



## Letters to Italy: translation and religion in nineteenth-century Ireland

Title	Letters to Italy: translation and religion in nineteenth-century Ireland
Author(s)	O'Connor, Anne
Publication Date	2016
Publisher	Palgrave Macmillan

## Letters to Italy: Translation and Religion in nineteenth-century Ireland

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The analysis of translation activity in particular societies and contexts can often focus on published texts and literary works. In nineteenth-century Ireland, such an approach would only capture a proportion of translation activity since, in this period, religious translations greatly outnumbered literary works and influential elements of translation were contained not just in publications but also in private correspondence. Indeed, religion was a forceful propeller behind translation activity in Ireland in the nineteenth century and constituted a major translation output for the country. Recent research has shown the dominance of religious translation in Ireland in the French context (Milan 2013), and it is thus important to study the function of translation and its effect on religious and societal developments in Ireland. Nineteenth-century Ireland experienced huge religious upheavals including increasingly bitter divisions between Protestants and Catholics and the 'Romanisation' of the Irish Catholic Church. It was a period of religious fervour which has been dubbed the 'devotional revolution' and the seeds were sown at this time for many subsequent years of sectarian tensions (Larkin 1972; Larkin 1980, 1987). This paper examines how translation was used to promote certain religious worldviews in Ireland in the nineteenth century and in particular, it will look at how an ultramontane form of Catholicism was progressed by means of translation.

Although books, articles and pamphlets are generally studied as translation outputs, this study will instead use private correspondence to demonstrate that important translation activity can also take place outside of this realm. It will use, as its case study, the private correspondence of Cardinal Paul Cullen (1803-1878) to demonstrate, through close textual analysis, how his translation efforts could be an effective means of advancing a religious point of view and how private letters could have a public function in promoting ideologies. Cullen, like many of his nineteenth-century contemporaries, was a prodigious letter writer, and his letters constitute his major output (more than any published pamphlets or sermons). The study of religion and translation is often dominated by biblical study and in fact Cullen himself was involved in biblical translation during his time in Rome. However, the main translation activity that dominated his life was in the contemporary realm and demonstrates how translation was a very actual and necessary activity for an ambitious nineteenth-century cleric. Cullen was not the only Irish cleric to be deeply involved in translation. His major rival John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam, was a noted translator and many Catholic priests who trained in Europe subsequently used their language skills for translation. Nuns were also active in the field of translation and their translation of devotional texts was hugely important in the entrenchment of Catholicism in Ireland in the nineteenth century (Milan 2015). The translation activity present in the

nineteenth century in the religious domain in Ireland is therefore a very important aspect of Irish society at the time and moulded the type of Catholic religion that was to emerge and have such an impact in subsequent years.

### **Paul Cullen and Religious Translation**

Paul Cullen was sent from Ireland to Rome for religious training at the age of seventeen and he spent almost thirty years at the heart of Roman Catholicism, fulfilling such roles as Professor at the College of the Sacred Congregations of Propaganda Fide and Rector of the Irish College. In 1850 he returned to Ireland as Archbishop of Armagh and soon afterwards became Archbishop of Dublin; in 1866 he became Ireland's first Cardinal. While in Rome, Cullen acted as a mediator between the English-speaking world and the Vatican, regularly translating documents and facilitating communication (O'Connor 2014; Kortzen 2012; Barr 2008a). On his return to Ireland, he continued this role and used translation to spread Roman doctrine in Ireland, to further his worldviews, and to drive home his importance in influencing Vatican decisions. As Apostolic Delegate in Ireland, he was given responsibility of liaising between Ireland and the Vatican. Much of this work involved the translation of requests and letters which were forwarded to Rome. He used his translation skills to further his distinct view of the nature and values of Irish Catholicism. Imbued with the values of Vatican Rome, Cullen's translation activities served to entrench Irish Catholicism in an ultramontane world view and create further religious division between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. Against a backdrop of religious tension in nineteenth-century Ireland, Cullen's use of language and translation can be viewed as a central element of his conceptual religious value system and the strategies that he employed in his translations advanced his abilities to impose his world view on those around him in nineteenth-century Ireland.

An examination of Cullen's translations reveals the strategies he used and the effects that could be produced through omission, condensation and addition. In some cases, both the source text and Cullen's translation have survived, so it is possible through close textual analysis to highlight the varying strategies employed by Cullen in translation. In this paper I will examine some of these letters in order to demonstrate Cullen's translation *modus operandi*. Although the letters are quite different in themselves, it is important to highlight at the outset that all of the letters under consideration were born out of conflictual situations. The causes of conflict were many and varied and include religion and education in Ireland; disputes over ecclesiastical leadership roles in Jamaica and India; and personal disputes amongst nuns. In these conflicts, recourse was made to Cullen to represent the interests of the letter writer to the Vatican authorities who could decide the outcome of the disputes. In entrusting their letters to Cullen to translate, the letter writers were thus hoping that he would represent their concerns in the best possible light and that his translations would result in a favourable outcome.

The first of these translations is of a letter from the Prioress, Sub Prioress and council of St. Mary's Convent Cabra dated 23 July 1839.<sup>1</sup> The nuns were at loggerheads with a former Prioress who had left their convent to set up a rival convent which was attracting nuns, novices and funding away from her former home. The rival convent had made an appeal to Rome for the resolution of the situation and the letter which Cullen translated was an attempt by the Cabra nuns to have their side of the story heard. In 1839 Cullen was the Rector of the Irish College in Rome and as such was acting as an ambassador for Irish interests in Propaganda.<sup>2</sup> He translated the letter in an efficient, literal manner which allowed for the nuns to have recourse to Roman authorities in the settlement of the dispute. The translation which has survived bears many marks of revision and certain words and phrases have been struck through in favour of alternative expressions. Cullen's attention to linguistic subtleties is clear in this process, as is the precision of his word selection in Italian. In contrast to later letters, his own world view does not impose itself forcefully in this translation; this dispute centred, it seems, on interpersonal rivalries between nuns and did not concern some of the more ideological battles which Cullen would fight in later years. In this early example of Cullen's translation activity, he did not take many liberties with the source text during the translation process. His interventions in the Cabra letter were minimal: at times he removed a repetition in the original, and at other times he elided sentences, but the overall translation was a close textual rendering of the source text. Its function was to communicate the nuns' concerns and for Cullen to use his language skills to put forward their side of the argument to the Roman authorities.

In sharp contrast to this literal translation from 1839 is Cullen's translation of a letter from Fr. James Glynn Killanine to Archbishop MacHale (17 June 1848) outlining the events and developments in a parish neighbouring his own.<sup>3</sup> The parish priest of the adjacent parish of Oughterard, Doctor Kirwin, had controversially accepted the role of President of the newly-founded Queen's College Galway. The College was a non-denominational institution and in the eyes of many Catholics, an 'infidel college'; Kirwin's acceptance of the role of President was thus an extremely controversial move and provoked much outrage and dissent at the time (Mitchell 1999). In his English letter, Glynn outlines how the parish of Oughterard has seen much proselytism and many conversions to Protestantism. He asserts that Kirwin has done nothing to combat this development and that he is happy to receive money (in his role as president) from 'a Government hostile to our faith'. He further accuses Kirwin of providing himself 'with a splendid carriage' during the famine 'to the scandal of thousands'. Cullen's translation of this letter for the Vatican shows extreme condensation of the original. Whereas Glynn's letter contained 278 words, Cullen's

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<sup>1</sup> Pontifical Irish College Rome (PICR), CUL/NC/4/1839/8 (1).

<sup>2</sup> Propaganda Fide was responsible for the formation of clerics and also the governance, promotion and co-ordination of the Catholic Church in non-Catholic countries (including Ireland). The Sacred Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, whose official title is "sacra congregatio christiano nomini propagando" is the department of the pontifical administration charged with the spread of Catholicism and with the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs in non-Catholic countries.

<sup>3</sup> PICR, CUL/NC/4/1848/13.

translation numbers only 159 words. This was quite unusual, especially in the passage from English to Italian as the latter language tends to be more verbose. Cullen's strategy was therefore one of condensation but his abbreviated translation still maintained the essential elements of Glynn's letter, namely the conversion of Catholics in Kirwin's parish and the denunciation of Kirwin's behaviour.

Cullen's world view certainly influenced his strategy in bringing to the fore the worries about proselytism and his translation highlights the points that were important to him. He omits Glynn's personal pronouncements on the situation, phrases such as 'I have often felt the greatest uneasiness and anxiety of mind'. Similarly, where Glynn says that Kirwin is 'almost continually absent from where he out to be, in his own Parish', Cullen translates this simply as Kirwin 'è continuamente assente dalla sua parrocchia' [is constantly absent from his Parish]. He has omitted Glynn's opinion that Kirwin should be in his Parish but he has also omitted the word 'almost' from before continually, thus rendering the statement more forceful and Kirwin's actions more blatant. Such changes, sometimes subtle, sometimes not, make this a translation imbued with Cullen's world view. Cullen's translation becomes a very pointed attack on a person whose world view did not tally with his own and the last paragraph of the letter is an example of character assassination through translation. Cullen truncates the translation in order to finish with an abbreviated but powerful image of contrast of Kirwin, parading in finery during the famine, oblivious to the suffering of his parishioners. Cullen's translation reads:

Durante la carestia il Sigr Kirwan non fece quasi niente per aiutare i suoi parrochiani, che pene soffrivano stenti incredibili, anzi in quel tempo comprò una splendida carrozza, e comparve in mezzo alla affamata moltitudine con un nobile treno.

[During the famine Kirwin did almost nothing to help his parishioners who suffered huge trials, in fact in that time he bought a splendid carriage and appeared in the midst of the starving multitude with a patrician convoy.]

Cullen has omitted the many sentences from Glynn's original letter which followed this description; Glynn had said:

The Doctor is no doubt a great favourite with the bitter enemies of the faith in so much so, that the great body of the people have a great distaste for his ministry and a violent suspicion of this orthodoxy so much so indeed that the common people were ready some time ago to lay violent hands upon him not his own Parishioners, but the inhabitants of a neighbouring Parish you may judge of the estimation in which he is held by the enemies of the Catholic religion from the number of those vipers that have signed the address to him on the occasion of his being appointed President.

Instead of translating this wordy and slightly incoherent sentence, Cullen eliminates it completely and, possibly appreciating the effect of the juxtaposition of famine and finery,

finishes his translation with the description of Kirwin in his splendid carriage. Cullen's exclusion of the personal opinions of Glynn means that the translated letter reads more like a report than an opinion piece

One may well ask why Cullen chose to condense the original letter in such a dramatic fashion. Was he working under time constraints? Did he need to simplify the message to suit the audience? Did he feel that the message would be more effective if expressed in such a direct manner? Certainly at times we can see that he is attempting to help the Italian reader and is aware of any areas that might cause confusion. So, for example, where Glynn talks about the 'great defection from the faith' in Oughterard, Cullen translates this as 'si sono fatte molte perversioni de' poveri cattolici' [there have been many perversions of poor Catholics]. His use of the word perversion to express a move away from Catholicism is significant and will be discussed in more detail later. Suffice it to say that in this phrase we have both a Cullen-biased choice of words which influence the message and also an additional clarification that it is Catholics who are being lost to the faith.

Whereas the Glynn letter provides an example of reduction, of expressing the most important points in a succinct fashion, removing the personal comments of the original author, other letters show considerably greater expansion of the original. An example of this approach can be seen in a letter Cullen translated from a certain L.D.S. in Jamaica who wrote to detail the poor state of the Catholic religion on the island of Jamaica.<sup>4</sup> Cullen's interest in the promotion of Catholicism in the English-speaking world emerges as an influential factor in the translation choices taken in this letter. In his translation, Cullen adds information to help change the course of events and, like the previous example, he uses an elegant and sophisticated translation in order to forcefully but subtly communicate his opinions. From the very outset, the translation says that:

La S. Congregazione considera tanto importante la missione di questa isola, che già s'era proposta di nominarvi un vescovo all' morte del presente ordinario

[The Sacred Congregation, deeming the mission on this island to be so important, had already determined to nominate a Bishop to the post on the death of the present incumbent]

whereas the original merely states that 'Several years ago the S. Cong. De Prop. Fide determined to appoint a Bishop to this post on the demise of the present incumbent'. This addition in the translation represents Cullen's own world view where *he* deems Jamaica to be an important mission and this attitude informs the rest of the translation where both the original and the translated texts detail the challenges facing Catholicism on the island. Cullen also omits the phrase 'several years ago' from the opening sentence, thus adding immediacy to his initial Italian phrase.

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<sup>4</sup> PICR, CUL/NC/3/1/9(1) Circa 1847.

Cullen helps the Italian reader in his translation: whereas the source text mentions that the Bishop was 'little skilled in the language of the greater part of his flock', the translator says that the Bishop had little skill in 'English, which is the language of the greater part of his flock'. This supplementation of information for the Italian reader shows that Cullen is making sure that the Italian reader will have all of the relevant information about the context. The original letter was written in order to complain about the incumbent Bishop of Jamaica and to detail his unsuitability for the post; Cullen (who obviously agreed with the sentiments of the letter writer) drove home this message in his translation by adding and repeating elements. Thus this original sentence in English which stated:

From the reasons above stated which certainly have not become weakened by time, and others, he is wholly inadequate, altho' an excellent ecclesiastic, to the arduous duties of his post.

is translated by Cullen

La poca pratica dell lingua Inglese, la vecchiaja, ed altre ragioni rendono questo vicario, benché uomo di merito, poco atto alla situazione che occupa.

[Lack of knowledge of the English language, old age, and other reasons make this ecclesiastic, even though a man of merit, little suited to the post he occupies]

Here Cullen has added at the start of the sentence two reasons why the Bishop is not suited to the post – these reasons had been stated in the first paragraph of the letter but Cullen felt the need to repeat them in order to drive home the point. The repetition of the notion that the Bishop was lacking the requisite language skills in English created a sharp contrast with Cullen who was putting himself forward as an expert in both the language and the Catholic Church in the English-speaking world, even in far-flung Jamaica. Cullen regularly sought to influence ecclesiastical appointments in the British colonies where a network of Irish priests and bishops was to emerge as a powerful force in the nineteenth century. From Australia to Canada and from Jamaica to Scotland, Cullen was determined to influence appointments to ecclesiastical roles (Barr 2008b, 2008a). In studying these trends, most historians would look at his direct interventions in decision making such as letters written on behalf of candidates and representations made directly to Propaganda Fide in Rome. However, in this example, it can be seen that Cullen also possessed subtle strategies which he used in translation to influence the perception of situations in the English-speaking colonies. Firstly by translating selected letters he enabled the flow of communication between the centre and the periphery and secondly his translation strategies ensured that a favoured message was driven home. Therefore, we can see in the translation subtle and at times overt interventions which alter the perception of the situation in the English-speaking colonies. For example when describing the position of the bishop in Jamaica, the original letter writer referred to the 'arduous' nature of the post; Cullen omitted this adjective in his translation, thereby diminishing any sympathy that might be present for a bishop occupying a 'difficult' post.

Apart from the manipulation of the original text, Cullen also shows skill in translation, writing in an elegant Italian, eliding sentences in order to create more verbose and Italianate constructions. He also adopts the appropriate religious terminology so while the original letter says, 'If a Bishop and a younger man was deemed by the S. Cong, to be required for the spiritual government of Jamaica many years ago, it certainly cannot be said that the need is less now', Cullen is much more precise in his Italian translation:

Se molti anni sono, si credette necessario di dargli un coadjutore, e s'era proposto anche di nominarvi un vescovo, certamente le ragioni per tali passi non si sono diminuiti col tempo.

[If many years ago, it was deemed necessary to give him a coadjutor, and it was also proposed to nominate a bishop, the needs for such measures have certainly not diminished with time]

Cullen shows similar skill in translating governmental ranks in the British administration into understandable and appropriate terms in Italian. The elegance of the translation helps to communicate the ideological message in a very persuasive manner: the original English letter mentions that the incumbent Bishop could be given a retiring pension, and Cullen renders this into a well-constructed hypothetical sentence in Italian, with an elegant use of the conditional tense and the subjunctive:

Se fosse necessario, la chiesa dell'isola potrebbe dare una pensione al Sigr. D. Bonio Fernandez, quando egli deporrebbe la sua carica.

[If it were necessary, the church on the island could give a pension to Mr. D. Bonio Fernandez when he relinquishes his duties]

Apart from elegance in the linguistic transfer, the translator also helps the Italian reader of the text by making sure that there is no room for ambiguities; therefore, when the source text mentions missionaries, the translated text renders this as 'missionarj cattolici' [Catholic missionaries]. Cullen always favours precision in his translation and thus when the original mentions that if nuns could be sent to Jamaica, there is a good house in the 'best situation in Kingston where they may live'; lest there be any doubt about the arrangements, Cullen in his translation says that there is a good house in one of the best locations in Kingston which they can rent. He does not leave it to chance that the Italian authorities might assume that the house is being offered for free to the church. Although I have highlighted interventions by Cullen in the translation, it must be acknowledged that much of this letter is a literal translation from English into Italian and so the changes documented above can be considered deliberate interventions. Cullen's choice of Italian words, phrases and insertions all suit the occasion of the translation; it is alternately informative and persuasive. He fulfils the function of an intermediary in facilitating the circulation of information about Catholicism in Jamaica but through his translation he also becomes an active actor in the transfer process, manipulating the source material as he deems fit.

The final translated letter to be analysed shows similar traits to the other letters discussed, and provides further indications of Cullen's *modus operandi* in the translation field. This letter was written in Bombay on 17th February 1849 by Rev. Whelan who was in dispute with a Carmelite missionary in Bombay, a certain Fr. Michael.<sup>5</sup> The dispute between the two men centred on the use of a church in the city: Fr. Michael and his associates were currently using it and Rev. Whelan wanted to have it as the Episcopal Church for the diocese. Whelan wrote to Cullen saying that he was giving him a brief statement of facts in the hope that he 'may be able to convey accurately all that is true in the care to the Superiors of the S. Congregation.' Cullen takes this sentence and in his translation of the letter it becomes:

Vi prego di tradurre i cenni che ora ve ne scrivo e di sottometerli o di mandarli a' medesimi.

[I ask you to translate the details which I am now writing to you about and to present them or to send them to the aforementioned people].

The original notion of 'accurately conveying' in Whelan's letter is transformed by Cullen into 'translation' and this transfer of concepts gives us an excellent insight into Cullen's notion of translation. Translation for him is interchangeable with the idea of accurately conveying. Accurately conveying could, for Cullen, involve omission and in the first clause of the sentence mentioned above, Cullen omits personal statements by Whelan relating to Fr. Michael. For example, Cullen does not include Whelan's description of Fr. Michael as 'an overbearing and disappointed man'. Similar, very personal invective in the letter is excluded. Here Cullen's translation choice can be interpreted as an attempt to be balanced and to appear objective. As in the Glynn letter from Ireland, Cullen plays down the letter writer's rancour towards the objectionable person and prefers instead to let the situation tell its own story. He never omits sections where the original letter writer worries about the effects on religion in their local area if action is not taken to support them. Whether the letter originates in Ireland or from distant Bombay or Jamaica, Cullen's concern for the propagation of Roman Catholicism (with the emphasis on Roman), induces the translator to intervene in order to aid the conveyance of the message to Vatican authorities. He omits the direct appeals that the letter writers make to him to act on their behalf and instead presents himself as a linguistic mediator. In the Bombay letter, Whelan appealed to Cullen to 'make known the contents of this short letter to the authorities' and he then expressed sympathies with the Pope for his 'present afflictions' and said that these have prevented him from 'addressing himself on the subject and at some length too'. Cullen maintains the sympathies expressed for the Pope in his translation but he adds the detail which is nowhere mentioned in the original that Whelan is writing to Cullen rather than directly to Propaganda as the news from Rome 'mi hanno persuaso che le lettere potrebbero andare smarrite [has convinced me that the letters could get lost]'. By adding this detail, Cullen

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<sup>5</sup> PICR, CUL/1716 (2)

justifies his role as an intermediary and why the letters are going to him rather than directly to Propaganda. He does not mention that Whelan hopes that Cullen will act on his behalf. These strategies present Cullen as a facilitator and a communicator for Propaganda whereas in fact, as his translations show, he could be defined by the modern term 'lobbyist', representing vested interests and influencing outcomes through his communication skills.

To create an air of neutral moderation, Cullen eliminates personal connections discussed in the letters. For example, when Whelan mentions nuns from Rathfarnham in Dublin who are working in Bombay, in Cullen's translation the reference to their Irishness is eliminated and they become a neutral 'piccola colonia di monache' [small group of nuns]. References to common acquaintances are also omitted. The omission of these details and the direct appeals to Cullen from the translated text give the translations a more moderate tone which is also aided by the exclusion of very personal invective. Although it is recognised that all human translations are imbued with ideology and personal strategies, Cullen downplays this aspect in his translations and presents texts that purport to be simple linguistic transfers.

It is interesting that all of the translations discussed here originate from letters that detail situations of conflict and discord. In the Bombay case, Rev. Whelan's enemies have made representations to Rome to gain favour and support for their position. He now finds himself doing the same thing and attempting to put across his side of the story in the most forceful manner possible. A similar situation had arisen in the Cabra letter where the nuns were reacting to what they deemed to be the unwarrantable influence of their opponent in making her view heard. Cullen's translation activity makes a direct intervention in the dispute and aids one side in putting forward their views to the appropriate authorities and in the appropriate terms. In the case of Whelan's letter, Cullen frames the translation as a defence of organised religion in the colonies against rebellious individuals. Some of Cullen's most elegant Italian is used to express the gravity of the situation and the measured and refined tone of the translation forcibly aids the letter's message. Cullen's translation reads:

Devo però mentovare che finalmento l'ho trovato necessario d'asserire i miei diritti, e nel fare questo passo, benché fossi pubblicamente insultato dagli amici di Fra Michele nella di lui presenza (come testimoniano molti signori Inglesi) pure m'astenni da ogni parola dura, e gli scrissi solamente che lo dichiaravo libero dai doveri temporali e spirituali connessi coll'amministrazione della chiesa di Bombay essendo determinato di tenerla come chiesa episcopale del Vicario Apostolico.

[I must however mention that I have eventually found it necessary to assert my rights and in making this move, even though I was publicly insulted by Fr. Michael's friends in his presence (as many English gentlemen can testify) I nonetheless abstained from any harsh words and I merely wrote to declare him free from temporal and spiritual duties relating to the administration of the church in Bombay as it had been determined to use it as the Episcopal church of the Apostolic Vicar.]

Cullen was willing in his translations to wax lyrically or to cut ruthlessly whenever necessary. In pleas from distant Bombay or Jamaica, he intervened through translation to advance the reach and influence of Irish and Roman Catholicism in the British colonies. It must also be observed that he generally achieved his aim and thus became one of the pivotal figures in the international Catholic Church in the nineteenth century (Barr 2008a; Barr 2015). Those writing to him understood his position of authority and influence and their letters display high levels of trust in his abilities and his methods. Monsignor Whelan's letter from Bombay says to Cullen, 'I do not know how to present to Propaganda the details of a dispute between Fr. Michael and me, I am asking you to translate the account which I am now writing to you and to present them to Propaganda'. The letter writers had no knowledge of how their words would be manipulated and used, but they entrusted their complaints and entreaties into the hands of an experienced operator who had been active in the field of translation since his early days in Rome. In this diary, John Thomas Hynes, (future Bishop of Leros and later Vicar Apostolic of British Guiana) recounts how in 1843 he showed documents relating to Demerara to Cullen who 'offered to translate the articles immediately and lay them before Cardinal Fransoni'.<sup>6</sup> A few days later he showed Cullen a letter and again Cullen 'offered to translate the address and lay it before the Prefect of Propaganda'. Either proactively or reactively, Cullen resorted to translation as a key tool in his communication network, one which would influence the flow of information throughout the English-speaking Catholic world.

### **Translation in a transnational world**

Cullen's strategies of using translation to further his own religious worldview and ideology did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries; indeed, he was upbraided in the press for directly bringing disputes to the attention of the Vatican and for translating important documents which would present his side of the discussion. The importance of translation in the world of religion can be clearly seen in the following statement published in the *Nation* newspaper in 1856:

Every scrap of news or document that can be turned to account to further those who advocate a certain policy, to damage those who do not, is regularly translated, edited, and sent forward. It is industriously circulated at Rome so that, under the Delegation of Doctor Cullen, the Church of Ireland has become far more closely bound to the Holy See. (9 August 1856 'Roman Politics in Ireland')

Cullen was the conduit for information flowing from Ireland to Italy and back again, and it was through translation that he regularly influenced developments in a manner in which he desired. The above statement encapsulates strategies in nineteenth-century Ireland: translation was used to 'advocate a certain policy' and in this case the policy advocated was the ultramontane agenda in Ireland, that is, the closer alignment of Irish Catholicism with

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<sup>6</sup> Brian Condon: Diary of John Thomas Hynes, 1843-1868  
<http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/condon/Hynes/July1843.htm>.

the orthodoxies of the Roman Catholic Church. The title of the article 'Roman politics in Ireland' suggests levels of interference through the work of dissemination and circulation carried out by Cullen. The division within Irish Catholicism is also apparent as the translation activity is deemed to damage those who do not support a 'certain policy'. The result for the author is clear: Ireland is more closely linked to Rome and Cullen has been successful in his dissemination activities. In the nineteenth century, the improved networks of communication through postal and travel system meant that information could flow easily between countries – the only impediment to such flows was linguistic incomprehension and here translation played a crucial role in facilitating the movement of information across borders in a rapid and influential manner. This translation activity had a controlling function, whereby information was selectively chosen and did not always represent a balanced picture of a dispute. The article cited above, when discussing the material sent to Rome from Ireland and translated, continued by saying that:

But two facts have been studiously kept back, which are as notorious as the daylight in Ireland. The First is simply this, That no Bishop or other Ecclesiastic within the memory of man, has so rapidly become so deeply unpopular in every part of the kingdom as his Grace. And the Second is, That a feeling of distrust and uneasiness against the Roman Tribunals has grown up in the country within the last few years such as was never known here before. With deep sincerity, we hope and pray that measures may be taken of a nature to rectify these evils, and the greater evils and scandals to which they are likely to lead. (*Nation*, 9 August 1856)

This statement provides an important contextualisation for Cullen's translation activity as it demonstrates how Cullen's desire to circulate and influence the flow of information was both born out of conflictual situations, but also contributed to deep divisions within Irish Catholicism. Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh has referred to Cullen as 'the gatekeeper, the arbiter of virtually all aspects of Irish Catholic development' (Ó Tuathaigh 2011, 437) and the prelate's translation activity allowed him to determine what passed through those gates on the way to Rome and back again. Translation always involves choice and Cullen's choices were often ones of omission where the other side in a dispute was not given a voice; for Cullen this would have been an obvious choice, such was his unswerving conviction in his ideology, he would never even have countenanced the validity of representing opposing views in any dispute.

Knowledge of Cullen's transnational activities was widespread: in the Dublin Young Men's Society, they could joke about translations being 'ultramontane' 'one of Dr. Cullen's Italian importations'. (*Nation*, 17 June 1854) Cullen's efforts to bring the Irish Church more in line with Roman practices, more ultramontane, resulted in divisions in the Irish Catholic Church (Larkin 2011; Rafferty 2011). His translation activities were viewed with suspicion and dislike – those in the opposing camp to the Archbishop of Dublin realised that his world-

view was being propagated through these translations. During the Maynooth controversy, the following report appeared in the *Nation*:

It appeared, however, that Dr. Cullen took the evidence with him to Rome without the knowledge of the commissioners, and without any permission on their part he had a portion of the evidence translated into Italian, and published in Rome. (*Nation* 3 March 1855 'The Maynooth Report')

Cullen's cross-national activities were mistrusted and the subject of discontent amongst those who held differing views. Recourse to Rome was made in all of Cullen's disputes in Ireland and his linguistic skills in the field of translation aided him greatly in achieving his aims. From the establishment of the Catholic University to disputes with rebel priests, Cullen turned to Rome, made representations and translated important documents in order to convince Rome to intervene in resolving Irish conflicts (Barr 2003; Keogh and McDonnell 2011). It was a continuous feature of the prelate's activities and one which repeatedly drew the attention of his contemporaries. In 1855, during heated debates and political and religious wrangling over the direction of the Catholic training seminary at Maynooth College, Cullen's activities were mentioned in the House of Lords and subsequently reported in the *Nation*. The accusation returned that Cullen had used translation to interfere in internal Irish disputes:

[The Earl of Harroway] received a protest from several of the professors of the College of Maynooth, stating that it had come to their knowledge that a copy of the evidence had been put into the hands of Dr. Cullen, and that Dr. Cullen had communicated it to Rome, having translated certain passages for the purposes of placing before the Irish Secretary to the Propaganda how far the teaching at Maynooth was at variance with the interests of the Roman Church. (*Nation*, 19 May 1855 'Maynooth')

Controlling and circulating information was thus a transnational enterprise, one at which Cullen was particularly adept, especially since his time in Rome when he regularly translated correspondence and placed it before Propaganda. Cullen, of course, was not the only person acting in this manner at the time, for example the *Nation* also reports how a pamphlet containing charges of political violence and intemperance, illustrated by extracts from the speeches of Irish Catholic clergymen and translated into Italian, was compiled and circulated by the British Government among the Roman authorities. (23 June 1855) In the flow of information between countries in the nineteenth century, vested interests attempted to make their side known through the translation of information and documents.

### **Textual choices**

The translation of these documents, as we have seen in the analysis of Cullen's translation of letters, was not a simple linguistic transfer but rather was layered with many hues of

ideology and personal agendas. As previously mentioned, Cullen wrote a letter in Italian to Propaganda Fide on almost a weekly basis from 1850 until his death in 1878. In these letters, he translated an Irish context into Italian for Vatican officials and sought to influence their perception and subsequent interventions in Irish affairs. The use of Italian in these letters and the careful choice of words to describe Irish situations demonstrate Cullen's linguistic abilities and his sensitivity to cultural transfer. The manner in which he transformed and transposed Ireland into Italian letters was an exercise in linguistic precision and manipulation. A selection of examples from these letters illustrates how he translated Ireland for the Vatican and how his choice of words was influenced by his distinct ideology and world view.

The first example relates to proselytism and the evangelical efforts of members of the Protestant community to convert Catholics in mid-nineteenth century Ireland. The Irish Church Missions had been set up by the evangelical Anglican minister Alexander Dallas in 1849 to convert Catholics in Ireland. The controversial Mission, which enjoyed substantial financial support from England, was particularly active in Connaught and garnered widespread publicity in both the Catholic and Protestant press in Ireland in the early 1850s for the alleged success of its programme (Bowen 1978; Moffitt 2011; Murphy 2005). The object of the evangelisers was to demonstrate the dangers and wrongs of Papal authority and to tempt Roman Catholics away from their Church by a variety of means. Proselytism in Ireland was, of course, a hugely contentious issue. Paul Cullen saw it as a serious threat to the Catholic Church and directed much of his energies in the 1850s towards combating the evangelists' efforts. He was outraged by their attempts to tempt Catholics from their religion and appalled at any hint of their success. So how did this translate into his letters to Italy? When writing to Rome in Italian, Cullen described conversions to Catholicism as 'conversioni' while conversions to Protestantism were 'perversioni'. The value system behind the choice of words is specific to Cullen's Roman Catholic outlook:

Grazie a Dio qui abbiamo non poche **conversioni** principalmente fra la povera gente. Una grande signora la figlia del conte di Wicklow fu convertita l'anno scorso, ed ella mena una vita da santa così si può sperare che ella convertirà tutta la sua famiglia, che è potentissima in questa parte dell'Irlanda. Mi dispiace però di soggiungere che le **perversioni** accadano ancora nella provincia di Tuam. Monsigr McHale lo nega, ma molti ottimi laici e preti di Dublino che hanno visitato quelle parti recentemente, m'assicurano che le scuole de' protestanti sono piene di fanciulli e che questi s'educano nella religione protestante.<sup>7</sup>

[Thanks be to God, we have had no small number of **conversions** here, chiefly among the poor people. A great lady, the daughter of the Count of Wicklow, was converted last year, and she leads such a saintly life, that it is to be hoped that she will convert her entire family, which is very powerful in this part of Ireland. I regret to add,

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<sup>7</sup> Cullen to Franson, 4 October 1852, Archives of Propaganda Fide, SC, Irlanda, vol. 31, ff. 252-253 .

however, that **perversions** are still taking place in the province of Tuam. Monsignor McHale denies it, but many fine laymen and priests from Dublin who have visited those parts recently assure me that the Protestants' schools are full of children, and that these are being educated in the Protestant religion.] [emphasis added]

The second example relates to the field of education where Cullen was particularly active in advocating Catholic education for Catholics. He opposed mixed education at all levels from primary to third level and the legacy of his success in opposing mixed education can be seen throughout Ireland even today. In his time he opposed the Queen's Universities and one of his pet targets were the Model Schools, the teacher-training institutions which were set up under the auspices of the Commissioners of the Board of National Education. Cullen vehemently opposed these schools as they provided for both the training of teachers and the teaching of pupils in a mixed religious context. He worried about the effect that such training would have on teachers and on the pupils. When expressing his concerns about these institutions to the Vatican, he termed the institutions 'Scuole Normali' which was the term used for teacher training institutes in Italy at the time. His ability to find a culturally specific translation for the Irish educational institution of model schools was crucial in enabling his superiors to understand the Irish cultural context. Cullen regularly translated culturally specific items like this into Italian in order to make them comprehensible to Italian clerics based in the Vatican. For example, when discussing money and finances (a favoured topic of the Irish prelate) he translated pounds into *scudi* and expressed monetary values in Italian terms so as to be clear in the Vatican.

## Conclusion

In 1853 Cullen commented on a sonnet that he had received:

Il sonetto dell'Ab. Mogliazzi è bellissimo, ma disgraziatamente non sono poeta per tradurlo.

[The sonnet by Ab. Mogliazzi is really beautiful, but unfortunately, I am not poet enough to translate it.]<sup>8</sup>

Cullen certainly had the linguistic skills to translate the poem but these skills were used for practical rather than poetical functions. He therefore rejected the possibility that he could translate the sonnet as he did not possess the requisite poetical skills. His abilities lay instead in the religious and political domains where for five decades of the nineteenth century, he used language and translation to influence the course of religion in Ireland. Whereas many studies of translation in Ireland have focused on literature, Cullen's statement above tells us that in his case, and in the case of many other religious in the nineteenth century, we need to look elsewhere in order to understand the impact and reach of their translational activity. The stream of translation present in personal correspondence

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<sup>8</sup> PICR, KIR/NC/1/1853/36

and in religious documents demonstrates how translation was an important element of the multilingual world of the Catholic Church and how it was essential for communication, self-promotion and influence in this period.

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