

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Ulster</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 30 History</p>
<p>Title of case study: Researcher, Historical Advisor and Narrator of ‘Wolfland’, the first Irish-language, historical documentary ever co-commissioned by RTÉ and BBC, broadcast 7th, 14th January 2013 (RTÉ) and 7th, 16th January 2013 (BBC2).</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Ó Ciardha’s underpinning research had a major impact on creative practice in the form of ‘Wolfland’, a flag-ship, two-part Irish-language documentary considering Irish relations with the wolf. His research on outlaws fundamentally shaped the content and presentation of the films. He provided the historical, literary, folkloric background to Ireland’s instinctive fascination with the wolf, a sense matched by viewing figures. Ó Ciardha’s research for the documentary produced an original re-telling of the English/British re-conquest of Ireland through the character and place of the wolf. He was researcher, conceptualiser, advisor and narrator.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Ó Ciardha has emerged as a leading authority on the outlaw in early modern Ireland, one of a triumvirate—rapparees, priests and wolves—that were viewed as leading threats to English re-conquest and plantation. His peer-reviewed research includes two major Irish-language and English-language articles on the Irish outlaw, as well as various other articles and review articles on historical and literary sources for early modern Ireland. Both the human outlaw and wolf—the outlaw of the animal kingdom—played key roles in Irish history, literature, mythology, folklore and popular culture. In spite of this, both have usually merited little more than walk-on and walk-off parts in general histories of the early modern period. Little work has been done on the incidence of outlaw activity or wolf attacks and their effects on contemporary politics, economics, culture and literature. A direct relationship existed between the incidence of Tory/Rapparee activity, wolf attacks and the location of woods, bogs and remote mountains. Indeed the wolf and woodkern, Tory and Rapparee became collectively barometers for measuring the extent of central government’s control over the island. Contemporary sources suggest that the authorities placed garrisons in or adjacent to areas favoured by outlaws, as well as organizing periodic Tory and wolf-hunts.</p> <p>Ó Ciardha’s researches to date on the Irish outlaw are based on extensive work in the major repositories and resources for early modern Ireland; Carte Papers (Oxford), the Egerton, Ellis, Sloane and Southwell Papers (British Library) Ormond MSS (National Library of Ireland), sources in Trinity College Dublin, as well as various newspaper, pamphlet and printed primary sources. In addition, extensive research has been undertaken on early modern English and Irish-language sources, including annalistic, historical and literary sources.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>‘The Irish Outlaw: the making of a nationalist icon’, in J. Kelly, J. McCafferty and I. McGrath (eds), <i>People and politics in Ireland: Essays on Irish History, 1660-1850 in honour of James I McGuire</i> (UCD, 2009), pp.51-70. Peer reviewed chapter.</p> <p><i>Dictionary of Irish Biography</i>, 9 vols (Cambridge, 2009), specifically essays on tories, rapparees, and robbers for this signature, Royal Irish Academy-sponsored publication.</p> <p>‘Tories and Rapparees in Armagh in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’, in A. Hughes, F. McCorry and R. Weatherup (eds), <i>Armagh: History and Society</i> (Dublin, 2001), pp.381-412. Peer-reviewed chapter.</p> <p>‘Tories and Moss-troopers in Scotland and Ireland in the Interregnum period’, in J. Young (ed.),</p>

The Celtic dimension of the English Civil War (Edinburgh, 1996), pp.141-64. Peer-reviewed chapter.

'Buachaillí an tsléibhe agus bodaigh gan chéille. Tóraíochas agus Rapairíochas i gcúige Uladh agus i ndeisceart Chonnachta sa tseachtú haois déag', (Mountain boys and senseless churls, toryism and rappareeism in Ulster and north Connaught in the seventeenth century), in *Studia Hibernica*, xxix (1995-7), pp.31-59. Peer-reviewed journal article.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The impact is on the very shape and content of television production, especially on the Series Producer and Director, whose testimony indicates Ó Ciardha's significant and growing effect on her TV series, *Wolfland*. Without the findings from his research the programme would have taken very different directions; but he was brought on board at an early point due to the prior knowledge of his work for the commissioning TV stations. The essential narrative, which pinpoints the major landmarks in the development of the wolf in Irish history, draws centrally on Ó Ciardha's work in order to drive the story-line. The key evidence base was sourced or verified by him. Ó Ciardha also provided the interpretative framework through which the narrative is to be understood. Specifically, the programme was shaped by the following insights from Ó Ciardha's research:

1. How Ireland's indigenous inhabitants lived side-by-side with the wolf and how the country's ultimate predator etched itself into their history, literature, mythology, nomenclature and psyche.
2. By the turn of the 16th century the country plunged into increasing turmoil as English and Scottish settlers began to be planted on vast swathes of the country. For these new arrivals, the wolf became a fearsome symbol of a wild and dangerous land.
3. How large-scale farming and deforestation saw the wolf lose its hunting and breeding grounds.
4. How war, rebellion, massacre, famine and atrocity provided rich pickings for this opportunist carnivore - preying on livestock and scavenging on the military fallen.
5. As fighting escalated between the settlers and the Irish, the savage wolf, the classic barometer of population pressures in early modern Europe, became one of an unholy trinity, which included the rebel Irishman ('Tory') and Catholic priest. The Crown and Commonwealth/Cromwellian administration would wage a relentless campaign to rid Ireland of all three.

The Producer-Director's evidence (letter 22 October 2012) explains how BBC and RTÉ 'were keen that we [the production company] approached Dr Éamonn Ó Ciardha for his expertise as a historical consultant for the project due to his research and publications'. Once the script was prepared with his help, Ó Ciardha was then crucial in 'historical fact checking' and in helping 'mould the project into what it became.' The impact intensified and changed pitch during the early stages when the script was being written, re-written and fine-tuned, since 'Ó Ciardha's clear expertise in the area', as well as his abilities in both Irish and English, additionally 'resulted in him becoming the series narrator for what will be a flagship historical documentary for both BBC and RTÉ' (letter, 22 October 2012, prior to airing).

In addition to shaping the script and presentation of the documentary series, there is evidence of the reach of the impact. The documentaries were shown during prime-time TV slots (7.30pm and 9.00pm). The viewing figures for Northern Ireland for the two episodes were over 30,000 (BBC Programme 1: 18,000; BBC Programme 2: 13,000), a significant proportion of the Irish-speaking population of the region (which does not include viewers from the Republic of Ireland). Over 200,000 viewers tuned into the two episodes in the Republic of Ireland (RTE Programme 1: 219,000 or 13.36%; RTE Programme 2: 208,000 or 12.75%) – a figure which represents over 25%

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of the Irish-speaking population.

The Wolfland series was also the subject of a BBC Ulster, Irish-language documentary, as well as receiving positive reviews in national and local newspapers.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)**Impact on the Programme Maker**

Letter from Steadipix Productions Series Director/Producer of Wolfland, 22 October 2012 (ID 1).

Reach to the General Public

'Animal Magic', *Belfast Telegraph*, 5 January 2013

'NOT only does new two-part documentary Wolfland explore our relationship with wolves over the centuries and their importance to our landscape and culture, but – rather like that other dual production, *Getaways* – it also highlights the increasingly close relationship between Auntie Beeb, who will broadcast the documentary on Friday (BBC2, 9pm), and RTE, who get first dibs by screening it on Monday (RTE1, 7.30pm). In *Wolfland*, Dr Eamonn O Ciardha takes us on an extraordinary, journey into Ireland's past as he reveals that more than 20,000 wolves once roamed our land' (<http://www.rte.ie/tv/programmes/wolfland.html>)

Web discussion boards <http://www.boards.ie/vbulletin/showthread.php?p=82832549>;

<http://www.politics.ie/forum/history/204648-bbc-ni-doc-wolfland-irish-wolf.html>

RTE, No 2 in Top 10 picks , 14 January 2013, http://m.rte.ie/ten/2013/0114/tv_picks.html