648] Letter from Lhar Joy, 26 June 2003, A1/03/141, NMIA, Dublin.

three recommendations brought forth in order to select a title to the exhibition which had to provide "a balance that conveys enthusiasm for the subject without seeming to celebrate war".[1649]

Conclusion of Chapter VI

The exhibitions of the twenty-first century at the UM and NMI demonstrate that military history had become an important part of the permanent collections of the two museums. Even though Anglo-Irish conflicts were part of the historical events on display, they were re-interpreted according to the new definitions of conflicts proposed by the two museums. In Dublin, these conflicts were only examples of the many conflicts in which the Irish had taken part all over the world. In Belfast, the conflicts were seen through the local context of opposition between the two main political traditions. The representations of Anglo-Irish historical conflicts shifted due to the new interest in the recent past and the intention to historicize the present, that is, to show that the present situation derived from a long history. While the museums presented the recent past as issued from a long evolution of military history, the chapter has demonstrated that the opposite process was potent. In many ways, the present context influenced the manner in which the past was represented, interpreted, and mobilized.

This present-centred military history moved from the focus on great men to a more popular history of conflicts. Through personal experiences, the relationship between soldiers and civilians or the participation of audiences, the exhibitions reflected the development of people's history, and oral history. In museums, this strategy also introduces an emotional human touch for the institutions, which in turn can attract visitors, who identify with these (other) ordinary citizens.[1650] The request – issued from new marketing and funding strategy – to target, attract, and to give more space to audiences resulted in a redefinition of the historical narratives. Both national museums attempted to provide representations of the past with which the visitors could identify; this contributed to the provision of historical narratives based on emotions, experiences, and ordinary people. It has become crucial for museums to give more space to visitors who would no longer be considered passive receptors of the historical narratives produced by the cultural institutions.

[1649] 1 December 2004, A1/06/312, NMIA, Dublin.
[1650] Wolfram Kaiser, "From Great Men to Ordinary Citizens? The Biographical Approach to Narrating European Integration in Museums", *Culture Unbound*, Volume 3, 2011, p. 395.

The process of inclusion of audiences in exhibitions – as representations or actors – was, however, not similar in the two national museums. In the Ulster Museum, audiences – although priority was given to victims – became part of the interpretations on display. In Dublin, the inclusion of experiences and ordinary people merely emerged through representations and the roles of the public were still very limited to suggesting titles for the 2006 display. The limits to the rapprochement between the two museums came from their distinct roles regarding the past on display, and the community they attempted to serve. Multiculturalism and the fragmentation of narratives matched the community relations policy undertaken since the late 1980s. The situation had been different in the South where political unity and nationalism were still crucial elements for the NMI. At the NMI, the exhibitions had to negotiate Irish national history in a wider framework of representations. Thus, Lahr Joye defined the 2006 exhibition as being both "about the unique stories of Irish soldiers and civilians in war and peace, and about the universal experience of soldiering as seen from an Irish perspective".[1651] This followed the clear suggestion from the 1998 exhibit strategy which highlighted the role of the museum in "preserving and exhibiting the nation's material heritage and communicate the essence of the nation to visitors from other countries".[1652] The NMI was, therefore, not giving up any national unity narratives but rather adapting them to an international framework. Much more than fragmented "voices" from audiences, the NMI provided a new territorialisation to the Irish people who were now represented as connected to many parts of the world, mostly the sites of Diaspora. The remaining opposition between the NMI and the UM came, then, more from different representations of the link between Irish and foreigners. It demonstrates that although global practices could be identified in different national museum – for instance the move from great men to ordinary people's history – the present-centred policy also underlined the adaptation of the representations to the specificity of the local context of remembering, be it focused on victims to come to terms with the past in Northern Ireland, or the need to negotiate Irish national identity with international audiences.

[1651] Joye, Martinovoich, *Design Brief for the Military History Galleries*.
[1652] Sears and Russell, *Exhibit Strategy*, Dublin, 1998.

Conclusion

Through the comparison of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) and the Ulster Museum (UM), the initial purpose of this comparative work was to assess the changing representations of historical Anglo-Irish relations, and more broadly, the mobilization of history in Ireland and Northern Ireland. This purpose is confronted with the difficulty that the two national museums are merely two institutions among many other media and sites of representations of the past. The two museums have had to compete with many other sites of memory related to 1690, 1798, and 1916.[1653] Nevertheless, the interest in the two national museums is based on two particular issues. First, their long existence allows for the all-too-often neglected history of changing representations. Second, the two museums have appeared as particular spaces where the mobilization of history can be examined throughout the twentieth century.

Changing Representations and Changing Mobilization of the History of 1690, 1798, and 1916

The current research has demonstrated how the representations of 1690, 1798, and 1916 have changed throughout the twentieth century and how the different steps in collecting artefacts have had consequences for the manner in which the past has been represented. Unsurprisingly, the NMI has preferably organized displays of insurrections such as the 1798 Rebellion and the 1916 Easter Rising, while the UM has, for a long period, provided Unionist interpretations of the past and focused on the Williamite wars. Although the representations of the three conflicts – and military history at large – are now entirely part of the displays, and constitute the permanent historical collection at the NMI, this has not been the case for most of the twentieth century. In the first decade after Partition, the collections of the two museums included very few artefacts regarding 1690, 1798 or 1916. In the Irish Free State, the national museum focused on the Celtic and early Christian roots of the Irish nation and ignored history after the Anglo-Norman invasions. In the North, the multiple examples of commemorative exhibitions in the 1960s hid the fact that 1690, 1798, and 1916 had been absent from the Belfast Museum's collections until then. Thus, the research has explored how, why, and when representations of historical conflicts emerged in the two national institutions.

[1653] For instance, the Visitor Centre devoted to the Battle of the Boyne opened in 2008 on the site of the battlefield. http://www.battleoftheboyne.ie/ (last visited July 2012). The internet represents an increasing means of communication about historical conflicts. http://www.1916rising.com/ includes history sections, maps, book reviews, and information about guided tours. (last visited July 2012).

The changing representations of the past have depended on processes of mobilization of history. In order to understand the changing mobilization of the history of the three conflicts, the research has highlighted three main issues: the evolution of Anglo-Irish relations in the twentieth century, the remit attributed to the two national museums, and the relations between the museums and their audiences.

One crucial aspect of identity building on the island of Ireland in the twentieth century has been the significance of the relationship with Britain. Thus, the changing political and economic relationships between the two islands have provided a matrix to the interpretations of the past, and, therefore, have contributed to the construction of representations of the past. The current research has sought to show how cultural agencies such as national museums have – or have not – taken the changing context of Anglo-Irish relations into consideration to adapt their displays. For instance, we showed how the politics of reconciliation shaped the general interpretations of the 1798 Rebellion during its bicentenary.

The second aspect which shaped the mobilization of history is the changing remit attributed to the two national museums. The term "national" attached to the museums has had different meanings for the two institutions. While the national status of the NMI has been driven by the need to provide national unity to the Irish State, the situation has been much more complex in Northern Ireland where any definition of national identity has engendered controversies. After its creation in 1961, the national museum of Northern Ireland has been associated with diverse meanings such as the Belfast civic culture, the province of Ulster, the island of Ireland, the whole United Kingdom, and more recently the European Community. According to the context, certain meanings of the term "national" were preferred. For instance, although the UM was created in 1961 as a national institution, one major dimension of the 1960s exhibition was still the Belfast civic culture. The 1967 exhibition arranged at the UM for the bicentenary of Henry Joy McCracken's death focused on Belfast's history much more than on the overall 1798 Rebellion on the island.

The third major dimension influencing the changing mobilization of history in the two national museums relates to the relationships the two institutions have had with their audiences. The question "whom is the national museum – and the different displays arranged – for?" has been crucial to understand the changing representations of the past. One key evolution in museums has been, as Marie Bourke stresses in her study of Irish museums, that the museums moved from "being about something to being for somebody".[1654] Indeed,

---

[1654] Bourke, *The Story of Irish Museums,* p. 443.

consideration for audiences has risen since the 1960s in both the NMI and UM. In the 1960s, in relation to the increase of international tourism, the NMI began to pay more attention to those who do not know about Irish history. Meanwhile, the change of the status from the Belfast to the national Ulster Museum encouraged the consideration of the existence of two main communities in Northern Ireland. Exhibitions began to be mounted in respect to Nationalists and Unionists. In addition to Anglo-Irish relations and the remit attributed to the two institutions, the relationships between museums and their audiences contribute to understanding the analysis of the mobilization of history in the twentieth century.

The Transformations of the Mobilization of History

In comparison to other studies of the uses of the past, the research provides a more detailed analysis of the process (including the purposes, the actors, and debates) through which the history of 1690, 1798, and 1916 has been mobilized in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The objective of the research has not been to reveal any (obvious) political mobilization of the past, but rather to appreciate its evolution. Three overlapping processes of mobilization have been underlined according to their main purposes. The first corresponds to the museums' contribution to the construction of opposite representations of the past according to Nationalist or Unionist ideologies. Although it is difficult to date precisely, it can be argued that, until the early 1970s the two national museums proposed opposite interpretations of Anglo-Irish relations based on independence from or union with Britain. Thus, the NMI served as materialization of Nationalist ideology from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s. Archaeology and collections of antiquities were initially selected and displayed to show the Celtic and early Christian roots of the Irish State. Likewise, the collection of Easter 1916 artefacts was designed to provide the State with historical heroes such as Patrick Pearse. In Northern Ireland, the creation of the Ulster Museum was served by Terence O'Neill's intention to develop Ulster identity as trademark in economic development. Until the 1970s, the two museums were characterized by their opposite support of Nationalist (NMI) and Unionist (UM) interpretations of Anglo-Irish relations. In this process of political mobilization of history for Nationalist and Unionist ideologies, the two museums constructed heroic and triumphal representations of the past. For instance, the 1941 commemorative exhibition of the 1916 Easter Rising at the NMI presented heroic representations of Patrick Pearse. Likewise, the first exhibitions arranged at the newly created UM in the 1960s focused on heroes such as William of Orange for the 1690s or the 36th Ulster Division at the Battle of

the Somme. Only the interpretations of Anglo-Irish relations differed. The NMI's heroic representations linked to insurrection presented Irish unity against Britain. Conversely, the heroes portrayed by the UM aimed at demonstrating the Union between the two islands.

A second process of mobilization was marked by the gradual political reassessment of the opposition between Nationalist and Unionist interpretations of Anglo-Irish relations. The interpretations of 1690, 1798, and 1916 as being chiefly Anglo-Irish conflicts became increasingly challenged due to the changing political relationships between Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Britain. Although the Northern Irish conflict which started in the late 1960s and the following attempts to make peace played a crucial role in the reinterpretations of the past, the changes in representing 1690, 1798, and 1916 began earlier. Already in the 1930s, the Irish government aimed to challenge the Republican mobilization of history to legitimise the use of violence against British authorities. This was blatantly obvious in the 1960s when Sean Lemass was *Taoiseach* and worked at better relations with Britain. The Golden Jubilee of the Easter Rising was marked by the government intention to move from a focus on historical conflicts to the future economic collaboration with Britain. The reassessment of the links between historical conflicts and the opposition between Nationalist and Unionist ideologies was undertaken further during the Northern Irish conflict. In Northern Ireland, local Ulster identity building and a new consideration for the two main traditions shaped the UM's exhibiting policy, partly in 1978 in the design of the Local History gallery and more openly in 1990 for *Kings in Conflicts*. The exhibition reflected the UM's aim to demobilize the history of the 1690s to challenge any political use in the present. The politics of reconciliation during the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion appeared as the epitome of the new political mobilization of history to match the reappraisal of Anglo-Irish relations. This is why the UM passed from an intention to demobilize the history of the 1690s in 1990 to the mobilization of the history of 1798 to reconcile communities in 1998. As a consequence, while the distinction between two strict communities was challenged in 1990, community relations were entirely part of *Up in Arms* in 1998.

This process of redefinition of historical Anglo-Irish relations was marked by two main changes in the representations of 1690, 1798, and 1916. The most visible consequence of the reappraisal of Anglo-Irish relations has been the absence and sometimes the challenge of heroic and triumphal representations of the past. Thus, in 1990 the UM was careful not to present any heroic representations of William of Orange as had been the case in annual parades from the Orange Order. The second change dealt with the enlargement of the frameworks of representations and the inclusion of new actors in the displays. Chapter three

354

showed that the enlargement of the frameworks could take the shape of the Europeanization of the representations of the past, notably the 1690 Battle of the Boyne whose interpretations changed in a European context. The final chapter also demonstrated that historical conflicts were reinterpreted while presented in an international framework as presented in the 2006 *Soldiers and Chiefs* exhibition at the NMI. In the 1990s and 2000s exhibitions, 1690, 1798, and 1916 were no longer solely defined as Anglo-Irish conflicts, and the relations between the two islands were no longer the matrix to interpret the past.

The research has pinpointed a third process of mobilization mainly linked to new roles attributed to the two national museums and new relationship with their audiences since the 1980s. The museums' interest in audiences has been amply studied in the two last decades. In 1994, Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, one of the most famous specialists of museum studies, published *Museums and their Visitors* in which she stressed that "in addition to looking inward to their collections, museums are now looking outward towards their audiences; where in the past collections were researched, now audiences are also being researched."[1655] Indeed, one of the chief revolutionary aspects of the history of museums is the increasing attention they have paid to the diversity of their visitors. Already in the 1960s, both Anthony Lucas, director of the NMI, and Noel Nesbitt, responsible of the UM's local history collections wanted to draw attention to the changing audiences. In Dublin, Lucas desired more historical context to help visitors – including tourists – who knew little about Irish history. In Belfast, Nesbitt was well aware that historical conflicts like the Battle of the Boyne or the 1798 Rebellion were differently interpreted in Nationalist and Unionist communities.

The attention paid to visitors and potential audiences rose in the 1990s spurred on the development of marketing strategies. Marketing strategies emerged within the UM in the 1980s and in the 1990s at the NMI in order to develop income generation, effectiveness of the management, and to attract new audiences. The national museums were not only participating in the creation of identity, but have been requested by State and European agencies to contribute to cultural tourism activity. The mobilization of history became more and more driven by economic and marketing factors. The research has demonstrated in Chapter four that the new economic and marketing purposes shaped the ways in which temporary exhibitions were designed in the 1990s and 2000s. The focus on audiences has been the principal issue in explaining the distinction between the NMI and UM's exhibiting policies. On the one hand, the design of exhibitions in the two national museums evolved similarly.

[1655] Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and their Visitors*, (London : Routledge, 1994), p. 1.

Thus, both museums began to integrate audio-visual technology in their display. More importantly, the museums shifted from object-oriented displays to a strategy of communication and interpretation. On the other hand, the dissimilar audiences in the two museums had an impact on the manner in which the past was represented. The NMI has become a tourist-oriented site, where international tourists and in particular Irish Diaspora were targeted. In Northern Ireland, the UM has largely remained centred on local community and family visits, and the distinction between the two main traditions has been reinforced. The contrast was overt in the 2000s when the two museums organized very similar exhibitions about military history in Ireland. However, the 2003 exhibition at the UM focused more on the local history which explained the Northern Irish conflict while the NMI set the history of Ireland in an international context of military history. It was symbolic that, in *Soldiers and Chiefs*, the 1916 Easter Rising received less attention than the Irish involvement in international conflicts such as the First World War which had, for a long part of the twentieth century, been ignored by the NMI. What was striking was that the opposition was no longer between Unionist and Nationalist interpretations of the past – as it had been above all since the creation of the UM in the early 1960s – but between national unity, framed within an international context at the NMI and the two traditions emphasized at the UM, which tended towards a more fragmentary understanding of identity.

National Museums and the Increased Mobilization of History

The number of commemorations in Ireland and Northern Ireland in the 1990s and 2000s suggests that the mobilization of history may have been on the increase after two decades in which the Northern Irish conflict prevented major official celebrations. Supported by the European funding for peace and reconciliation the UM organized displays and permanent collections dealing with twentieth century Ireland. A significant aspect of the UM's 2003 exhibition was the important space devoted to the Northern Irish conflict and its consequences for the population. Likewise, under the impulse of the Irish Defence Forces and the new marketing strategy which considered the recent past as more suitable for tourists, the NMI introduced and finished its historical permanent collections with the Irish involvement in the United Nations and the politics of reconciliation between Ireland and Northern Ireland. Although present-centred exhibitions resulted from new definitions of the links between past and present, it is more questionable whether this represents a greater politicization of history. The current research has demonstrated that the roles of governments and other State agencies

in the construction of historical narratives within the two national museums should not be over-emphasized. At the same time, it is going too far to concur with James Cuno – Director of the Art Museum of Chicago – who in his book entitled *Museums Matter* argued that the "museum is precisely not an instrument of the state but is instead an instrument against an essentialized, state-derived cultural identity in favor of a cosmopolitan one".[1656] Although it is a too strong to deny any political influence in the construction of representations in museums, it is true that the study of the NMI and the UM did not reveal major involvement by political actors. Despite the limitation of sources alluded to, the archives of the NMI reveal that the involvement of the Irish government has been very limited for most of the twentieth century. In a recent Master thesis on the successive exhibitions related to the 1916 Easter Rising at the NMI, Anne-Marie Ryan concludes "Government influence at the NMI is evident from early exhibitions in 1932 and 1935, when government officials facilitated individuals lobbying for exhibitions on the Irish Revolution; in 1941, when a commemorative exhibition was mounted at the suggestion of the Minister for Education and in 1966, when the Taoiseach secured a number of objects for the NMI from the IWM."[1657] The situation was, in fact, more complex. In the 1930s, the role of the government was secondary. The creation of historical collections devoted to the 1916 Easter Rising at the NMI derived from popular interest and Helen Gifford-Donnelly's persistence. Likewise, in 1941 and 1966, the government did not have any project regarding the NMI. While the government secured objects from the Imperial War Museum – especially the 1916 flag – it was not initially connected to the NMI's collections. The point is not to challenge any political involvement in the construction of collections at the NMI, but to assert that it was by no means determinant in the interpretations of the past.

Both in Ireland and Northern Ireland, the involvement of governments was limited to certain periods. In the 1930s, the Irish government encouraged the construction of representations of historical republican heroes such as Patrick Pearse or Theobald Wolfe Tone. In the 1960s, Terence O'Neill's government in Northern Ireland supported the creation of the national Ulster Museum in the construction of an Ulster identity. More importantly, the attempts to make peace in Northern Ireland during the 1990s resulted in political funding – from the British government or the European Community (via the Community Relations Council) – to construct less divisive representations of the past. Even in this period of strong political mobilization of history, political actors were not directly influencing the construction

---

[1656] James B. Cuno, *Museums Matter: in Praise of the Encyclopedic Museum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 3.
[1657] Ryan, "Exhibiting the Irish Revolution", p. 39.

of historical narratives at the national museums. The process of political mobilization took place indirectly, through the work of historians. Thus, Jane Leonard and Kevin Whelan linked the two national museums with state or European agencies such as the government Commemoration Committee or the Community Relations Council in charge of the European funding for peace and reconciliation. Museums were sites where politics of reconciliation were interpreted, associated with other considerations – such as marketing – and integrated in the overall design of exhibitions.

More than the political uses, the increased mobilization of history is revealed by the multiple new actors involved in the construction of exhibitions. Until the 1960s, exhibitions were exclusively designed by curators; the 1948 commemorative of the 1798 Rebellion was arranged at the NMI by Gerard Hayes-McCoy, and the 1967 exhibition about Henry Joy McCracken was entirely designed by Noel Nesbitt. The situation was very different in the 1990s and 2000s. Although William Maguire was in charge of *Kings in Conflict*, the overall organization of the exhibition involved the UM's Education Department (especially for the production of the Education Pack), a designer, historical advisers. The inclusion of audio-visual mechanisms in temporary exhibitions necessitated the collaboration with private companies like Martello Multimedia for *Fellowship of Freedom* in 1998 at the NMI. Likewise, in order to adapt displays better for audiences, an interpretative planner worked at the NMI for the organization of *Soldiers and Chiefs*. Absent from the exhibition building process for most of the twentieth century, historians have collaborated with the two national museums for the recent displays.

Certainly the most notable actor who has been involved in the construction of exhibitions is audiences. The role played by audiences contributed to a more complex definition of official narratives of the past not merely established by state agencies. This complexity is not entirely new and has already been attested in the first chapter for the 1930s. For instance, the 1916 collection at the NMI was born from the work of an Irish veteran of the Easter Rising – Helen Gifford-Donnelly – and the networks of donors she succeeded in mobilizing in the 1920s. Likewise, the focus on commemorative exhibitions at the UM has revealed that the design of the 1960s displays was also influenced by private collectors. It is, therefore, inappropriate to consider all-too-neat distinctions between official and popular narratives of 1690, 1798, and 1916. What has been different since the 1990s is the direct involvement of audiences – and not individuals – in the design of exhibitions.

Public interpretations of objects and of the whole exhibition was a central aspect of the 2003 exhibition mounted at the UM. Through 'voices' of victims associated with certain

objects, or through messages hung in contemplation areas, visitors participated in the construction of historical narratives. This is part of the general trend in museums which, according to Hooper-Greenhill, have become "closer to their audiences" and in which "the concept of voices have become significant".[1658] She argued for the development of "post-museum" where the focus would be on the visitors' interpretations of objects, and where "exhibitions will become one among many other forms of communication".[1659] It would be naïve to think that visitors truly participate in the construction and design of exhibitions. For instance, their involvement in *Soldiers in Chiefs* was limited to the participation in the selection of a title. However, it is true more and more museums take audiences into consideration to mount exhibition. For instance, one of the most notable aspects of the House of French History project has been the possibility to start building collections according to the survey of potential visitors regarding what they expected to find in such a house/museum. The limited involvement of audiences at the NMI and the fact that the project at the House of French History failed contrasted with the UM where the "voices" contributed to the fragmentation of historical narratives in the 2003 exhibition. The discrepancy stemmed from the distinct roles attributed to the two national museums in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The NMI was still driven by the alleged national unity whereas the UM had developed a more acute perception of cultural diversity and the need to respond to visitors' own interpretations of the past. The mobilization of history has, therefore, been more complex than the simple political uses of the past.

Present-centred exhibiting policy encouraged to deal with the diversity of audiences and their interpretations of the past, and, as a consequence, to provide more sophisticated representations of the past in which figures such as heroes, enemies, or victims were reinterpreted. For instance, the UM's involvement in politics of reconciliation – for example the visits of communities from Crumlin after the murder of a young Catholic in 1998 – strengthened the reinterpretation of the roles of the institution, and new consideration on the impact of representations on audiences. The mobilization of history to attract new audiences has also allowed the museum to provide richer representations of the past no longer limited to objects or text. Thus, sounds, moving images, re-enactments have been added to the displays of artefacts. Whether the NMI – and Collins Barracks in particular – has become a major site of display in the 2000s, it is first and foremost due to the economic – and to some extent the political – needs.

[1658] Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*. p. 143.
[1659] Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*. p. 152.

Why (National) Museums Matter?[1660] *The National Museum of Ireland and the Ulster Museum Actors of Change?*

While studying the mobilization of history in Ireland and Northern Ireland, it has been necessary to assess to what extent the two national museums have been at the forefront of new interpretations of 1690, 1798, 1916 and the overall history of Anglo-Irish relations. In other words, the research has demonstrated why museums matter. Very often, the publications which explain why museums matter come from staff of museums themselves or museum experts.[1661] These works result partly from the competition in which museums have to highlight their specificity in comparison with other media and cultural institutions. The current research has been more interested in pointing out to what extent the National Museum of Ireland and the Ulster Museum have contributed to the mobilization of history and the changing representations of 1690, 1798, and the 1916 Easter Rising. In the long term, the research has demonstrated that the changing representations within the two museums have been the result of external reinterpretations of the past. The construction of historical narratives of the 1916 Easter Rising at the NMI came from Republican veterans who aimed to remember their dead fellow rebels. Likewise, the internationalization of the frameworks of representation at Collins Barracks in the late 1990s and 2000s came from the collaboration with the Irish Defence Forces and their involvement in conflicts outside Ireland. In Northern Ireland, the rise of military history in the 1990s was very much the consequence of politics of reconciliation applied by Jane Leonard.

Change in museums has been the subject of many studies and debates. Janet Marstine asked in her introduction to new museum theory and practice "Are museums changing or are they merely voicing the rhetoric of change? Are museums capable of change?"[1662] Sceptical positions argue that museums cannot change.[1663] In 1969, Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel stressed that although museums introduce new spaces, new exhibitions, and new educational initiatives, they refrain from scrutinizing their own production, and aspire to unify their public

---

[1660] Cuno, *Museums Matter.*

[1661] Nigel J. Collar, Clemency T. Fisher, eds., *Why Museums Matter: Avian Archives in an Age of Extinction: Papers from a Conference of this Title held at Green Park, Aston Clinton, and workshops at the National History Museum, Tring, 12-15 November 1999* (British Ornithologists' Club, 2003).

[1662] Janet Marstine, *New Museum Theory and Practice: an Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), p. 6.

[1663] Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995); Mieke Bal, *A Mieke Bal Reader.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

rather than acknowledge multiple and shifting identities.[1664] It is true that, for a long time, the two national museums have concentrated on their role of preservation of objects. In doing so, the two national museums intended to save and freeze what they defined as cultural heritage. In 2009, Patrick Wallace presented the NMI as a site of preservation of the national heritage but denied that the museum was a site of history-making.[1665] However, the research has also revealed that, since the 1960s, the two national museums have paid much more attention to the diversity of their audiences and have adapted the display of their collections accordingly. More than debating whether museums are, or are not, actors of change, it is important to note the specific process of changing representations.

One reason which explains why the two national museums have not been in the foreground in the process of changing interpretations of the past deals with the construction of collections. Unlike other actors in the history-making process, museums have to manage objects collected over a long period of time. While mounting exhibitions, curators have to deal with a previous selection of what was deemed worth preserving. The relevance of long term collecting policy is a major specificity of museums in comparison with other sites of history-teaching such as schools, and other media such as television, radio, and the internet. Change in museums is a constant negotiation between present mobilization and previous construction of representations through collections. It explains, for instance, the dominant continuity of the representations of the 1916 Easter Rising in the NMI's permanent collections. This also explains the difficult creation of historical collections in the 1930s and 1940s in comparison with antiquities which had been the core of the NMI's collection since the late nineteenth century. In order to provide enlarged representations of the Battle of the Boyne in 1990, William Maguire and the UM had to borrow artefacts from many European museums. Likewise, the NMI did not have artefacts to include representations of "enemies" in the 1991 new permanent exhibition of 1916.[1666] Representations of the past in the two national museums changed less quickly than other factors of mobilization. While the Irish government evolved from a low-key participation in the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising to a strong political mobilization during the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion, the NMI was marked by the continuity of representations. The complex process of change in museums also derives from the multiple issues taken into consideration. In addition to politics of

---

[1664] Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Darbel, and Dominique Schnapper, *L'amour de l'art les musées d'art européens et leur public* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969).
[1665] Personal interview, February 2009, Dublin.
[1666] For instance, the uniform of the Black and Tans came from Britain.

reconciliation, other factors such as marketing policy, funding, space and objects available have played a role in the overall construction of representations.

Despite the inability of national museums to provide hegemonic interpretations of the past by themselves, the research has demonstrated that the UM and the NMI mattered in three different aspects. Firstly, and most obviously, as we have shown at length, the two national museums served to provide authority for specific interpretations of the past. In the 1930s, for example, the transfer of the 1916 collections from private donors to the NMI contributed to giving authority to Republican narratives of the 1916 Easter Rising. Secondly, and less obviously, in certain respects museums have played an important part in demobilizing history. The design of *Kings in Conflict* in 1990 for the tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne was designed to deconstruct the significance it had in Unionist mythology. Utilized for the new history curriculum which followed the 1989-1990 reform of education in Northern Ireland, the UM sought to produce a new interpretation that reflected the social and religious diversity of its school-age visitors. Finally, national museums have contributed significantly to an enlarged definition of history-making. Exhibitions are the result of long processes of organization which involve many different actors, of whom academic historians are only one. As Hilda Kean, Paul Martin, and Sally Jordan suggested in the introduction to *Seeing History: Public History in Britain Now*, "Public history relies on a collective and collaborative effort of people often working in different fields".[1667] Moreover, written historical narratives are increasingly challenged by material, visual, audio representations of the past, and in this context museums have played an increasing role in providing richer representations of the past. The gradual involvement of audiences in the construction of displays can also help museums to become relevant sites of reflection about what national history means.[1668] The NMI and the UM, though not at the forefront of such developments, have nevertheless provided spaces where curators, historians, educationalists, community relations personnel, tourism promoters and many others have been able to participate in creating a more 'bottom up' representation of the past and the basis for a more participatory historical culture.

[1667] H. Kean, P. Martin, and S. Jordan "Introduction", in Hilda Kean, Sally J Morgan, and Paul Martin eds., *Seeing History: Public History in Britain now* (London: Francis Boutle, 2000), p. 15.
[1668] De Groot, *Consuming History* , p. 236.

Appendix

Appendix 1: List of Museums' Directors

National Museum of Ireland:

W.E. Steele	(1878-1883)
Valentine Ball	(1883-1895)
Colonel Plunkett	(1895-1907)
Count Plunkett	(1907-1916)
No director between 1916 and 1934	
Adolf Mahr	(1934-1939)
Antony Lucas	(1954-1976)
Joseph Raftery	(1976-1979)
Brendan O'Riordain	(1979-1988)
Patrick Wallace	(1988-2012)

Ulster Museum:

Wilfred Seaby	(1962-1970).
Seaby had been director of the Belfast Museum since 1953.	
Alan Warhurst	(1970-1977)
Alan McCutcheon	(1978-1983)
Sean Nolan	(1983-1996)

Director of MAGNI

Mike Houlihan	(1998-2003)
Tim Cooke	(2003-)

Appendix 2: List of Keepers and Education Officers

<u>National Museum of Ireland</u>:

    Keepers

        -Liam Gogan: 1914-1916 and 1922-1936 (assistant keeper, antiquities)

                                1936-1956 (keeper of the Art and Industry division)

        -Tomas O'Cleirigh: Assistant keeper in charge of the 1935 exhibition of Easter 1916 relics

        -Gerard Hayes-McCoy: 1937-1959 (in charge of the historical collections)

        -Oliver Snoddy: 1963-1989 (in charge of the historical collections)

        -John Teehan: Keeper of the Art and Industry division

        -Michael Kenny: 1975-2001 (assistant keeper, in charge of the historical collections since 1989)

                                2001-2012 (keeper of the Art and Industry division)

        -Lahr Joye: 2001- Assistant keeper in the history division.

    Education Officers

        -Felicity Devlin

        -Helen Beaumont

<u>Ulster Museum</u>:

    Keepers

        -Noel Nesbitt: Librarian, in charge of the local history collections

        -William (Bill) Maguire: 1980-1995 (keeper of the local history division)

        -Trevor Parkhill: 1995-2012 (keeper of the local history division)

    Outreach Officer

        -Jane Leonard   1997-2006

    Education Officers

-Sheila Speers: 1980-1996
-Marian Ferguson: 1996-2010

Appendix 3:

Organigram of the National Museum of Ireland, 2007

Organigram of the National Museum of Northern Ireland, 2007

NATIONAL MUSEUMS & GALLERIES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

ULSTER MUSEUM MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ULSTER MUSEUM

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Divisions

Art	Science	Human History	Collections Services	Museum Services
Departments				**Central Resources**
- Fine Art	- Botany	- Archaeology & Ethnography	- Registry	- Finance
- Applied Art	- Zoology	- Local History	- Conservation	- Personnel
	- Geology	- Armagh County Museum		- Buildings
				Public Services
				- Marketing & Public Relations
				- Education Services
				- Design & Exhibition
				- Gallery Services & Security
				- Visitor Services

Appendix 4: Ministers, Prime Ministers, and Secretaries of State, Ireland and Northern Ireland

Irish Free State / Republic of Ireland

Minister for Education

-John O'Kelly, August 1921 – January 1922, Sinn Fein (SF)

-Michael Hayes, January 1922 – September 1922, Pro-Treaty-Sinn Fein

-Finian Lynch, April 1922 – August 1922, Pro-Treaty SF

-Eoin MacNeill, August 1922 – November 1925, Cumann na nGaedhael

-John Marcus Sullivan, January 1926, March 1932, Cumann na nGaedhael

-Thomas Derrig, March 1932 – September 1939, Fianna Fail (FF)

-Sean O'Ceallaigh, September 1939 – September 1939, FF

-Eamon de Valera, September 1939 – June 1940, FF

-Derrig June 1940 – February 1948, FF

-Richard Mulcahy, February 1948 – June 1951, Fine Gael (FG)

-Sean Moylan, June 1951 – June 1954, FF

-Richard Mulcahy, June 1954 – March 1957, FG

-Jack Lynch, March 1957 – June 1959, FF

-Patrick Hillery, June 1959 – April 1965, FF

-George Colley, April 1965 – July 1966, FF

-Donagh O'Malley, July 1966 – March 1968, FF

-Jack Lynch, March 1968 – March 1968, FF

-Brian Lenihan, March 1968 – July 1969, FF

-Padraig Faulkner, July 1969 – March 1973, FF

-Richard Burke, March 1973 – December 1976, FG

-Peter Barry, December 1976 – July 1977, FG

-John Wilson, July 1977 – June 1981, FF

-John Boland, June 1981 – March 1982, FG

-Martin O'Donoghue, March 1982 – October 1982, FF

-Charles Haughey, 7 October 1982 – 27 October 1982, FF

-Gerard Brady, 27 October 1982 – December 1982, FF

-Gemma Hussey, December 1982 – February 1986, FG

-In 1984, the National Museum of Ireland moves to the Department of the

Taoiseach

President of the Executive Council

-W.T. Cosgrave, December 1922 – March 1932, Cumann na nGaedheal

-Eamon de Valera, March 1932 – December 1937, FF

Taoiseach

-Eamon de Valera, December 1937 – February 1948, FF

-John A. Costello, February 1948 – June 1951, FG

-Eamon de Valera, June 1951 – June 1954, FF

-John A. Costello, June 1954 – March 1957, FG

-Eamon de Valera, March 1957 – June 1959, FF

-Sean Lemass, June 1959 – November 1966, FF

-Jack Lynch, November 1966 – March 1973, FF

-Liam Cosgrave, March 1973 – July 1977, FG

-Jack Lynch, July 1977 – December 1979, FF

-Charles Haughey, December 1979 – June 1981, FF

-Garret FitzGerald, June 1981 – March 1982, FG

-Charles Haughey, March 1987 – February 1992, FF

-Albert Reynolds, February 1992 – December 1994, FF

-John Bruton, December 1994 – June 1997, FG

-Bertie Ahern, June 1997 – May 2008, FF

-Brian Cowen, May 2008 – March 2011, FF

-Enda Kenny, March 2011 - , FG

Northern Ireland

Prime Minister

-Sir James Craig (Viscount Craigavon): June 1921 – November 1940, Ulster Unionist

-John Miller Andrews, November 1940 – May 1943, Ulster Unionist

-Sir Basil Brooke (Viscount Brookeborough): May 1943 – March 1963, Ulster Unionist

-Terence O'Neill: March 1963 – May 1969, Ulster Unionist

-James Chichester-Clark, May 1969 – March 1971, Ulster Unionist

-Brian Faulkner, March 1971 – March 1972, Ulster Unionist

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

-William Whitelaw: March 1972 – December 1973, Conservative

-Francis Pym, December 1973 – March 1974, Conservative

-Merlyn Rees, March 1974 – September 1976, Labour

-Roy Mason, September 1976 – May 1979, Labour

-Humphrey Atkins, May 1979 – September 1981, Conservative

-James Prior, September 1981 – September 1984, Conservative

-Douglas Hurd, September 1984 – September 1985, Conservative

-Tom King, September 1985 – July 1989, Conservative

-Peter Brooke, July 1989 – April 1992, Conservative

-Sir Patrick Mayhew, April 1992 – May 1997, Conservative

-Mo Mowlam, May 1997 – October 1999, Labour

-Peter Mandelson, October 1999 – January 2001, Labour

-John Reid, January 2001 – October 2002, Labour

-Paul Murphy, October 2002 – May 2005, Labour

Appendix 5: National Museum of Ireland and Ulster Museum

National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Pearse Square, main entrance, 2007

National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Clarke Square, main courtyard, 2009.

Ulster Museum (Belfast, Stranmillis), 2005.

Appendix 6 : Collins Barracks, Site an Location

Site of Collins Barracks (Archives of the NMI, CB 95/011)
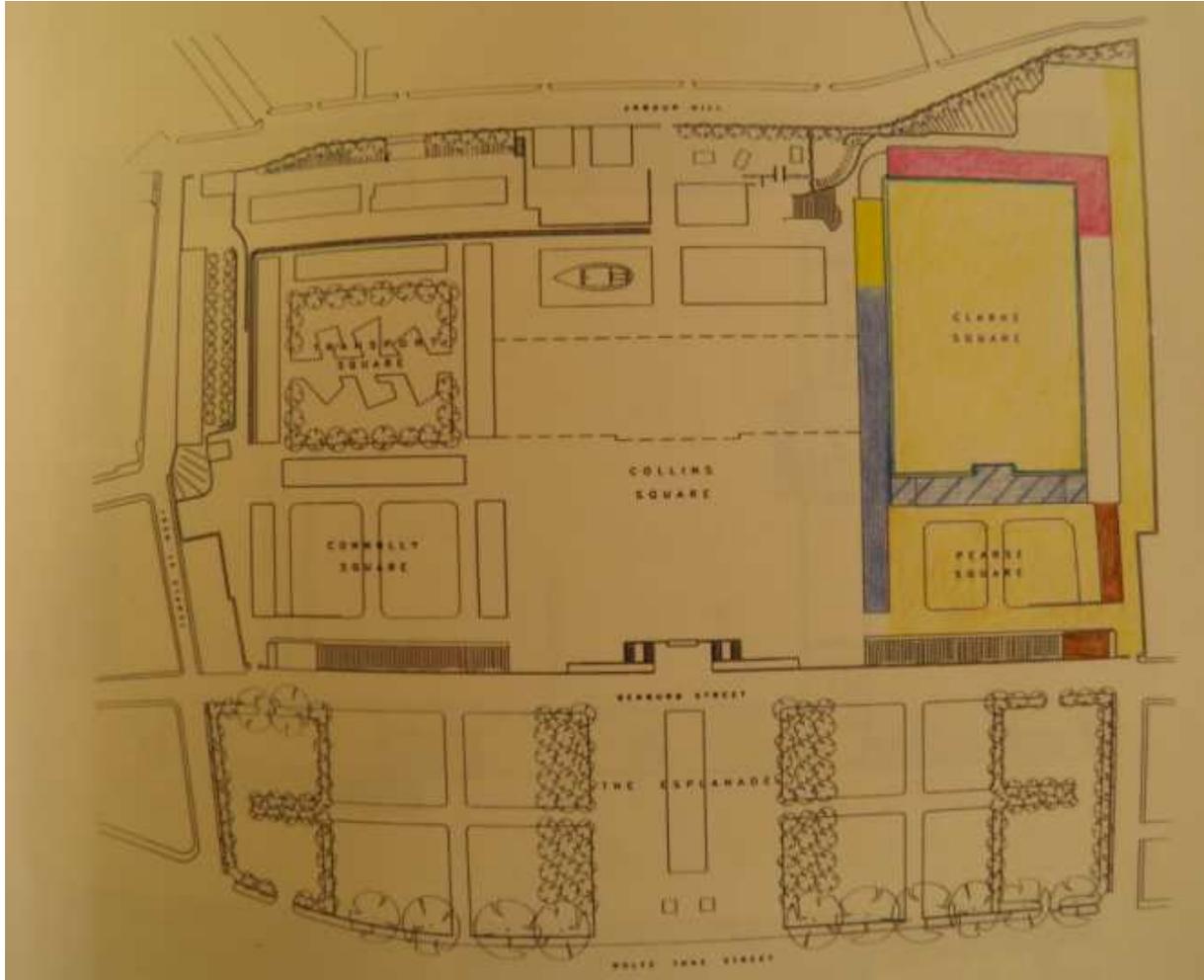
Location, Collins Barracks (archives of the NMI, A1/95/017)
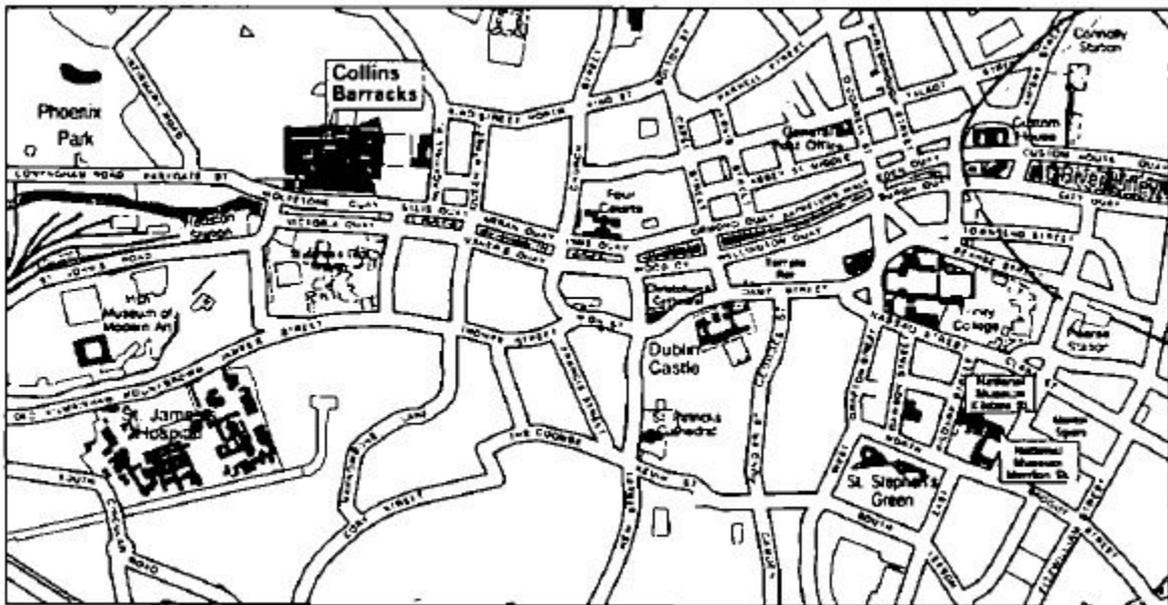
Appendix 7: Layout of Permanent and Temporary Exhibitions, National Museum of Ireland and Ulster Museum

Outline Guide to the Principal Collections and List of Publications, Postcards and Transparencies, National Museum of Ireland, Dublin 1971.

Layout of the 1991 Permanent Exhibition: *The Road to Independence*. Source: National Museum, 1916 exhibition, 1991, Archives of the Office of Public Works (OPW), Dublin.

Layout of the 1998 Commemorative Exhibition of the 1798 Rebellion. McCullough Mulvin Architects, 1798 Exhibition, archives of McCullough Mulvin Architects, 1998.
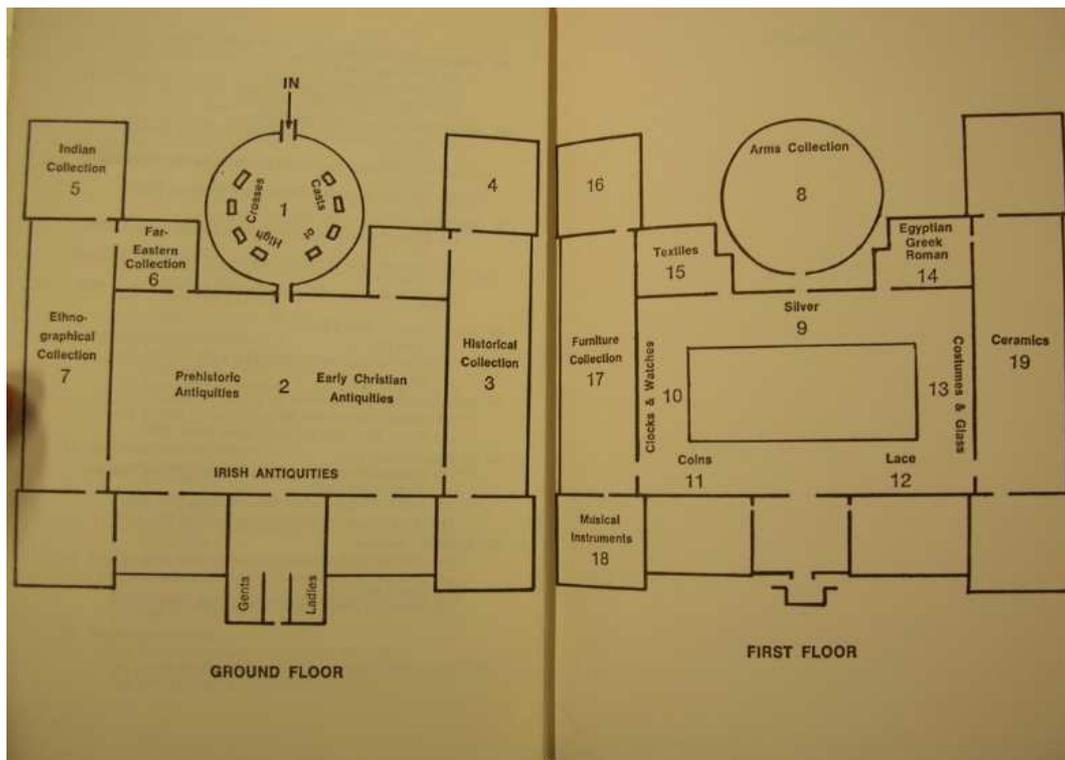
Floor 1

Ground Floor

← Entrance

Clarke Square

Galleries - Soldiers and Chiefs:
The Irish at War at Home and Abroad, from 1550
Gailearaithe - Saighdiúirí agus Taoisigh:
Éireannaigh ag troid in Éirinn agus i gCéin, ó1550

15   **The British Garrison in Ireland**
Garastún na Breataine in Éirinn

16   **Warfare in Ireland**
An Chogaíocht in Éirinn

17   **The Wild Geese**
Na Géanna Fiáine

17   **Irish in the American Civil War**
Éireannaigh i gCogadh Cathartha Mheiriceá

18   **Irish in the British Service**
Éireannaigh i Seirbhís na Breataine

19   **The First World War**
An Chéad Chogadh Domhanda

19   **The 1916 Rising**
Éirí Amach na Cásca

20   **The Irish Wars**
Cogaí na hÉireann

21   **Claiming the Future**
Ag Glacadh Seilbh ar an Todhchaí

22   **The Second World War - The Emergency**
An Dara Cogadh Domhanda - An Éigeandáil

23   **Training for Peace**
Traenáil don tSíocháin

i   **Reception**
Fáiltiú

  Cloakroom
Seomra Cótaí

  Toilets
Leithris

  Shop
Siopa

  Café
Caife

  Stairs & Lifts to Galleries
Staighre agus Ardaitheoirí chun na nGailearaithe

General Outline of the Permanent Collections, Ulster Museum, Before the 2006-2009 Refurbishments.
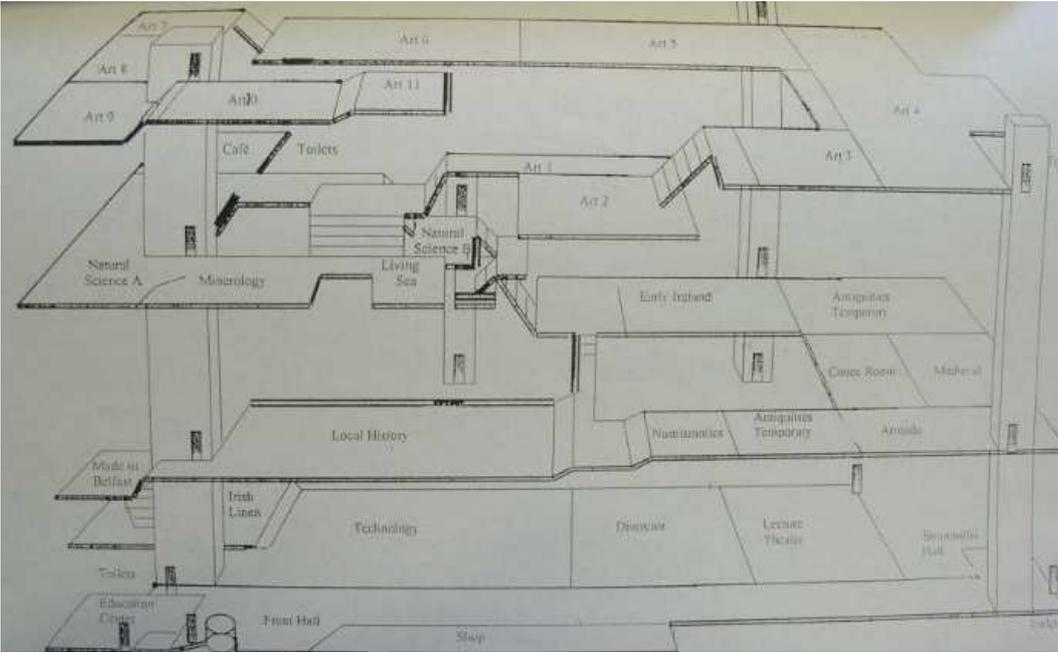
Appendix 8: List of Permanent and Temporary Exhibitions, National Museum of Ireland and Ulster Museum

Date	Title/Subject	Event	Site
1932	Pathway to Freedom	Easter Rising	NMI
1935	1916 permanent collections	/	NMI
1941	1916 Easter Rising	25th anniversary	NMI
1948	1798 Rebellion	150th anniversary	NMI
1958	Elisabethan Ulster	400th anniversary of throne accession	Belfast Museum
1962	William III memorial exhibition	Dutch week	Ulster Museum
1964	The Two World Wars	25th and 50th anniversaries of outbreak of War	Ulster Museum
1966	1916 Easter Rising	50th anniversary of 1916 Easter Rising	NMI
1966	Somme anniversary exhibition	50th anniversary of the Battle	Ulster Museum
1967	Orange Order exhibition	Imperial Grand Loge Council	Ulster Museum
1967	Henry Joy McCracken	Bicentenary of his birth	Ulster Museum
1988	Spanish Armada	Quatercentenary of the Spanish Armada	Ulster Museum
1990	Kings in Conflict	Tercentenary of Battle of the Boyne	Ulster Museum
1991	Road to Independence	75th anniversary of 1916 Easter Rising	NMI
1998	Up in Arms	Bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion	Ulster Museum
1998	Fellowship of Freedom	Bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion	NMI
2001	War in XXth century Ireland	60th anniversary of Blitz in Belfast	Ulster Museum
2003	Conflict : the Irish at War	/	Ulster Museum
2006	Soldiers and Chiefs	/	NMI
2006	Understanding 1916	90th anniversary of 1916 Easter Rising	NMI

Appendix 9: Exhibitions and Visual Representations

Appendix: 9-A: 1941 commemorative exhibition of the 1916 Easter Rising. Photograph of the central hall, National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street, archives of the National Museum, A1/99/003

Appendix 9-B: Poster of the 1966 exhibition devoted to the Battle of the Somme, Ulster Museum, Somme Anniversary, Archives of the Local History Department, Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Museums Northern Ireland.
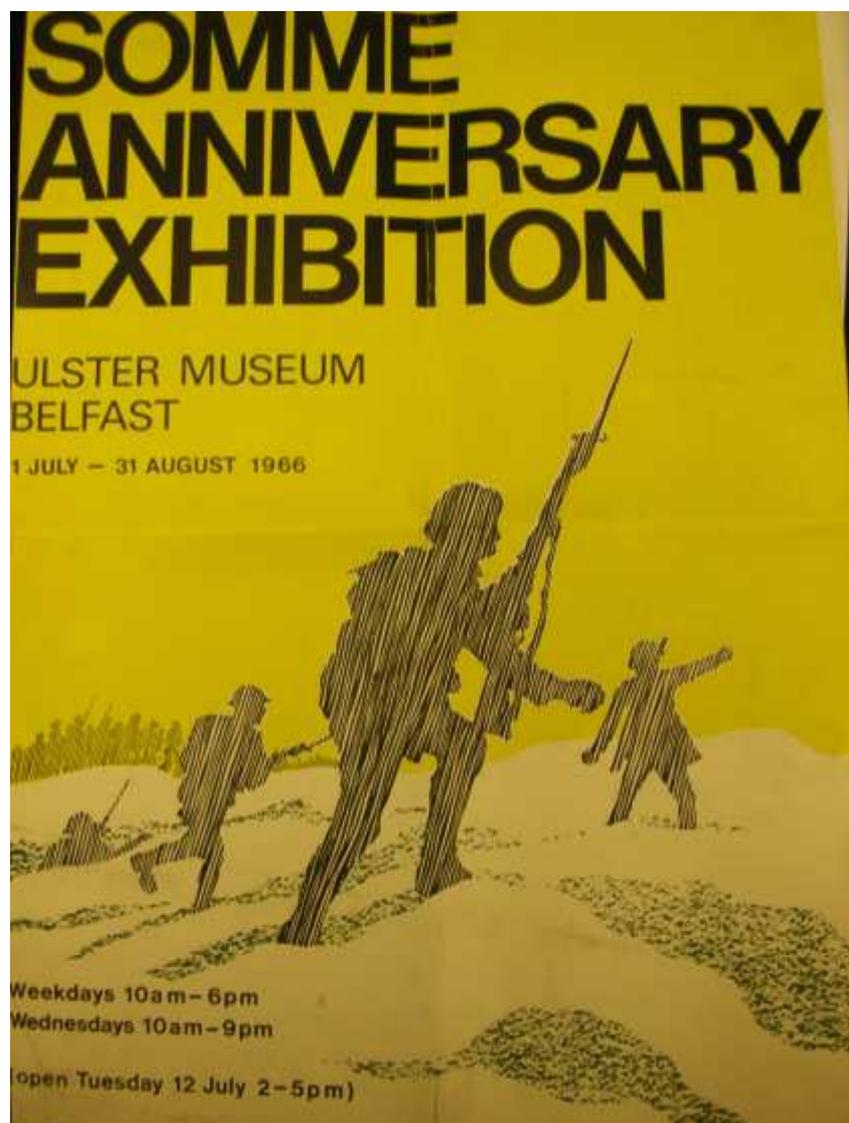
Appendix 9-C: Photograph of the 1916 Historical Collections, *The Irish Times*, 29 April 1970.
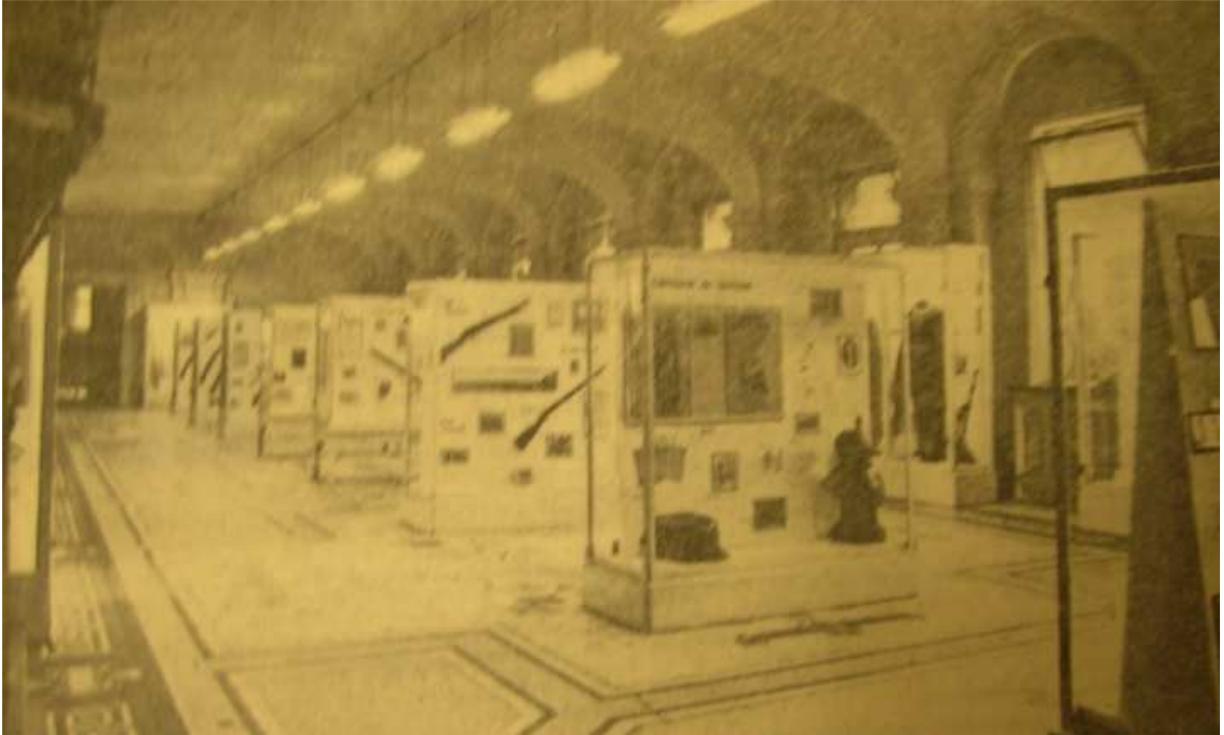
Appendix 9-D: Logo of *Kings in Conflict*, Ulster Museum, 1990, Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Museums Northern Ireland.

Appendix 9-E: Poster of *Kings in Conflict*, Ulster Museum 1990, Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Museums Northern Ireland.

Appendix 9-F: *Europe in 1688*, *Kings in Conflict*, 1990, Ulster Museum. Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Museums Northern Ireland

Appendix 9-G: Design of the Rotunda, portraits of the 1916 executed leaders, 1991, NMIA, A1/90/108

Appendix 9-H: Leaflet published for the exhibition about the Irish Defence Forces, mounted at the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin National Museum of Ireland, 1997.
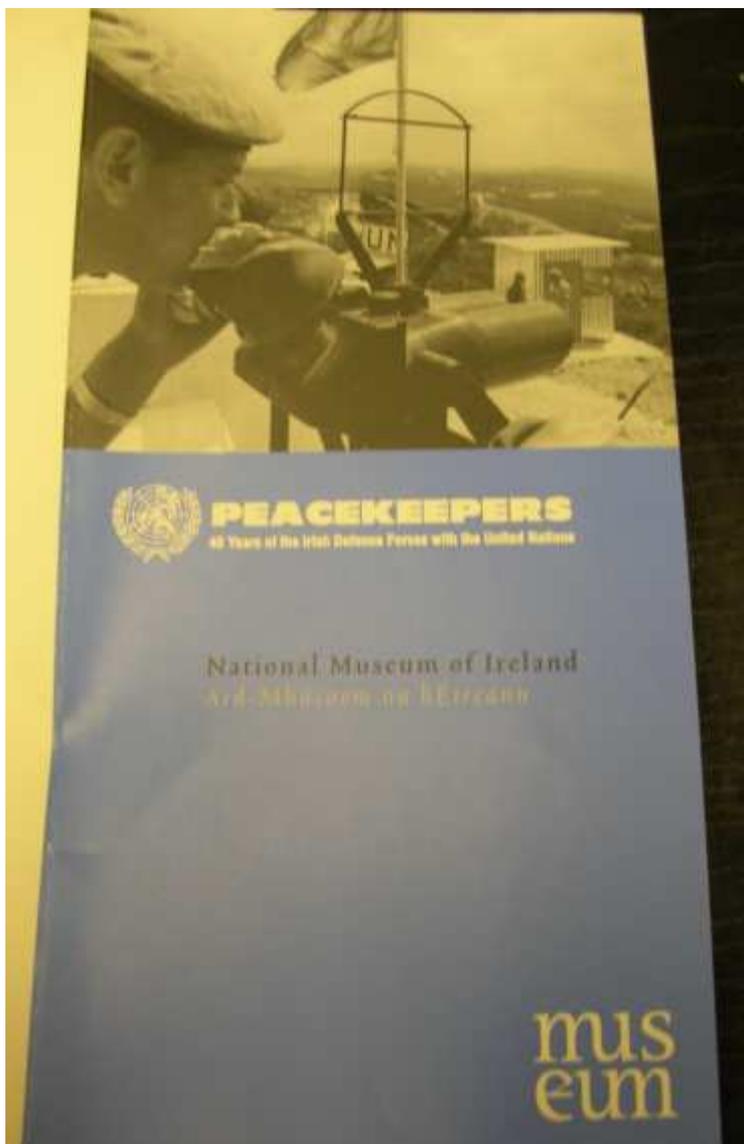
Appendix 9-I: Leaflet published by the National Museum of Ireland for the 1798 Rebellion Lecture Series, Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, 1998, Courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland.
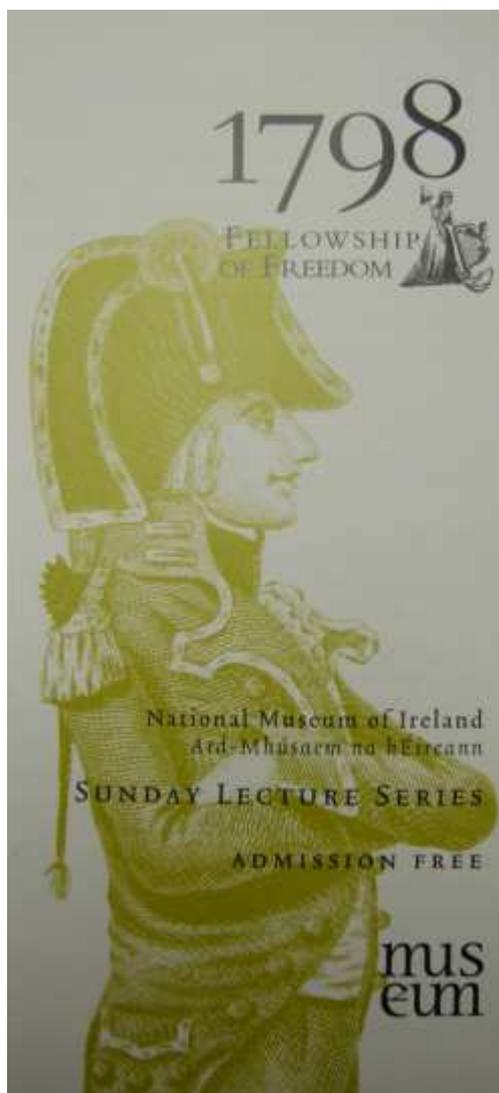
Appendix 9-J: Poster published by the Ulster Museum for *Up in Arms*, Ulster Museum, 1998, Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Museums Northern Ireland.
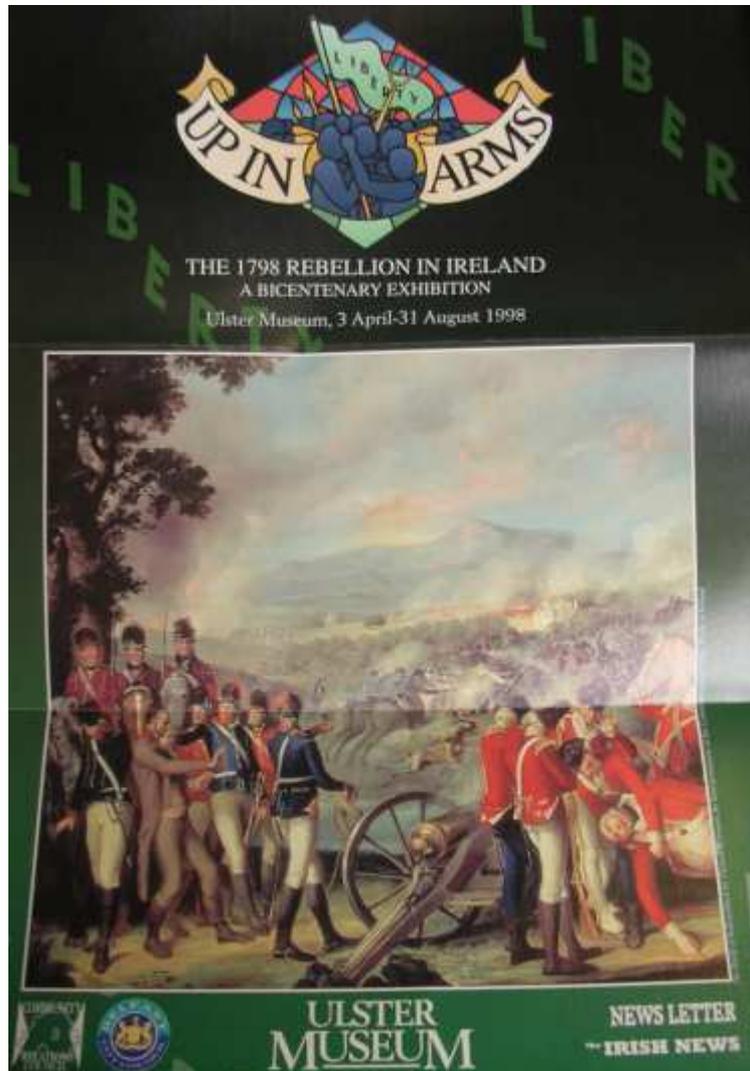
Appendix 9-K: Logo of *Up in Arms*, Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Museums Northern Ireland
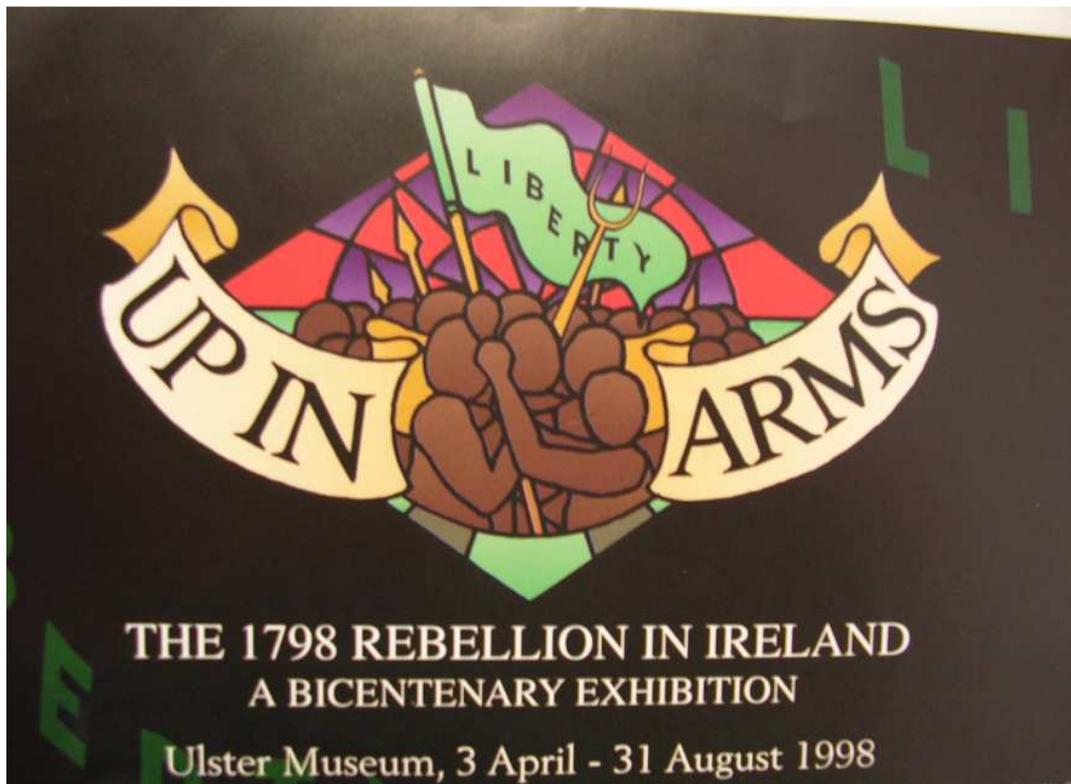
Appendix 9-L: Thomas Robinson, *The Battle of Ballynahinch,* (original name: *Combat between the King's Troops and the Peasantry at Ballynahinch*), (d.1810), Office of Public Works, Dublin. With the kind permission of the Office of Public Work.

Appendix 9-N: George Cruikshank, *The Rebels Executing their Prisoners on the Bridge at Wexford*, 1845, Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

Appendix 10: Museums' Annual Attendance

Date	Belfast/Ulster Museum	National Museum of Ireland
1919	undisclosed	270000
1924	undisclosed	276000
1929	undisclosed	367000
1934	undisclosed	339000
1939	undisclosed	299000
1940	undisclosed	277000
1944	undisclosed	310000
1946	127000	undisclosed
1949	undisclosed	240000
1951	131000	undisclosed
1952	138000	undisclosed
1953	127000	undisclosed
1954	130000	185000
1955	135000	undisclosed
1956	126000	undisclosed
1957	127000	undisclosed
1958	134000	undisclosed
1959	113000	212000
1960	114000	162000
1961	122000	152000
1962	129000	167000
1963	undisclosed	180000
1964	138000	153000
1965	undisclosed	173000
1966	122000	159000
1967	undisclosed	188000
1968	undisclosed	173000
1969	91000	163000
1970	undisclosed	178000
1974	215000	undisclosed
1975	187000	undisclosed
1978	181000	undisclosed
1979	197000	undisclosed

1980	218000	undisclosed
1981	181000	undisclosed
1982	181000	undisclosed
1983	254000	undisclosed
1984	undisclosed	undisclosed
1985	260000	undisclosed
1987	255500	undisclosed
1988	341000	undisclosed
1989	243200	undisclosed
1990	277700	undisclosed
1991	291600	undisclosed
1992	457000	undisclosed
1994	260000	undisclosed
1995	336000	undisclosed
1996	254000	undisclosed
1997	328800	undisclosed
1998	235000	undisclosed
1999	215000	undisclosed
2000	243000	570000
2001	undisclosed	444000
2002	202000	673000
2003	203000	427700
2004	225000	undisclosed
2005	undisclosed	630300
2006	undisclosed	863300
2007	undisclosed	1003500
2008	undisclosed	793100
2009	undisclosed	789200
2010	undisclosed	992900

Bibliography

Primary sources

I) Archives

    A) Ireland

        National Museum of Ireland's Archives (NMIA)

            Art and Industry Division's archives, Registration Department, Collins Barracks, Dublin

            Archives of the National Museum's Department of Education, Department of Education, Collins Barracks, Dublin

        National Library of Ireland's Archives, Dublin

        National Gallery of Ireland's Archives, Dublin

        National Archives of Ireland (NAI)

            Department of the *Taoiseach*

            Department of Education

        Office of Public Works' Archives, Dublin

        Government Commemoration Committee's Archives 1995-1998, (GCCA), Library of the *Taoiseach*, Leinster House, Dublin

        Irish Parliamentary debates (*Dail* and Senate)

        University College Dublin's Archives

            Liam Gogan's personal papers

            Richard Mulcahy's personal papers

            Eamon de Valera's personal papers

            Sean Lemass' personal papers

        RTE Library and Archives, Dublin

        Irish Film Archives, Dublin

        Martello Multimedia Company, materials related to *Fellowship of Freedom* (1998)

        1798 Visitor Centre, Enniscorthy

            Archives of *Comoradh '98*

            Archives of the 1798 National Visitor Centre

B) Northern Ireland

        Ulster Museum's Archives (UMA)

                Local History Department's archives, Ulster Museum, Cultra

                Department of Education, Stranmillis, Belfast

                Director's strongroom (archives available at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra)

                        Minutes of the Board of Trustees

                        Annual reports

        B.B.C Northern Ireland, archives, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra

        Archives of the Orange Order, Schomberg House, Belfast

        Minutes of the Belfast Corporation, Belfast, Belfast Central Library

        Archives of the Belfast City Council, Belfast City Council, Belfast

        Minutes of the Belfast Corporation's Library and Museum Committee, Belfast Central Library, Belfast

        Northern Ireland Parliament, official reports, Hansard

        Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast

                Cabinet files

II) Interviews

        Bartlett, Tom, October 2009, Dublin

        Beaumont, Helen, November 2009, Dublin

        Bhreathnach, Sighle, March 2009, Dublin

        Browne, Bernard, March 2010, Wexford

        Collins, Peter, February 2010, Belfast

        Crozier, Maurna (Community Relations Council), January 2010, Newry (Northern Ireland)

        Dunne, Tom, March 2010, Dublin

        Ferguson, Marian, March 2010, Cultra

        Fitzpatrick, David, April 2009, Dublin

        Foster, Roy, May 2010, Dublin

        Hume, David (Orange Order), May 2009, Belfast

        Joye, Lahr, February 2010, Dublin

        Kennaway, Brian, November 2008, Belfast

Kenny, Michael, October 2009, March 2010, Dublin

Laffan, Michael, February 2009, Dublin

Maguire, William, March 2009, February 2010, Belfast

Parkhill, Trevor, January 2009, May 2010, Cultra

Speers, Sheila, March 2010, Belfast

Wallace, Patrick, November 2008, January 2010, Dublin

Whelan, Kevin, November 2008, January 2010, Dublin

III) Main newspapers

The Irish Press

The Irish Independent

The Irish Times

The Orange Standard

The Belfast News Letter

The Belfast Telegraph

An Phoblacht

IV) Published primary sources

Catalogues, leaflets, and other materials

Conflict, the Irish at War, exhibition leaflet, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 2003).

Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and 1798. CD-Rom, (Dublin: Martello Multimedia, 1998).

Fellowship of Freedom, Exhibition Guide. (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1998).

1798 Fellowship of Freedom, exhibition leaflet, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1998).

Maguire, William, ed. *Up in Arms. The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland.* (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1998).

Maguire, William, ed., *Kings in Conflict, Ireland in the 1690s*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1990).

National Museum of Ireland, *Peacekeepers. 40 years of the Irish Defence Forces with the United Nations. Leaflet, (*Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1997).

National Museum of Ireland, *Road to Independence, Education Booklet*, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2001).

National Museum of Ireland, *Soldiers and Chiefs: Irish Soldiers at Home and Abroad*, leaflet, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2009).

Parkhill, Trevor, Up in Arms: Exhibition Guide, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1998).

Snoddy, Oliver, *Guide to the Historical Exhibition Commemorative of the Rising of 1916*, (Dublin: National Museum, 1966).

Up in Arms: The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland. A bicentenary exhibition. Slide pack, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1998).

Whelan, Kevin, *Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and 1798*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998).

Reports

Annual Reports of the Department of Education, Dublin.

An Roinn Oideachais, *The Junior Certificate, History syllabus*, Dublin: 1989.

Board of Visitors of the National Museum of Science and Art. *Report of the Board of Visitors of the National Museum of Science and Art, Dublin*

Bodkin, T. *Report to the Government of Ireland on various Institutions and Activities concerned with the Arts in Ireland*. (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 1949).

Bord Failte, *Cultural tourism development strategy*, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1991).

Bord Failte, *The Failte Business 2000: The Role of Tourism in Economic Growth*, (Dublin: Bord Failte, 2000),

Community Relations Council, *Annual Report*, Belfast.

Comptroller and Auditor General, *Report on Value for Money Examination. The National Museum at Collins Baracks*, Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, (Dublin: Stationery Office, October 1996).

Department of Education. *Report on the National Museum of Ireland 1931-32*. (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 1932)

Department of Education. *Report on the National Museum of Ireland 1981* (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 1981).

Department of Education of Northern Ireland, *The education reform (Northern Ireland) order*, (Belfast: H.M.S.O, 1989).

Department of Education, *Education for a changing world : Green Paper on Education*, (Dublin: Stationary office, 1992).

Department of Education, *Charting our Educational Future. White Paper on Education*, (Dublin: Stationary office, 1995).

The European Commission, *Peace and reconciliation: an imaginative approach to the European programme for Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland*, (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1998).

Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland, *Report of the Interim Board of the National Museum of Ireland presented to the Minister of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Mr Michael D. Higgins T.D.*, Unpublished Report, Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, 1995.

Institute of Professional Civil Servants. *Fóntas músaem d'Éirinn/Museum service in Ireland*. (Dublin: Institute of Professional Civil Servants, 1973).

Joye Lahr and Martinovich Paul, *Challenges of context and content: Finding Solutions in a Storyline*, unpublished report, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2006).

Joye Lahr and Martinovoich Paul, *Design Brief for the Military History Galleries at the National Museum of Ireland*, unpublished, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2006).

LORD, *National Museum of Ireland strategic plan,* unpublished Report, National Museum of Ireland, 1994.

Museums and Galleries Commission, *Review of Museum in Northern Ireland*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983).

Nils Lithberg, *Untitled report on the National Museum of Ireland*, Unpublished report, (Dublin: Ministry of Education, 1927).

Northern Ireland Curriculum Council, *Cross-curricular Themes- Guidance Materials*, (Belfast : NICC, 1990).

Obe, A.W. *A Time for Change. A Review of major museums in Northern Ireland*, (Belfast: Department of Education, 1995).

Report on conditions in the national museum of Ireland, Compiled by the National Museum branch of the Institute of Professional Civil Servants, December 1969

Report of the cross-curricular Working group on Education for Mutual Understanding to the Parliamentary Under-secretary of state for education, *Education for Mutual Understanding : A cross-curricular theme*, (Belfast: NICC, 1989).

Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon, *Accounts of the Ulster Museum*. 1990-1991, Belfast, HMSO, 1992.

Roholt, Velure, *Evaluation of the Conflict exhibition at the Ulster Museum*, Belfast: Interim Report 1, November 2004.

Sears and Russell Consultants, *Exhibit Strategy*, (Dublin: April 1998)

Short General Guide to the National Collections. (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1932).

Ulster Corporate Plan, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1989).

Ulster Museum, *Annual Reports*, Belfast.

Ulster Museum, *Corporate Plan*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, September 1989).

Ulster Museum, *Kings in Conflict: Educational Pack*, (Belfast, Ulster Museum, 1990).

Secondary sources

1916 Anniversary Committee. *Souvenir Programme, Reclaim the Spirit of Easter 1916*, Dublin 1991.

An Chaisc 1916, Newsletter of 'Reclaim the spirit of Easter 1916' Festival, (Dublin: 75th Anniversary Committee of 1991, March 1991).

Anderson, Benedict *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983).

Anderson, Benedict 'The New World Disorder', *New Left Review*, n. 193, pp. 3-13.

Aronsson, Peter 'Explaining National Museums: Exploring Comparative Approaches to the Study of National Museums', in Knell, *National Museums*. pp. 29-54.

Ar Thoir Na Saoirse 1916-21. The Road to Independence, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1991).

Ashworth Gregory J. and Larkham, Peter J. eds., *Building a new heritage: tourism, culture, and identity in the new Europe*, (London: Routledge, 1994),

Assmann, Jan, *Moses the Egyptian : The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Bal, Mieke, *A Mieke Bal reader.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Ballaght, Robert '1916 and all that – a personal memoir' in *The 1916 Rising: Then and Now, Papers from a conference held at Trinity College, Dublin on 21 and 22 April 2006, organised by The Ireland Institute and Dublin University History Society*. [http://www.theirelandinstitute.com/institute/p01-ballagh_memoir_page.html] (last visited January 2012).

Barry, Sebastian, *A long long way*, (London: Viking, 2005).

Bartlett, Tom, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation : the Catholic Question, 1690-1830*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1992).

Bartlett, Thomas, and Keith Jeffery, eds., *A military history of Ireland.* (Cambridge: New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Bartlett, Tom 'Sticking to the past', *Times Literary Supplement*, 25 January 2002, pp. 27-8.

Beiner, Guy, 'Commemorative heritage and the dialectics of memory', in Mark McCarthy, ed., *Ireland's heritages: critical perspectives on memory and identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 55-69

Beiner, Guy, *Remembering the year of the French: Irish folk history and social memory.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).

Beiner, Guy 'Between Trauma and Triumphalism: the Easter Rising, the Somme, and the Crux of Deep Memory in Modern Ireland', *Journal of British Studies* 46, April 2007, pp. 366-389.

Bennett, J. 'History Textbooks in Primary Schools in the Republic of Ireland, 1971-1993' *Oideas* 42, summer 1994, pp. 26-38.

Bennett, Tony 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations*, n.4, 1988, pp. 73-102

Bennett, Tony, *The birth of the museum : history, theory, politics* (London: Routledge, 1995)

Benoit, Isabelle, *Politique de memoire : les musees d'histoire francais et allemands 1945-1995.* (Florence: European University Institute, 2001).

Berger, Stefan 'On the Role of Myths and History in the Construction of National Identity in Modern Europe' *European History Quarterly* 2009, 39, pp. 490-502.

Best, E.J., *The Huguenots of Lisburn: The Story of the Lost Colony*, (Lisburn: Lisburn Historical Society, 1987).

Breathnach-Lynch, Sighle '"Executed": The Political Sculpture of Albert G. Power', *Eire-Ireland,* 29, 1, Spring 1994, pp. 44-60

Bhreathnach-Lynch, Sighle, 'Revisionism, the Rising and Representation', *New Hibernia Review/Iris Éireannach Nua*, 1 (1999), pp. 82-96

Bhreathnach-Lynch, Sighle 'Commemorating the hero in newly independent Ireland: expressions of nationhood in bronze and stone', in Lawrence McBride, ed., *Images, Icons and the Irish Nationalist Imagination, 1870-1925*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999)

Black, Jeremy, *Rethinking Military History*, (New York: Routledge, 2004).

Bloomfield, David, *Peacemaking Strategies in Northern Ireland.* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997).

Bloomfield, Kenneth, *We Will Remember Them*, (Belfast: April 1998).

Bodnar, John E, *Remaking America : public memory, commemoration, and patriotism in the twentieth century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

Bourdieu, Pierre, Darbel Alain and Schnapper Dominique, *L'amour de l'art les musées d'art européens et leur public* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969).

Bourke, Marie. *The story of Irish museums, 1790-2000 : culture, identity and education.* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011).

Boyce, George and O'Day, Alan, eds. *The making of modern Irish history: revisionism and the revisionist controversy*. (London: Routledge, 1996).

Boyce, George, '"No lack of ghost"': memory, commemoration and the State in modern Ireland', in Ian McBride, ed., *History and memory in modern Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 254-71.

Boylan, P.J. 'Reflecting the state of the nation', *Museums Journal*, 2 (1995), pp. 24-5.

Bradburne, James M. 'The poverty of nations: should museums create identity?' in Fladmark, J. Magnus, ed., *Heritage and museums: shaping national identity*, (Dorset: Donhead Publishing Ltd, 2000) 379-93

Bradley, J. *Viking Dublin Exposed: The Wood Quay Saga*, (Dublin: O'Brien Pr, 1984).

Bradshaw, Brendan "Nationalism and Historical Scholarship in Modern Ireland", *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 27, n. 104, November, 1989, pp. 329-351.

Brady, Ciarán, ed. *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938–1994*. (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994)

Briody, Michael, *The Irish Folklore Commission, History, Ideology, Methodology 1935-1970* (Helsinki, Finnish Literature Society, 2007)

Brown Stephen and Patterson Anthony, *Imagining marketing : art, aesthetics, and the avant-garde* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000).

Buckley, Anthony '"Cultural heritage in a oasis of calm". Divided identities in a museum in Ulster', in Ulrich Kockel, ed., *Culture, Tourism and Development*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994),

Bryan, Dominic. *Orange Parades*. (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

Canny, Nicholas, 'Gerard Anthony Hayes-McCoy, 1911-75', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography: from earliest times to the year 2002* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) vol.5, pp. 875-6

Carter, Bill, and Parker, A.J. *Ireland : a contemporary geographical perspective*. (London; New York: Routledge, 1989).

Caul, L, ed., *A common curriculum : The case of Northern Ireland*, (Belfast: Learning Resources Unit, Stranmillis College, 1993).

Cauvin, Thomas, *The Catholic Church and the Irish Constitution: Governmental Policies, 1965-1972*, Master Institute of Political Studies (Sciences-Po, Paris), unpublished, Paris, 2002.

Chartier, Roger 'Le monde comme representation', *Annales, Economies, Sociétes, Civilisations*, vol. 44/6, 1989, pp. 1505-1520.

Chesterman, Simon 'Introduction : Global norms, Local contexts', in Simon Chesterman, ed., *Civilians in War*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), pp. 1-6.

Clancy, Michael, *Brand New Ireland? Tourism, Development and National Identity in the Irish Republic*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

Clare, Anne. *Unlikely Rebels: the Gifford Girls and the Fight for Irish Freedom.* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2011).

Clarke, Kathleen and Litton, H., *Revolutionary Woman : Kathleen Clarke, 1878-1972. An Autobiography*, (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1991).

Coakley, John 'Mobilizing the Past: Nationalist Images of History', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 10:4, 2004, pp. 531-560.

Cole, Elizabeth A, *Teaching the violent past : history education and reconciliation.* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers : In cooperation with the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, 2007).

Collins, Peter, *Who fears to speak of ' 98'?* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003).

Connolly, Sean. J. ed., *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Connolly, Sean. J. *Imagining Belfast : Political ritual, Symbols and Crowd*, Economic and Social Research Council, http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/identities/findings/Connolly.pdf

Conway, Martin, and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Europeanization in the twentieth century : historical approaches.* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Cooke, Pat, 'Kilmainham Gaol : Interpreting Irish Nationalism and Republicanism', *Open Museum Journal*, electronic journal, vol. 2, 2000.

Coolahan, John, *The ASTI and post-primary education in Ireland, 1909-1984*, (Dublin, Cumann na Meanmhuinteoiri, 1984).

Coolahan, John, *Irish Education: its history and structure*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2002).

Cottrell, Peter, *The Anglo-Irish War : the Troubles of 1913-1922*. (Oxford: Osprey, 2006).

Cox, Michael, Adrian Guelke, and Fiona Stephen, eds., *A farewell to arms? : beyond the Good Friday Agreement*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

Crane, Susan, 'Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum', *History and Theory*, Vol. 36, No. 4, (Dec., 1997), pp. 44-63.

Crane, Susan, *Museums and memory*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Crooke, Elizabeth, 'Exhibiting 1798', *History Ireland*, vol. 5, n.4, 1998, pp. 41-45.

Crooke, Elizabeth, *Politics, archaeology and the creation of a National Museum in Ireland: an expression of national life*. (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000).

Crooke, Elizabeth 'Dealing with the past: Museums and Heritage in Northern Ireland and Cape Town, South Africa' *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 11:2, 2005, pp. 133-134.

Crooke, Elizabeth, *Museums and community ideas, issues and challenges* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007).

Crozier, Maurna, ed., *Cultural Traditions in Northern Ireland : Variety of Irishness,* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, QUB, 1989).

Cuimhneachan, 1916-1966. *A record of Ireland's commemoration of the 1916 Rising*, Dublin, 1966.

Cullen, Louis, 'The 1798 Rebellion in its Eighteenth-Century Context', in Patrick J. Corish (ed.), *Radicals, Rebels and Establishments. Historical Studies* 15, Belfast, 1985.

Cuno, James B. *Museums matter : in praise of the encyclopedic museum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Daly, Mary 'Nationalism, Sentiment, and Economics: Relations between Ireland and Irish America in the Postwar Years', *Eire-Ireland*, 37:1/2, 2002, pp. 74-91.

Daly, Mary E, '*Histoire à la carte* ? Historical commemoration and Modern Ireland', in Eberhard Bort, ed., *Commemorating Ireland. History, Politics, Culture* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004), pp. 34-55.

Daly, Mary E, Margaret O'Callaghan, eds., *1916 in 1966 : commemorating the Easter Rising*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007).

Darby, John, *Scorpions in a bottle : conflicting cultures in Northern Ireland.* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1997).

Dawson, Graham, *Making Peace with the Past? Memories, Trauma and the Irish Troubles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

Deane, Seamus 'Wherever Green is Read', in Dhonnchadha and Dorgan (eds.), *Revising the Rising*, pp. 91-105.

Deane, Seamus, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

Démobilisations culturelles après la grande guerre. (Paris: Noesis, 2002).

Deptartment of Education, *Rules and programmes for secondary schools 1970*-1971, (Dublin: 1971).

Deutsch, Richard 'Guerres de mémoires et memoires des guerres', *Etudes Irlandaises*, 22, 1997.

Deutsch, Richard 'In the Name of the Father: Réinterpréter l'histoire?' Actes du Colloque de la SOFEIR, Tours, *Visions & Révisions*, (Tours: Presses Universitaires de Tours 1998), pp. 113-126.

Devlin, G. and Hoyle, S. *Committing to Culture: Arts Funding in France and Britain*, (London: Franco-British Council, 2000).

Diaz-Andreu, Margarita, *A World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Dickinson, Greg, Blair, Carol, and Ott, Brian, eds., *Places of Public Memory. The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, (Tucsaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

Dicks, Bella, *Heritage, place, and community*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).

Dictionary of Irish Biography: from earliest times to the year 2002 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Doherty, Gabriel and Keogh, Dernot, eds., *1916 : the long revolution* (Douglas Village, Cork: Mercier Press, 2007)

Dolan, Anne. *Commemorating the Irish Civil War: history and memory, 1923-2000*. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Donnelly, J. Jr 'Sectarianism in 1798 and in Catholic nationalism memory', in L.W. Geary, ed., *Rebellion and remembrance in modern Ireland*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 15-37.

Dowler, L. 'The mothers of the warriors: women in West Belfast, Northern Ireland' in R. Lenit, ed., *Gender and catastrophe*. (London: Zed Books, 1997), pp. 77-91.

Duncan, Carol, *Civilizing rituals : inside public art museums* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995).

Dunne, Tom 'Wexford's *Comoradh '98:* politics, heritage and history', *History Ireland* 6: 2,1998, pp. 51-52.

Dunne, Tom. *Rebellions: memoir, memory and 1798*. (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2004).

Elliott, Marianne, *Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

Ember, Melvin, Ember, Carol, Skoggard, Ian, eds., *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*, (New York: Springer, 2005).

Edwards, Ruth Dudley, *Patrick Pearse: The Triumph of a Failure*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1977).

Evans, E. Estyn. *Ulster : the common ground*. (Mullingar: Lilliput, 1984).

Estyn Evans, 'Archaeology in Ulster since 1920', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 31, 1968, pp. 3-8.

Farrell, Michael, *Northern Ireland: the Orange State*, (London: Pluto Press, 1980).

Fentress, John and Wickham, Cris, *Social memory.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992)

Feron, Elise, 'Irlande du Nord: une réconciliation incertaine', *Cultures et Conflit*, n. 40, 4. 2000, pp. 15-35.

Ferriter, Diarmaid, 'Commemorating the Rising, 1922-65: "A figurative scramble for the bones of the patriot dead"?', in Daly, Mary E. and O'Callaghan, Margaret, eds., *1916 in 1966: commemorating the Easter Rising*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007), pp. 198-218

Ferriter, Diarmaid, *The Transformation of Ireland*, (Dublin: Overlook Press, 2007).

Finlayson, Alan 'The problem of "culture" in Northern Ireland: a critique of the Cultural Traditions Group' *The Irish Review*, 20, 1997, pp. 78-81.

Fischer, Karin, *L'histoire à l'école en Irlande, 1920-1996,* unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Caen, 2002.

Fitzpatrick, David. *Politics and Irish life, 1913-1921: provincial experience of war and revolution*. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977)

Fitzpatrick, David, *Ireland and the First World War*. (Mullingar: Lilliput, 1988).

Fitzpatrick, David, 'Commemoration in the Irish Free State: a chronicle of embarrassment', in Ian McBride, ed., *History and memory in modern Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 184-203

Foster, Roy 'We Are All Revisionists Now', *Irish Review*, n°1, 1986, pp. 1-5.

Foster, Roy, *Modern Ireland. 1600-1972*, (London: Penguin, 1988).

Foster, Roy, *The Irish story: telling tales and making it up in Ireland*. (London: Allen Lane, 2001)

Foster, Roy, *Luck and the Irish. A Brief History of Change from 1970*, (Oxford: Oxford Universty Press, 2008).

Fournier, Anne-Alexandra. "L'intégration de la thématique communautaire dans les politiques publiques nord-irlandaises : genèse et illustration contrastée dans l'éducation et l'emploi", Master Thesis, University of Grenoble, 2009.

Fox-Davies, Arthur Charles. *Armorial families; a directory of gentlemen of coat-armour.* (Rutland Vt.: Tuttle, 1970).

Frazer, F. and Fitzduff, M., *Improving Community Relations : A Paper prepared for the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights*, Belfast, August 1986.

Funkenstein, Amos, 'Collective memory and historical consciousness', *History and Memory*, 1989, I, n.1, pp. 5-26.

Furlong, Nicholas, *Father John Murphy of Boolavogue, 1753-1798*, (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1991).

Furlong Nicholas and Keogh, Daire, eds., *The Mighty Wave: the 1798 Rebellion in County Wexford*, (Dublin: Four Courts press, 1996).

Gailey, Alan, and Trefor M Owen. *From Corrib to Cultra : folklife essays in honour of Alan Gailey*. (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast in association with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 2000).

Gardiner, Eamonn T., *Dublin Castle and the Anglo-Irish war: Counter-insurgency and Conflict*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

Gellner, Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism*, (London: Blackwell, 1983)

Gibbons, Luke, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre-Dame Press, 1996).

Gillespie, V. 'Recent publications for history teachers produced in Northern Ireland', *Stair*, 1983, pp.14-15.

Gillis, John R., 'Memory and Identity: the history of a relationship', in Gillis, John R., ed., *Commemorations: the politics of national identity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)

Giving Voices, *The Work of the Cultural Traditions Group*, (Belfast: Community Relations Council, 1995).

Glaser, Jane R, Artemis A Zenetou, *Museums : a place to work : planning museum careers*. (London; New York: Routledge, 1996).

Glynn, Irial 'Famine, commemorations and asylum debates in Ireland conflated', in Irial Glynn and J. Olaf Kleist, eds., *History, Memory and Migration: Perceptions of the Past and the Politics of Incorporation*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Gowan, O.R., *Murder Without Sin. The Rebellion of 1798*, first published 1859, reprinted by the Education Committee of The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Belfast, 1998.

Graff-McRae, Rebecca, *Remembering and forgetting 1916 : commemoration and conflict in post-peace process Ireland* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2010).

Graham, Tony "The Colossus of Clonegal : Interview with Kevin Whelan", *History Ireland* , ix, n. 4, winter, 2001,

www.historyireland.com/volumes/volume9/issue4/features/?id=113588, (last visited December 2010).

Gregory, Adrian and Paseta, Senia, eds. *Ireland and the Great War: a War to Unite Us All?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)

Graham, Brian J. 'The Search for the Common Ground: Estyn Evans' Ireland', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 19.2 (1994) pp. 189-190.

Graham, Brian and Shirlow, Peter, 'The Battle of the Somme in Ulster memory and identity', *Political Geography*, 21, 2002, pp. 881-904.

De Groot, Jerome. *Consuming history : historians and heritage in contemporary popular culture*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2009).

Gudgin, Graham 'Discrimnation in Housing and Employment under the Stormont Administration', in Patrick J. Roche and Brian Barton, eds., *The Northern Ireland Question: Nationalism, unionism and partition*, (London, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1999).

Gunn, Simon, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

Halbwachs, Maurice. *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire, par Maurice Halbwachs,...* Paris: F. Alcan, 1925.

Halbwachs, Maurice, *The collective memory.* Trans. F. J. and V. Y. Ditter. (London: Harper Colophon Books, 1950)

Harris, Gareth, 'Nation building', *Museums Journal*, 4 (2011), pp. 22-5.

Hayes-McCoy, Gerard, 'A Defect in Irish Education', *University Review*, vol. 3, n. 4, 1963.

Hayward, Katy and O'Donnell, Catherine, *Political discourse and conflict resolution debating peace in Northern Ireland* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010).

Healing Through Remembering, *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project*, June 2002, http://www.healingthroughremembering.org/images/assets/htrreport.pdf

Heatley, F. *Henry Joy McCracken and his times*, (Belfast: Belfast Wolfe Tone Society, 1967).

Hefferman, T. F. *Wood Quay: the clash over Dublin's Viking past*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988).

Higgins, Roisín. *Transforming 1916 : meaning, memory and the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012).

Hill, Judy, *Irish Public Sculpture: a History*, (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1998).

Hill, M. 'Regions: identity and power: a Northern Ireland perspective' in Donal O' Drisceoil, (ed.) *Culture in Ireland regions: identity and power,* (Belfast: Institute of Irish *Studies,* 1993),

Hillerbrand, H. J. ed., *Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, vol. 1, (London: Routledge, 2004),

Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Nations and Nationalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Holohan, F. T. 'History teaching in the Irish Free State 1922-1935' *History-Ireland*, vol. 2, 4, winter, 1994.

Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. *Museums and the shaping of knowledge*. (London: Routledge, 1992)

Hooper-Greenhill, Eileen, *Museums and their Visitors*, (London : Routledge, 1994).

Hooper-Greenhill, Eileen, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, (London, Routledge, 2000).

Horne, John. *State, society, and mobilization in Europe during the First World War*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Horne, John 'Introduction', in John Horne, ed., *Démobilisations culturelles après la grande guerre.* (Paris: Noesis, 2002). pp. 49-51.

Horne, John 'Guerres et réconciliations européennes au 20e siècle', *Vingtième-Siècle*, n. 104, October-December, 2009, pp. 3-15.

Horne, John, ed., *Our war : Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008).

Howe, Stephen, *Ireland and Empire : colonial legacies in Irish history and culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Howe, Stephen 'The Politics of Historical 'Revisionism': Comparing Ireland and Israel/Palestine', *Past & Present*, n. 168, 2000, pp. 227-253.

Hudson, Kenneth, 'Attempt to define museum', in *Representing the nation: a reader*, eds. Boswell, david and Evans, Jessica (London: Routledge: 1999), pp. 371-9

Hughes, J. 'Paying for peace : Comparing the EU's role in the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Kosovo' in J. Hughes, ed., EU Conflict Management, (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 12-31.

Hutchinson, John, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987).

Hüther, Andreas, 'Trapped between Present and Past: Writing the 1798 Bicentenary' *Eighteen-Century studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Winter, 2005), pp. 336-339.

Hutton, Patrick, *History as an Art of Memory*, (University Press of Vermont, 1993),

Hyland, A. 'Multi-Denominational Schools in the Republic of Ireland 1975-1995', in *Education and Religion*, conference organized by C.R.E.L.A at the University of Nice, 21-22 June 1996. http://www.educatetogether.ie/reference_articles/Ref_Art_003.html (last visited February 2012).

Inglis, Tom, *Moral monopoly : the Catholic Church in modern Irish society*, (Dublin; New York: Gill and Macmillan ; St. Martin's Press, 1987).

Jarman, Neil, *Material Conflicts : Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland*, (Oxford: Berg 1997).

Jedin, Hubert, ed., *History of the Church*, vol. 10, The Church in the Modern Age, (London: Burns and Oates, 1981).

Jeffery, Keith. *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Johnson, Nuala C. *Ireland, The Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Kaiser, Wolfram 'From Great Men to Ordinary Citizens? The Biographical Approach to Narrating European Integration in Museums', *Culture Unbound*, Volume 3, 2011, pp. 385-400.

Kalela, Jorma. *Making history : the historian and uses of the past*. (Basingstoke, UK; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Kaplan, Flora S. *Museums and the making of « ourselves » : the role of objects in national identity*. (London; New York; New York: Leicester University Press, 1994).

Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D. *Exhibiting Cultures*: *the poetics and politics of museum display*. (Washington, London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991)

Kavanagh, Gaynor, 'Making Histories, Making Memories', in Kavanagh, Gaynor, ed., *Making Histories in Museums*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp. 1-15

Kavanagh, Gaynor 'Melodrama, Pantomime or Portrayal? Representing ourselves and the British past through exhibitions in history museums', *International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol. 6/2, 1987, pp. 173-179.

Kean Hilda, Morgan Sally, and Martin Paul, eds., *Seeing history : public history in Britain now* (London: Francis Boutle, 2000).

Keating, Michael. *The new regionalism in Western Europe : territorial restructuring and political change*. (Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, Mass.: E. Elgar, 1998).

Keegan, John, *The Face of Battle*, (London: Viking Press, 1976).

Kennedy, Billy. *A Celebration, 1690-1990 : the Orange Institution : King William III, Prince of Orange*. (Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, 1990).

Kennedy, Brian, *Dreams and responsibilities, the State and the Arts in Independent Ireland*, (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1990).

Kennedy, Brian 'The failure of the Cultural Republic: Ireland 1922-1939', *Studies*, 81 (321), 1992, pp. 14-22.

Kenny, Michael, *The 1798 Rebellion : photographs and memorabilia from the National Museum of Ireland*. (Dublin: Country House in association with the National Museum of Ireland, 1996).

Kenny, Michael. *The Road to Freedom : Photographs and Memorabilia from the 1916 Rising and Afterwards*. (Dublin: Country House in association with the National Museum of Ireland, 1993).

Kiberd, Declan, *Anglo-Irish Attitudes*. Field Day pamphlet 6. (Derry: Field Day, 1984).

Kiberd, Declan, 'The Elephant of Revolutionary Forgetfulness', in Dorgan, Theo and Ní Dhonnchadha, Máirín, eds. *Revising the Rising*, (Derry: Field Day, 1991), pp. 1-20.

Kiberd, Declan, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation,* (London: Vintage, 1996).

Killen, John, *The United Irishmen and the government of Ireland, 1791-1801*, (Belfast: Linen Hall Library, 1998).

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. *Destination culture : tourism, museums, and heritage*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

Klee L. Klein, 'On the emergence of memory in historical discourse', *Representations*, 69, 2000, pp. 127-150.

Knell, Simon J. ed. *Museum revolutions: how museums change and are changed*, (London: Routledge, 2007)

Knell, Simon J., 'National museums and the national imagination', in Knell, Simon J., Aronsson, Peter, Amundsen, Arne, eds. *National museums : new studies from around the world*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 3-29

Knell, Simon J., Aronsson, Peter, Amundsen, Arne, eds. *National museums : new studies from around the world*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2011).

Kockel, Ullrich, *Culture, tourism, and development : the case of Ireland*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994).

Kohl, Philip L. and Fawcett, Clare, eds., *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995),

Lambert, Peter, and Phillipp R Schofield. *Making history an introduction to the history and practices of a discipline*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2004). http://site.ebrary.com/id/10094324.

Lee, Joseph, *Ireland, 1912-1985 : politics and society*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Leonard, Jane 'Lest we forget: Irish War Memorials', in Fitzpatrick, *Ireland and the First World War*.

Leonard, Jane, 'The Twinge of Memory: Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday in Dublin since 1919', in Richard English and Graham Walker, eds., *Unionism in Modern Ireland: New Perspectives on Politics and Culture*, (Dublin: Basingstoke, 1996).

Leonard, Jane, *The Culture of Commemoration : The Culture of War Commemoration*, (Dublin: 1996).

Leonard, Jane, *Memorials to the casualties of conflict : Northern Ireland 1969-1997*, (Belfast: Community relations Council, November 1997).

Leonard, Jane 'Towards an oral history of the Troubles: *Conflict* at the Ulster Museum' in Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, *What made now in Northern Ireland*, (Belfast: Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, 2008).

Lowenthal, David. *The past is a foreign country*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Lowenthal, David, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Lucas, Anthony T. 'The West Cross, Monasterboice: a note and a suggestion' *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, 12, 3, 1951, pp. 123-125.

Lucas, Anthony T. *The National Museum: Its place in the cultural life of the nation*, (Dublin: *An Roinn Oideachais*, 1968).

Lucas, Anthony T. 'Souterrains: The Literary Evidence' *Bealoideas* 39-41, 1971-1973, pp. 165-191.

Lucas, Anthony T. *Treasures of Ireland. Irish Pagan and Early Christian Art*, Dublin, 1973.

Lynn, Brendan 'The Anti-Partition League and the Political Realities of Partition, 1945-1949', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 34, n.135, 2005.

Lyons, F.S.L., *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982, 2nd ed.)

MacDonagh, Oliver. *States of mind : a study of Anglo-Irish conflict, 1780-1980*. (London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1983).

Macdonald, Sharon, and Gordon Fyfe, eds. *Theorizing museums : representing identity and diversity in a changing world*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996).

MacDonald, Sharon, 'Museums, national, postnational and transcultural identities', *Museum and society*, 1 (2003), pp. 1-16

Macdonald, Sharon, ed. *A companion to museum studies*. (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2006).

Maguire James and Quinn, James, eds., *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, vol. 4, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Maguire, William, ed., *Kings in Conflict. Revolutionary War in Ireland and its Aftermaths,* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1990).

Maguire, William 'Digging up the past: 1690 and all that', *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 4, n.2, 1990, pp. 61-62.

Maguire, William, *Belfast : a history*, Carnegie Publishing, 2009.

Marstine, Janet, *New museum theory and practice : an introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006).

Martin, Francis, X. 'Eoin MacNeill on the 1916 Rising', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 11, 1948.

Martin, Francis X. '1916 – Myth, Fact and Mystery', *Studia Hibernica*, n°7, 1967, pp 7-124.

Mason, Rhiannon 'Nation Building at the Museum of Welsh Life.' *Museum and Society* 2005, 3(1), pp. 18-34.

Mason, Rhiannon. *Museums, nations, identities : Wales and its national museums*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).

Mason, Rhiannon, 'Representing Wales at the Museum of Welsh Life', in Knell, Simon J., Aronsson, Peter, Amundsen, Arne, eds. *National museums : new studies from around the world*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 247-72.

Maxwell, William H. *History of the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland,* 1845.

McBride, Ian, 'Memory and national identity in modern Ireland', in Ian McBride, ed., *History and memory in modern Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1-42

McBride, Ian, ed., *History and Memory in modern Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

McCarthy, Mark, ed. *Ireland's heritages : critical perspectives on memory and identity*. (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2005).

McCully, Alan, 'The relevance of the teaching of cultural and social studies to the handling of controversial issues in the history classroom', in R. Austin (ed.), *Essays on History teaching in Northern Ireland*, Coleraine, Faculty of Education Resource Centre, University of Ulster, 1985.

McDowell, S. 'Commemorating dead 'men': gendering the past and present in post-conflict Northern Ireland' *Gender, Place & Culture*,15: 4, 2008, pp. 335-354.

McGarry, Ferghal. *The Rising: Ireland, Easter 1916*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

McIntosh, Gillian, 'Stormont's Ill-timed Jubilee: The Ulster '71 Exhibition' *New Hibernia Review*, vol. 11, n. 2, Samhradh/Summer, 2007, pp. 17-39.

McIntosh, Gillian 'Symbolizing the civic ideal: the civic portraits in Belfast Town Hall", *Urban History*, 35, 3, 2008, pp. 363-381.

McManus, M. 'Some Notions of Folklore, History and Museum Interpretation: A Time for Reappraisal?', *in* Trevor Owen, ed. *From Corrib to Cultra. Folklife Essays in Honour of Alan Gailey*, (The Institute of Irish Studies, QUB and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 2000).

McNeill, William, 'Mythistory, or Truth, Myth, History, and Historians', *American Historical Review*, 91/1, 1986, pp. 1-10.

Miles, Hewstone and Brown, Rupert, eds., *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

Miller, David, ed., *Rethinking Northern Ireland. Culture, Ideologyn and Colonialism*, (New York: Longman, 1998).

Monaghan, Nigel 'The National Museum of Ireland', in Neil Buttimer, Colin Rynne and Helen Guerin, eds., *The Heritage of Ireland,* (Cork, Colin Press, 2000).

Morris Richard Joseph and Ehrenhaus, Peter Charles, *Cultural legacies of Vietnam : uses of the past in the present* (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Pub. Corp., 1990)

Morrissey, Mike, and Marie Smyth, eds. *Northern Ireland after the Good Friday agreement : victims, grievance, and blame*. (London; Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 2002).

Moody, Theodore and Edwards, Dudley, 'Preface', *Irish Historical Studies*, 1938, pp. 35-37.

Moody, Theodore, 'Irish history and Irish mythology', *Hermathena*, 124, summer 1978, pp. 7-24.

Moore Ruth, and Rolston Bill, *Healing Through Remembering : Conversation Guide on Dealing with the Past*, (Belfast: 2008).

Moriarty Mary and Sweeney Catherine, *Markievicz: the rebel Countess*, (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1991).

Morillo, S. and Pavkovic, M.F., *What is Military History ?*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

Morrissey Mike and Smyth Marie, eds., *Northern Ireland after the Good Friday agreement : victims, grievance, and blame* (London; Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 2002).

Mullins, Gerry, *Dublin Nazi N° 1. The Life of Adolf Mahr*, (Dublin: Liberty Press, 2007).

The Museum Association Belfast Conference, *Handbook*, 1938.

Nealon, Ted, *Access and Opportunity. A White paper on Cultural Policy*, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1987).

Neill, K. 'The Broighter Hoard: Or How Carson Caught the Boat', *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 7, n. 2, 1993, pp. 24-26.

Nesbitt, Noel, *The Changing Face of Belfast*, (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1969).

Nesbitt, Noel, *A museum in Belfast: a history of the Ulster Museum and its predecessors.* (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1979).

Ni Dhonnchadha, Maˊ irıˊn and Theo Dorgan, eds., *Revising the Rising* (Derry: Field Day, 1991)

Nic Craith, Mairead, *Plural identities, singular narratives : the case of Northern Ireland*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

Noiret, Serge '"Public History" e "Storia Pubblica" nella rete', *Ricerche Storiche*, n. 40, maggio-agosto, 2009, pp. 275-327.

Nolan, W. 'The Heritage Business: Problems and Possibilities', in, W. Nolan, ed, *The Heritage Business; Present State and Future Prospects*. Interdisciplinary Centre for Local and Heritage Studies, (Dublin: University College Dublin, 1992), pp. 1-19.

Nora, Pierre, ed. *Les Lieux de mémoire*. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

Nora, Pierre, and Jordan, David P., eds., *Rethinking France: les Lieux de Mémoire*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999).

O'Callaghan, John, *Teaching Irish independence : history of Irish schools, 1922-72* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009).

O'Ceallaigh, Daltun, ed., *Reconsiderations of Irish History and Culture*, (Dublin: Leithmas, 1994).

O'Clery, Conor. *The greening of the White House : the inside story of how America tried to bring peace to Ireland*. (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1996).

O'Connor, Fionnuala, *A Shared Childhood: The story of the integrated schools in Northern Ireland.* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press Limited and the Integrated Education Fund, 2002).

O'Croinin, Daibhied., *A new history of Ireland : Prehistoric and early Ireland*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

O'Dwyer, Rory, *The Eucharistic Congress, Dublin 1932: an illustrated history*. (Dublin: Nonsuch Ireland, 2009).

O'Faolain, Nuala 'An era beyond imaginative reach', *The Irish Times*, April 29th 1991, p.12.

O'Floinn, R. 'The National Museum of Ireland' *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 22, no. 2, Summer, 2008, pp. 44-45.

O'Hagan, J. and Duffy, C. 'Access and Admission Charges to Museums: A Case Study of the National Museum', *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, vol. 28, 1994, pp. 125-152.

O'Hagan, J. W. 'National museums: to charge or not to charge?' *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 19, 1995, pp. 33-47.

O'Hearn, Denis, *The Atlantic Economy. Britain, the US and Ireland*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

O'Neill, Terence, *Ulster at the crossroads.* (London: Faber, 1969).

O'Neill, Terence, *Autobiography, (*London: Hart-Davies, 1972).

O'Carroll, John P. and Murphy, John A. eds., *De Valera and His Times*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1986).

Owen, T. M. 'The Role of a Folk Museum', in Alan Gailey, ed., *The Use of the Past*, (Belfast: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 1988).

Pakenham, T. *The Year of Liberty: the Story of the Great Irish Rebellion of 1798*, London, 1969.

Parkhill, Trevor 'The Curator as Interpreter, Interlocutor and Facilitator: the 1798 Rebellion and the Conflict Exhibition 2003', in *Effective Presentation & Interpretation in Museums. Proceedings of the Symposium,* 7 November 2003, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

Parkhill, Trevor 'That's Their History. Can a Museum's History Exhibitions Inform a Reconciliation Process in a Divided Society?' *Folk Life. Journal of Ethnographic Studies* Vol. 41, 2002, pp. 37-44.

Peyronel, Valérie 'L'aide européenne et le programme pour la paix en Irlande du Nord', *Etudes Irlandaises*, vol. 30/2, 2005, pp. 141-154.

Porter, Gaby 'How are women represented in British history museums?' *Museum International*, 43, 3, 1991, pp. 159-162.

Pollack, Andy, ed., *A Citizen's Inquiry : The Opsahl Report on Northern Ireland*, (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1993).

Poulot, Dominique, *Musée, nation, patrimoine, 1789-1815*. (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).

Poulot, Dominique, *Une histoire des musées de France, XVIIIe-XXe siècle*. (Paris: Découverte, 2005).

Prösler, M. 'Museums and Globalization', in Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (eds.), *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), pp. 21-44.

Racioppi Linda and O'Sullivan Katherine 'Grassroots Peacebuilding and Third-Party Intervention: The European Union's Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland' *Peace and Change*, vol. 32, issue 3, 361-390, July 2007.

Raifeartaigh, Tarlac, ed., *The Royal Irish Academy: A Bicentennial History. 1785-1985*, (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1985).

Regan, John 'Southern Irish Nationalism as a Historical Problem' *The Historical Journal*, 50, 1 (2007), pp. 197-223.

Regan, John, 'Irish public histories as an historiographical problem', *Irish Historical Studies*, 37, 146 (Nov. 2010), pp. 88-115.

Reid, Gemma, 'Redefining nation, identity and tradition: the challenge for Ireland's national museums 2005', in Mark McCarthy, ed., *Ireland's heritages: critical perspectives on memory andidentity*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 205-222.

Reilly, Jacqueline and McCully, Alan, 'Critical Thinking And History Teaching In A Contested Society: The Potential Influence Of Social Cognitions', American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans. American Educational Research Association, 2011, http://eprints.ulster.ac.uk/18137/ (last visited April 2012).

Revel, Jacques and Levi, Giovanni, *Political uses of the past : the recent Mediterranean experience* (London; Portland, OR: F. Cass, 2002).

Richards, J.M. ed., *Provision for the arts*, (Dublin: The Arts council / The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1976).

Rolland, Anne-Solène, Hanna Murauskaya, eds., *Les musées de la nation : créations, transpositions, renouveaux : Europe, XIXe-XXIe siècles*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008).

Rolston, Bill, *Drawing support. Murals in the North of Ireland*, (Belfast: Pale Publication, 1992).

Rosenzweig, Roy, and David P Thelen. *The presence of the past : popular uses of history in American life*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

Ruane, Joseph and Todd, Jennifer 'Why can't you get along with each other? : culture, structure and the Northern Ireland conflict', in Eamonn Hughes, ed, *Culture and Politics in Northern Ireland 1960-1990,* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991), pp. 27-43.

Ryan, Anne-Marie. 'Exhibiting the Irish Revolution at the National Museum of Ireland since 1932'. Master Thesis dissertation, University of Leicester, 2011.

Savaric, M. 'State and Culture in the English-Speaking World: Le Multiculturalisme et l'Irlande du Nord', *Multiculturalism*, vol 5, n°1, 2007, pp. 92-114.

Sawyer, Andy, 'National Museum in Northern Ireland', report for the EuNaMus project: http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/064/026/ecp64026.pdf

Shaw, Francis, 'The Canon of Irish History: A Challenge', *Studies*, 61, 1972.

Shield, C. 'Wanted: a Museum Director with Ideas', *Hibernia*, 21 May 1976.

Sibbett, R.M. *The sunshine patriot : The 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down*, (Belfast: Educational Lodge of the Orange Order, 1997).

Simms, J. 'Remembering 1690' *Studies*, 251, 1974, pp. 231-242.

Simpson, Moira G.. *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*. (London: Routledge, 1996).

Sinclair, A. *Arts and Cultures : the history of the Fifty years of the Arts council of Great Britain*, (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995).

Slaby, Alexandra, *L'Etat et la culture en Irlande*. (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 2010).

Slaby, Alexandra 'La politique culturelle de l'Irlande depuis 1945', in P. Poirrier, ed, *Pour une histoire des politiques culturelles dans le monde, 1945-2011*, (Paris: La documentation française, 2011).

Smith, Alan and Robinson, Alan, *Education for Mutual Understanding, the Initial Statutory Years,* (Coleraine : Centre for the Study of Conflict, 1996).

Smith, Anthony D. *Theories of Nationalism*, (London: Duckworth, 1983).

Snoddy, Oliver P. *Irish Revolutionary Movements 1913-1916*, (Dublin: University College Dublin, 1963).

Snoddy, Oliver, *Two Godfathers of Revisionism: 1916 in the Revisionist Canon*, (Dublin: Fulcrum, 1991).

Stewart, A.T.A. 'Kings in conflict: exhibition review', *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 1991-1992, pp. 152-153.

Stewart, A.T.Q. *The Hidden Roots of the United Irishmen*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1993).

Stewart, A.T.Q. *The Summer Soldiers : the 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1995).

Stout, M. 'Review of *Emir Estyn Evans and Northern Ireland: The Archaeology and Geography of a New State' in* J. A. Atkinson; I. Banks; J. O'Sullivan, eds., Nationalism in Archaeology, (Glasgow, Cruithne Press, 1996), pp. 111-127.

Sweeney, Paul, *The Celtic Tiger: Ireland's Economic Miracle*, (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1998).

Taillon, R. *Women of 1916 : When History was Made*, (Belfast: Beyond the Pale, 1996).

Teehan, John, *The Company of Goldmiths of Dublin Exhibition*, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1987).

Todd, Jennifer 'Two traditions in Unionist Political Culture', *Irish Political Studies* 2, 1987, pp. 1-26.

Tonge, Jonathan, *Northern Ireland: Conflict and Change*, (Harlow: Longman, 2002).

Townshend, Charles. *Easter 1916 : the Irish rebellion*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006).

Trench, B. *James Connolly, Memorial Unveiling Brochure*, Dublin, May 1996.

Turpin, John, 'The Royal Dublin Society and Its School of Art, 1849-1877', *Dublin Historical Record*, 36, 1982, pp. 2-20.

Turpin, John 'Three 1798 Bicentenary exhibitions compared', *Eire-Ireland*, vol. 32-33, 1997-1998, pp. 263-264.

Turpin, John, *Oliver Sheppard (1865-1941)*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).

Turpin, John 'Oliver Sheppard, Albert Power and State Sculptural Commissions', *Dublin Historical Society*, vol 55, spring 2002.

Urry, John, 'How societies remember the past', in Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, eds., *Theorizing museums : representing identity and diversity in a changing world* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996).

Vergo Peter, ed., *The New Museology*, (London: reaction Books, 1989).

Walker, Brian, *Dancing to History's Tune: History, Myths and Politics in Ireland*, (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, 1996).

Wallace, Patrick, *Viking and Norman Dublin: The Wood Quay excavations*, (Dublin: 1985).

Wallace, Patrick, 'Irish Archaeology and the Recognition of Ethnic Difference in Viking Dublin', in Junko Habu, Claire P. Fawcett and John M. Matsunga, eds., *Evaluating multiple narratives: beyond nationalist, colonialist, imperialist archaeologies*. (New York: Springer, 2008).

Walsh, John, *The Politics of Expansion: The Transformation of Educational Policy in the Republic of Ireland, 1957-1972* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

Whelan Kevin and Nolan William, eds, *Wexford: History and Society. Interdisciplinary Essays in the History of an Irish County, (Dublin:* Geography Publications, 1987).

Whelan Kevin, Flanagan Patrick and Ferguson Paul, eds., *Rural Ireland 1600-1900* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987).

Whelan, Kevin 'The Role of the Catholic Priest in the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford', in Kevin Whelan and William Nolan, eds., *Wexford History and Society*, (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1987).

Whelan, Kevin 'The religious factor in the 1798 rebellion in County Wexford' in Patrick Flanagan, Paul Ferguson and Kevin Whelan, eds., *Rural Ireland 1600-1900*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987), pp. 60-74.

Whelan, Kevin, 'Catholics, politicisation and the 1798 rebellion' in Réamonn Ó Muirí, ed., *Irish church history today* (Armagh, 1990), pp. 63-83.

Whelan, Kevin 'Politicisation in County Wexford and the origins of the 1798 rebellion' in Gough and Dickson, eds., *Ireland and the French Revolution*, Dublin, 1990, pp. 156-78.

Whelan, Kevin 'Come All You Staunch Revisionists: Towards a Post-Revisionist Agenda for Irish History' *The Irish Reporter*, n. 2, 1991.

Whelan, Kevin, 'The recent writing of Irish history' *UCD History Review*, 1991, pp. 27-35.

Whelan Kevin, Dickson David, and Keogh Daire, eds., *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism, and Rebellion*, (Dublin: Lilliput, 1993).

Whelan, Kevin 'The Bases of Regionalism', in P. Ó Drisceoil, ed., *Culture in Ireland: Regions, Identity and Power*, (Belfast: IIS, 1993).

Whelan, Kevin, *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism, and the Construction of Irish Identity, 1760-1830*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996).

Whelan, Kevin, 'Reinterpreting the 1798 Rebellion in County Wexford', in Daire Keogh and Nicholas Furlong, eds., *The Mighty Wave*, pp. 34-36.

Whelan, Kevin, 'The Revisionist Debate in Ireland', *Boundary 2*, 1 (2004), pp. 179-205

White, Haydn, T*ropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, (Baltimore, John Hopkin's University Press, 1978).

White, Robert, *Ruairi O Bradaigh : the life and politics of an Irish revolutionary*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2006).

Whyte, John, 'How much discrimination was there under the Unionist regime, 1921-1968?', *Contemporary Irish Issues*, 1983, pp. 1-36.

Wieviorka, Michel 'L'émergence des victims', *Sphera Publica*, 3, 2003, pp-19-38.

Williams, M.A. 'The National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks', *Museum Ireland*, vol. 8, 1998.

Wills, Clair. *Dublin, 1916: the siege of the GPO*. (London: Profile, 2009).

Winter Jay and Sivan, Emmanuel, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Winter, Jay. *Remembering war : the Great War between memory and history in the twentieth century*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

Winter, Jay and Prost, Antoine, *The Great War in history : debates and controversies, 1914 to the present* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Wood, Gordon S. *The purpose of the past : reflections on the uses of history* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008).

Zuelow, Eric, 'Enshrining Ireland's Nationalist History Inside Prison Walls: The Restoration of Kilmainham Jail', *Eire-Ireland*, vol. 39, fall-winter, 2004, pp. 180-201

Zuelow, Eric, 'The tourism nexus: national identity and the meanings of tourism since the Irish Civil War' in Mark McCarthy, ed., *Ireland's heritages: critical perspectives on memory and identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 189-204.

Zuelow, Eric, *Making Ireland Irish. Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009).