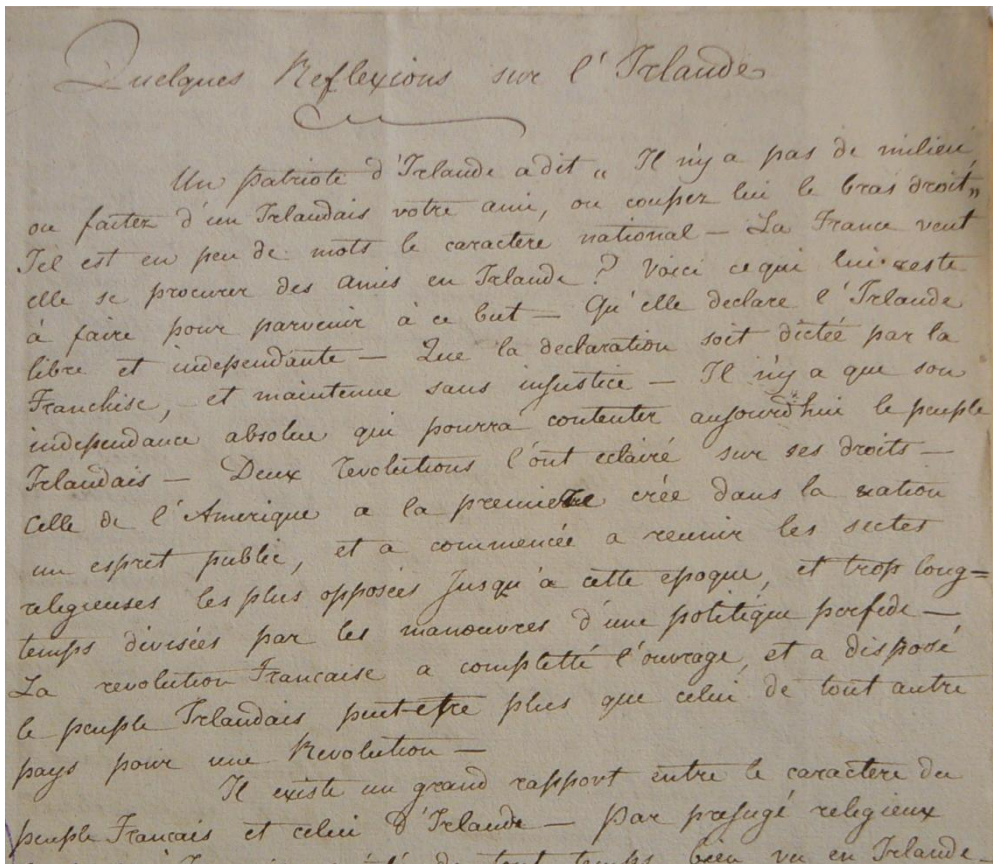


Journée d'étude :
L'Irlande et la France
à l'époque de la « République atlantique »



Vendredi 27 mai 2016
à l'Institut d'histoire de la Révolution française (IHRF)



UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 1
PANTHÉON SORBONNE

Organisation : Mathieu Ferradou avec l'aide de Sylvie Kleinman
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As Ireland commemorates the Centenary of the 1916 Rising and the Proclamation of the Irish Republic (Easter Monday, 24 April 1916), and as this defining landmark event comes more than 15 years after the Bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion, it is both relevant and necessary to interrogate anew the defining links between Revolutionary France and Ireland forged during the pivotal decade of the 1790s. This re-appraisal is all the more timely given the new research perspectives which have emerged in the three decades since the publication of Marianne Elliot's seminal *Partners in Revolution* (1982) and the Bicentenary of the French Revolution.

Research and publications on this subject has to date been dominated by Irish, British and American historians, while scholars of the French Revolution in France have largely ignored Ireland; the few exceptions are now mostly outdated in their perspective. Debate on Ireland in the 1790s has thus mainly taken place within an Anglophone sphere, and has focused on the origins and consequences of the 1798 Rebellion and how it precipitated the Act of Union. Reflecting the political fissures and sectarianism which emerged at this time and cast a long shadow over Irish history, scholars have evidently debated the roots of Irish republicanism which in the 19th century increasingly became synonymous with Catholic identity, nationalism and separatism.

These historiographical debates sharpened as soon as the Rebellion was crushed and the Union passed, and were continuously revived and renewed throughout the successive phases of Irish nationalism and republicanism throughout the 19th and 20th centuries: the Young Ireland and Fenian movements, the Easter Rising (1916), the War of Independence (1919-1921), the Civil War (1922-1923), Partition and the establishment of Northern Ireland in 1920. At each stage on the timeline of Irish history, these divisions became more entrenched, and in the Post-Famine mindset, nationalism was increasingly associated with Catholicism and eventually republicanism, and Unionism with Protestantism. Teaching, publishing, and engaging with public debate in the bitterly divisive context of the Troubles in Northern Ireland and their aftermath (ca. 1968-1998), some Irish historians - especially those deemed of the revisionist school - have been harsh in their appraisal of the first republicans of the 1790s and the sectarianism which grew out of the 1798 Rebellion. Though this may be oversimplifying some of their conclusions, and recognising the moral dilemma faced by academics not intending to fuel paramilitary hagiographies, what emerged from this otherwise rich phase of scholarship often presented the United Irishmen as delusional and opportunist republicans. Few have pursued research on the Defenders, portrayed as superstitious and

sectarian discontents. As for the glorious failure of the French expeditions, which in popular narratives only came about due to the persuasive diplomatic skills of Theobald Wolfe Tone, not only were no French academics with specialist insights invited to internationalise the 1998 Bicentenary, but French political and military decision-makers have often (and rather naively) been portrayed as unreliable and ineffectual, launching expeditions which either failed or came too late.

In the light of the ongoing renewal of scholarship on the French Revolution in France and further afield, i.e. fertile ground for new and interdisciplinary interpretative frameworks, it seems useful and even necessary to propose new angles from which to analyze this crucial decade in Irish and French history. Furthermore, constructive debates between revisionists and post-revisionists, after reaching their peak in 1998 and its immediate aftermath, actually abated and have led to a form of status quo.

This conference's primary objective is therefore to present an overview of the current state of historical scholarship in English to a French public, but also to renew historiographical debates about the links between France and Ireland in the revolutionary period by broadening the chronological and geographical contexts. By relocating the Franco-Irish alliance within the context of the Atlantic Revolution, or more precisely within the sphere of the Atlantic Republics, our aim is also to define a continuum from the 1770s and the Volunteer movement to the first decades of the 19th century, Emmet's Insurrection of 1803, and the campaigns for Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s and 1830s. The other objective is to question the French Revolution itself, by analyzing the links between French and Irish forms of republicanism and defining their respective relationships to the American precedent. Consequently, the presentations are intended to formulate a comparative and connected historical approach in an attempt to better understand the multiple origins, different meanings, and contrasted fates of this first wave of Irish republicanism, emerging in this 'island set in a Virginian sea', between America, the Three Kingdoms and France.

Programme / Program

*Les communications et échanges auront lieu en français et/ ou en anglais
Proceedings will be conducted in English and/or in French
Des résumés des communications seront disponibles en français et en anglais
Abstracts will be circulated in both French and English.*

9h00: accueil/ welcome.

Matin/ Morning:

9h30 : Ouverture : Thomas Bartlett (Aberdeen University & Royal Irish Academy) : General introduction: ‘Writing the history of the revolutionary 1790s during the “Troubles”: historiographical and moral dilemmas’ (in English).

10h-12h30 : Atelier 1 : L’Irlande en France, la France en Irlande : transpositions, délocalisations, comparaisons, confrontations / Workshop 1 : Ireland in France, France in Ireland : transpositions, relocations, comparisons & confrontations

Présidence : Thomas Bartlett

10h : Rachel Rogers (Université de Toulouse-Jean-Jaurès) : ““Their cause then and ours is the same”: The British and Irish in the Paris-based Society of the Friends of the Rights of Man, 1792-94’ (in English).

10h30 : Timothy Murtagh (Hertford College, University of Oxford): ‘Dublin’s Journeymen – Irish *Sans-Culottes*?’ (in English).

11h : Sylvie Kleinman (Trinity College, Dublin) : « Rhétorique et conception de la souveraineté irlandaise dans les négociations et les préparations militaires entre Theobald Wolfe Tone et le Directoire (1791-1798) » (en français)

11h30-12h30 : Discussion introduite par Mathieu **Ferradou** (université Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne, IHRF/ IHMC)

Après-midi/ Afternoon :

14h-17h : Atelier 2 : Circulations transnationales : connexions (contre-)révolutionnaires et (anti-)républicaines / Workshop 2 : Transnational circulations : (counter-) revolutionary and (anti-) republican connections

Présidence: Pierre Serna

14h: John Donoghue & Anthony Di Lorenzo (Loyola University, Chicago): ‘Transatlantic Abolitionism and Radical Republicanism over the Longue Duree, 1650-1800’ (in English)

14h30: Niklas Frykman (Pittsburgh University): ‘The conspiracies of 1798 in Britain’s Royal Navy’ (in English)

15h : Pascal Dupuy (Université de Rouen) : « Le républicanisme « maudit » aux Etats-Unis, en France et en Irlande d’après les images anglaises » (en français)

15h30 : Laurent Colantonio (Université de Québec, Montréal): « Les nationalistes irlandais et les républicains français au début du XIXe siècle : l’impossible rencontre » (en français)

16h-17h: Discussion introduite par **Yevan Terrien** (Pittsburgh University)

17h : Concluding remarks : Hugh Gough (University College, Dublin) (in English)

17h20 : Conclusion : Pierre Serna (directeur de l’IHRF) (en français)

“Their cause then and ours is the same”: The British and Irish in the Paris-based Society of the Friends of the Rights of Man, 1792-94’

Rachel Rogers

University of Toulouse – Jean Jaurès

Background and main points:

I conducted my PhD research into the British community in Paris during the early French republic, loosely gathering around a club which was registered with the Paris municipal authorities in January 1793 as the “Society of the Friends of the Rights of Man”. I attempted to grasp the scope of the associational culture which mobilized British residents of Paris in the early 1790s while also exploring their contributions to the debates surrounding the drafting of a republican constitution at the turn of 1793, and the manner in which they wrote back the revolution for a British audience, contributing to the flow of cross-Channel news.

My intention in this presentation is first to sketch out some of the interactions between British and Irish residents centred around White’s Hotel, the hub of the society’s activities. While these collaborations on different projects are perhaps unsurprising during the early phase of the Revolution, what stands out is the persistence of such cross-national agendas and ventures, even after February 1793 and the outbreak of war between Britain and France. Indeed, during what we may call the radical phase of the Revolution, leading on the Terror, Irish activists in Paris appear to have continued to assert their loyalty to the Revolution over and above their nationality in an attempt to guarantee freedom to stay or to leave the French capital. I will put this transcending of national allegiance into the context of the British reform movement and the characteristics of the British expatriate community in revolutionary Paris in an attempt to go some way to explaining why joint agendas could be pursued by radicals and revolutionaries with very different heritages of oppression, even after the outbreak of war between Britain and France in February 1793.

An overview of the arguments:

- British-Irish joint ventures in the context of club culture:

The Society gathered under its banner English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish and American members in its brief existence and, within the club, British and Irish members of the club engaged in joint publication and journalistic projects. Cross-national initiatives therefore found their place easily in the early republic. This was perhaps to be expected in the early years of universalism and openness to foreigners. Yet, this relative fluidity and inattention to specific national agendas also characterized the months of 1793 and 1794 when nationality was becoming a key theme of focus.

- Similar treatment by the French authorities in 1793-4:

English, Irish, Welsh and Scottish residents were also treated in similar fashion by the revolutionary authorities during the Terror. This is borne out in prison appeals by individuals caught up in the crisis.

- Loyalty to the revolution trumped nationality:

We might also have expected that a more self-conscious assertion of Irish national belonging would have been in evidence in the months after the British entry into war with France, in an attempt not only to shield oneself from the repercussions of repressive measures, but also to dissociate Ireland from the stain of anti-republicanism associated with the British war effort. This does not appear to have always been the case. There was still some desire to place adherence to the universal agenda of the Revolution above national bias and country-specific circumstances, even when the urge to fall back on nationality was becoming strong.

- Some echoes in London reforming circles:

This concordance of national agendas within the confines of reforming clubs and societies is in evidence to a certain extent within the London Corresponding Society. The London society saw, if not the cause of the English, Scots and Irish as being one, at least the treatment at the hands of the ruling authorities as being equally repressive, thus conferring on their differing causes common elements. It is not the past suffering of the Irish people at the hands of the British government that is at issue, for the LCS, but the present repression of reform movements which affects the nations within Britain and Ireland equally and unjustly.

- Particular radical pedigree of British exiles in Paris:

Many of the British members of the SFRM travelled to Paris to avoid the repressive measures being instituted by the British government against reformers who continued to articulate their criticism of the existing constitutional framework. They also tended to be amongst the more committed to the cause of political reform, not necessarily going as far as to advance to case for a republican overhaul of the British constitution, but certainly refusing to rein in their own enthusiasm for the republican turn in France, even after the execution of the king in January 1793. This may explain, to a certain extent, why common cause was found with Irish reformers who also took up residence in Paris. Views expressed tended to celebrate the republican advances in France rather than extol the British constitutional heritage of Magna Carta, the Glorious Revolution and the Bill of Rights.

- Retrospective rewriting and the stress placed on national difference:

Some reformers, on their return to Britain in 1794-5, after the relaxation of the measures adopted under the Terror and the opening up of the Channel crossing to foreigners, maintained their admiration for French affairs, flirting with imprisonment when they did, under the terms of existing libel laws or the Gagging Acts of 1795. Others however, rewrote their involvement in the Revolution and in doing so wrote out much of their earlier enthusiasm, differentiating retrospectively between the interests and priorities of British and Irish members of the society. Agendas changed as the revolution wore on, and for those British members of the club, returning home after their brief experience in revolutionary France, there was a temptation for some to renege on previous commitments and draw a much starker gulf between themselves and former acquaintances who were later implicated in attempts to overthrow British rule in Ireland. Such retrospective re-interpretation can sometimes lend more weight to the national schisms and dissensions within the society.

‘Dublin’s Journeymen- Hibernian Sans Culottes?’

Timothy Murtagh

Hertford College, University of Oxford

It is widely recognized that Ireland was deeply affected by the French Revolution; the debates provoked by the Revolution raised questions about Ireland’s own ‘ancien regime’. The example of Catholic France, throwing off the shackles of absolutism, made possible a new alliance between Protestant middle-class reformers and their Catholic counter-parts, agitating for both parliamentary reform and Catholic enfranchisement. In late 1791, the Society of United Irishmen was established with branches in both Belfast and Dublin. The subsequent historiography concerning this period has focused on the United Irishmen and in particular their middle- and upper-class leaders. Whether it is the dashing aristocratic character of Lord Edward FitzGerald or the doomed romantic figure of Robert Emmet, the focus has been on figures of a certain social class - Ireland’s *Jacobins* - often paying little attention to its *sans- culottes*.

This paper argues that there is a second, partly submerged, republican tradition present in this period, one that had flourished, not among middle class reformers, but among artisans in Irish cities such as Dublin – journeymen and small masters who absorbed the new revolutionary doctrines, but filtered these ideas through the direct experience of their working lives. They propounded a vision in which labour was identified with virtue. Simple living, usefulness and hard work characterised the patriot, while idleness was identified with moral and political vice, conspiracy and counter-revolution.¹

By the mid-eighteenth century, Dublin, was the ninth largest city in Europe. Significantly though, of the top ten most populous cities in Europe, Dublin was the only one on the list that was not the capital of a sovereign state.² This quirk reflected the anomalous nature of Ireland within the British Empire: Dublin exhibited some of the characteristics of a capital city, such as housing a parliament, but it was a parliament that had a complicated and

¹ This description is taken from a characterisation applied to Parisian Sans-Culottes. See, William Sewell Jr. *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labour from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge, 1980) pp 100-10.

² Jan De Vries, *European Urbanization, 1500-1800* (1984) , Appendix 1; David Dickson, *Dublin. The Making of a Capital City* (Dublin, 2014) p.152.

subordinate relationship to Westminster. Dublin was neither a metropolitan capital nor a colonial outpost.³ Yet it was the proximity of Dublin's workers to the Irish parliament which enabled a long apprenticeship in street politics which was akin to the crowds of London or Paris. Since the 1750s, crowds of Irish tradesmen had regularly been called into the streets by Irish politicians. Partially as a result, Dublin artisans responded powerfully to the new political climate of the 1790s, as numerous artisan political clubs sprang up in the city.⁴ In 1795, one newspaper went as far as to juxtapose the terminology of the French Terror with the names of Dublin's working-class districts: 'the Terrorists of Pill lane, the Marats of Skinners-row, the republican chouans that nightly revel in Hoey's court and the Roberspierrean Pike committee of Suffolk Street'.⁵

These working-class political societies were emboldened by new revolutionary doctrines, but their growth was made possible by the changes in manufacturing processes in the city over the previous several decades. As Dublin's guild system slowly disintegrated, journeymen fought to maintain wages and to maintain their traditional work practices. In both Britain and Ireland, the decade from 1791-1800 accounts for nearly a third of all the labour disputes recorded for the century.⁶ Dublin's journeymen 'combinations' (analogous to the French *compagnonnage*) were a powerful force in both civic and guild politics, a fact made clear during mass demonstrations in 1780 and 1792, when tens of thousands of journeymen marched through the city streets. By 1795, an official military analysis of Dublin pointed to the strategic danger posed by the city's disaffected artisans: 'they have in a manner organized (if not disciplined) themselves, so that they can assemble in 40 minutes in one body of 2,000 men, by concerted signals, from one house of call to another'.⁷ Not only did the city's combinations demonstrate an impressive ability to mobilise, they also possessed a distinctive political culture, built upon a language of commercial grievance and remonstrance derived from decades of guild-hall politics. It was a popular culture with potentially radical implications. This was in contrast to the United Irishmen, whose political aims did not necessarily extend to far-reaching social amelioration. Indeed, several prominent United

³ Thomas Bartlett, 'This Famous Island Set in a Virginian Sea': Ireland in the British Empire 1690-1801' in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. II (Oxford, 2001) pp 262-5.

⁴ A substantial list of these can be found in Kevin Whelan, *Tree of Liberty* (Cork, 1996) p. 77.

⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 2 July 1795. (Although Suffolk Street still exists, both Pill Lane and Hoey's Court have disappeared.)

⁶ C.R. Dobson *Masters and Journeymen: a Pre-history of Industrial Relations* (London, 1980) p. 26.

⁷ 'Report by Lieut-Gen. Earl of Carhampton to Duke of York on defences of Dublin, March 1795, in J.T. Gilbert (ed.), *Documents relating to Ireland, 1795-1804* (Dublin, 1970) p. 94.

Irishmen had been employers who had found themselves in labour disputes with their workers.⁸

Regardless of conflicts in ideology and personnel, the United Irishmen recognized the insurrectionary potential of Dublin's radical underworld. Following their official suppression in 1794, the United Irishmen had reconfigured themselves as a secret revolutionary movement. As Dublin assumed a central role in the planned United Irish uprising, the harnessing of Dublin's popular classes became a priority. By the end of 1796, Dublin's United Irishmen had consolidated the various pre-existing artisan clubs and were actively pursuing new recruits among the city's manufacturing districts. Over the space of the next year and a half, the United Irishmen had created a system of cellular-organized societies in the city, the membership of which was possibly as high as 10,000 on the eve of the rebellion.⁹ Yet, notwithstanding this mass enrolment, Dublin did not rise in rebellion in 1798. While it had been the lynchpin in the planned United Irish revolution, a series of government arrests and counter-intelligence operations ensured that no serious challenge to law and order occurred within the city. Deprived of co-ordination and the key advantage that taking the capital could have provided, the Rebellion was disjointed, resulting in sporadic uprisings in south Leinster and east Ulster. Despite the failure of 1798, Dublin's revolutionary underground proved remarkably resilient, surviving to produce one great 'encore' - the rising of Robert Emmet in 1803.

⁸ Marianne Elliott, *Partners in Revolution* (New Haven, 1982) p.228; James Quinn 'The United Irishmen and Social Reform' in *Irish Historical Studies* (1998).

⁹ Sproule to Lees, n.d. [May 1798], NAI, RP620/51/40.

‘The rhetoric and definition of Irish national sovereignty in the negotiations and military preparations between Theobald Wolfe Tone and The Directory, 1791-1798.’

Sylvie Kleinman

Department of History and Centre for War Studies Trinity College, Dublin

In Irish collective memory, the French military expeditions to Ireland (whether planned or failed) during the Revolutionary and early Napoleonic wars are generally perceived as heroic military exploits demonstrating France’s recognition of the Irish people’s right to sovereignty. Transformed into a potent site of memory, the so-called French myth of the nation in arms liberating oppressed peoples was rediscovered and glorified anew during the centenary of the 1798 Rebellion in 1898. This being said, France and the memory of this early fraternal and republican alliance which had created an Irish nationalism of sorts internationally, are largely absent from the current debates and commemorations marking the centenary of the 1916 Rising. In the immediate context this makes sense, because during the 19th century France had become too close to its former British enemy to compromise this relationship, especially after the Entente Cordiale and the outbreak of the Great War. In April 1916, France was evidently worn down by her relentless efforts at Verdun, and was critical of the need to redeploy her British ally’s troops towards Ireland. In Ireland, the revolutionaries of 1916 had not sought the support of France, but the wish to emulate the heroes of 1798 and avenge the deaths of these first martyrs of liberty were a constant driving force, namely in the rhetoric of the great ideologue Patrick Pearse. He more than anyone re-invigorated with eloquence and persuasion the pantheonisation of Theobald Wolfe Tone, the embodiment of the Franco-Irish myth of 1798, dying in his French uniform and the first in the modern era to fully enunciate an independent Irish republic.

But whereas France’s involvement or not seems to point to a certain imbalance between these two foundational revolutionary chapters of 1798 and 1916, another fundamental dimension brings out a similarity. The United Irishmen, just like their descendants in 1916, audaciously proclaimed an Irish republic, a political goal which seems logical today but which was not the open wish of a majority of the Irish population. If this gap is currently recognised in terms of 1916, it is less so for 1798 beyond the academic sphere, as

historians seek to define the precise context of these vanguard movements which could even be called utopian. It is therefore timely within the scope of this one-day event to revisit Tone's incessant lobbying of the Directory's civilian and military decision-makers, and to draw out of the abundant documentary sources which fuse military logistics with ideological rhetoric, this formulation of a sovereign republic as the political goal of these campaigns.

Is it necessary to ponder Tone's early republicanism? His legacy was appropriated with impunity by paramilitaries all through the 20th century and, wrenched from its eighteenth century context, his anglophobia became synonymous with violence, terrorism and sectarianism throughout the Troubles in Northern Ireland. And until recently, the term 'republicanism' was very ambiguous and could mean affiliation to splinter groups often beyond the law. Yet the instant association between 'Wolfe' Tone (a posthumous label) and this often anti-democratic republicanism had been considerably diminished by the magisterial and meticulous biography by Marianne Elliott. But for early-stage researchers today, it is clear that publications on the United Irishmen from the 80s are often coloured by the very tense political climate in which they were written.

While defeatists reacted to exaltation of the hero and minimised Tone's agency, his biographer even questioned how early he had formed a separatist republican vision and attributed it to an accident of history triggered by events and his exile to America. This paper will summarise how Irish sovereignty was formulated during the negotiations between Theobald Wolfe Tone and the Directory (1791-1798) and the military campaigns which ensued, and will then chart the marking influence on the collective consciousness of his writings after their publication in 1826. It will conclude by assessing the weight of France in the scope of his influence on Irish nationalism, and in the memory of 1798 for the 1916 generation.

'Transatlantic Republicanism and Abolitionism in the Longue Durée'

John Donoghue

Loyola University Chicago

Anthony DiLorenzo

Loyola University Chicago

Our paper compares and contrasts the conceptualization and transnational circulation of abolitionist ideas in the mid-seventeenth century English Revolution and the late eighteenth-century "Age of Atlantic Revolutions." Our method stresses both continuity and change across time and Atlantic space in the multiple efforts republicans made to eradicate human bondage. Such an approach helps to explain how conservative American reactions to transatlantic French and Irish "Jacobinism" in general, and the Haitian Revolution and the 1798 Irish uprising in particular, negatively impacted early abolitionist agitation in the United States.

Understanding republican abolitionism in the seventeenth century demands a confrontation with how contemporaries understood slavery. While most historians have equated slavery during the period with racialized, lifetime servitude, contemporaries recognized the existence of *slaveries* rather than one monolithic institution. In the seventeenth century English plantation complex laborers from around the Atlantic world had a variety of chattel bondage types imposed on them; although "slavery" served rhetorically to describe many forms of tyranny during the period, observers and unfree workers recognized each point along this chattel spectrum as a material form of slavery. At the same time, contemporaries clearly distinguished between the term-bound enslavement of "Christians" and the perpetual enslavement of "negroes" and less frequently, Indians.

What is remarkable about the transatlantic republicans of the mid-seventeenth century English Revolution is that they united their well-studied efforts to end political "slavery" (i.e. monarchical and other political institutions based on magisterial prerogatives) to an effort to abolish economic slavery (along the spectrum outlined above) in England's burgeoning Atlantic empire. In fact, they saw a causal relationship between economic and political

slavery, frequently linking the rise of economic slavery in the empire to the political “enslavement” of English body politics at home and in the colonies. In ideological terms, it is fascinating to note that their abolitionism sprang from the same roots as their revolutionary politics, which entangled the imperatives of practical Christianity with the traditions of the ‘free born Englishmen’ and the tenets of classical and renaissance republicanism.

Slavery had become increasingly racialized by the beginning of the eighteenth century and, in turn, antislavery rhetoric and action came to focus more narrowly on the enslavement of Africans. Nevertheless, republicans throughout the Atlantic world frequently framed their attacks on slavery within the paradigm of revolutionary reform and rooted their appeals for both personal and political freedom in an expansive conception of natural rights. Like the English revolutionaries of the mid-seventeenth century, American Quakers, French *philosophes*, and transatlantic republicans all, at various times during the eighteenth century, connected political despotism with forced labor, and vice versa. By century’s end, radical republican abolitionists argued that liberty *en totale* was threatened by institutions that sustained economic slavery.

In both the mid-seventeenth century and the late eighteenth century, major political revolutions informed the ideas and actions of those who opposed slavery. Historians have long noted the important influence of earlier Anglo revolutionary traditions on the republican ideology of the American Revolution, but few have recognized the profound effects of these ideas on the development of abolitionism in the early United States. Britain’s dominance of the slave trade in particular was characterized as a symptom of imperial corruption and hypocrisy during the course of the American Revolution. Later the French Revolution emboldened advocates of egalitarian citizenship rights, which infused antislavery rhetoric and action with an emancipationist thrust not witnessed since the English Revolution. Subsequent rebellions in both Saint Domingue and Ireland all but annihilated the tenuous distinction between public and personal freedom, as the oppressed violently resisted multiple forms of tyranny, exploitation, and bondage. The momentous French emancipation decree of 1794, in particular, has received scant attention by scholars of transatlantic abolitionism, despite widespread popular support for the French Revolution in both the United States and Ireland during the mid-1790s.

As revolutionary fervor spread in the late eighteenth century, conservatives reacted with repressive attempts to contain the radicalism that was spilling over into the closely guarded domain of economic enslavement. The resulting backlash laid the groundwork for a widespread ideological assault on disordering extremism of all types, implicating radical abolitionists as well. Jacobins became the face of anarchy and anti-Jacobin sentiment swelled by the late 1790s in the United States and Great Britain. At the same time, refugees from revolutionary violence and repression in France, Saint Domingue, Britain, and Ireland fled to the young United States. Formerly enslaved people from Saint Domingue and Irish republicans were particularly feared by the agents of order in the new republic. As a result, abolitionists moved to the center to avoid controversy, becoming increasingly moderate as evidenced by the excessively gradual emancipation policies passed in New York and New Jersey, as well as the failure to oppose laws that stripped African Americans of civil rights in the North, and the tightening of manumission laws in the upper South.

‘The conspiracies of 1798 in Britain’s Royal Navy’

Niklas Frykman

University of Pittsburgh

Throughout the summer of 1798, officers in the Royal Navy’s home command uncovered a series of violent conspiracies intended to support the rebellion that had just erupted in Ireland. On the *Caesar*, an 80-gunship cruising in the Celtic Sea between France and Ireland, 56 men swore, formally, ‘on the Cross, to be United Irishmen, equal to their Brothers in Ireland, and to have nothing to do with the King or his Government’. Less formally, the appropriately named John Hater promised ‘he should never die easy till he swum in English blood’. His shipmate and co-conspirator John Deane, corporal of marines, meanwhile declared ‘he would sooner kill an Englishman than fire at a Frenchman’. Similar promises were made by dozens of men onboard the *Defiance*, the *Glory*, and the *Captain*, and there are suggestions that further cells were active on the *Queen Charlotte* and the *Ramillies*.¹⁰

Even though naval historians have tended to downplay the significance of the 1798 conspiracies, in large part because they all failed, my paper will argue that they were a serious and coordinated attempt to help break the Royal Navy’s blockade of Brest at a critical moment during the rebellion in Ireland, and ideally to provide the future free Irish Republic with the nucleus of a sea-going navy. In the first part of my paper, I will focus my analysis on the conspiratorial networks that bound together and allowed leading conspirators on different ships to communicate with each other, as well as with shore-based radicals inside and outside the navy at their home base in Plymouth, who in turn were in touch with insurrectionists in Ireland and their contacts in France.

However, I will not only contextualize the conspiracies geographically in order to demonstrate their place in the history of the 1798 Irish Rebellion, but also chronologically to argue that the turn towards violent insurrectionary politics on the lower decks of the navy was not an impulse that simply flowed from the revolutionary movement on land to determine events at sea, but rather that it happened to coincide with the direction that shipboard class

¹⁰ Court martial against men onboard the *Caesar*, 16-23 July 1798, TNA: PRO (UK) ADM 1/5346; court martial against men onboard the *Defiance*, 8-14 September 1798, TNA: PRO (UK) ADM 1/5346; court martial against men onboard the *Glory*, 1-9 October 1798, TNA: PRO (UK) ADM 1/5347; Court martial against men onboard the *Captain*, 5-8 December 1798, TNA: PRO (UK) ADM 1/5347.

struggles had taken following the suppression of the fleet mutinies in the summer 1797. By focusing in particular on the conspiracy onboard the *Defiance*, for whom this was the third serious mutiny in four years, I will demonstrate how political experience accumulated at sea to prepare the crew for the violently treasonous role they sought to play in the 1798 rebellion.

‘The impossible meeting: Irish nationalists and French republicans in the first half of the 19th century.’

Laurent Colantonio

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As the Republic of Ireland commemorates the centenary of the Easter Rising of 1916, it is sometimes overlooked that the separatist and republican option, which was at the forefront of the political scene at the end of the eighteenth century, had then been for a long time only supported by a minority in the nationalist movement. My contribution will focus on the first decades of the 19th century, at the end of ‘age of the Atlantic Revolutions’ which is the focus of this workshop, precisely when the Franco-Irish republican ‘connection’ had evaporated and when the perspective of a Republic did not mobilise the crowds in Ireland anymore, after the failures of both the ‘Rebellion’ of 1798 and the aborted rising of Robert Emmet in 1803. During this first half of the 19th century, before 1848, republican ideas did not find a receptive audience, whether in France or in Ireland. In the latter, after the Act of Union (1801), what was now at stake is different; in the 1820s-1840s, energies were focused on the great mass movements of the Catholic emancipation campaign and the repeal of the Union.

Until the break of O’Connell with the Young Ireland movement in 1846-7, nationalists claimed to further the aim of national sovereignty but did not demand a republic. Yet, despite the downplay of the republican dynamic, both the French Revolution and the Irish ‘Republican moment’ in the late 18th century were prevalent in the political discourse and debates. The near past (as exemplified with the United Irishmen, the character of Wolfe Tone, the missed French landings of 1796 and 1798, the rising of 1798, the Terror, the recourse to an armed struggle, etc.) seemed unavoidable. But why precisely was it mobilized? What were the proposed interpretations, and what did they reveal about the present? Daniel O’Connell, who will be the focus of this paper, defined his own political project in reference and opposition to the last decades of the 18th century, showing both admiration for ‘Grattan’s Parliament’ of 1782, which constituted a model, and scorn for the revolutionary republicanism, about which he had painful personal memories. The bloody failure of the rising of 1798 was used as a repulsive counter-model.

Despite his demonstrated hostility, French republicans showed a deep and almost boundless admiration for O'Connell in the mid-1830s. To map out the history of the delusion, which goes on until 1843, enables to measure the distance between the two political projects which had in common their reference to popular sovereignty. In 1835, the French newspaper *Le National* glorified the 'orator of democracy' and published in one volume translations of two of his speeches, while Lamennais paid tribute to this 'colossal revolutionary'. In 1835-6, during the trial of the republican insurgents of April 1834, some of the defendants in Paris asked O'Connell to defend them. His refusal revealed the extent to which French republicans were confused about O'Connell, attributing him political opinions that were clearly misplaced.

In 1847-8, following the death of the 'Liberator', the republican ideal made a comeback in Ireland, especially among a group of activists, claiming to further the inheritance of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen. But then again, the *rendezvous* with France, which had become again a republic, was cut short. This time, the call for help from the Irish nationalists fell on the deaf ears of the French Provisional Government.