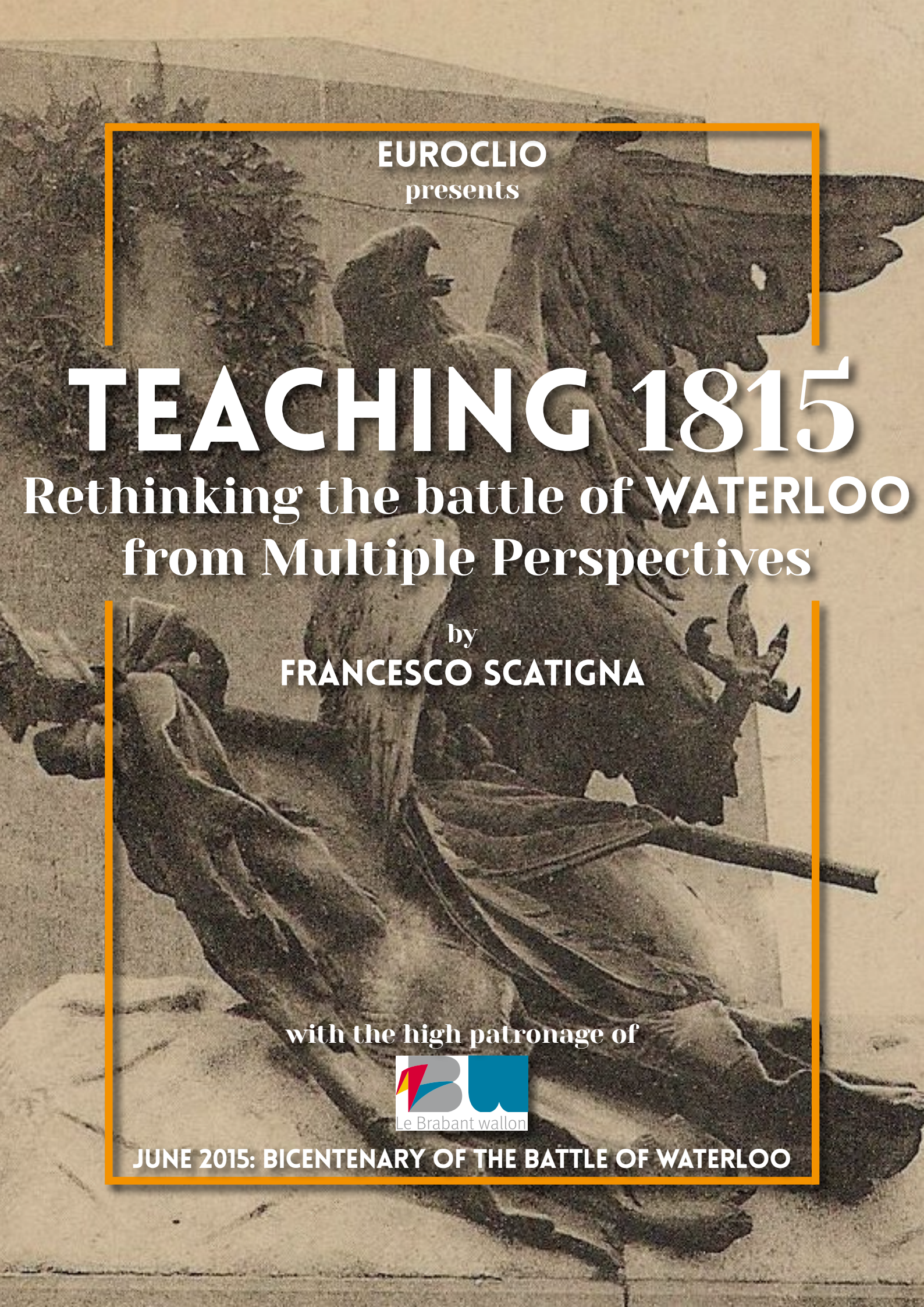

EUROCLIO
presents

TEACHING 1815

Rethinking the battle of WATERLOO from Multiple Perspectives

by
FRANCESCO SCATIGNA

with the high patronage of

Le Brabant wallon

JUNE 2015: BICENTENARY OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

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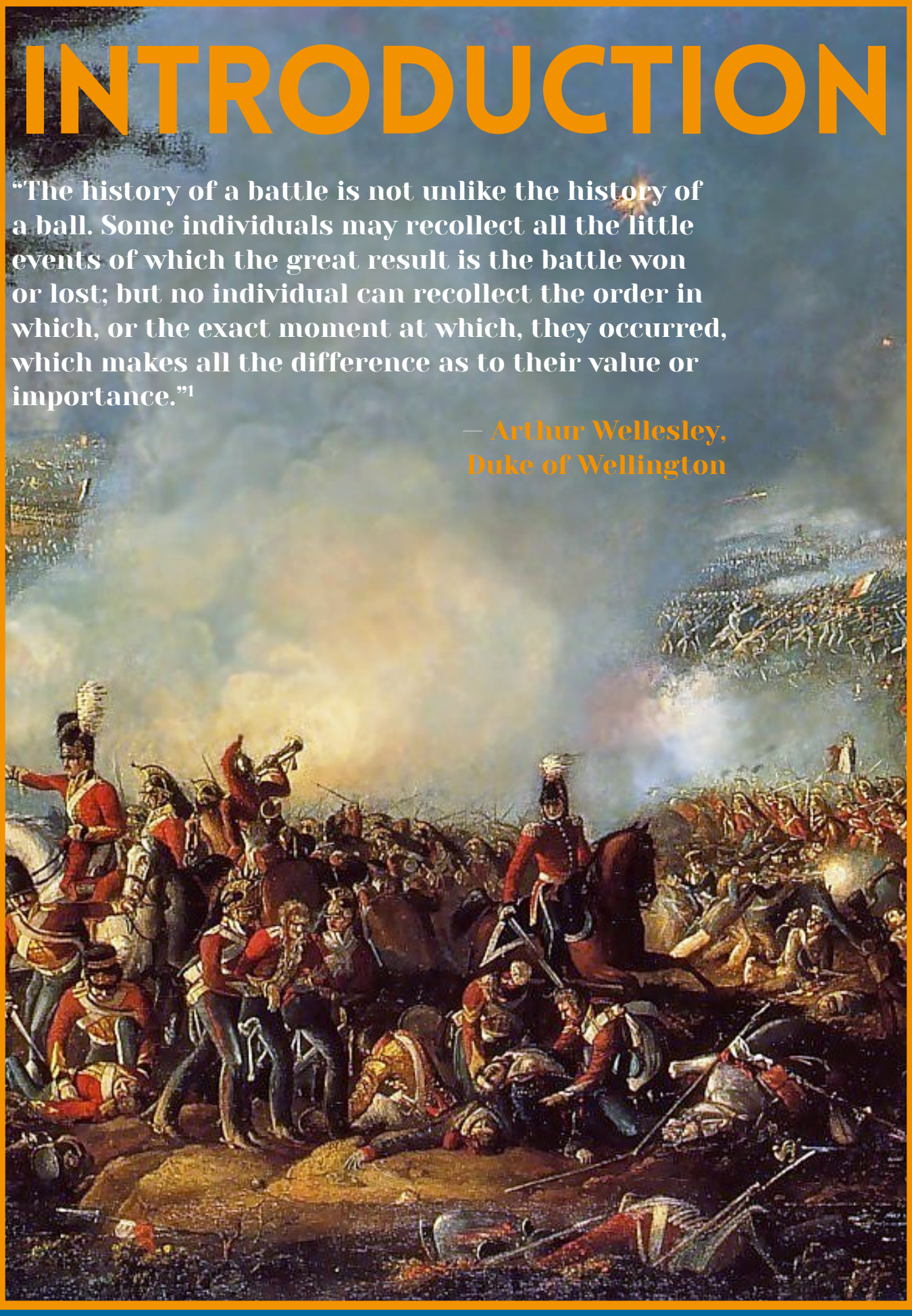
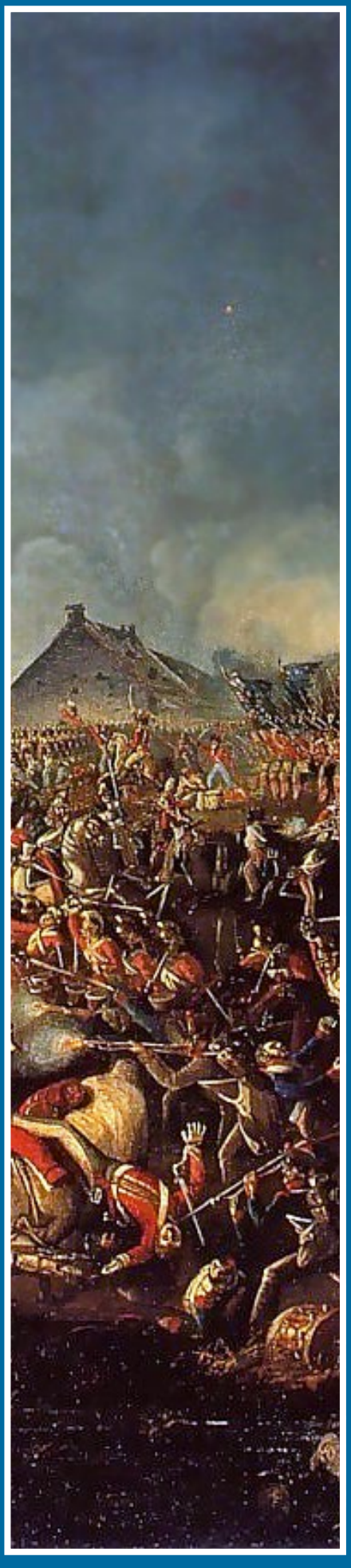


"The history of a battle is not unlike the history of a ball. Some individuals may recollect all the little events of which the great result is the battle won or lost; but no individual can recollect the order in which, or the exact moment at which, they occurred, which makes all the difference as to their value or importance."[1]

— Arthur Wellesley,
Duke of Wellington



WHY A CONFERENCE - AND A PUBLICATION - ABOUT WATERLOO?

2015 marks the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, a milestone in Europe's 19th-century history, a defining moment in European history which marked the end of the Revolutionary and then Napoleonic wars (1792-1815), and drew the curtains over the first phase of the revolutionary years.

Many initiatives are taking place to commemorate the anniversary, such as official commemorations on the battlefield and academic events. It is high time, then, for history education organisations and educators to seize the moment and develop cross-border, engaging educational initiatives. In this framework, EUROCLIO, the European Association of History Educators, together with Waterloo200, the Commune of Braine-l'Alleud, and the Province of the Brabant Walloon, organised an international Seminar for history educators, titled *"Teaching 1815. Rethinking the Battle of Waterloo from Multiple Perspectives"*, which took place in Braine L'Alleud on 12-15 February 2015. Stemming from this successful initiative, this publication tries and gives an idea of the complexity of the battle of Waterloo, the multiple angles it can be approached from, and the intellectual richness it can provide students with, if taught with passion, innovation, and cultural awareness.

This publication aims at overcoming the classic military reading of the battle, by including the views and opinions of a larger variety of characters (civilians, common soldiers, public opinion at large...). Besides, it aims at countering the classic 'great men history', who occupy the centre of the stage, leaving little space for a democratic narrative - and consequently no room for a full understanding of the great changes in history.

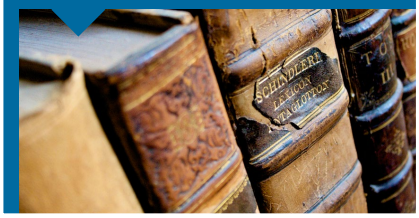
Finally, EUROCLIO, and therefore this publication, tries and speak to a wide audience; in fact, we hope to reach the widest possible audience, and to seed in the reader's mind some of the principles EUROCLIO is committed to: innovation in history education, multiperspectivity, the concept of responsible history teaching, and development of critical thinking.

Young people, young students, are therefore at the centre of our concerns. During the Seminar in Braine-l'Alleud emerged a feeling, among educators, that the battle of Waterloo is an important event which had a huge impact on European history, and yet not enough time is dedicated to it in schools.

While trying to reach a general audience, this publication was primarily written with teachers and teachers' needs in mind; its primary mission, so to say, is to support high quality teaching of the battle of Waterloo.

The Battle has enjoyed quite an amount of attention from a military point of view. But the battle of Waterloo is not only a battle between Napoleon and Wellington, nor is it a mere military confrontation. Waterloo is a defining moment in European history; Waterloo is one of those fine tipping points that decided on the course of history. In sum, Waterloo is much more than a battle: it is a metaphor of both the preceding and the successive years, and as such it is also an extremely useful event for history teaching.

REMEMBERING WATERLOO AND THE NAPOLEONIC WARS



WATERLOO - IN - HISTORIOGRAPHY

How have historians remembered Waterloo until now? The interest in Waterloo has changed over time, and it may be worth, here, briefly summarise how and why it did so.

As per many historical events, this battle has changed status when national narrative and national interest required to[2].

The very first accounts of the battle came from the actors themselves: Napoleon himself published his first account of the battle in the *Moniteur* (17, 18 and 21 June 1815); he dictated a second one while on his journey to St. Helena, which accused Marshall Ney and Grouchy of fatal mistakes that led to the defeat. From the British side, Wellington's party responded to critics as early as thirteen years after Waterloo (Sir Napier's account of the Peninsular Wars dates from 1828).

The first post-Waterloo years were thus characterised by pamphlets and contrasting accounts. In the 1830s and 1840s historians and military experts who did not participate to the battle started publishing new accounts; among them, Dutch and Prussian texts are particularly notable: the Dutch account, written by a former aide-de-camp of Frederick of the Netherlands (whose division was in Waterloo but did not see action) focuses on the positioning and on the events concerning Dutch troops - thus concentrating on building a national memory of the battle. The Prussian accounts, among which one written by von Clausewitz and published in 1835[3], are all more technical and focused on the way the battle developed. In Britain, discussion revolved around Wellington's performance, and the role Prussian troops had, rather than on the battle itself; Britain was at the apex of its world power, and victory at Waterloo was a non contentious subject: British troops, alone, had won the battle, as consensus went.

Portrait of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington – 1814

The second half of the XIX[th] century and its nationalism affected the way the battle of Waterloo was studied, especially in the Continent, where French historians felt the need of reassessing the defeat (a glorious defeat[4]) and their Prusso-German colleagues worked for a definitive recognition of the essential role of Prussian troops on the field. The rising of tensions towards the end of the century and the change in the traditional diplomatic assets applied pressure upon the classic perspectives on Waterloo. In 1915, the British government downplayed celebrations of the centenary: in the middle of an equally devastating war, the old enemy was now London's best ally[5].

However, the XX[th] century marked also a new change in the way information was collected: authors started feeding from multiple archives - while until then the usual research concerned one archive and foreign, published sources at times.

The First World War, which superseded the Napoleonic Wars as the new Great War, prompted new reflections among French historians, who started wondering about the reasons of Napoleon's defeat.

Until the Second World War, historians had focused on the high commands' perspectives on the battle, with very few mentions to the soldiers - let alone to the civilians, or the social repercussions of the Battle and the campaign in general. In the aftermath of the war, finally, new perspectives started being taken into account and ego-documents from common soldiers became the core of some new works[6] - coming especially from English-speaking historians. Waterloo studies followed in the new trends in history writing, and turned to a less classic, more 'democratic' kind of presentation. Bruno Colson calls it 'Cultural History', and adds:

"Historians are now concerned by the cultural repercussions of the event itself and its memorialising.[7]"

"OUR ALLY IS TODAY OUR SWORN ENEMY!"

A cartoon depicting King George V sweeping away his German titles in 1917. During the First World War the Royal House changed its name from 'Saxe-Coburg and Gotha' to the more British 'Windsor'.

A Good Riddance – L. Raven Hill 1917

PUBLIC REMEMBRANCE - AND - WATERLOO

The scale of the battle of Waterloo was huge - even in modern terms: its almost 50.000 deaths within a single day are comparable to the first day of the Somme-Battle of July 1916.[8] The death toll exacted by the Napoleonic Wars equals that of the First World War - in relative terms of population.[9] Since Europe was in 1815 in good part ravaged by more than twenty years of basically uninterrupted state of war, people started memorialising the major events quite early - the battle of Waterloo included.

Some main reasons can be put forward to explain how structured public remembrance could be enforced as early as during the XIXth century: the European-wide character of the Napoleonic Wars and battles (including Waterloo) put different national perspectives in simultaneous competition for the same events. Combined with the rising nationalism (due also to the war itself), and thus to the construction of national narratives which took place during those years, made it a convenient subject for national remembrance.

Furthermore, the enforcement of national education programmes enabled people to have basic education and to be fed with national narratives and perspectives of events of the past: basic education created a community with a sense of what the nation was and of what it stood for, thus creating the bases for common public remembrance[10]. Historical narratives thus tended to support the construction of the national State; they tended to avoid complexity, and often were undisputed within their communities.

Today, instead, organisers of educational and cultural initiatives to remember past wars have the opposite, but equally difficult task of navigating the complex and sometimes blurred lines of commemoration, legitimisation and glorification.[11] Even when there is no willingness to justify wars or the devastating losses they caused, there are significant political and cultural pressures to draw meaning from past conflicts and to avoid suggesting that so many deaths might have been in vain or without just purpose.

Cross-border activities can help understand that *what is remembered, how it is remembered* and *why it is remembered* can vary from one society to another and from one generation to another. The development and implementation of comparative online teaching modules will help transporting national (re-) interpretations of key moments from a country's - or a region's - past into a broader European and global perspective. A focus on best-practices exchanges, cross-border dialogue and European-wide support network will enable educators to be better equipped and thus to own the capability to make students aware of the risks of glorification or victimisation of a tragic past seen exclusively through a national prism.

From top to bottom:
1. Soldiers during a reenactment of the battle of Waterloo
2. French cuirassier during a re-enactment of the battle of Waterloo
3. Reenactors in the uniform of the 33rd Regiment of Foot (Wellington's Redcoats)

THE ROLE OF
– PERSPECTIVES –

Do national perspectives play a role in Waterloo studies? The literature (both academic and novelistic) on Waterloo still features a predominance of national points of view, language skills of researchers are determining to a large extent still the results, and therefore the perspectives of historical research. Finally, national perspectives still predominantly determine the point of views and consequently national bias are still very present in the way Waterloo features in the national narratives. A European perspective on Waterloo and the Napoleonic wars in general might positively reflect in history teaching in primary and secondary schools. Nonetheless, the marginality of the subject in many European curricula pushes teachers to teach Waterloo the traditional way, thus missing a rich subject which could instead be very useful as a key to spread light on life in 1815. In this framework, this publication might be useful in supporting educators as a quick reference book and a collection of ready-to-use ideas, while also making the case for the relevance of teaching Waterloo today.

TODAY'S
– RELEVANCE –

The European and Global Dimension

The European dimension of the alliance against Napoleon in 1815, and particularly the armed forces in the Battle creates a subject of European importance. A large majority of the soldiers on the battlefield spoke German, many of them in the British army.[12] Part of the British regular army was the German Legion, a legacy of the fact that the king was of Hanoverian descent. However, many more spoke German. Brendan Simms, a well known Cambridge historian, wrote on *The New Statesman* in 2014 that *"Waterloo was a 'European' rather than a 'British' or 'German' victory"*. Waterloo offers a picture of the high degree of European 'cooperation' existing at the time – a very relevant information, nowadays.

Waterloo's precedent and subsequent years can also be brought into the classroom through the battle. After all, Waterloo marked the beginning of the process of destruction ofdecaying empires such as the Spanish and the Ottoman, and the definitive establishment of new great Powers, such the British, Russian, later the American[13], and the European empowerment of Prussia. One can even consider it as a first beginning of a unification process of Germany.

The Napoleonic wars and Waterloo can thus be taught from the viewpoint of a European and even global dimension. In particular, the bicentenary of the Battle should be an opportunity to reflect on dynamics of conflict and cooperation in Europe throughout the 19th and the 20th century[14]. This way, learning about the war will contribute to reinforce peace and the values attached to it in the minds of young people, helping them understand the world they live in and become responsible and citizens.

Ordinary People

The Napoleonic Wars were known at the time as the 'Great War' - a proof of the wide public's awareness of the impact this period had had on Europe. Notwithstanding this, remembrance concerned mainly the major characters who fought the wars (Napoleon, Nelson, Wellington, Blucher...), while almost no memorial or public remembrance took into consideration the commoners (be they soldiers or civilians). For instance, the victims of the battle of Waterloo did not receive any celebratory burying of some sort, nor were their deaths commemorated in any meaningful manner[15].

Personal testimonies reveal a complex picture of responses ranging from patriotism to comradeship to self-preservation. Soldiers kept diaries, wrote letters or, if they survived, simply remembered what they had seen and done, thus uncovering their idealism, nationalism, pragmatism, reluctance to go to battle, sarcasm, and any other shade of human behaviour, so much so that students can promptly feel a connection to them.

Soldiers' experiences and motivations defy simplistic classifications and rarely fit political narratives. Here lies their added value: at a time when the legitimacy and relevance of the nation are being challenged by globalisation, mass migration, identity politics and many other forces, it may be tempting for governments to seek to use wars to construct a national identity rooted in a particular vision of the past. Yet even if soldiers' sacrifices could be moulded into a simply-defined defence of the nation and its values against an external enemy, this is likely to prove divisive and even counter-productive. Attempts to create a single national memory by excluding alternative perspectives are detrimental to efforts to make war commemorations inclusive and meaningful to a broad spectrum of society. Injection of multiple perspectives, besides those of great men, into history teaching is thus a fundamental tool in order to keep history unbiased and independent. Multiple perspectives add complexity to the narration of history; showing students that there is no one, correct view, but many, competing and coexisting ones, leads to the understanding of complexity in the past - and in the present.

Focusing on the way commoners have 'not been remembered' so far is indeed an interesting perspective to take into account when discussing about Waterloo. In recent years there has been a tendency to focus more on this perspective. In Spring 2015 a team of international archaeological experts was due to start new research on Waterloo's battlefield, and especially in the environment of Hougoumont Farm, to try to locate the common burial places created right after the battle[16].

Commemoration of the dead has, in short, changed much over the years - a very interesting subject of discussion with students and learners. But it is commemoration of civilians at large that ought to find its way into history teaching. Learning about the everyday life of civilians and common soldiers is significant as a way to understand the perspectives of those who lived during the Napoleonic Wars, while being also a means to make comparisons with today's societies.

Women

Gender studies are an important subject that history teaching should be tackling, as it opens up discussion on the role of women in society, today and in the past. It is relevant, and it is fair: for in 1815 women were playing an increasingly important role in society, thanks to the effects of the French Revolution but also because of the rise of the bourgeoisie in Europe. Students could be confronted to characters such as the women who died at Waterloo. So far ignored by the classic rendition of the Battle, many women had followed their husbands or had participated to the battle as nurses[17].

Furthermore, common women experienced a steady evolution of their role after (and in part due to) the Revolution; these are themes that can be explored using Waterloo as a starting point.

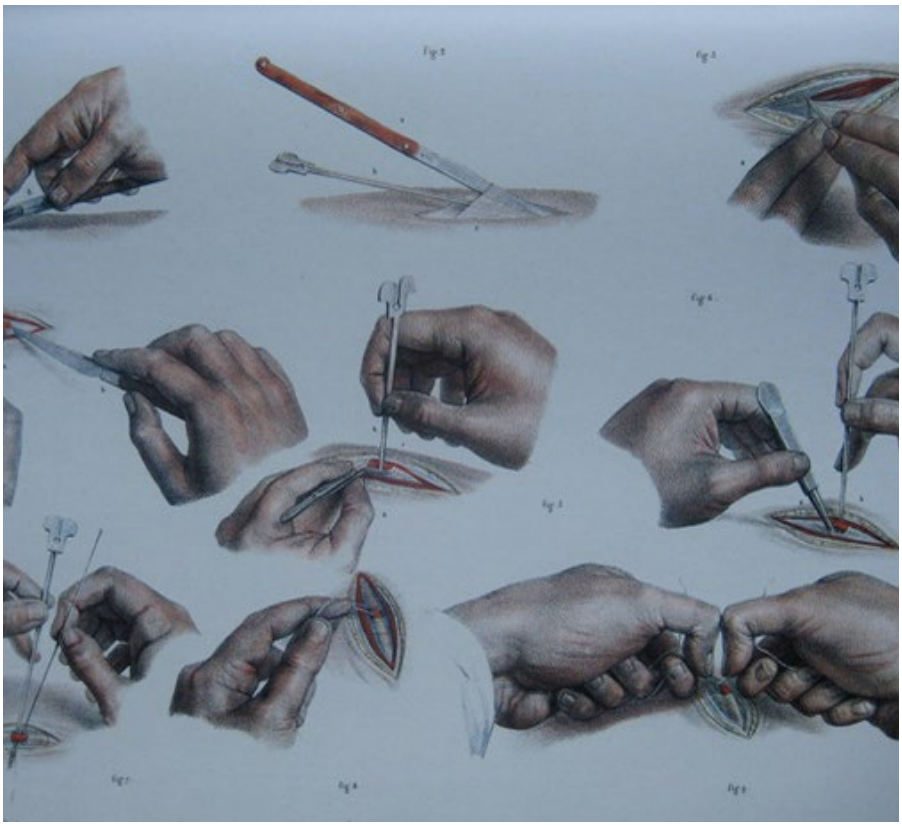
The Duchess of Richmond's Ball– Robert Hillingford 1870s (CC via Wikimedia)

Medicine

Another kind of history, not one of politics but of science, can be extracted by the study of Waterloo. History of medicine is closely related to military history as it is from that field that surgeons and doctors received the strongest inputs to develop new medical tools and innovative methods of intervention.

The Napoleonic Wars also proved a formidable incentive to develop the study of epidemiology, leading to a better control of diseases such as smallpox and scurvy, and increased the studies about correct nutrition (especially in harsh environments).

Addressing this field when talking about Waterloo can indeed foster reflection upon the toll wars exact upon civilians and soldiers, but also upon the ways technology may develop under the strain of hard times.

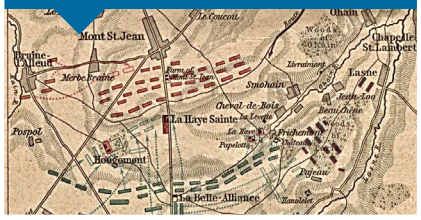


This picture was used by Professor Michael Crumplin during the February Seminar in Braine L'Alleud (Workshop: "Some Gain through Pain – advances in Military Medicine 1792 – 1815).

In conclusion, the distinctive features of the Napoleonic Wars - and of Waterloo as a highly symbolic event, make it a relevant subject to teach today: because of its own historical importance, but also because it provides tools for teachers to engage in effective talks on remembrance with students. This way, historical memory can be effectively translated from a token of respect to victims into lessons for the future, and from a highly public and institutionalised issue into a critical and reflective subject. This enables history to fulfil its potential as a resource for the present and the future. In order to achieve this results, educators need to provide students with the tools to develop their own, solid historical thinking skills.

HOW TO MAKE TEACHING ABOUT IT ATTRACTIVE

This publication tries and provoke educators into thinking of ways to teach Waterloo in a new, fresher way which is still relevant for students today – while still being fun. It is a real challenge.



MULTIPLE NARRATIVES - AND - PERSPECTIVES

Beyond the national narrative

The battle of Waterloo, as previously noted, was much more than a confrontation between Napoleon, Wellington, and Blucher. It was also more than a battle between German, French, British, Dutch, and Belgian troops. We are used to learn about Waterloo with a focus on our national narrative; so that French students learn about the glorious defeat, British learn about the definitive victory, Germans about the beginning of their process of unification, Dutch about the participation in the battle of the future King William II, and so on.

Trying to surpass the national focus is indeed hard - but it may be worth it, if only because a constrained regard upon the battle would prevent a clear understanding of its proportions. Thus, one alternative narrative would entail a different approach to the main characters of the battle of Waterloo, the troops engaged in the fight.

The panorama is much more European than the usual narrative tells us: of the 73,200 Allied troops, only thirty-six per cent of the troops in Wellington's army were British (that is English, Irish, Welsh or Scottish); 10 per cent were part of the British King's German Legion, 10 per cent were Nassauers, 8 per cent were Brunswickers, 17 per cent were Hanoverians, 13 per cent were Dutch and 6 per cent 'Belgian'[18]. And even among the 'French' soldier, French language was not always their mothertongue. Napoleon himself has been quoted as saying, while referring to his Alsatian troops: *"Let them speak German as long as they wield their swords in French*[19]*"*.

Upon looking on these figures, D-Day veteran and former British chief of the defence staff Field Marshal Lord Bramall's definition of Waterloo as 'the first NATO operation[20]' is more than understandable - and helps putting into perspective the way military cooperation is understood still today.

A narrative which places Waterloo in a truly European perspective effectively makes it a shared heritage; which entails a shared responsibility - and sheds new light on the evolving nature of European conflict and cooperation dynamics.

But a European perspective on the Battle of Waterloo is by no means the only alternative to the classic national narratives; what about teaching Waterloo as a failure of the peace, rather that a victory or a glorious defeat? After all, the First Treaty of Paris (1814) had seemingly pacified Europe and exiled Napoleon to the Island of Elba; yet, when Napoleon escaped in February 1815 the French population and his former troops rapidly switched alliances back to their Emperor. Is that not a sign of a detachment between the elites negotiating in Vienna and the commoners? Unresolved issues of injured pride and resentment to the Bourbon monarchy exacted their toll through the Hundred Days campaign. This line of thought can be very promising when brought in the classroom: it may lead to a discussion about change and continuity in peace negotiations in the past and today; or it could lead to reflections on the fact that this time the French population pushed for a return of the Emperor (and thus, war), while the elites were actually settling a peace.

Multiple perspectives

When it comes to views on the Battle, Waterloo's great men have so far monopolised the stage. Their accounts have been read, studied, assessed, taught. As we mentioned earlier, a recent trend has now placed quite some importance to ego-documents produced by commoners, too. Letters, account of their lives, diaries, memoirs, can be very powerful and honest in their descriptions.

Ego-documents can nowadays be collected on the internet; a good starting base is the Waterloo200's website (nam.ac.uk/waterloo200), for ego-documents like many other sources.

Cartoons and press also play a pivotal role in accounting for multiple perspectives.

Civilians' perspectives come handy for a teacher, as further focus on the role of civilian men and women would further enrich students. The teacher could engage students in learning activities that would let them enter in the shoes of the commoners during Waterloo's times and even in Waterloo's surroundings. They could be led to compare images of common life in the 1810s and today; or they could be engaged to think about what kinds of jobs people had at the time, and how they could be affected by the Napoleonic Wars.

The direct impact of the battle to the civilians living in or near the battlefield is also a way of making the subject alive for students.

The excerpt from a Guardian article may serve as a good introduction for a discussion on the issue[21].

A last remark: not all civilians were victims.

Some of them actually profited from the Napoleonic Wars. It is important that students are enabled to grasp the complexity of history, as they simply mirror the complexity of humanity itself. Such a discussion would easily lead students to compare the situation of war profiteers to modern times.

Scène de la campagne– Horace Vernet 1814

WATERLOO: THE AFTERMATH BY PAUL O'KEEFFE

excerpt from **The Guardian, 27/11/2014**

The impact of this world war on civilians was less than that of the next; how much less we don't know, since it remains unmeasured. The three battles of June 1815 – Quatre-Bras, Ligny and Waterloo – were fought on agricultural land. The peasants whose livelihood it was feature in the accounts – insofar as they feature at all – only as looters who pillaged the dead. Tim Clayton's synoptic Waterloo, and Bernard Simms's The Longest Afternoon, a micro study of the action at the farm of La Haie Sainte, which held up the French while Wellington consolidated his position on Mont Saint-Jean and Blücher moved west to support him, give glimpses of devastation: burnt-out ruins of villages; fields trampled and harvests destroyed; houses occupied and barricaded; doors, shutters and furniture used as firewood; outbuildings gutted; livestock slaughtered; farm machinery wrecked; fugitives "driving their cattle before them, others bearing bundles, women carrying or pulling their children after them ... moaning and weeping". Anecdotal evidence – but enough to explain why, as Paul O'Keeffe tells us in Waterloo: the Aftermath, looting was to an extent tolerated. There was no compensation beyond what was had by plunder.

– J. PEMBLE

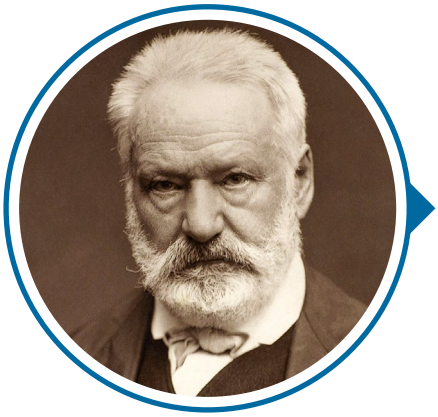
The following list is ashamedly incomplete, but it serves its purpose: literature can be taught through Waterloo, and viceversa.
All these works are copyright free, and an educator just needs a quick internet search to uncover the texts.

ART AS A KEY TO – WATERLOO – AND VICEVERSA

The arts have been focusing on the battle of Waterloo for two hundreds years now, and are not likely to stop any time soon.

The famous fictional history writer Bernard Cornwell has very recently published his first nonfiction book, and it is titled *Waterloo: The History of Four Days, Three Armies and Three Battles*.

Still in the literary field but well back in time, immortal authors have felt the need to measure themselves with the iconic value of the battle of Waterloo: generations of French students have been learning about it during literature class, by studying Victor Hugo's verses in *L'Expiation* (1853)[22]:



VICTOR HUGO

"Waterloo ! Waterloo ! Waterloo ! morne plaine !
Comme une onde qui bout dans une urne trop pleine,
Dans ton cirque de bois, de coteaux, de vallons,
La pâle mort mêlait les sombres bataillons.
D'un côté c'est l'Europe et de l'autre la France.
Choc sanglant ! des héros Dieu trompait l'espérance ;
Tu désertais, victoire, et le sort était las.
O Waterloo ! je pleure et je m'arrête, hélas !
Car ces derniers soldats de la dernière guerre
Furent grands ; ils avaient vaincu toute la terre,
Chassé vingt rois, passé les Alpes et le Rhin,
Et leur âme chantait dans les clairons d'airain !"

To switch language, James Joyce did visit the battlefield in 1926, and the Wellington Museum, incidentally the same visited by Hugo, and mentioned the battle in his *Finnegan's Wake*, although mysteriously (such is the character of the novel), as being between 'Willingdon' and 'Lipoleum'.

Sir Walter Scott visited the battlefield in 1815, after the Battle, publishing his reportage in 1816 as a set of fictional letters. He also wrote a poem, like Hugo, but, unlike the French writer, Scott's triumphalist *The Field of Waterloo* was received very poorly, and actually derided. Despite our great affection to the great writer of *Ivanhoe* and *Waverley*, it may be interesting and entertaining alike to quote a popular squib mocking Sir Scott:

SIR WALTER SCOTT

"On Waterloo's ensanguined plain
Lie tens of thousands of the slain;
But none, by sabre or by shot,
Fell half so flat as Walter Scott."

Even great authors sometimes fall flat.

Honoré de Balzac, in the *Medecin de Campagne* (1833), described Waterloo in violent terms, as much as Napoleon's old enemy, François-René de Chateaubriand, did in *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* (1849).

Stendhal, in *La Chartreuse de Parme* (1839), provides us with one of the most human views on the battle:

"Red uniforms! Red uniforms!' the escorting hussards cried joyously, and initially Fabrice could not make anything of it; eventually, he noticed that actually almost all the corpses wore red clothes.

A particular circumstance had him shiver with horror; he noticed that many of those unfortunate red clothes were still alive, were ostensibly crying out for help, and no-one was responding to their begging. Our hero, a very humane fellow, tried very hard for his horse not to stamp upon any red cloth. The escort stopped; Fabrice, who was not paying enough attention to his soldier's duties, kept galloping, while observing a wounded wretch.

STENDHAL

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, instead, sketched a more humorous, but not less intense, portrait of the battle. Sherlock Holmes' dad also fathered Brigadier Gérard, a pompous and dull, but also brave and good-hearted, French soldier, a die-hard supporter of Napoleon. The amused sarcasm employed by Conan Doyle lightens up the tragedy of war, and his unusual mockery of patriotism make the Brigadier's short stories particularly interesting for the classroom[23].

Of all the great battles in which I had the honour of drawing my sword for the Emperor and for France there was not one which was lost. At Waterloo, although, in a sense, I was present, I was unable to fight, and the enemy was victorious. It is not for me to say that there is a connection between these two things. (...) Wellington had with him sixty-seven thousand men, but many of them were known to be Dutch and Belgian, who had no great desire to fight against us. Of good troops he had not fifty thousand. Finding himself in the presence of the Emperor in person with eighty thousand men, this Englishman was so paralysed with fear that he could neither move himself nor his army. You have seen the rabbit when the snake approaches. So stood the English upon the ridge of Waterloo.

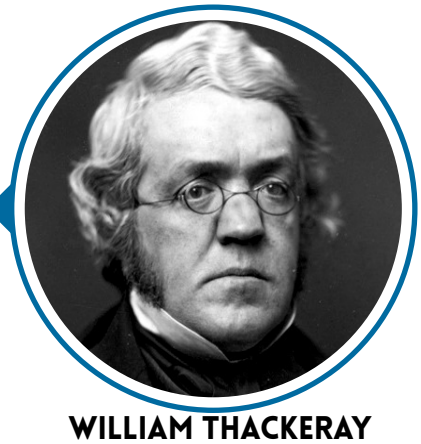
SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

William Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* (1847) found space for Waterloo and for a praise to Wellington:

Everybody had such a perfect feeling of confidence in the leader (for the resolute faith which the Duke of Wellington had inspired in the whole English nation was as intense, as that more frantic enthusiasm with which at one time the French regarded Napoleon), the country seemed in so perfect a state of orderly defence, and the help at hand in case of need so near and overwhelming, that alarm was unknown."

The same Thackeray, few lines afterwards, gave a very piercing reading of the political situation Napoleon found himself entangled in upon returning to France:

Those who like to lay down the History-book, and to speculate upon what might have happened in the world, but for the fatal occurrence of what actually did take place (a most puzzling, amusing, ingenious, and profitable kind of meditation) have no doubt often thought to themselves what a specially bad time Napoleon took to come back from Elba (...). The august jobbers assembled at Vienna, and carving out the kingdoms of Europe according to their wisdom, had such causes of quarrel among, themselves as might have set the armies which had overcome Napoleon to fight against each other, but for the return of the object of unanimous hatred and fear. (...) Each was protesting against the rapacity of the other; and could the Corsican but have waited in his prison until all these parties were by the ears, he might have returned and reigned unmolested.



WILLIAM THACKERAY

From top to bottom:

1. Cambronne à Waterloo – Armand Dumaresq 1867

2. *The field of Waterloo – J.M.W. Turner 1818* (CC via Tate.org.uk)

3. *De Slag bij Waterloo – Jan Willem Pieneman* 1824

The Napoleonic Wars have also attracted many among the greatest painters of the time, such as Ingres, or David. Paintings can be used for exercising students' critical thinking: they can identify propaganda, extract information, look for the message the painter wanted to pass through, analyse the which side of the story the painter had decided to portray. Under the same vein, satirical pictures can be a good exercise.

There are many of them about Napoleon and the Napoleonic Era. There are some about Waterloo too: they are usually under copyright, but can be used in the classroom.

The Battle was famously depicted by J.M.W. Turner, with sombre strokes of colour which suggested the horrors of war.

Other painters measured themselves with Waterloo, with a more or less open political agenda such as Dumaresq's *Cambronne à Waterloo* (commissioned by Napoleon III), or Pieneman's *De Slag bij Waterloo* (financed by the Dutch monarchy), and Northern's *Attack on Placenoit* during the battle of Waterloo.

From painting to cinema, images have repeatedly proven their learning value. They catch students' attention and ease them into the story that is being told. Waterloo has been a long-time hit for the cinema industry. The first obvious examples are Charles Weston's *The Battle of Waterloo* (1913), and Karl Grune's *Waterloo* (1929), although one may want to refrain from feeding students with a 1910s and a 1920s early cinema essays. Besides, Weston's movie is now almost entirely lost, due to the natural and irreversible nitrate decomposition.

A safer choice is the Soviet-Italian production *Waterloo* (1970). The movie boast old stars such as Christopher Plummer and Rod Steiger, beside a cameo appearance by Orson Welles. It could be a good choice, because it is a truly international production (an East-

West collaboration right during the Cold War) which diversify the average cinema culture of students (and educators!). The movie is generally considered rather faithful and, while it focuses much on Waterloo itself, it does cover the Hundred Days.

A wonderful French production dates from 2002: *Napoléon,* a rendition for television of Max Gallo's bestsellers books. The series is very intense and extremely well played by actors who are among the best of the French and international scene: Christian Clavier, Gerard Depardieu, John Malkovich. Its fourth and last episode is centred on Waterloo.

In 2014 the documentary *Waterloo, l'ultime bataille* has been released. The film, directed by Serge Lanneau, has been promoted as a documentary which does not try and romance the battle, and it is based on the notes of French, Belgian, and British soldiers.

From image to sound. Napoleon has prompted many musical masterworks, such as Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's beautiful *1812 Overture* (inspired by the Russian campaign) and Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony N. 3* or the *Heroic Symphony* (which dedication he famously scrapped upon Napoleon's coronation) and *Wellingtons Sieg oder die Schlacht bei Vittoria* (dedicated to Wellington's victory in Vitoria, during the Iberian Campaign, 1813).

This would be a good way to introduce students to classical music and the Napoleonic Wars at the same time!

And finally, a half-joking remark: let's not forget about ABBA's *Waterloo*, proud winner of the 1974 Eurovision Song Contest!

Waterloo movie – 1970 (CC via Waterloo 200)

Napoléon mini-series – 2002

ONSITE
- LEARNING -

Educators know that direct experience of the place of history can have a more effective impact on students than words. Visiting the battlefield is common practice - an old one, in fact; Waterloo has been, in a way, a touristic destination since the battle itself[24]:

THE TIMES
UK newspaper, 1934

Waterloo involved the presence of significant numbers of tourists before, during, and, particularly, after the battle. In a conversation reported by his private secretary, Wellington observed : "I hope the next battle I fight will be further from home. Waterloo was too near: too many visitors, tourists, amateurs, all of whom wrote accounts of the battle".

An introduction to the battle through what is called *thanatourism* can leave a very vivid impression to the students, thanks to its anecdotal potential combined to the many accounts that 'tourists' wrote and that, although they displeased Wellington, can be extremely useful to add multiple perspectives on the battle from external eyes. These accounts, their evolution over time, and the evolution of the reasons behind thanatourism are in addition essential to a clearer understanding of the process of memorialisation over the years.

The process of memorialisation and the evolution of the way Waterloo has been remembered - or not - over the years has been mentioned earlier in this publication. It is a central subject to tackle with learners, as it leads them beyond the mere study of the event, to an understanding of how public opinion shapes, and is shaped by, politics and history. Understanding this process provides students with the necessary tools to grasp the multiple shades of the world they live in; it provides them with special 'reading glasses' to decipher the traps of public memory and enables them to be ready to take into account competing perspectives on historical and contemporary events. In a word, it helps open their minds (ours, actually) and increases the chances of having them engaging in cross-border exchanges.

Memorials and monuments are thus are an excellent tool for addressing public remembrance of events such as Waterloo: let us take Waterloo's Lion's Mould.

STUDENTS SHOULD BE CONFRONTED WITH QUESTIONS SUCH AS 'WHY IS THIS MONUMENT PORTRAYING A LION?', OR 'WHY IS IN THAT SPOT?', AND SIMILAR QUESTIONS.

By highlighting the reasons behind monuments, which can range from pure propaganda ('the King of the Netherlands has been wounded on that spot, for the glory and freedom of humanity!') to a shared memory, which still betrays a certain perspective on a historical event (such as what has been left on purpose of the Berlin Wall)[25].

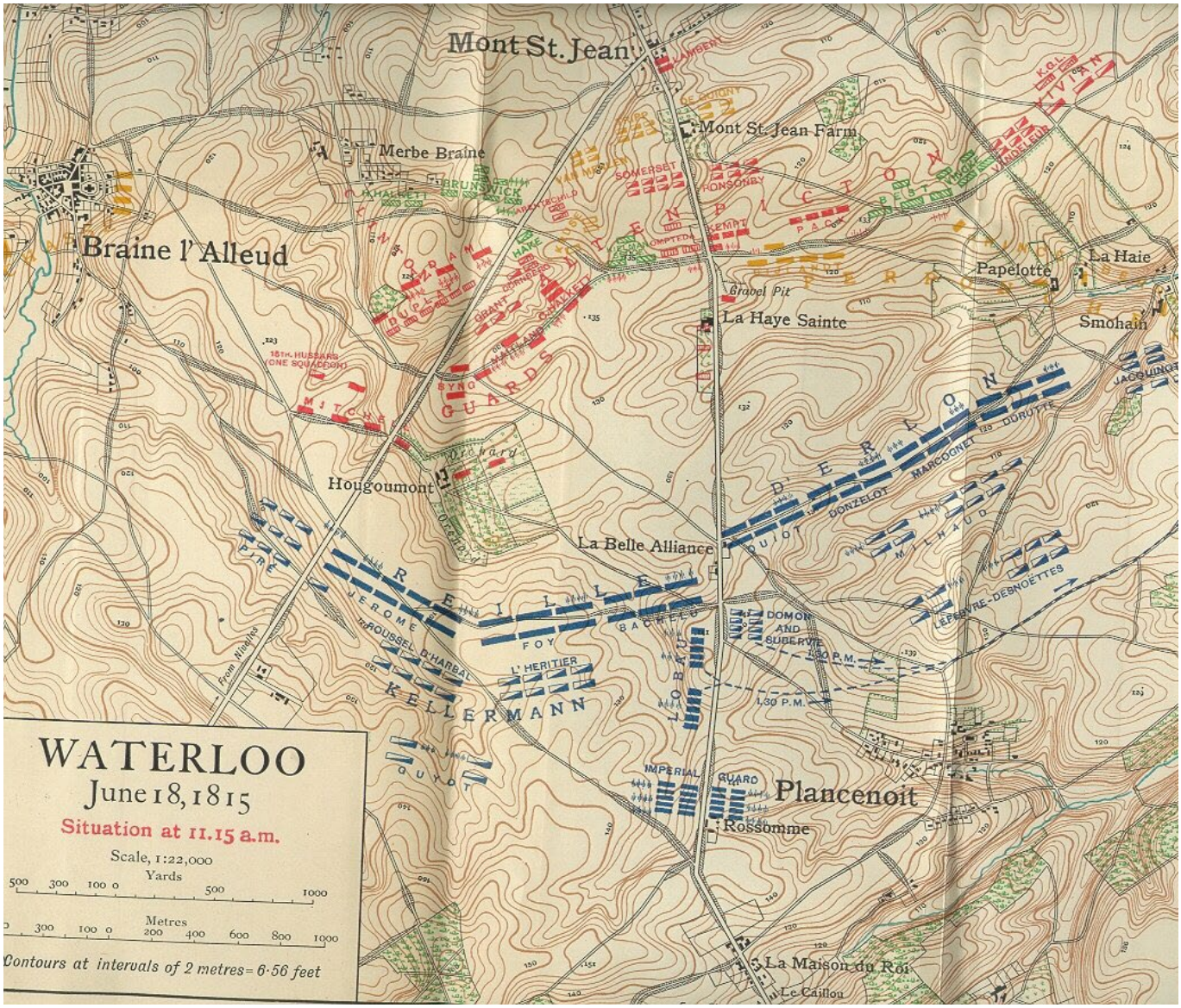
Pictures are perfect tools for learning activities and allow for very easy comparison exercises. Field trips are also good, when possible, for a more complete and deeper understanding of the function and rationale of a memorial.

LEARNING - WITH - MAPS

Maps are excellent learning tools. Maps can tell stories - in this case the story of a battle. It can be used as a tool for describing the battle from a military point of view - but there are other possible uses to it. An enlarged map of Southern Belgium could show the cities and villages affected by the battles of Waterloo and Quatre-Bras, for example.

Students could be challenged to find out the number of inhabitants, and try to describe the way the battle influenced their lives.

Sources such as maps can be very simple and yet generate quite an amount of work for students. They can stimulate students to apply their historical knowledge, their sense of chronology, their historical awareness, and hopefully develop their sense of a co-existence of contrasting perspectives on history.



A LAST SUGGESTION: QUESTIONS

Just a glimpse through the subjects and fields we have tackled in this booklet would prove the impressive potential of Waterloo. Like looking through a kaleidoscope, through Waterloo educators can unleash a wide array of themes, while the richness of the sources allow for multiple and flexible ways to teach the battle in a way that not only teaches about facts, but also foster critical and historical thinking.

In conclusion, we would like to leave you with some reflections on the bulk of a history class: the set of questions that would make a lesson start. How to find new, fresher questions that would appeal students and that they would feel compelled to find their own answers to?

The solution can perhaps be found by detaching ourselves from the subject, and looking at it from the distance. Questions thus framed will benefit from an increased awareness of the bigger picture: if one looks at Waterloo as more than a battle, but as a converging movement of troops, one could then ask:

WHY WAS NAPOLEON GOING IN THAT DIRECTION, TOWARDS BRUSSELS?

thus opening up discussion on strategy and diplomacy.

If one instead regards Waterloo as the final stage of Napoleon's attempt to regain power, one could ask:

WAS WATERLOO SO IMPORTANT AFTER ALL? WOULD NAPOLEON HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STAY IN POWER AFTER A VICTORY IN WATERLOO?

This would lead to interesting debates about politics, but also about the situation of civilian populations:

HOW LONG WOULD HAVE FRENCH COMMONERS ENDURED A PROLONGED STATE OF WAR?

And if Waterloo marked the end of Napoleon's power, what about his allies?

WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE PRINCES
(HIS BROTHERS, BUT ALSO THE GERMAN PRINCES, AND THEN MARÉCHAL MURAT, AND THE THEN SWEDISH PRINCE BERNADOTTE)
AND POLICY MAKERS THAT HAD BENEFITED FROM HIS RULE?

Students could be instructed to choose a character and make their own research; besides, entire social classes lost or won from Napoleon's defeat, in different grades according to the European region they lived in.

One could then use Waterloo as a mere springboard and ask further questions:

IS IT POSSIBLE TO SAY THAT WATERLOO PUT AN END TO THE FIRST PHASE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD?

And even further: to what extent do you think that Waterloo was a French defeat, since many French actually had fought against Napoleon? Was it a victory for monarchists and republicans alike, and a defeat only to the Napoleonic faction? And what about the other nationalities involved? What did Waterloo mean for the Polish legion? And for the Polish peasants? Such a question would indeed underline the pan-European, transnational, cross-border scope of the subject.

There is indeed space for some historiographical reflection, too:

WHAT DID NAPOLEON'S LEGACY CONSIST OF?

or,

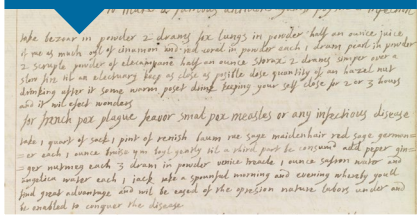
WHEN DID IT START GOING WRONG FOR NAPOLEON? WHEN DID HE START LOSING HIS POWER?

Students could also be confronted with the way we look at history: we judge events with a post-factum knowledge of history that may distort our judgement. In order to make it clear to learners, a questions such as

HOW FAR IS OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO INFLUENCED BY WHAT HAPPENED LATER?

can indeed be an useful tool.

CONCLUSIONS



FINAL - CONCLUSIONS -

Many other questions could be formulated, although one is essential: is this relevant? How relevant is the battle of Waterloo today?

This publication tried and answer to this question positively. But if there is one thing all educators know, and the first thing students should learn from history, that would be: we need to question, always, all information we receive. So, do question our conclusions, and ask your students: are you sure Waterloo is relevant?

And, most importantly, how can we talk about Waterloo, and the past, in a way that goes beyond erudition and tells us something about today?

The past is a present we can benefit from only with an open mind and the willingness to always question our convictions.

REFERENCES - AND - ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 1

[1] From *Waterloo: Four Days That Changed Europe's Destiny*, T. Clayton, 2014.

CHAPTER 2

[2] What follows is a brief summary of the discussions on the evolution of historiography on Waterloo that took place during the Seminar in Braine L'Alleud in February 2015 with the participation of Professor Bruno Colson (University of Namur) and Dr Russ E. Foster (Waterloo 200 Education Group).See also: B.Colson (2014), Waterloo, Two Centuries of Historiography, International bibliography of military history, 34 (149-170).

[3] Notable also because it was the only work that prompted a response from the Duke of Wellington, who sought to argue in defense of his management of the troops on the ground, which had been scrutinised by von Clausewitz.

[4] For instance: Jean-Marc Largeaud. Napoléon et Waterloo: La défaite glorieuse de 1815 à nos jours. Paris: La Boutique de l'Histoire. 2006

[5] Or, in other terms, as the Hannoverscher Courier noted in June 1915: "Our ally of that time is today our sworn enemy".

[6] Colson identifies a couple of notable ones: Antony Brett-James, ed., *The Hundred Days: Napoleon's Last Campaign from Eye-witness Accounts* (London-New York, 1964), and John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London, 1976).

[7] B. Colson, 2014, page 165.

[8] Barbero, Alessandro (2005), *The Battle: A New History of Waterloo*, Atlantic Books and Whitehead, R. J. (2013) , *The Other Side of the Wire: The Battle of the Somme. With the German XIV Reserve Corps, 2 July 1916*, Solihull: Helion.

[9] A remark made by Professor Michael Rapport during his recorded keynote speech during the February Seminar in Braine L'Alleud. The Euroclio Secretariat can be contacted for more information on his speech.

[10] For the role of education in forming a national perspective and narrative, see for instance B. Anderson (1983), *Imagined Communities*, Verso.

[11] A powerful example is the following: the Belgian State envisaged, in 2014, to mint a 2 Euro special coin to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo; the French government protested against it and threaten to veto the Belgian proposal at the Council of European Ministers for Finance. The Belgian Government withdrew its proposal. That Waterloo should prompt such a strong reaction by a Socialist government, 200 years after the facts does say something about the unresolved remembrance issues still lingering in Europe. See for instance http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31849506 (retrieved May 2015).

[12] See page 17 of this booklet for an insight on this point.

[13] In fact, who knows how Britain would have dealt with the US if it were not distracted by the French upheavals?

[14] The question of earlier chances for building a unified European value and law system, and the big backlash after Waterloo and the Congress of Vienna would also be significant topics to discuss.

[15] One explanation for this, beside the traditional despise that higher classes held for the lower ones, could be that in this period the nature of the armies had started to change, as the common soldiers were no longer only drawn from the ranks of the criminal classes. The new armies began to comprise soldiers who carried a political stake in the nation. Governments were increasingly under pressure to justify losses. 'To suggest that soldiers might have died in vain was culturally and politically unpalatable; legitimising their loss required a noble cause.' See K. Varley, *How should we commemorate wars?*, History and Policy, August 2014. See http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/how-should-we-commemorate-wars-lessons-from-the-nineteenth-century (retrieved May 2015).

[16] http://www.gla.ac.uk/research/news/headline_392886_en.html (retrieved May 2015)

[17] See for instance: Page, F.C.G. (1986), *Following the drum: Women in Wellington's wars*, London: Andrew Deutsch.

CHAPTER 3

[18] As a result, "*approximately 45% of the army spoke German as its primary language*". See Battle Story: Waterloo 1815, G. Fremont-Barnes, 2012.

[19] P. Maugué (1970), *Le particularisme alsacien, 1918-1967*. Paris: Presses d'Europe, 146.

[20] C. Moore, *Still skirmishing over the Battle of Waterloo*, The Telegraph, 15/09/2013.

[21] *J. Pemble, Waterloo: The Aftermath by Paul O'Keeffe; The Longest Afternoon by Brendan Simms; Waterloo by Tim Clayton – review*, The Guardian, 27/11/2014.

[22] *Waterloo! Waterloo! Waterloo! Gloomy plain! / Like a wave that batters in a urn too full...*

[23] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Brigadier Gérard at Waterloo*, originally published in The Strand Magazine, 1903.

[24] Seaton, A.V., *War and Thanatourism: Waterloo 1815-1914*, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 130158, 1999, page 132-133.

[25] For an extremely interesting set of reflections on the dynamics between propaganda and public memory in relation to memorials, you can read C. Clark, (1996), *The Wars of Liberation in Prussian Memory*, The Journal of Modern History, 68: 550-576.