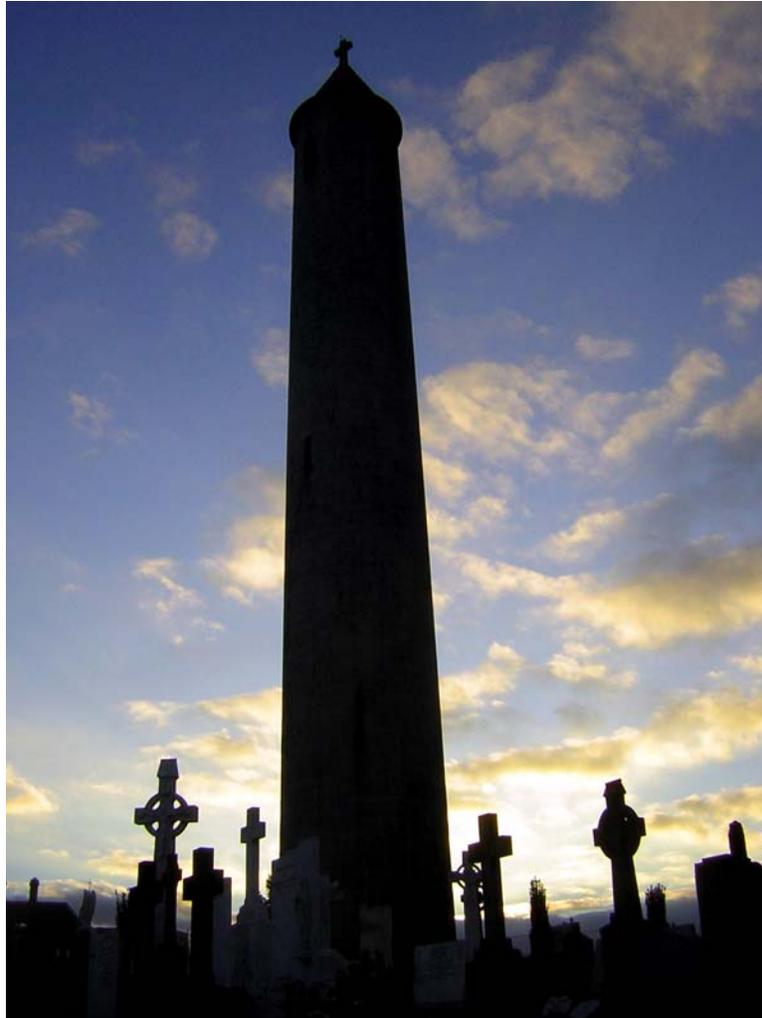


**“The Dust of Some”:
Glasnevin Cemetery and the Politics of Burial**



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*The dust of some is Irish earth
Among their own they rest;
And the same land that gave them birth
Has caught them to her breast.
And we will pray that from their clay
Full many a race may start
Of true men, like you, men,
To act as brave a part.*

From J.K. Ingram's
"The Memory of the Dead"

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Introduction

This project was born of my personal interest in revolutions. I have always been fascinated with history and have devoted a good deal of interest to the American Revolution and the heroes that came out of it. Through the course of my studies of Irish history, I began to develop an equal fascination for the series of revolutions that took place here, which are seemingly all strung together into a solid tradition of violent rebellion in Ireland. As discussed in more detail below, this interest evolved into a focus on Glasnevin Cemetery, where many of these revolutionary heroes are buried, and the political implications and consequences of events that occurred there.

In order to show how funerals and treatment of grave sites are used as important political tools, this paper is focused on Glasnevin Cemetery and is divided into three sections: an account of the founding of the cemetery, which required a significant amount of political capital; a discussion of four public funerals held in the cemetery, showing how various groups politicized these events and subsequent commemorations at the graves; and an examination of the ongoing construction and renovation at Glasnevin and the possible political motives or ramifications behind it.

The four funerals play a central role in one's understanding of this topic. The men discussed are: Terence Bellew MacManus, a Young Irelander originally interred in the U.S. and moved to Glasnevin some months later, chosen because his funeral is identified by several sources as the precedent that all nationalist funerals to come would follow; Charles Stewart Parnell, the prominent political leader of the late 19th century, chosen to give an example of a constitutionalist republican funeral (as opposed to physical-force republicanism, the ideology of the other three men); Jeremiah O'Donovan

Rossa, Fenian leader, chosen because of the popular interpretation of his funeral as a direct call to arms for the 1916 rebellion; and Michael Collins, military leader and statesman, chosen because of his ongoing popularity and reputation as a definitive Irish hero.

A significant problem with any field-study based historical paper is that many or most people one would profit from talking to are dead. Surely, this analysis would have benefited greatly from the perspectives of planners and attendees of the funerals. However, I believe that the generous use of primary documents, mainly newspaper accounts, constitutes a fair attempt at filling this void. The particular literature I used and people I spoke to are detailed in the methodology section, which follows.

Methodology

Formation of Topic

I began this project with an interest in the legacy of violence in Irish culture. I was originally interested in whether and how a tendency toward violent forms of resistance is transmitted through generations of Irish people. A related topic was Irish heroes; are leaders that use physical-force tactics glorified more than leaders that choose the constitutional route? As I searched for ways to explore these topics, my academic director Aeven Kerrisk suggested I consider focusing on a place, such as Glasnevin cemetery. I looked over some information on Glasnevin to find that many of the leaders I had been thinking about were buried there; I thought that examining how these men are remembered in death would be a fruitful way to discover who is most glorified in Irish culture and why. Beginning my research, I took note of all prominent burials or significant historical occurrences in the cemetery. This was quite overwhelming and I realized I needed a more narrow focus. A meeting with my advisor, Gillian O'Brien, spurred me to conclude that the aspect I found most interesting was the political ramifications of these historical occurrences (how political capital was used or gained at various points in the cemetery's history.) She suggested I focus in on the politics of burial, and I finally arrived at my final topic selection.

Literature

I utilized Dublin's libraries, finding a great deal of information that would have been impossible to access elsewhere. I began by checking some material out of the Central Library at the Ilac Center; as became my habit, I noted any works footnoted in a relevant book or article to look up the following day. This led me very quickly to the

Pearse Street Library. I spent many days in the reading room on the first floor, looking at books, newspapers or other relevant documents from the Irish Collection or the Dublin and Local Studies Collection. This library holds an absolute wealth of material and was indispensable to me. I carefully noted sources and paraphrased or quoted material in a small notebook. I photocopied any relevant images. To find useful materials, I referenced the footnotes of everything I was reading and used several search terms on the library catalogue. The staff at Pearse Street was also very willing to help in guiding me to primary source materials. I used the National Library on Kildare Street one day to access some newspapers the Pearse Street Library did not have a copy of (a rare occurrence).

The single most helpful piece of literature I found was an article by Pauric Travers called “‘Our Fenian Dead’: Glasnevin Cemetery and the Genesis of the Republican Funeral” in the book *Dublin and Dubliners*, edited by James Kelly and U. MacGearailt. It contains an account and analysis of four nationalist funerals, three of which are included in this paper. Other materials I found extremely helpful were primary sources such as newspaper coverage of the funerals and a few firsthand accounts in memoirs. I found that if I kept following footnotes from secondary sources, it might take a few “layers,” but it was worth the time and effort to go back to the original source. For general background information on Glasnevin, Carmel Connell’s [Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, 1832-1900](#) was useful. Even though I did not end up citing it much in this paper, it gives a good idea of the history and issues surrounding Glasnevin.

Interviews

As a practice interview, Aeven made me an appointment with Emily Mark Fitzgerald, an art historian at University College Dublin. While she did not have much specific expertise on Glasnevin, she presented some useful material on commemoration in general and gave me some starting points with literature.

My advisor, Gillian O'Brien, set up a tour for a group of students with Shane MacThomais, the historian at Glasnevin Cemetery. I went along on this tour and afterwards, made an appointment to talk to him. I also pursued contacts at the National Graves Association, and ended up meeting with both Matt Doyle, the secretary, and Eva Ò Cathaoir, the historian. In the interest of presenting a fair interpretation of the funerals, it should be mentioned that while the NGA are not affiliated with a political party, they only venerate and care for the graves of those who fought for a 32 county republic. I attempted to keep this in mind during my research and to find sources that would balance out this point of view.

I selected these people to interview largely because of their positions indicated they would have a mutual interest in my topic; I was not able to find many experts on the subject. At all three of my meetings, I took as many jotted notes as was reasonable while still giving the proper level of respect to the other person. Immediately after each meeting I sat down to type out expanded notes. While I realize this does not perfectly preserve each interview, I believe I accurately recorded a great deal of the conversations. I chose not to use a tape recorder, in some cases for practical purposes (Matt Doyle and I talked while we walked around the cemetery) and in some cases because I wished to preserve the informality of the meeting.

Because of the nature of this project the meetings with historians were most useful to me. Additionally, I gleaned information from the interviews with MacThomas and Doyle about the attendance at tours and interests of tourists. This information was not available elsewhere, making these interviews an integral part of this project.

Fieldwork

An additional and important piece of my method was spending time in the cemetery. Wandering and watching gave me a greater sense of understanding of the place I have been researching and describing. I feel a certain familiarity with and passion for the place simply because of the hours I spent there. I spent time taking photographs and noting observations about the various graves. One day was devoted to pacing around with a photocopy of a map and noting relevant graves and plots. That map developed into the version I have included with this paper. It is significant that I chose to undertake this fieldwork in November, a month traditionally associated with remembrance of the dead. I was in the cemetery and noted increased attendance on Remembrance Sunday, this year November 9th, a day devoted particularly to commemorating those who died in armed conflicts. The downside of working in November was the cold, rain, and short hours of light which often forced me to shuffle my plans for the day when the weather was not exactly as I had hoped.

Glasnevin Cemetery and the Politics of Burial

*... but the fools, the fools, the fools! -they have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace!*¹

So claimed Patrick Pearse in his famous oration at the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa (both the oration and the funeral are discussed in more detail below). While the average Irish person would recognize or even be able to recite this quote, it is not often that the full implications of it are realized. Why is leaving the remains of a leader in the hands of his people considered so incredibly foolish? What is it about dead patriots that can agitate a country into a state of rebellion?

For many societies, but for Ireland in particular, the death and commemoration of prominent politicians or military leaders are inexorably tied to their politics, and their memories are used by their colleagues (or enemies) posthumously to achieve political aims. As Pauric Travers puts it "honouring the dead was not simply a matter of paying due respects – it forms a potent element in the endorsement of a particular political culture or the creation of an alternative one."²

In addition to the innately political nature of commemorating fallen leaders, people find a particular resonance with graves. As opposed to monuments, which can seem impersonal even in all their exaltation, a grave site has the advantage that the person's remains are actually *there*.³ Ostentatious display (although often present) is not necessary to make a grave into a site of veneration.

¹ Aldous, Richard. "Patrick Pearse." Great Irish Speeches. (Quercus) 69.

² Travers, Pauric. "'Our Fenian Dead': Glasnevin Cemetery and the Genesis of the Republican Funeral." Dublin and Dubliners. Ed. James Kelly and U. MacGearailt. (Grehan Print Limited, 1990) 52.

³ Interview 3.

Glasnevin cemetery, an enormous burial ground located north of Dublin city center, contains a powerful combination of these two ingredients. A large number of prominent leaders are interred there. The elements of the politicization of the deaths of leaders and the resonance people find in grave sites are combined, and multiplied by the sheer number of such people buried at Glasnevin, to create a site that is rich with battles over memory and the generation of political capital. In fact, the staff of the cemetery were worried enough about the politics of memory encapsulated in the cemetery that they felt they needed to start giving their own, unbiased, tours of the place before political parties did. They began doing so about ten years ago.⁴

This paper seeks to explain the role of Glasnevin as a stage where various political players act out funerals and commemorative ceremonies that are often more about gaining sympathy for a cause than they are authentic expressions of grief or veneration. It explores the formation of the cemetery (which was fittingly a political battle itself), several prominent funerals that have taken place there, and the current state of the cemetery (which is a result and reflection of its rich history and a place where political battles rage even still).

The Progressive Founding of Prospect Cemetery

From the time of the Reformation until 1829, Catholics had no graveyard in Dublin.⁵ They could only be legally buried by Protestants and had to pay a substantial fee for the privilege. There was resentment about paying this fee in addition to the tithes already exacted from them; a family would have to contribute money to a church to

⁴ Interview 3.

⁵ Fitzpatrick, WJF. History of the Dublin Catholic Cemeteries. (Dublin: Published at the Offices, 4 Rutland Square, 1900) 1. Travers 53.

which they did not belong in order to give their loved on a proper Christian burial.⁶

Daniel O’Connell assessed the problem by saying that the authorities “were not content with oppressing Catholics when living, but they must insult them when dead.” Adding to this insult, many of the Protestant graveyards were originally consecrated by Catholics and later seized. O’Connell insisted that Irish Catholics be allowed to practice the religious ceremony “of which *they only, of the whole Christian world, were deprived.*”⁷ Catholic funeral ceremonies occurred despite the authorities’ insistence that a Protestant church must preside over burials. These discreet ceremonies or paying a Protestant church to conduct the burial were tolerated by the Catholic population up until the 1820s, when most of the penal laws had been removed, at which time the lack of a Catholic cemetery became a major source of contention.⁸ O’Connell responded to the outcry from the Catholic population by endeavoring to create a place where they could bury their own dead.

Originally, a piece of land was selected near the Phoenix Park and a cemetery called Golden Bridge was opened there in 1828.⁹ However, demand for plots there was so great that the planners became worried about running out of land; they began to look for additional ground.¹⁰ A suitable piece of land was selected next to the Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin, and the Burial Committee (a permanent committee formed in 1828 to manage the affairs of the to-be-established burial-grounds)¹¹ began negotiations to purchase it in July of 1831. The deed was obtained on the 19th of September, 1831. The

⁶ Fitzpatrick 1.

⁷ O’Connell, John, comp. The Select Speeches of Daniel O’Connell, M.P. Vol. 2. (James Duffy, 1854) 236.

⁸ Travers 53.

⁹ Fitzpatrick 15.

¹⁰ Fitzpatrick 18.

¹¹ Fitzpatrick 14-15.

ground was consecrated on the 21st of February, 1832, and the first person was buried there the following day.¹² Upon opening the cemetery was nine acres of land; today it is one-hundred and twenty acres.¹³

O'Connell's original intention was to establish a place where not only Catholics could use, but a place where any religious sect would be free to bury their dead and conduct ceremonies of their choice.¹⁴ The governing body of the cemetery kept his wishes in mind; there were no restrictions on creed and from the beginning any type of religious ceremony was allowed. In fact, in the first few years the cemetery was open, an average of one Protestant was buried there per week. Materials were kept on hand at the cemetery for any Protestant minister who wished to give a ceremony there.¹⁵

In this way Glasnevin Cemetery (officially called Prospect Cemetery, but as Glasnevin is a more common term, it will be used in this paper) was an extremely progressive place since its founding. In an era where all societal institutions were separated and carefully labeled as appropriate for one tradition or the other, Glasnevin did not officially exist for either, and was commonly used by both. A separate Protestant plot was established for "those who prefer to be interred apart,"¹⁶ but religious segregation of graves did not become the tradition, and to this day the religious traditions are intermingled throughout the cemetery.¹⁷

The importance and controversy around the establishment of Glasnevin Cemetery becomes clearer when one puts it in the context of the politics of the time, and in fact of

¹² Fitzpatrick 18.

¹³ Interview 1.

¹⁴ O'Connell 243.

¹⁵ Fitzpatrick 21.

¹⁶ Fitzpatrick 21.

¹⁷ Interview 3.

the politicians of the time. In the Parliament at Westminster, Daniel O’Connell was the champion of the establishment of a cemetery in which Catholics could practice their own ceremonies, and he would have been perceived by many to have achieved legendary status by being the first Catholic allowed to sit in Parliament. Thus the progressive idea of a multi-denominational cemetery was proposed and campaigned for by a highly progressive politician, and can be viewed in the ground-breaking series of events in the early 19th century which included the end of the penal laws and Catholic emancipation. Additionally, O’Connell’s method of constitutional nationalism was innovative in itself in a nation coming out of a period of physical-force republicanism. Jane Wilde, a nationalist supporter and writer of the early 19th century, said of him: “he overthrew all laws that stood in his path without violating one... without ever resorting to or inculcating one act of violence to terrify [the English cabinet] into submission.”¹⁸ He pursued the founding of a Catholic cemetery in just the manner she describes; in this way the method by which Glasnevin was established was also politically significant.

Glasnevin as a Soapbox: Political Capital and Public Funerals

In the latter half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the political significance of Glasnevin was made obvious through the numerous public funerals that occurred there. The first major funeral was that of Daniel O’Connell himself. On the 5th of August, 1847, he was laid to rest in Glasnevin in what has been called a “self-conscious celebration of Catholic achievement and confidence.” Unprecedented crowds attended to celebrate his life and mourn his death; a procession took a circuitous route all throughout

¹⁸ O’Duffy, R.J. Historic Graves in Glasnevin Cemetery. (James Duffy and Co., Limited, 1915) 61-62.

Dublin before ending at Glasnevin.¹⁹ It was a very respectable occasion, without much suspicion from the British authorities (in a sharp contrast to the funerals of physical-force nationalists yet to come).²⁰ The round tower eventually erected as a tribute to him in Glasnevin is 168 feet high,²¹ an imposing structure visible from nearly everywhere in the



The O'Connell tower, clearly visible from the opposite side of the Finglas Road (from the St. Paul's Section of the cemetery).

expansive cemetery. However, according to W.F. Wakeman, this tower was not erected simply to remember O'Connell's resting place; that would not easily be forgotten. It was to serve instead

as a "sign and guide for pilgrims in ages to come."²² So began the age of Glasnevin's establishment as a "site of nationalist pilgrimage."²³

Several other funerals solidified this function of Glasnevin as a site of veneration; as more and more nationalist heroes came to be buried there, it became the obvious selection for the burial grounds of prominent politicians. In fact, the funerals of the heroes buried there came to be used as a platform for political propaganda and a rallying point for the nationalist cause. Funerals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were treated as a day out for the family; extraordinary numbers of people attended funerals of radical leaders not necessarily because they agreed with the politics of that person, but because being seen at a prominent funeral was a mark of respect and standing in the

¹⁹ Travers 54-56.

²⁰ Interview 4.

²¹ Interview 1.

²² Wakeman, W.F. Graves and Monuments of Illustrious Irishmen. (Dublin: The Freeman's Journal, Limited) 32.

²³ McBride, Ian. "Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland." Introduction. History and Memory in Modern Ireland. Ed. Ian McBride. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2001) 31.

community. Additionally, at this time it was often difficult to express political will as rallies or demonstrations would have been dealt with harshly by the British authorities. It was much more difficult for them to regulate a funeral, and so they were often used as platforms from expressing political messages.²⁴

This section seeks to examine the funerals of four nationalist leaders: Terence Bellew MacManus, Charles Stewart Parnell, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, and Michael Collins.²⁵ These solidified what Pauric Travers calls “the messianic style of nationalist remembrance” even despite the battles over the content and execution of the funerals between constitutionalist and physical-force republicans and often the Catholic Church.²⁶ The funerals will be analyzed to look at the use of the funeral for specific political purposes and the main message communicated in the orations or demonstrations that took place there. The further commemoration and current remembrance of these leaders will also be taken into consideration when examining any political motives behind the funeral. These examinations are meant to illustrate how Glasnevin, as a national burial ground, has been used as a site of important political expression and a propaganda tool.

A Blueprint: Terrence Bellew MacManus

The funeral that set the precedent and format for all nationalist funerals to come was that of Terence Bellew MacManus. In life, he was a Young Irelander involved with the rebellion of 1848. He was deported to Australia because of this involvement, but subsequently escaped to the United States. He was buried in California in 1861. His body was exhumed and brought from San Francisco to New York on a steamer via Panama, and was met by large crowds in both of those cities. His body was re-interred at

²⁴ Interview 4.

²⁵ The graves of these men are marked on the annotated map on page 42.

²⁶ Travers 31.

Glasnevin on the 10th of November, 1861.²⁷ It is hardly disputed that his exhumation and subsequent showy journey from California to Ireland were planned specifically for their propaganda value. In fact, MacManus's death was brazenly taken advantage of by the Fenians, who used his exhumation and funeral to attempt to gain support for their cause.

The planning of the movements and funeral were characterized by rows between the Young Irelanders and the IRB/Fenians.²⁸ In fact, Travers characterizes the funeral as a battle for control between the "church, moderate nationalists and revolutionaries," with the latter as the ultimate winner.²⁹ The revolutionaries did find a member of the Catholic Church willing to endorse their cause; Archbishop Hughes gave a mass and address for MacManus in which he stated that resistance to a tyrannical government is justified.³⁰ Like the O'Connell funeral, the procession took a winding route through Dublin, however this time the route was chosen specifically to conjure images and memories of past revolutionary leaders³¹: the procession passed the spot where Robert Emmet was hanged for his involvement in the 1803 rebellion and where Edward Fitzgerald was killed in the midst of the 1798 rebellion.³² The Freeman's Journal reported that "the funeral procession was the largest by far that has been seen in this country since the burial of O'Connell."³³

Some sources characterize the funeral itself as an outpouring of authentic grief for a fallen hero. MacManus was characterized as 'the epitome of the selfless freedom fighter, the dedicated apostle of Irish independence, as the proponent of revolutionary

²⁷ Travers 57-58.

²⁸ Interview 4.

²⁹ Travers 57.

³⁰ Travers 58.

³¹ Travers 57.

³² McBride 31.

³³ "The Funeral of Terence Bellew MacManus." The Freeman's Journal 11 Nov. 1861.

solutions.”³⁴ Captain Smith, who had traveled from America with the remains, gave an oration which urged onlookers to consider that “the spirit of Irish liberty went hand in hand with the spirit of the dead” and insisted that the funeral was not for the individual patriot but to raise awareness of this overall spirit of liberty.³⁵ One man commented that MacManus was “bourne over a Continent and two seas—the greatest space over which the dust of man has ever been carried by the faith, love, and power of his kindred.”³⁶ It was the opinion of the papers that the extraordinary showing at the funeral was a genuine reflection of devotion to the cause he aspired to.³⁷

Despite this opinion, there is plenty of evidence that the MacManus funeral was a carefully manipulated political ploy to gain membership for the Fenians and to possibly even start a rebellion. It is clear that the organizers of the event did not know MacManus on a personal basis, as the carving on the coffin they had made for him reflected that he was 40 years old at the time of his death, when in fact he was 50. His family was not solicited for their opinion on the funeral services; the Fenian planners assumed they would not object. Additionally, although the Fenians ended up with control over the proceedings, there is strong evidence that MacManus was never involved with that group, and in fact had not been involved with *any* nationalist affairs since his arrival in San Francisco.³⁸ All of this evidence indicates that the Fenians chose to use the death of this once-prominent nationalist as a political ploy.

³⁴ Bisceglia, Louis R, "The Fenian Funeral of Terence Bellew MacManus." Eire-Ireland 14.3 (1979): 46-47.

³⁵ O'Leary, John. Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism. Vol. 1. (London: Downey and Co., Limited, 1896) 167.

³⁶ O'Duffy 35.

³⁷ "The Funeral of Terence Bellew MacManus." The Freeman's Journal 11 Nov. 1861.

³⁸ Bisceglia 51-52.

Their political aims would have been accomplished in several ways. The funeral procession was an impressive sight, and police reports from that day indicate there was very little drunkenness and the crowd was under control. This was the result of strict and well-coordinated organizing. The leaders of militant nationalist organizations selected young, fit men from the crowd and asked them to join or contribute to the organization. The young men, impressed with the successful planning of such an impressive event, were inclined to accept.³⁹ Additionally, the atmosphere of the funeral lent the attendees to sympathize with rebels even if they had not previously agreed with MacManus's



*The MacManus memorial.
The grave remained
unmarked until 1933.*

politics. This gave the Fenians an “important boost” and they toyed with the idea of using it to start a rebellion.⁴⁰

In fact, the Londonderry Standard reported on the event as an attempt to “to stimulate, propagate, and organize Roman Catholic rebellion in Ireland...”⁴¹ Indeed, the Fenians designed the funeral to shift “militant opinion” into “overt revolutionary activity.”⁴²

Further proof that the Fenians did not truly care

about the resting place of MacManus lies in the fact that although they had excess funds from the funeral,

they did not use them to erect a headstone.⁴³ A monument was not erected over his grave until November of 1933, and it honors other Fenian leaders along with him.⁴⁴

³⁹ Interview 4.

⁴⁰ Travers 58.

⁴¹ Bisceglia 62.

⁴² Bisceglia 45.

⁴³ Bisceglia 64.

Interestingly, MacManus is hardly remembered at all today. Only historians might recognize the name; ordinary citizens rarely have an idea who MacManus is and would not visit Glasnevin to see his grave specifically.⁴⁵ This further indicates that his significance as a national hero was presented disproportionately by those wishing to profit from his death.

A Nation's Regret: Charles Stewart Parnell

*—Let us go round by the chief's grave, Hynes said. We have time.
— Let us, Mr Power said.
They turned to the right, following their slow thoughts. With awe Mr Power's blank voice spoke:
— Some way he is not in that grave at all. That the coffin was filled with stones. That one day he will come again.
Hynes shook his head.
— Parnell will never come again, he said. He's there, all that was mortal of him. Peace to his ashes.⁴⁶*

This piece of dialogue from the “Hades” chapter of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (which takes place in Glasnevin) is a powerful indicator of the popular memory of Parnell. It captures the air of mystery around the man portrays him as almost Christ-like (the phrase “That one day he will come again” hints at a resurrection.) This is highly ironic considering popular opinion of Parnell immediately before his death. Upon finding out about his long-term relationship with Katherine O’Shea, a married woman, in December of 1890, the political party he was head of (the Irish Parliamentary Party) rejected him. He put candidates up for election in 1891 and they all lost, indicating that the public had

⁴⁴ “After Thirty-Five Years Fenian Memorial Unveiled.” *The Irish Times* 27 Nov. 1933.

⁴⁵ Interview 3.

⁴⁶ Joyce, James. “Ulysses.” *The Essential James Joyce*. By James Joyce. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 570.

abandoned him as well. In October of 1891, he died suddenly and seemingly without having redeemed himself from the throes of scandal.⁴⁷

Despite this, on the 11th of October 1891 he was afforded much the same type of funeral as O'Connell and MacManus before him, with a winding procession and hundreds of thousands of attendees. According to The Freeman's Journal, "as an expression of national sorrow it [stood] unequaled. No greater upheaval of emotion [had] ever been witnessed in Ireland." People were so moved as to feel they needed a memento of the occasion; entire trees were ripped apart so that each person could take home a sprig or a leaf.⁴⁸ The supply of ivy was plentiful at Glasnevin, so many took this plant, and Parnell came to be commemorated with Ivy, the day of his death being referred to as Ivy Day.⁴⁹

How could public opinion change so quickly? And who would benefit from the memory of this now-venerated politician? Some sources indicate the elaborate funeral and devoted remembrance were partially motivated by guilt over the O'Shea controversy.⁵⁰ The peoples' attendance at this funeral seems to have been an authentic expression of grief, which may have been deepened by the sentiment that they had abandoned him at a time of need. Parnell's political party, however, appeared to display insensitivities toward his final resting place in an attempt to harness the newly-generated sympathy. Several sources report that the decision to bury Parnell in Glasnevin was made by members of the Irish Parliamentary Party and was *against* the wishes of his

⁴⁷ O'Brien, Gillian. "Lecture 5." *The Irish Revolutionary Tradition*. 20 Dominick St Lower, Dublin. 25 Sept. 2008.

⁴⁸ "Charles Stewart Parnell – From England to Ireland." The Freeman's Journal 12 Oct 1891.

⁴⁹ Travers 46.

⁵⁰ Interview 4.

family,⁵¹ who owned an ornately decorated vault in Mount Jerome cemetery.⁵² The reason his colleagues cited was that there were already many noble names in Glasnevin, to which Parnell should be added.⁵³ The Freeman's Journal reports that Parnell was buried "over the ground where the poor in former years were buried" and remarks that it is fitting that he is buried among the men he is said to have died for.⁵⁴ However, Shane MacThomais, the historian and tour guide at Glasnevin Cemetery, takes a different view of this, remarking that the



This simple memorial to Parnell stands far apart from his family's plot in Mount Jerome.

IPP essentially stole Parnell's body from his family and buried it in a cholera pit,⁵⁵ which surely would have been a cheap piece of land. This evidence suggests that while the Irish Parliamentary Party had attempted to disown Parnell as not to experience negative repercussions from his affair, they attempted to re-claim his memory, and the political capital generated from it, by taking control of his remains and facilitating a large-scale funeral at Glasnevin.

About a month before his death, Parnell made this fortuitous statement:

If I were dead and gone to-morrow, the men who are fighting against English influence in Irish public life would fight on still... they would still believe in the future of Ireland a Nation; they would still protest that it was not by taking orders from an English minister that Ireland's future would be saved, protected, or restored.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Interview 3, Travers 61.

⁵² Interview 3.

⁵³ Travers 61.

⁵⁴ "Charles Stewart Parnell – From England to Ireland." The Freeman's Journal 12 Oct 1891.

⁵⁵ Interview 3.

⁵⁶ "Portrait of Parnell." United Ireland 9 July 1892.

He was correct in that the fight against English rule went on. His death, however, left a vacuum in Constitutional nationalism, as the generation after him adopted tactics of physical force.⁵⁷ This strategy became pervasive and military tension was palpable by the time of the Rossa funeral.

A Call to Arms: O'Donovan Rossa

Untitled

*Grieve not for him: speak not a word of sorrow;
Although his eyes saw not his country's glory,
The service of his day shall make our morrow:
His name shall be a watchword in our story.*

*Him England for his love of Ireland hates:
This flesh we bury England's chains have bitten:
That is enough; for our deed now he waits;
With Emmet's let his epitaph be written.*

-Thomas MacDonagh⁵⁸

This poem, published in the souvenir program sold at O'Donovan Rossa's funeral, perfectly captures the overall mood of the event. A strong push to carry on Rossa's legacy instead of mourning him, and his characterization as a revolutionary hero equal to Emmet, are evident from the military trappings and grandeur of the funeral. It was planned and carried out by the combined manpower of the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Citizen Army, and the IRB.⁵⁹ Never before had these groups cooperated⁶⁰, and this funeral was a foreshadowing of the impending rising.

⁵⁷ O'Brien.

⁵⁸ Diarmuid O Donnabhain Rosa 1831-1915, souvenir of public funeral to Glasnevin Cemetery Dublin, August 1st 1915. 2nd ed. (O'Donovan Rossa Funeral Committee 1915, 1955) 9. Hereafter 'Funeral Committee'.

⁵⁹ Travers 66.

⁶⁰ "O'Donovan Rossa's Funeral." The Irish Times 2 Aug. 1915.

In fact, the inner circle of those planning the 1916 rising also had a strong hand in the planning of Rossa's funeral. The author of the poem above, along with Patrick Pearse and James Connolly (who are also quoted here from their contributions to the Rossa funeral) were future signatories of the 1916 proclamation who were subsequently executed for their involvement. Thus the funeral was strongly influenced by the planning of this event, and was used as a mixture of a dress rehearsal for the rising (with many young men in full uniform, carrying rifles) and a signal to attendees that something serious was going to happen soon.⁶¹ They attempted to use the funeral to gain sympathy and manpower for their upcoming project; they did this by making a distinct argument about the legitimacy of using physical force.

An article in the souvenir program entitled "The Irish Volunteers in 1915" explicitly argues that a member of that organization has "taken up in his generation the traditional policy of the Irish people, - abandoned for a few decades- the policy of physical force!"⁶² A further article by James Connolly raises the topic with slightly more subtlety, asserting:

The soul of Ireland preached revolution, declared that no blood-letting could be as disastrous as a cowardly acceptance of the rule of the conqueror, nay, that the rule of the conqueror would necessarily entail more blood-letting that revolt against the rule.

He praised Rossa as the "living embodiment of that gospel" and asked each individual to weigh in his mind whether, if he did not agree with the sentiment, he was worthy to pay honors to Rossa's remains.⁶³ It is an eloquent hard sell for the legitimacy of physical force. Not just the written rhetoric of the funeral contained these messages; the 5,000

⁶¹ Interview 4.

⁶² Funeral Committee 9.

⁶³ Funeral Committee 7-8.

men carrying rifles in the procession must have sent a clear message to anyone they passed,⁶⁴ and, according to the Freeman's Journal, Rossa uniquely had a volley of shots fired over his grave.⁶⁵

Despite the already very clear message carried through the program and the physical appearance of the procession, the IRB asked Patrick Pearse to give an oration that would convey a statement of their principles. Knowing the rising was near, they were not cautious and encouraged Pearse to take things to an extreme.⁶⁶ He did, boldly declaring: "we pledge to Ireland our love, and we pledge to English rule in Ireland our

hate." He took to heart the idea of the legacy of revolution in Ireland, referencing older leaders as the sowers of seeds that were about to come to fruition. While some sources indicate⁶⁷ that Pearse was not aware of the upcoming rising at this time, he surely foreshadowed it in saying: "Life springs from death; and from the graves of



The Rossa grave, next to which Pearse stood to give his famous oration.

patriot men and women spring living nations." While this may seem like shameless promotion of a cause at the expense of the dead, Pearse even addresses this topic: "This is a place of peace, sacred to the dead, where men should speak with all charity and with all

⁶⁴ "O'Donovan Rossa's Funeral." The Irish Times 2 Aug. 1915.

⁶⁵ "Funeral of O'Donovan Rossa." The Freeman's Journal 2 Aug. 1915.

⁶⁶ Travers 66.

⁶⁷ Interview 4.

restraint; but I hold it a Christian thing, as O'Donovan Rossa held it, to hate evil, to hate untruth, to hate oppression, and, hating them, to strive to overthrow them.”⁶⁸

It was this oration that became the legacy of the Rossa funeral. According to the historian at Glasnevin, most people will mention this oration if one discusses O'Donovan Rossa at all.⁶⁹ The National Graves Association argues that it is not any grave, but the spot where Patrick Pearse stood to make this oration “which attracts the attention of all visitors to Glasnevin Cemetery.”⁷⁰ Combining Pearse's soon-to-be famous speech, the words of colleagues in the program, and the physical appearance of the funeral procession, the militant physical-force republican groups of the day had developed a powerful weapon to sway hearts and minds to their cause.



The often-visited Collins grave.

A Hero (for some): Michael Collins

According to MacThomais, the grave of Michael Collins is the most popular grave in the cemetery with no parallel.⁷¹ Fresh flowers are left on it every day of the year; in fact, it is covered with them. How did this man come to be so venerated in death?

Collins is unique in that, unlike the other men

discussed in this paper, he died fighting

Irishmen, not fighting the English. The Civil War remains a divisive issue in Irish

⁶⁸ Aldous 69.

⁶⁹ Interview 3.

⁷⁰ National Graves Association. Tour of Glasnevin Cemetery. (1988) 22.

⁷¹ Interview 1.

society to this day. It would seem that someone who died fighting in the Civil War might receive less praise from Irish society, as there is a sector of the population that plainly disagrees with his politics. It appears, however, that this gap is more than made up for by the enthusiasm of those who do agree.

Collins's funeral took place on the 28th of August, 1922. The Freeman's Journal claims it was "probably the greatest tribute of affection and the most affecting farewell ever paid in our midst to an Irish patriot chieftain"⁷²—a bold claim considering Ireland's history of large public funerals. The paper further claims the presence of a quarter million people in the procession, and details the elaborate military honors Collins was afforded. Men in uniform lined many parts of the route of the procession. He was buried, significantly, in the National Army plot, with "forty-eight men of the National army, the rank and file, [lying] buried within ten yards of the grave of their Chief."⁷³ The Commander-in-Chief of the National Army, Richard Mulcahy, gave an oration full of praise, admiration, and mourning. He also emphasized, however, "the people's resolve to keep the torch of liberty ablaze."⁷⁴ While many took the day to mourn the death of their fallen leader, still others commemorated him by continuing to fight for his cause; it is reported that hostilities did not cease on that day, and gunshots could be heard from the funeral.⁷⁵

While the Collins funeral was certainly a politically charged event, less political capital was gained from it than the other funerals discussed here. This is probably due to the distraction of the ongoing Civil War. The subsequent erection of the cross over his

⁷² "Ireland's Day of Intense Mourning." The Freeman's Journal 29 Aug. 1922.

⁷³ "Ireland's Day of Intense Mourning." The Freeman's Journal 29 Aug. 1922.

⁷⁴ "General Collins's Funeral." The Irish Times 29 Aug. 1922.

⁷⁵ "Ireland's Day of Intense Mourning." The Freeman's Journal 29 Aug. 1922.

grave and his commemoration, however, were highly political, if not well-publicized events.

In 1935 Collins's brothers and sisters began an attempt to erect a cross with an inscription over his grave. Although most of the family's correspondence was with the Minister for Defense (as it was a military grave) and the Dublin Cemeteries Committee, there is evidence of the close involvement of Eamon de Valera, a direct political opponent of Collins during the civil war, in the enormous amounts of paperwork and delay the family was put through. Their original letter of intent was not answered for four months. Although the reply was affirmative, the Dublin Cemeteries Committee subsequently objected to the size of the foundation for the monument. Nearly four years later, after the family succeeded in getting through this bureaucratic red tape, de Valera met with Collins's brother Johnny and personally added some stipulations: a cap on how much the monument could cost, specifics about the inscription including that it could be only in Irish, and a requirement that there would be "no public subscription and no publicity." Additionally, none of Collins's family was allowed to be present at the blessing except Johnny.⁷⁶ (The final product can be seen in the photograph above.)

Aside from the plainly unreasonable delay and difficulty with the erection of a simple monument, these specific conditions from de Valera make it obvious that the prevention was for a political purpose. De Valera must have been concerned at the amount of sympathy expressed at Collins's public funeral; he was not about to let the dedication of this new memorial further the dead patriot's cause.

Despite de Valera's efforts to downplay the Collins grave as a site of veneration and pilgrimage, the anniversary of his death (coupled with that of Arthur Griffith, also a

⁷⁶ Coogan, Tim P. Michael Collins a Biography. (London: Arrow, 1991) 428-431.

pro-treaty leader who died only a matter of days before Collins) became an annual remembrance of his cause, complete with ostentatious displays and speeches from prominent leaders. In this case his death was used as a reminder and occasion “for adherents of the Treaty to renew their faith and venerate their founders” year after year.

⁷⁷ Collins’s early death was perhaps a more beneficial occurrence for the popular memory of his cause than the natural course of his life would have been.

Conclusions Drawn from the Funerals

It is evident from the controversy and results that came from these four occasions that a public funeral is a powerful weapon for whoever controls it, and that a funeral is an effective way to express a political message to a large group of people at a time when they are perhaps a bit more susceptible than normal to accept it. This idea of the power of a public funeral is further confirmed by the government’s behavior in terms of the bodies of the executed 1916 leaders. These men are not buried in Glasnevin because the government refused to turn over their bodies to allow for a public funeral.⁷⁸ Their burial at Arbor Hill proves that the British authorities saw the danger of placing that kind of political capital in the hands of the enemy; however, in this particular case, their executions created enough of a stir to begin a war.

Thus Glasnevin’s simple role as a place where funerals take place is transformed into a different role; that of acting as a field where groups vie for the hearts and minds of the public. As David Fitzpatrick puts it, year by year Glasnevin becomes a “battleground”

⁷⁷ Fitzpatrick, David. "Commemoration in the Irish Free State: a chronicle of embarrassment." History and Memory in Modern Ireland. Ed. Ian McBride. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2001) 200-201.

⁷⁸ Interview 1.

rather than a “site of veneration.”⁷⁹ The marks of these battles which have gone on over the years are visible in a simple walk through the cemetery today.

Ongoing Politics: The Current State of the Cemetery

Glasnevin cemetery today is not only a site of nationalist pilgrimage and a working cemetery (which has always been its prime function), but a tourist attraction as well. Both MacThomais and members of the National Graves Association give tours. The NGA tours run only in the warmer months on Sunday mornings. MacThomais’s tours take place twice a week in colder months and daily in the summer. Both consider their endeavors successful and cite a healthy mix of Irish citizens and international tourists as attendees. Additionally, ex-prisoner or cross community groups from Northern Ireland often request tours.⁸⁰ According to MacThomais, the main graves visitors to the cemetery are interested in seeing are Michael Collins, Charles Stewart Parnell, Daniel O’Connell, and the Republican plot generally.⁸¹ As tourism is such an important function of the cemetery today, this section is intended to explain what the cemetery looks like to those visitors, and to provide some additional insight into political workings behind the cemetery layout. It will also describe and analyze the current renovation effort and the debate over the ownership of memory. Overall, it will summarize the political currents present around the cemetery today.

Politics of the Physical Layout

During tours, Shane MacThomais comments on what he finds to be an unusual aspect of Glasnevin cemetery: that anyone and everyone can be buried there. Not only is it open to all religions, but one can find some of the most prominent political figures in

⁷⁹ Fitzpatrick 203.

⁸⁰ Interview 1, Interview 3.

⁸¹ Interview 3.

Irish history buried alongside pauper's graves. Additionally, explains MacThomais, it is not unusual to find "former comrades and latter enemies," military or political, laid to rest nearly side by side.⁸² What is even more unusual is that despite the previously discussed religious integration, elements of political and socio-economic segregation are evident in portions of Glasnevin, particularly relating to Civil War politics. In his article "*Our Fenian Dead,*" Pauric Travers discusses the decision to bury Michael Collins in the National Army plot as opposed to the Republican Plot. He comments: "Even or perhaps especially in death, divisions remained..."⁸³.

Divisions remain politically even today, as indicated on the included annotated map (see page 42). MacThomais points out that someone being buried near the Republican plot would be affiliated with Fianna Fáil, the traditional anti-treaty side in the Civil War. Those buried near Michael Collins and the National Army Plot would be associated with Fine Gael, the pro-treaty side. According to MacThomais, someone buried in the plot owned by the NGA would be associated with Sinn Fein.⁸⁴ "The divisions are nuanced, but they are certainly there once you start to look," explains MacThomais in reference to the ongoing political segregation. Peoples' reactions to the Civil War graves display the still ongoing tension from this period: Matt Doyle of the NGA has had people leave the tour group upon arrival at Eamon De Valera's or Michael Collins's grave.⁸⁵

In addition to these political divisions, parts of the cemetery are largely comprised of certain social classes. Of the 1.5 million people buried in the cemetery, 800,000 are in

⁸² Interview 1.

⁸³ Travers 67.

⁸⁴ It should be noted that the NGA maintains that they are not associated with any political party, although they do support the ideology of a 32 county republic. (<http://nga.ie/history.htm>)

⁸⁵ Interview 2.

unmarked graves. This is largely due to families not being able to afford headstones. The large, grassy area by Parnell's grave contains many interred remains without marking. Many of these people died as a result of disease or famine.⁸⁶ The cemetery also historically designated graves as either "Perpetuity" or "Non-Perpetuity" graves, with holders of a Perpetuity grave gaining the exclusive right to burial on a certain plot for an increased fee. In Non-Perpetuity graves, several people of no relation could be buried in the same plot. Only one section of Glasnevin (the "Garden Section") has both of these types of graves; the other sections remain segregated to keep the Perpetuity graves "as exclusive as possible."⁸⁷ There are two-thousand plots remaining in Glasnevin, and they are priced according to location⁸⁸, continuing the tradition of a person's burial place being decided largely by what their family can afford.

Renovation of the Cemetery

These divisions between political affiliations and socio-economic status are nuanced; one might not notice them without knowing of them beforehand. A much more obvious phenomenon to visitors is the ongoing construction and renovation of the cemetery. On weekdays the construction is obvious. The front portion of the cemetery is noisy and filled with equipment and barriers. A museum, coffee shop, and visitor's center are being built, indicative of the fact that Glasnevin cannot sustain itself financially much longer by functioning simply as a burial ground. This project is necessary to incentivize tourism, which will become the main way Glasnevin generates revenue.⁸⁹ The other part of the project is a restoration to the "pre 1900's condition as a Victorian

⁸⁶ Interview 1.

⁸⁷ Connell, Carmel. Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, 1832-1900. (Dublin: Four Courts P, 2004) 55-56.

⁸⁸ Interview 1.

⁸⁹ Interview 3.

Garden Cemetery...” The intention is to make the cemetery an enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing place to visit and walk through. This is to be done in time for the 100th anniversary celebration of the 1916 rising. €2.5 million euros per year for ten years



(starting in 2006) have been allocated for the project, as a part of the National Development plan. It is being carried out by the Office of Public Works, a government body.⁹⁰



Before-and-after images of the type of 19th century graves which are currently being renovated.

Among other things, this project involves the restoration of pathways and setting upright of sloping monuments, which is a particular problem in the older portions of the cemetery. The earliest graves, from the mid 19th century, were on average eight to eleven feet

high. However, they tend to sink, and many are up to halfway submerged into the earth. To restore the cemetery, each headstone has to be

pulled from the earth and placed on a foundation to prevent it from sinking again. Work has already begun and is progressing row by row.⁹¹

The Current Politics of Memory

Why might Glasnevin need to be restored for an anniversary of the 1916 rising? To be sure, other periods in history and important leaders of other causes are better represented in the cemetery, but it would be foolish to think there is no connection

⁹⁰ Glasnevin Cemeteries Group. Restoration and Conservation of Glasnevin Cemetery. (Dublin, 2008)

⁹¹ Interview 1.

between Glasnevin and the 1916 rising at all. One executed leader of the rising, Roger Casement, is buried there. Many rank-and-file soldiers are interred in the cemetery, several of whom have graves in the NGA's care.⁹² MacThomais feels that there is a strong connection between the cemetery and 1916, citing the women and civilians killed in the fighting who are buried there in addition to the rank-and-file soldiers. He also mentions the cemetery's personal tie with the revolt: some of the clerks who worked in the office at that time left to join the fighting, and some of the gravediggers took leave to fight for the British Army in World War I (and so may have been sent to quell the rising).⁹³ Furthermore, there is a large monument to those who perished in the 1916 rising (and other Irish rebellions) on the St. Paul's side of the cemetery, which was erected by the NGA.⁹⁴

In addition to these valid motives for including Glasnevin as a part of the commemoration of the 1916 rising, there are some more subtle political reasons that €25 million might be devoted to such a project. It may have been easier that usual to secure such an amount as Glasnevin Cemetery is in the home district of former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern. The project may have been further motivated by embarrassment at the state of disrepair in Ireland's national cemetery.⁹⁵ However, it seems most likely that the political motive behind the renovation is an attempt by Fianna Fáil, the political party which is currently the senior partner in the coalition government, to gain ownership over the memory of 1916. Both Doyle and MacThomais agreed this is a possible agenda. MacThomais, however, emphasized the cemetery's connection to 1916 and the fact that

⁹² Interview 2.

⁹³ Interview 3.

⁹⁴ Interview 2.

⁹⁵ Interview 3.

while that may be Fianna Fáil's intention, they are subtle and there would not be a way to prove it for certain. Doyle agreed more wholeheartedly, but stressed that he does not care about the political motives behind the renovation; the cemetery is badly in need of repair and he is glad funds have been devoted to it no matter what the reason.⁹⁶

An attempt to gain ownership over the memory of a certain person, event, or ideology by using Glasnevin cemetery is not uncommon. In fact, it is a normal occurrence practiced by many political parties and other groups. Each party or group has their own time and manner of doing so: Sinn Fein marches to Glasnevin every Easter to commemorate various Republicans and the 1916 rising, Fianna Fáil does so some weeks after to visit the republican plot, and Fine Gael uses the cemetery to commemorate Michael Collins's death every August. Other groups such as the Communist Party and the Parnell Society use the cemetery for commemorations relevant to their causes as well.⁹⁷

All of these provide further examples of how Glasnevin is not simply used as a functional burial ground or a tourist attraction; in fact, various groups and political parties vie for the attention of the visitors and Irish citizens, using the powerful political capital created by death and commemoration to further their own causes. Men like Eamon de Valera and Michael Collins, directly opposed politically in their lives, continue to contend for the affection of the masses in death. Taking the present state of the cemetery as a snapshot can reveal not only the tensions of the past (for example, through the Civil War parties being buried in separate plots) but also the current battles between political

⁹⁶ Interview 2, Interview 3.

⁹⁷ Interview 3.

entities (such as Fianna Fáil's possible attempt to claim ownership of the memory of 1916 through the renovation).

Conclusions

“Paltry funeral: coach and three carriages. It's all the same. Pallbearers, gold reins, requiem mass, firing a volley. Pomp of death.”⁹⁸ While the funerals examined here were far from paltry, this quote from *Ulysses* emphasizes the similarities between public funerals, and it is not difficult to see how the “pomp of death” can be exploited for a certain cause. Glasnevin, then, as the site of so many important funerals, is simply a stage on which political actors compete for the support of their audience, the Irish people.

Furthermore, the history and political battles of the cemetery are closely related to the surrounding events of Irish history. The founding, which represented a victory for the long-oppressed Catholic population, caused a shift in which a cemetery which had not previously been allowed to exist became the most famous and significant cemetery in Ireland. The public funerals were used directly by various groups to gain political capital or suppress commemoration that might be damaging to their cause. The current state of the cemetery can shed light on Ireland's history of conflict; while the conflict have always it purported to be about religion, the intermixing of the religions in death while political affiliations remain segregated indicate much about how the conflict manifests itself.

⁹⁸ Joyce 557.

To conclude I wish to address issues not only relevant to the content of this paper but to do with my own learning as well. At the start of this project, I was nervous particularly about the field-study component of the work. I was unsure that I would be able to incorporate enough fieldwork considering my topic, and anxious about conducting interviews. Carrying out this project has helped me to expand my view of what fieldwork is; I can now see that my days spent in the library can be placed in this category as well, considering my interactions with the staff and use of primary source materials. Additionally, I am much more confident about conducting interviews as I believe I made a good impression on those I spoke to and was able to elicit much relevant knowledge even in the informal atmospheres I chose.

I began this paper with a reference to my personal interest in revolutions; it is that interest which led me to this topic, and which has now been broadened and enriched by the study of a cemetery in which so many revolutionary heroes are buried. I found this topic to be *so* rich that I have had to heed the advice of Aeveen Kerrisk, my academic director, that fieldwork can never be *finished* and one must simply leave the field at some point to write it up. I feel strongly that this work is unfinished. There are many articles and sources I did not have a chance to look at or analyze fully. I am confident that there are graves to be seen and people to be questioned who I have not even yet begun to imagine. Considering both my passionate interest in revolutions and my desire to continue in this line of research, I hope to be fortunate enough to apply the frame of reference I have created here to other cemeteries, possibly in the United States. I would be interested to see whether and how the particular politics of burial I identified are a uniquely Irish phenomenon.

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Interviews/Interactions

Interview 1: MacThomais, Shane. Group Tour. 10 Nov. 2008. 2PM, Glasnevin Cemetery.

Interview 2: Doyle, Matthew. Personal interview and tour. 14 Nov. 2008. 2PM, Glasnevin Cemetery.

Interview 3: MacThomais, Shane. Personal interview. 19 Nov. 2008. 1:45PM, Offices at Glasnevin Cemetery.

Interview 4: Ò Cathaoir, Eva. Personal interview. 22 Nov. 2008. 11AM, West Coast Coffee on Duke Street.

Appendix 1 - Full Text of the Title Poem

The Memory of the Dead, by J.K. Ingram

Who fears to speak of Ninety-Eight?
 Who blushes at the name?
 When cowards mock the patriot's fate,
 Who hangs his head for shame?
 He's all a knave, or half a slave,
 Who slights his country thus;
 But a true man, like, you, man,
 Will fill your glass with us.

We drink the memory of the brave,
 The faithful and the few:
 Some lie far off beyond the wave,
 Some sleep in Ireland, too;
 All, all are gone; but still lives on
 The fame of those who died;
 All true men, like you, men,
 Remember them with pride.

Some on the shores of distant lands
 Their weary hearts have laid,
 And by the stranger's heedless hands
 Their lonely graves were made;
 But, though their clay be far away
 Beyond the Atlantic foam,
 In true men, like you, men,
 Their spirit's still at home.

The dust of some is Irish earth,
 Among their own they rest,
 And the same land that gave them birth
 Has caught them to her breast;
 And we will pray that from their clay
 Full many a race may start
 Of true men, like you, men,
 To act as brave a part.

They rose in dark and evil days
 To right their native land;
 They kindled here a living blaze
 That nothing shall withstand.
 Alas! that Might can vanquish Right—
 They fell and passed away;
 But true men, like you, men,
 Are plenty here to-day.

Then here's to their memory—may it be
 For us a guiding light,
 To hear our strife for liberty,
 And teach us to unite—
 Through good and ill, be Ireland's still,
 Though sad as theirs your fate,
 And true men, be you, men,
 Like those of Ninety-Eight.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ "The Memory of the Dead." [Bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com). 30 Nov. 2008 <<http://www.bartleby.com/250/136.html>>.

Appendix 2 – Annotated Map

Map of Glasnevin Cemetery

Indicating some important historical graves, and sections of political or socio-economic significance.



Most of this information was gathered through personal experience; please see text of ISP for further explanations and citation of sources.

Appendix 3 – Full Notes from Interview 1

Tour of Glasnevin Cemetery, November 10th, 2008, at 2pm. Given by Shane McThomais, the historian and regular tour guide at Glasnevin. Set up by Gillian O'Brien for a group of American Students on the IES program, which I was invited to join.

Shane began by giving us a brief history of the cemetery and how it has expanded (when it opened, it was 9 acres, now it is 120). The first grave he showed us was the Mountjoy Martyrs, the “forgotten ten” who were executed during the War for Independence. Their grave has many flowers on it because November marks the anniversary of their executions. Next, he showed us Rodger Casement's grave. He is the only leader of the 1916 rebellion buried in Glasnevin. The rest are at Arbour Hill, as the government would not turn over their bodies to allow for a public funeral.

After briefly examining these graves which are at the very front of the cemetery, we descended into the O'Connell vault. The gates are normally locked to the public but Shane let us in. It is decorated ornately, in the Celtic romantic style. Daniel O'Connell's actual coffin, inside a stone casing, is ten feet long and four deep. Also inside this vault are other members of the O'Connell family. The coffins are simply stacked on top of one another. Shane informed us that this is common practice, and actually all over the cemetery there are underground rooms with numerous coffins stacked on top of one another. Those bodies stored inside such a room are protected from the elements and thus well preserved, retaining their hair, skin and nails in good condition.

We exited the O'Connell vault and headed toward the Parnell resting place. As we walked Shane explained that the walls and watch towers were built in the early 1800s to keep out grave robbers. People would tunnel into graves (so as to preserve the look of the grave so that the family would not know what happened), break into the top of the coffin, and tie something around the body in order to be able to pull it out through the tunnel. The bodies would be sold to a local surgeon's college. This practice stopped when morticians began to preserve bodies with chemicals like formaldehyde.

Shane talked about the Parnell funeral, citing it as one of the biggest ones to ever take place in the cemetery, and referencing a story in Joyce's *Dubliners* about Parnell (the “Ivy Day” chapter). He then explained that the entire grassy area we were standing on is pauper's graves. This was the area used if the family did not have enough money to purchase a headstone. He went on to say that just because there is no headstone somewhere does not indicate there is no body below it; no matter where you step in the cemetery, on the grass or on a path, there is probably someone buried beneath your feet. Of the 1.5 million people currently buried in Glasnevin, 800 thousand of them are in unmarked graves.

We proceeded to the grave of Eamon and Sinead de Valera. Shane gave a bit of background on deValera and his political career, and explained that this is probably the most vandalized grave. He noted that this is probably a result of Civil War politics, which continue to be divisive to this day. He then showed us the Republican plot and mentioned the many notable people buried there. He showed us and explained the background of the Hunger Strike monument and Rossa's grave.

In his explanation of this (the Republican) plot Shane mentioned how unusual Glasnevin is in the sense that anyone can be buried there. One will often find “former comrades and latter enemies” buried not too far away from each other. He continued by explaining that the various plots have political affiliations and that you can tell someone’s political affiliation by where they are buried, even now. Those buried in the plot owned by the National Graves Association would be associated with Sinn Fein; in the Republican plot with Fianna Fáil; near Michael Collins with Fine Gael.

Next we walked very far east, to the oldest part of the cemetery and where the restoration has already begun. We walked through the already-restored first gate to the cemetery and Shane explained the circumstances of the first person to be buried there. There are very detailed records of every person to be buried—headstones cannot always be trusted and provide limited information. The records are all currently being put online into a searchable database. The project is to restore one row at a time, pulling the sunken headstones out of the ground and placing them on foundations. As much as half of many headstones is currently sunk into the ground. The restoration is meant to beautify the cemetery, but some argue that it will cause the old burial grounds to lose their character.

We walked around the WWI and II memorials. Shane explained how the commemoration of those who died in these wars is often overshadowed by the 1916 rebellion, but also mentioned that Tuesday is Armistice day and that there would be a ceremony and poppies left by these monuments.

The tour finished at Michael Collin’s grave. Shane said that this grave is by far the most popular in the cemetery with no parallel. Fresh flowers are left on it regularly.

Shane concluded by reiterating that you can see someone’s political and socioeconomic status simply by looking at where they are buried in Glasnevin. He explained that there are 2,000 plots left and that they are priced according to location, furthering this trend of money determining where someone would be placed in the cemetery.

Appendix 4 – Full Notes from Interview 2

Conversation with Matthew Doyle, Secretary of the National Graves Association, November 14th 2008 at 2pm, while walking around Glasnevin Cemetery.

I had used the phone number from the NGA website to try and make contact with someone to interview. Matt rang me, we e-mailed a bit and then finally settled on walking around the cemetery to see some of the NGA graves and have a chat. We walked around for about an hour and fifteen minutes in both portions of the cemetery (on either side of the Finglas Road). It proved too difficult to walk, talk, look and write at the same time, so I did not take notes during the conversation but rather made some notes immediately after. What follows is based on those notes and my own memory. It seems exceedingly unlikely that the order in which we talked about things has been preserved; I have focused, rather, on getting the content and context right.

I asked Matt about his position in the organization and how he got involved. He told me he is the secretary and what kinds of duties that entails. I asked if it was his full-time job; he laughed and showed me the post-man's uniform he had on under his coat. He explained that no one in the organization is paid for their work there, and that they all have other jobs. He became involved in the NGA because of the condition of Bodinstown Cemetery. He was upset at how run-down it was and offered to clean it up once a year for the NGA. He quickly became assistant secretary as everyone in the higher positions at that time were older, and they knew they needed to bring in younger people to keep the organization going.

After hearing this, I was curious about why people such as Matt who are already so busy volunteer to put time or money into this cause. He responded that most people care about the commemoration of at least some of their patriot leaders; largely, the 1916 leaders. He explained that people become more uncomfortable when these leaders are tied to those of the modern Troubles. The NGA, however, stands by the idea of a 32 county republic and will honor the any person who stood for that.

Despite this belief, Matt was careful to tell me that the NGA is not affiliated with any political party and that they do not accept government funding. He expressed that people actually choose to entrust their loved one's grave with the NGA because they are confident it will not be used for a political purpose. Matt finds this to be an important point—using a grave site or death as a strategic move for a politician is disrespectful to the dead. He also said that accepting government funding would allow someone else to dictate their agenda. When I asked him about the importance of graves as opposed to other forms of commemoration, he stressed the importance of maintaining one's dignity in death and how a gravesite can contribute to that. While the NGA only physically cares for the graves of patriot dead, Matt talked about the importance of respecting *all* graves, including ordinary citizens and those who fight on the opposing side of Irish patriots.

Matt told me all about the tours the NGA runs on Sunday mornings during the warmer months. They get not only ordinary Irish citizens, but also many ex-prisoners from Northern Ireland and tourists (mostly American). The tours had a slight upturn in popularity after the Good Friday agreement. Recently the Republic has instituted harsher drunk driving laws and Matt feels that these laws have contributed to the declining popularity of their tours; he believes people will not risk coming out early on a Sunday

morning if they had a few drinks the night before. The tours are free and are meant to be educational. I rather shyly asked Matt whether Michael Collins is included on their tour, as I knew the NGA would not consider him a national hero for having fought on the pro-treaty side in the civil war. At first Matt joked with me but then made it clear that Michael Collins is, in fact, included on their tour. He noted that sometimes when the group approaches Eamon de Valera's grave, certain people will choose to walk away from the tour. The same will happen with Michael Collins's grave at times.

The NGA takes care of more than 60 graves in Glasnevin alone. A few of the earliest ones are small memorials to foot soldiers in the 1916 rebellion. The NGA also paid for the large monument to the 1916 men on the St. Paul's side of the cemetery. This monument highlights a point that Matt had been trying to drive home for our entire tour: the NGA is dedicated to the patriot dead of all generations. As the monument reflects with the various years on each panel, the NGA respects the legacy of the Young Irelanders, Robert Emmett, the Fenians, the Invincibles, the IRB and so on. He also emphasized the breadth of their interest throughout the tour, taking me to see the graves of constitutionalists, physical-force republicans, and artists.

We talked about the ongoing renovation of Glasnevin at several points during our walk. He says it is to be welcomed. The NGA cleaned up only the graves relevant to the 1916 rising in 1966, and that cost €3,000. He is glad the rest of the graves in the cemetery are getting the same respect and treatment. I posed the question of whether he thinks Fianna Fail might be doing this to somehow gain ownership over the 1916 rising. Matt responded that "a blind man could see that." However, he finds the political motives behind the cleanup to be less relevant than the fact that it is actually happening. If Fianna Fail did not do it, they would simply have to wait for the next political party with a motive to clean up the cemetery.

Appendix 5 – Full Notes from Interview 3

Informal interview with Shane MacThomais, historian and tour guide at Glasnevin Cemetery, 1:40PM on 19 November 2008, at the cemetery offices.

As I could not get a hold of Shane on his mobile, I went to the cemetery offices on Wednesday the 19th intending to go along in the public tour he was scheduled to give. I was somewhat early and upon entering the office Shane told me he would have time to talk to me right then. We sat across from each other at a desk while Shane finished his lunch (my visit was unexpected, after all) and I took jotted notes.

I started by explaining my project a bit and mentioning the four graves I will concentrate on. Shane immediately noted that hardly anyone knows who Terence Bellew McManus is; “maybe some historians would,” he said, but not the average person. He also noted that Rossa is most famous for Pádraig Pearse’s oration. He said that 9 of 10 people you ask about Rossa would mention that oration. I asked him who people request to see, or if they come to see a specific grave whose is it. He said most people would come to see Michael Collins, Charles Stuart Parnell, Daniel O’Connell, or the republican plot generally. He gets about half Irish citizens and half tourists. Some groups that tend to book are ex-prisoners or cross-community groups from the North.

When I asked about the division of plots in the cemetery according to political affiliation, he responded that they are nuanced but once you look into it you can see that they really do exist. I asked if there is any religious division; Shane said that there was an attempt to start a Protestant plot, but it never really took off and the religions are highly mixed.

Shane noted that the tours are a good lead-in to the restoration, which will include a museum, coffee shop, and visitor’s center, making tourism the future of the cemetery. I asked if he sees any political motives for the restoration. He responded that it probably helped that the cemetery is in Bertie Ahern, the former Taoiseach’s, home district, but a bigger motivation was that Glasnevin is seen as Ireland’s national cemetery and it was embarrassing to have it in a state of disrepair. I asked whether he feels Glasnevin has a major link to the 1916 rising; he said that he feels so strongly. The leaders are not there but they were only one aspect of the rising. Foot soldiers, women and civilians killed in the rising are buried at Glasnevin. Additionally some of the clerks in the office at that time left to fight, and some of the gravediggers were on leave to fight for the British Army in World War I; in this way the cemetery is intimately tied to the rising.

When asked about the particular importance of graves, Shane responded that people find more resonance with them than standing at a monument; the person is actually there. He also pointed out that graves are important politically since if you control the funeral and commemoration, you control the politics around that person. He used Parnell as an example, explaining how after the Irish Parliamentary Party had ruined his reputation prior to his death, they essentially claimed his body and decided that he would be buried in Glasnevin on a cholera pit against his families wishes, as they have a beautiful plot in Mount Jerome cemetery.

Shane has been giving tours for about 10 years and working for Glasnevin is his full time job. He had studied history, and the cemetery wanted to start giving its own tours as they were worried about political parties or groups starting to give biased tours of

the cemetery. (He mentions that while treaty supporters like Michael Collins are on the National Graves Association's tour, they are quick to tell you those people were traitors). He enjoys giving the tours, especially in the warmer seasons when they are full. He sees various political parties and groups trying to "own" the cemetery or memories therein in their own ways; Sinn Fein marches out every Easter, some weeks after Fianna Fail visit the Republican plot, and Fine Gael commemorate Michael Collins's death every August. Other groups like the Communist Party or the Parnell Society use the cemetery for various commemorations as well. I asked if the restoration is Fianna Fail's way of trying to settle the question once and for all; he said probably, but they are subtle.

Appendix 6 – Full Notes from Interview 4

Informal interview with Eva Ò Cathaoir, historian for the National Graves Association, 11am on 22 November 2008, at West Coast Coffee off Dawson Street.

I got Eva's mobile number from Matt Doyle who encouraged me to call her. I contacted her on Monday the 17th and we set up the interview. We sat at a table in the basement of West Coast. She ate while we talked, and I took notes. Other people came and went as we sat- this was a bit distracting but was also useful to ease tension and keep the interaction informal.

Our talk was structured around the four funerals I am concentrating on (at least, that was the intention—Eva seemed somewhat reluctant to have any conversation at all about Michael Collins). Throughout the interview, she recommended many works I should look at that were either directly related to the funerals or gave a deeper sense of understanding by talking about other funerals or figures.

I explained my project and Eva started by recommending I look at Owen McGee's *The IRB*, which includes a discussion of the mourning of the Manchester martyrs and its relation to public funerals. (Unfortunately I was rather close to the end of my research period at this point and did not get to follow up on many of Eva's recommendations.)

In Irish custom everyone attends prominent funerals. It is a mark of respect and standing in the community to be seen at such an event. Additionally, in 19th century Ireland people were largely not allowed to express their political will—the British authorities would not allow large demonstrations, etc. However, the British government could not stop them from having funerals and so they expressed their political will at these.

The planning of the McManus funeral was characterized by rows between the Young Irelanders and the IRB, both of which wanted control over the proceedings. It was a very large event. People would have treated it like a day out. Cheap train tickets were available on Sundays and they would have made it into a family outing. The police reports from this funeral show that the men had things under control; there was virtually no drunkenness. The members of the planning groups would have used it as an opportunity to pull young men aside and ask them to join. The young men, being so impressed with the event, were inclined to accept. Eva recommends Joseph Denioffe's *A Personal Narrative of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood* for an account of the McManus funeral. As a comparison to the O'Connell funeral, the McManus funeral would have been considered much less respectable. It did, however, become the blueprint for a nationalist funeral, and reflected the general air of sympathy for rebels in Ireland at the time.

Parnell would have gotten support from many sources: constitutional nationalists and physical-force nationalists alike. The large impressive funeral was partially motivated by feelings of guilt over the controversy around Parnell. The IRB was also involved in the planning of this funeral. How to dress on these occasions was extremely important; it was traditional to wear green for nationalism and black for grief. The funerals were very productive commercially. Shopkeepers and pubs were happy about the increased business they produced.

We spoke about a few other funerals to give additional perspective: John O'Mahoney and Terence MacSwiney. The funeral procession for Terence MacSwiney occurred without his body being present. He was not a gunman and there was a large amount of sympathy for him. His death had a major effect on the War for Independence. In fact the funerals of physical-force republicans were seen as more subversive and the British government would have been more suspicious of them, even trying to get the names of those who attended. However, as the large funerals were used as family outings, just being present at someone's funeral did not necessarily mean you approved of their politics.

Parnell and the Manchester Martyrs are still commemorated at their grave/monument every year. The bodies of the Manchester Martyrs were never returned to Ireland. Irish people are very skeptical about cremation. They feel strongly that a body must have a proper Christian burial, if possible alongside their family. This is why the issue of the bodies of the Manchester Martyrs caused such a stir. The idea of returning to a grave or monument every year to clean it is a constant reminder of why the person died.

Eva feels that the accounts of the Rossa funeral are tinged because the rising happened so soon after. Many accounts were not written until after the rising, and knowing that it happened puts a much more dramatic spin on the funeral. According to Eva it was "wonderfully stage managed." We then talked about the female figures of "chief mourner." For Rossa this was his daughter Eileen, for McManus his sister, for Parnell his mother (?). They were figureheads and did not actually have much power. A select few of those planning the Rossa funeral would have known about the impending rising, and so it was a mix between a dress rehearsal and a signal that something was about to happen. There were many military trappings.

How quickly a monument is erected to a deceased person is a reflection of the political interest in their cause. McManus is an example; his headstone was not put up until decades after his death, signaling that there was not sufficient interest in the revolutionary cause at that time for a revolt.