

# Consuls and other interpreters in Cork Harbour, Ireland

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## 1 Introduction

In 1801 the Act of Union brought about the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, putting an end to the Irish Parliament and allowing Ireland to be governed from Westminster via officials based in Dublin Castle. The population of Ireland expanded rapidly at the start of the nineteenth century; from 4.5 million in 1801 to just under 7 million in 1821 and over 8 million in 1841. However, this expansion was rapidly followed by the great famine and extensive emigration, reducing the population to 4.4 million in 1901. Remarkably few foreigners were resident at the time. For example, in the 1871 census, out of a total population of 5.4 million, only 8,643 were foreign subjects, a figure corresponding to a mere 0.2 per cent of the population. Of these, almost half were from Europe, mainly from France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland and Spain and they included a significant number, 1,321, of seamen who happened to be in Irish ports on the night of the census.

Julio César Santoyo has pointed to the history of interpreting as ‘one of the most notorious empty spaces in our field’ (2006: 13). Anthony Pym suggests that ‘people of different backgrounds came together in urban centres, particularly big cities’ (2009: 44) and goes on to call for the ‘humanization’ of translators (2009: 45). Pym recommends focusing on individual translators rather than their texts, suggesting that this approach will allow researchers ‘to model intercultural decision-making as an ethical activity’, something that will enable an understanding of the reasons behind translators’ decisions. Unfortunately, what interpreters heard in one language and said in another is not recorded; there are no texts. For court interpreters, the first issue is to identify the interpreters –

who were they? Pym suggests that individual translators are engaged ‘in many aspects of cross-cultural communication’, and interpreters in the nineteenth century were certainly engaged in cross-cultural communication. In this chapter, we endeavour to humanize the foreign language interpreters based in Cork Harbour in the nineteenth century, to find out who they were and what their background was, but also to find out, if possible, how they approached the task of interpreting.

## 2 The legal system

Irish law is part of the common law system. In the nineteenth century, the investigation of crimes and the role of the interpreter were quite different from the time of writing. The usual process was that if a serious crime was discovered, a magistrate investigated and took depositions or statements from witnesses. Then the grand jury went through the indictment to decide if the case should go to trial, to begin with at the lowest courts, the petty sessions, and if sufficiently serious, the case would be referred to the quarter sessions or, in the case of murder, to the assizes. From 1836 the Prisoners’ Counsel Act allowed defendants to see copies of depositions and counsel to make a speech on behalf of the defendant. However, prior to the Criminal Evidence Act 1898, defendants were not entitled to give evidence.

Interpreters had to take an oath to ‘well and truly interpret and explain to the Court (and Jury) the evidence given in this case according to the best of your skill and understanding. So help you God’ (Humphreys 1867: 376) and then had to swear in any witnesses who did not speak English. As suggested by the oath, the role of the interpreter was seen as being for the court and the jury rather than the defendant. The role of the interpreter was discussed in *R v Lee Kun*, an appeal against the conviction of a Chinese man in London who was not provided with interpreting during his trial for murder. According to the judgement, defendants who did not speak English were allocated an interpreter during magisterial investigations to ensure that they understood the evidence against them. Chief Justice Lord Reading noted that practice varied from court to court with some judges insisting on interpreting being provided in all cases while others allowed defence counsel or defendants to waive access to an interpreter. In addition, a distinction was made between cases where defendants had access to legal counsel and cases where they did not. For example, if a defendant had legal counsel ‘the practice has been for the Court not to require the translation of the evidence

unless the accused or his counsel applied for it' (*The King v Lee Kun* (1916: 343) 1 K.B. 337).

The Irish courts were familiar with interpreters who were made available for monolingual Irish speakers and for Deaf people. There was statutory provision from 1773 to 1774 for the grand juries to pay Irish language interpreters a salary of £10 a year to work at assizes level. Further legislation was introduced in 1837 whereby the grand juries could pay Irish interpreters at quarter sessions courts a salary of £30 a year. Irish interpreters were employed in Cork city until at least 1856 (*Southern Reporter & Cork Commercial Courier* 4 March 1856) and in the county of Cork until at least 1928 (*Southern Star* 8 December 1928). Interpreters, to begin with family members and later Deaf school teachers and chaplains, were made available for Deaf people (Leonard 2015: 10). Unlike the salaried Irish language interpreters, foreign language interpreters were selected on an ad hoc volunteer basis as the need arose. It was a case of accepting the best, or perhaps the only, person available on the day. No evidence of payments to foreign language court interpreters during the nineteenth century was located.

An unusual feature of the courts at the time was the jury *de medietate linguae*. Niamh Howlin details how from 1354 Jews in both criminal and civil cases in England could opt for a jury that included six members of their religion. However, around the start of the eighteenth century, the system changed and half of the jury could be made up of any six foreigners regardless of their native language (Howlin 2010: 65). The right was extended to all aliens and continued until 1870 (Howlin 2010: 56 and 80). The small number of foreigners resident in Ireland meant that some foreign language interpreters also took on the role of jurors.

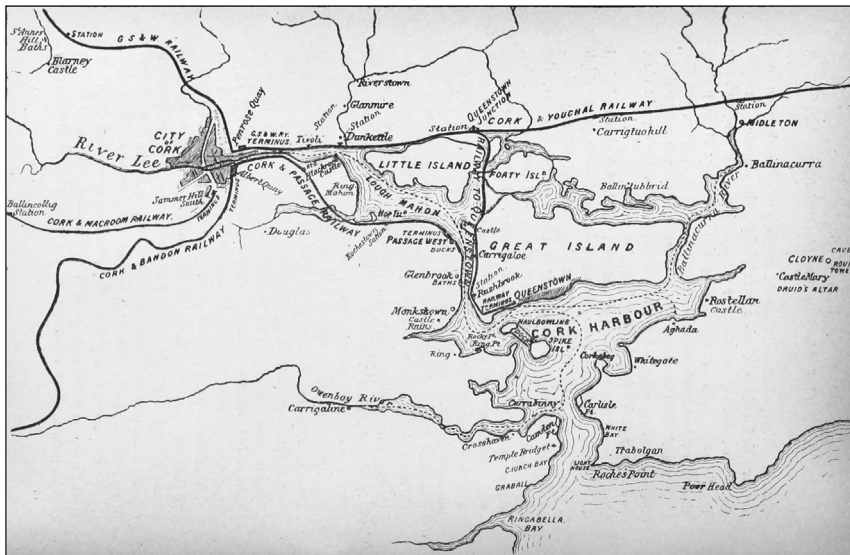
Over the course of the nineteenth century, there was increasing regulation of merchant shipping, and local marine boards were set up to examine ships' masters and mates. The Cork mercantile marine board came into being in 1851 and held examinations in navigation and steamship early that year (*Cork Examiner*, 31 March 1851). Interpreters were required to interpret for witnesses who did not speak English at the board of trade, established in Ireland in 1840 thanks to subscriptions from the people of Dublin (Mooney 1845: 370) to hold enquiries into collisions between ships.

### 3 Cork Harbour

This chapter focuses on Cork Harbour during the nineteenth century and its three ports in Cork city, Cove and Passage West. (Cove was renamed Queenstown

to mark Queen Victoria's visit in 1849 and the name was changed to Cobh after the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922.) There were petty sessions in all three ports, and there was an assizes court in Cork city. Cork city's motto is *Statio bene fide carinis* or a safe harbour for ships, in recognition of its very large natural harbour, 6 kilometres long by 2 kilometres wide and reputedly large enough to shelter all of the nineteenth-century British navy. According to a local directory called *Guy's Almanac*, some two and a half million tons of shipping entered Cork Harbour each year (1875: 292). The harbour was used for exports of butter, meat, live animals and corn and for imports of sugar, tea, coffee, wine, tobacco, salt, herrings and corn (Marmion 1855: 539). However, there were ongoing problems due to the fact that the waters were shallow, and there was a need for infrastructure to meet the needs of visiting ships. In 1822 the Cork Harbour commissioners were charged with improving the port, harbour and the river Lee. They carried out works in 1848 as did the admiralty which organized the construction of a pier and two boat harbours. Dredging work continued in different sections of the port over many decades. In Figure 7.1, Queenstown is located south of Great Island while Passage West is west of Great Island.

Queenstown is best known in Ireland as the departure point for many Irish emigrants leaving for the United States of America. It is also linked with two very large ships: The first being the *Titanic* which anchored offshore in 1912 to take



**Figure 7.1** Cork Harbour Guide to the most picturesque tour in Western Europe. Cork: Guy & Co., 1891.

on passengers and mail before setting off on its final voyage. The second is the *Lusitania* which was torpedoed by a German submarine in 1915 while sailing from New York to Liverpool and sank off the town. According to Marmion, previous to the American war of independence (1775–83), Queenstown consisted of just a few fishing huts. However, during that war, fleets destined for America, the West Indies and the Mediterranean docked in Queenstown to take on provisions and naval stores (Marmion 1855: 518–21). Large ships started anchoring in the harbour in 1859; mail and passengers were then carried by smaller vessels to the quayside. In 1877 an act of parliament was passed to allow for construction of a deep-water quay at Queenstown, and this work was completed in 1883 (Coakley 1919: 83–6). The new quay was mainly used by government ships and army transports, and was used extensively during the first Boer war (1880–1).

By 1835 Passage West, a trading and ship building port, located 8 kilometres from Cork city, had a large dry dock for the construction, maintenance and repair of ships. Prior to 1850, larger ships had to dock at Passage thus incurring extra costs as half their cargo had to be unloaded and taken on smaller boats to the city. As the ships were then lighter, they could enter the city. There was also a pier built by the St George's Steam Packet Company where passengers could disembark and cargo could be unloaded (Lewis 1837: 419). From 1862 a train linked Cork city to Queenstown, and in 1876 the mail trains from Dublin to Cork were extended to the town. There were also ferries between various towns.

According to the 1851 census, the population of Cork city was 86,485 while that of Queenstown was 10,906 and that of Passage West was 2,857. The large amount of trade in and out of Cork Harbour meant that there was a constant need for interpreters who could work with ships' captains, seamen and merchants and negotiate deals; help people in shops and taverns; and, the situation arising, act as interpreters for the board of trade, and indeed in court.

## 4 Method

As part of a larger study, digitized newspaper archives were searched using the keywords 'court' and 'interpreter'. For the purpose of this chapter, the author selected results relating to Cork Harbour and foreign languages. Very few results were found for the decades before the 1830s, mainly because at that time newspapers sourced their news from the London newspapers and there was little local coverage. Where found for the following decades, many court reports

mention ‘an interpreter’ or that ‘an interpreter was sworn’ and provide no further information on the identity of the interpreter. However, some reports do identify the interpreters although this can be problematic if it is just ‘Mr Barry’ or ‘Mr O’Mahony’ because without any additional information it can be impossible to establish who exactly the person is, particularly in the case of common surnames. Where the identity of the interpreter could be established, searches of digitized newspaper archives, local directories and the websites [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) and [findmypast.ie](http://findmypast.ie) were carried out to obtain supplementary information.

## 5 Findings

Most interpreting situations that took place on ships, for example, or in ports are undocumented, but some of those that took place in public have been recorded in newspaper reports, and they indicate that some people, both Corkonians and foreigners, were bilingual or indeed multilingual. The newspaper reports show that many defendants, plaintiffs and witnesses were seamen from merchant ships whose crews could consist of men from different countries who did not necessarily share a language. The charges brought in court cases where interpreters were required include murder, manslaughter, smuggling of tobacco and alcohol, disputes between captains and seamen, stabbings by and of seamen, and cases where seamen found themselves in houses of ill fame and were robbed.

Foreign language court interpreters belonged to two groups: (a) consuls and vice consuls who spoke foreign languages and (b) bilingual or multilingual foreigners and locals. Ethical issues relating to accuracy and impartiality arise in some instances.

### 5.1 Consuls as interpreters

In relation to the role of consuls in a legal context, Tuson explains that when witnesses were examined, depositions could be taken in writing in their presence. The depositions then had to be read over and signed by the witness with the consul also signing to authenticate the document. The consul was also to provide a written statement outlining the details of the case. In criminal cases, depositions were made in the presence of the accused. Where witnesses did not speak English, depositions were to be made ‘through a competent interpreter, sworn to interpret truly, and the name of the interpreter and the fact that he was

so sworn should be stated on the deposition, and certified by the Consul' ( 1856: 79).

Consuls, vice consuls and consular agents were appointed to all the large ports around Ireland – Dublin, Belfast, Limerick, Londonderry, Waterford, Wexford – and to Cork and nearby Queenstown. They were nominated by their government, approved by the British government, and then a letter was sent from Dublin Castle to the local mayor to notify him of the new appointee. Local consuls reported to their consul general in Dublin who in turn reported to his consul general in London. Almanacs indicate that very few consuls, vice consuls and consular agents had foreign names. For example, in 1863 there were four in Cork: Francis Michelli for Austria, Paolo Stefano Minich for Honduras, George Miloro for Italy and Nicholas George Yourdi for Greece (*Laing's Cork Mercantile Directory* 1863: 168), while in 1875 there were only two: Michelli was still in place and the other person was Paolo Stefano Minich now representing Chili, Hayti and Honduras (*Guy's Cork Almanac* 1875: 293).

An early example of a consul acting as interpreter was the Portuguese consul Adeonato da Silva Lima (1826–88), who was born in London. In 1851 da Silva Lima married Sarah O'Donnell, youngest daughter of Herbert O'Donnell, a justice of the peace and large landowner. In 1854 he acted as interpreter for a Portuguese seaman who alleged that a local woman had robbed him and stripped him of his clothes which she pawned (*Cork Constitution*, 9 February 1845). By 1861, according to the *Post Office London Directory* (Ancestry.com), he was a wine merchant in London. The family later lived in Portugal.

Frenchman Claude Marcel (1793–1876) is particularly interesting because of his published works on the teaching of languages. To begin with he was a soldier and was shot in the shoulder at the siege of Antwerp during the Napoleonic Wars in 1814. The exact date of his arrival in Ireland is unclear, but he was chancellor in Cork from at least 1824 and consul from at least 1848 until his resignation in 1863 when he returned to France (Institut français de l'éducation website). While in Cork he gave private classes in French and Italian, gave lectures on education, and wrote two books on the topic: *Language as a Means of Mental Cultures* (1853) and *Premiers Principes d'Education* (1855) (see Smith 2009 for more information). Claude Marcel was a juror on a jury *de medietate linguae* on at least two occasions (*Cork Constitution* 18 March 1852, *Cork Examiner* 21 March 1853). No records were found of Marcel acting as interpreter, but on at least one occasion, he deputed his son Justin Marcel (1833–1920) to do so. The case involved a woman who was charged with robbing a Frenchman of a purse containing six sovereigns in a house of ill repute. Justin Marcel did not

take an impartial role; he told the court that ‘this poor man came to Cork from Waterford with the intention of going home, but he was then robbed of all the money in his possession’ (*Cork Constitution*, 2 October 1855).

According to Agstner (2004: 41), as there was extensive corn trade with Ireland, the Austro-Hungarian Empire decided to appoint an honorary consul agent in 1845. Unusually, from 1854 to 1870, the consul was paid. In 1854, Francis M. Michelli (1808–76), originally from Trieste, who had previously worked as a translator and shipping agent in London, was appointed honorary consul agent at Queenstown on a large salary of £260. Michelli was also entitled to collect consular fees, which, according to Agstner, averaged out at £1,536 a year. In 1864 Michelli was made provisional consul on a salary of 2,100 guilders plus an allowance of a similar amount and 1,500 guilders to run the office. In 1860 he was the interpreter for the master and two crew members of the Austrian brig the Picro which sank in Cork Harbour after a collision with the Cumberland steamer. The men were suing for damages for their clothes and effects (*Cork Examiner*, 30 March 1860). This case was heard at the court of admiralty which at the time sat in Dublin.

Nicholas George Yourdi (–1879) was consul for Greece and on his death was replaced by his brother Eleferios George Yourdi known as Ely or E. G. Yourdi (1835–1910) who was a consular agent until 1897 when he was officially appointed vice consul (*Cork Examiner*, 4 October 1897). Apparently, the Yourdi family was ‘very distinguished and noble’ and the Yourdi brothers had to emigrate after the Greek war of independence (1821–32) (*Cork Constitution*, 12 December 1895). In 1850 the house of Yourdi in Syra, Greece, had ‘failed to the amount of five hundred thousand drachmas (18,000*l*)’ (*Freeman’s Journal* 1 November 1850). Nicholas Yourdi married Marianne Wilkinson and according to a naturalization certificate (Ancestry.com), at least one of their children, John Robert, was born in Greece in 1856. The Yourdis’ exact date of arrival in Ireland is unknown, but by 1859, Nicholas was the consul for Greece based in Queenstown. He was also involved in bottomry, a high-risk system of insuring ships whereby, in order to raise enough money to finance a voyage, a ship would be used as security. If the money was not repaid, then the ship would be forfeited. The risk was that if the ship sank, the lender would lose his money. The Yourdis had a ship called the George & John Yourdi and regularly imported corn from Constantinople and Odessa and steam coal. The Yourdi brothers frequently acted as interpreters in the courts: Nicholas in the 1860s and Eleferios in the 1890s. In 1895, Eleferios was the interpreter in a manslaughter case heard at assizes. The defendant was unrepresented because the British government only allocated interpreters in



murder cases. Yourdi did not assume an impartial role and commented that 'the unfortunate deceased man brought it all on himself'. Interestingly, the prisoner was found not guilty and discharged (*Cork Examiner* 12 December 1895).

Paolo Stefano Minich (1833–?) had commanded the revolutionists in Italy in 1848. The date of his arrival in Ireland is unknown, but he married Sarah Grant in 1857 and their son was born the following year (*Cork Examiner*, 22 February 1858). In 1860, he left Ireland to join General Garibaldi in his campaign to quell uprisings in Sicily. In 1863, Minich inserted a notice in a newspaper warning that he would not be liable for any debts incurred by his wife (*Cork Examiner*, 21 April 1863). That same year, he was appointed vice consul at Queenstown for the Republic of Haiti (*Dublin Evening Mail*, 7 January 1863). Minich was a ship agent and consul for a number of states – not only Haiti but also vice consul for the Ottoman Empire, Honduras, and consul for Chile. In addition, he was the representative of a number of insurance underwriters from different countries (*Cork Constitution*, 8 November 1877) and developed 'a thriving and prosperous' business (*Cork Constitution*, 28 March 1878).

Minich acted as interpreter at Queenstown petty sessions on at least one occasion when two Italian sailors were charged with deserting a ship and threatening the life of the captain (*Southern Reporter & Cork Commercial Courier*, 7 October 1862). However, he found himself in court in 1878, charged with perjury and an attempt to defraud an insurance company of £1,200. The facts of the case were that an Italian ship called the *Unione S* was to travel from Philadelphia to Cork with a cargo of corn. However, the corn became saturated with seawater, supposedly because the vessel got stranded before leaving the Delaware River. The insurance policy stipulated that compensation would only be paid out if the vessel got stranded or was lost. The trial focused on Minich's role as interpreter for the owner of the ship. According to the *Freeman's Journal*, the captain, mate and a sailor had informed Minich in Italian that the ship was not stranded, but Minich had drawn up a protest or written declaration in which he stated that they had told him that the ship was stranded. Minich, the captain, mate and sailor went before a notary where the three members of the crew swore that the declaration was correct with Minich acting as interpreter. The declaration was then sworn by a notary public. Minich was defended in court by high profile lawyers Peter O'Brien and Isaac Butt and the latter pointed to the absence of a motive because Minich was unlikely to gain in any way. In fact, the only person who could benefit was the purchaser of the cargo, Charles Cantillon, a magistrate and former mayor of Cork, and it seemed very unlikely that he

would be involved in an attempt to defraud the insurance company (*Freeman's Journal*, 28 March 1878).

It is very difficult to work out what happened in this case: Was it a genuine misunderstanding where Minich thought the crew members had said that the ship was stranded? Did Minich attempt to protect the crew? His familiarity with insurance matters should have meant that he would be exceedingly careful about such matters. Another possibility is that the crew changed their story and Minich was the scapegoat. Despite the absence of a motive, the jury found Minich guilty and he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. However, according to the Irish Prison Registers ([findmypast.ie](http://findmypast.ie)), his sentence was commuted to six months on account of the poor state of his health.

Giorgio Miloro, known as Chevalier Miloro (1812–81), was the consul for Italy for about twenty years. He was also a shipowner, ship agent, a town commissioner, and even a member of the Queenstown model yacht club. He married Anne McLaren in 1853, and they had one son Giorgio Vincent. According to newspaper reports, Miloro was a frequent interpreter in court. For example, in 1857 he acted as interpreter at Passage West in the investigation of a murder (*Cork Constitution*, 5 September 1857), and in the 1870s he was the interpreter at a stabbing case (*Cork Constitution*, 27 October 1871), followed by another stabbing case where, most unusually, Miloro gave £2 to the victim and also paid the fine of £1 and 10 shillings in costs, one third of which was to go to the victim (*Cork Examiner*, 12 February 1874). In 1875, Miloro was the interpreter for an Italian witness in a case where five seamen from an English ship were charged with wilful and malicious injury to an Italian ship (*Cork Constitution*, 5 October 1875). In 1879, Miloro was asked to interpret for two Italian sailors, on drunk and disorderly charges (*Cork Examiner*, 29 July 1879).

Miloro interpreted at board of trade inquiries on at least two occasions. In 1876 he acted as interpreter for the board of trade at an inquiry in Queenstown about the brig *Sussex* which went down in the Wilmington River in Georgia, United States (*Cork Examiner*, 7 September 1876). Miloro also interpreted at an inquiry into a collision between a steamship belonging to the Cork Steamship Company and an Italian brig (*Cork Constitution*, 6 February 1878).

Another consul who acted as interpreter on a number of occasions but was a native English speaker was James Demery (1837–1903), who was originally a shopkeeper and then a ship's agent and consul for Spain. The exact origin of his connection with Spain could not be established. Demery ran a lodging house called the *Albergo Italiano* which eventually comprised several houses (*Cork Examiner*, 7 August 1880). In 1873, he was tried at Queenstown petty sessions for

aiding in unshipping three gallons of rum. However, although he was convicted, the magistrates recommended that the damages be reduced and suggested that it was a bona fide transaction between Demery and Minich (*Cork Constitution*, 4 October 1873). Like Nicholas Yourdi, he was involved in bottomry insurance in the 1870s (*Cork Examiner*, 27 October 1873). In 1879 he raised funds for people affected by heavy flooding in Murcia, Spain (*Cork Examiner*, 21 November 1879). He interpreted for Portuguese, Spanish and Italian. Demery was upwardly mobile: he bought a house on Queen Street in Queenstown for £295 in 1863 (*Cork Examiner*, 13 May 1863). As consul, he advertised that he issued bills of health (*Cork Constitution*, 2 May 1873). His eight-bedroom mansion in Fort Lisle West, Queenstown, was put up for auction in 1885 along with furniture and ‘a splendid Tricord cottage piano’, rare old Indian china, ‘a magnificent selection of oil paintings’, foreign stuffed birds and several sets of oriental china (*Cork Constitution* 1 October 1885). Demery emigrated to Australia circa 1893 with his wife and four adult children and died in Sydney in 1903 (Ancestry.com).

## 5.2 Other foreign language interpreters

In 1876 there was a very unusual case, possibly the only occasion on which an interpreter travelled from England to Ireland specifically for a court case. The Caswell mutiny case involved the trial of a Greek man, Christos Baumbos, charged with murdering the captain, first mate, second mate and steward during a mutiny on a ship which was travelling from Buenos Aires to Cork. Baumbos did not speak English, and at Queenstown petty sessions, there was some discussion about how to proceed and the Chairman recommended that they have ‘a proper interpreter, one who had no interest in the matter’. Greek consul Nicholas Yourdi told the court that ‘there’s only myself and my brother here, who are Greeks’. However, magistrate Mr Beamish rejected his offer outright, saying, ‘You have nothing to say to it at all. Your brother is a most respectable man, but still he is your brother’ (*Cork Examiner*, 16 May 1876). It is not entirely clear why the courts were not willing to have the consul as interpreter on this occasion. It may have been because he had instructed the lawyer for the defence or because, like Baumbos, he was Greek, or perhaps because he was involved in shipping and might have found it difficult to be impartial when interpreting for an alleged mutineer.

Most unusually, Joseph Cartwright, the son of a collector of customs, born on the Ionian Islands (Breathnach 2003: 107) who had previously interpreted at the Lennie mutiny trial in London, was recruited to act as interpreter at

petty sessions in May and at assizes in late July. At the first trial at assizes, it was decided that all questions and answers should be put down in writing and Cartwright would then translate 'the result of the examination' to Baumbos (*Irish Times*, 27 May 1876). This procedure may have been time-consuming and probably explains why the defendant's counsel agreed that, to save time, the interpreter would only interpret the important points of the evidence (*Irish Times*, 28 July 1876). As explained above, this was acceptable practice at the time because Baumbos had legal counsel. However, a newspaper reporter commented that, with the exception of some 'ship's language', Baumbos 'seemed to be utterly ignorant of the evidence' (*Cork Constitution*, 28 July 1876). As the jury could not agree, with eleven in favour of conviction and one in favour of acquittal, Baumbos was put on trial for a second time. A question arose about two words – 'tutti mort' – reportedly said by one of the Greeks. Cartwright translated the phrase as 'all dead' adding (quite unnecessarily) that this was distinct from 'tutti mostri' which would mean 'all brutes' (*Cork Constitution*, 24 May 1876). Later he informed the court that he spoke Italian perfectly and that he knew 'even the distinction between the Venetian and Neapolitan dialects' (*Irish Times*, 29 July 1876). Baumbos was found guilty and sentenced to death. According to newspaper reports, Cartwright interpreted the sentence of death 'exhibiting great emotion' (*Irish Times*, 1 August 1876). Yourdi, who was present throughout the trials in his role as consul, told the court that he had communicated by letter with the prisoner's father who had been a captain in the Greek navy during the war of independence against Turkey (*Cork Constitution*, 28 July 1876).

A frequent interpreter for Italian was Reverend Gerald Brennan or Brennan (1810–63), a Catholic priest who had studied for the priesthood at the Capuchin convent of Frescati in Rome. After returning to Cork he was appointed chaplain in the Cork workhouse where he contracted famine fever (*Cork Examiner*, 7 July 1863). In 1852, he interpreted for an Italian who was charged with feloniously assaulting a woman and with stealing a small sum of money from her (*Southern Reporter*, 16 March 1852). He informed a judge that he was a part-time prison chaplain (*Cork Examiner*, 21 March 1853) where no doubt he got to know and counsel detainees and prisoners. Indeed, in 1852, he interpreted for a man who was charged with murder and had already spent five months in prison awaiting trial. This case is interesting because Brennan asked the court if he could make a remark. Apparently, he had been in communication with the defendant's parish priest from whom he had received a letter that very morning giving the defendant 'the very highest character'. Brennan disregarded any notion of impartiality and

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argued on behalf of the defendant that it would be 'a great hardship' to keep him in prison. He also told the court:

He is a stranger, my lord, to the Consul, and though he has got a very good character of him, it is unlikely he would go bail for him. Besides a bail would be no advantage to him in a strange place without employment. He feared the man was so excited by the transaction that he would destroy himself.

The court agreed to await the advice of the attorney general (*Cork Examiner*, 19 March 1852). At Cork assizes in 1857 an Italian who was charged with assault opted for a jury *de medietate linguae* (*Southern Reporter*, 30 July 1857). Brennan was also a witness in the case and gave testimony as to the behaviour of the defendant, basically to the effect that he was insane (*Cork Examiner*, 31 July 1857). He also acted as interpreter in a manslaughter case in 1863 where the judge addressed the defendant saying, 'I have addressed you in as plain language as I could, so it might be interpreted easily to you' (*Southern Reporter*, 2 April 1863). Clearly, this particular judge was making an effort to allow for ease of interpreting.

Gabriele Goidanich (1833–85) was born in Lussingrande, Austria, the island of Veli Lošinj in present-day Croatia. His father, Pietro Goidanich, was a civil servant. His brother Giovanni, a shipbroker, was based in Waterford where he was consul for Waterford and New Ross. Gabriele Goidanich was charged with smuggling tobacco in 1861 (*Cork Examiner*, 8 October 1861) and eight years later appeared in court as an interpreter for a man facing similar charges (*Southern Reporter*, 11 December 1869). Goidanich was awarded a Board of Trade certificate of competency as master in the merchant service in 1863 and married Arabella Eva O'Sullivan in 1866. He was a ship agent and involved in the Queenstown Ship Chandlery Company, and on his death in 1885 his estate was worth £886, a considerable sum for the time.

AQ: Should 'ship agent' be changed to 'shipping agent' in the sentence 'He was a ship agent and involved ...'?

Interpreters could be asked to provide explanations to defendants. For example, in 1855, a Spanish speaker was accused of stealing a gold chain. A man called John Rawley was sworn in as interpreter and informed the court that the defendant said he had stolen the chain. The interpreter was asked to explain the effect of his confession to the defendant. Rawley then told the court, 'I have told him that he will be punished very severely, and that he may be a long time in prison, but he still says he stole it.' The judge then asked him to 'stand by, and try and learn from him who and what he is' (*Southern Reporter*, 22 March 1855). In effect, Rawley was being asked to take on the role of investigating magistrate. While this was unusual, the judge may have encouraged this approach in the hope that direct communication would help resolve issues.

Emmanuel Tedesco (1833–98), born in Valetta, Malta, was awarded Board of Trade certificates of competency in the Merchant Service as Only Mate in 1858, and as Master in 1861. He took both examinations in Cork. In 1866, he married Eliza Baggot. In 1881, he was a sailmaker (*Slater's Directory* 1881). However, some years later he was the hotel keeper at Kilmurray's Hotel in Queenstown (*Cork Constitution*, 30 August 1894). Tedesco acted as interpreter a number of times. In 1866 he was the interpreter in a case against two crew members of a Maltese vessel who were accused of fighting (*Cork Examiner*, 10 April 1866). In 1872, a man possibly erroneously referred to in the newspaper as Mr Fedesco, but who was most likely Mr Tedesco (handwritten 'T' and 'F' may have been confused), was present at Passage West petty sessions when local interpreter James Hanley alias 'Rucco' was interpreting in a case about a ship master's use of abusive and threatening language. Tedesco intervened and alleged that Hanley was 'completely manufacturing the answers of the witness'. He then agreed to take over the interpreting (*Cork Examiner*, 3 January 1872). Tedesco acted as interpreter on at least one occasion in 1873 (*Cork Constitution*, 28 August 1873). His name is not mentioned again until a murder case first heard at Queenstown petty sessions in 1882. In this case, Tedesco translated the depositions into Italian (*Cork Examiner*, 24 January 1882).

Nicholas Yourdi played an interesting role as consul at a trial where the interpreter was a local teenage boy. In 1855, the interpreter for a Greek sailor complaining of ill-treatment was a barefooted, 'most raggedly dressed' boy aged thirteen or fourteen called Patrick Callanan who 'astonished the court by his ability in making the complainant's statement intelligible to the court'. He informed the court that he also spoke Portuguese, Spanish and Italian – languages which he had acquired by virtue of talking to foreign seamen. The mayor, who was presiding, was impressed and promised to send for him whenever he needed an interpreter (*Nenagh Guardian*, 28 November 1855). However, the following year, a very different picture emerged when Yourdi was in attendance at the police office court in Passage West in a case involving two Greek crew members' complaints about food and wages. A local boy called Clenane, most likely Callanan again, was sworn in as a witness to testify as to the food on board. He was then sworn in as interpreter and told the court that he had been interpreting 'as long as I can remember'. Yourdi intervened saying, 'The translation that boy has given is very wrong'. Yourdi then challenged another interpreted question, saying, 'Oh, your worship, this boy is doing very wrong. He says to the witness, "I am putting now the case before you, you must answer me."' However, the boy swore that he did not say such a thing, he merely asked

the question but the witness 'did not give me the right answer'. When the boy interpreted the original question again, he told the court that the witness had said 'he would not be satisfied with it, but Yourdi claimed he had said 'no such thing; he says he does not understand you' (*Cork Constitution*, 8 January 1856). The second case showed how important it was for the consul to attend the case; he was the only person present who was in a position to understand and signal inaccurate interpreting.

Pasquale Tomassini had lived in England for a number of years before moving to Ireland. He was the proprietor of two hotels, one in Queenstown which he put up for sale in 1857 and a second at Warren's Place in Cork city. He took out a small advertisement in the newspaper in 1867 to the effect that he had returned from Italy and had received a shipment of wine direct from his vineyard at Monte Dago (Ancona) in Italy (*Cork Examiner*, 25 February 1867). Tomassini sold the Cork hotel in 1868, and he seems to have returned to Ancona. From at least 1876, his son Albert P. Tomassini (1846–1902), who was born in England, was British consul there (*Thom's Directory*). The issue of payment to foreign language interpreters arose in 1851 at Cork city criminal court. Tomassini had just finished interpreting for the captain of a ship from whom four women had allegedly robbed the sum of £19. After the accused had been found guilty, the solicitor for the prosecution observed that Mr Tomassini was entitled to his expenses. However, the judge said that that could only be done by presentment, as happened in the case of the Irish interpreter who was paid by the grand jury. He suggested that Tomassini could perhaps be paid as a witness in the case (*Cork Constitution*, 22 March 1851). Expenses could be paid to witnesses in assizes cases as outlined in Table 7.1 ('s' stands for shillings, and 'd' stands for pence). Interpreters would most likely have been included in the second category along with commercial and law clerks. However, no record has been located of interpreters of foreign languages receiving witness expenses for their interpreting work.

Correspondence with the Chief Secretary's Office at Dublin Castle suggests that it was only in 1903 that a foreign language interpreter was paid for his work; John Burke from Belfast was paid 2 pounds and 2 shillings for interpreting for Italian at Belfast assizes (CSO LB 91: 488, National Archives of Ireland). No earlier records of payments to interpreters of foreign languages were located although it is possible that the courts were in a position to make payments perhaps out of petty cash or fines, for example. Joseph Cartwright who travelled from London to interpret in the Caswell mutiny case must have been paid, and his travel and accommodation and other expenses may have been covered centrally by

AQ: Please confirm if the text ('s' stands for shillings, and 'd' stands for pence) could be moved as footnote in Table 7.1

AQ: The caption of Table 7.1 "Witness expenses Annual Report of the Local ..." seems unclear. Please check.

**Table 7.1** Witness expenses Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Ireland, being the 11th Report under the Local Government Board (Ireland) Act 35 and 36 Vic c 69, with appendices Dublin 1883

<b>Personal Allowance</b>	<b>Minimum per day</b>	<b>Minimum per night</b>	<b>Maximum per day</b>	<b>Maximum per night</b>
1. Labourers	2s	1s 6d	5s	2s 6d
2. Farmers, shopkeepers and their assistants, commercial and law clerks, artisans, etc.	5s	5s		
3. Warders and other gaol officials, except governors	5s	5s		
4. Governors of gaols and petty sessions clerks	7s 6d	7s 6d		
5. Merchants, bank officials &c	5s	5s	10s	10s
6. County surveyors' assistants, land surveyors &c	4s	4s	10s	5s
7. Resident magistrates, and other government officials not classed above	10s	10s		
8. Doctors, solicitors, engineers and handwriting experts	21s	10s	42s	10s
9. Clergymen, private gentlemen, officers of the Navy and Army &c	5s	5s	42s	10s

AQ: '&c' does not seem to read as intended in the table. Please check.

Dublin Castle. It is also likely that in civil cases litigants paid interpreters out of their own pockets – even Irish speakers had to pay interpreters out of their own pocket or depend on a volunteer in civil cases.

Carl Rudolph Felton (1833–1906), known by his middle name 'Rudolph' and occasionally referred to as Randolph, was born in Germany. In 1863, he married Ellen O'Sullivan. Felton's main source of income seems to have been as a water clerk, a clerk from a ship owner's or agent's office, who boards an arriving ship (*Oxford English Dictionary*). However, he also worked as an interpreter and on the 1901 census his occupation is listed as 'retired interpreter'. In 1873 Mr Harvey, consul for the North German Confederation, applied to Queenstown petty sessions to have a man called Johann Muller extradited to London on foot of a warrant issued by a judge in Cologne. Fenton was sworn in as interpreter and deposed that the English translation of the warrant was correct. He went on to swear that the seal was the official seal and that one copy was issued for the constabulary in Germany while a duplicate was sent to Ireland (*Cork Examiner*, 30 September 1873).

There are mentions of other interpreters, although they may not have worked in the courts. For example, Mr Spiteri was a hotel keeper, Greek interpreter and



ship agent who had arrived in Queenstown in 1850 (*Cork Constitution*, 22 June 1854). Similarly, Count Gerissimo Masino Valsamachi was a shipbroker and interpreter (*Cork Examiner*, 21 June 1854). Meanwhile, Maurizio Gabardini was known as the interpreter in Passage (*Cork Constitution*, 11 September 1852; *Southern Reporter*, 4 December 1860) while Marco Giovanni Cola from Queenstown was described as 'interpreter and ship agent' (*Cork Constitution*, 24 September 1866).

On some occasions it proved difficult to locate an interpreter. The Norwegian language presented a problem at Queenstown petty sessions in 1872 when the master of a Norwegian ship was charged with assaulting a crew member and with having fired a shot at him. The chief mate gave evidence, and it was proposed that a coasting pilot called Hansen act as interpreter. Captain Seymour, consul for Norway, raised the issue of impartiality, cautioning that the pilot depended on Norwegian captains for work, but did not actually object. However, the court had great difficulty understanding the answers as conveyed by the ad hoc interpreter (*Cork Examiner*, 22 October 1872). Similarly, in 1882 at the same court, no interpreter could be found for a Spanish seaman who was facing a murder charge. The victim being an Italian, consuls Demery and Minich for Spain and Italy respectively were present in court. Demery informed the court that 'a gentleman who he knew would be there at half-past eleven for the purpose of interpreting'. The magistrate questioned why an interpreter was not provided at once but was told that 'we could not get one in the town; it is very difficult to get people who speak Spanish here'. The magistrate then commented that 'it ought not to be so difficult in a town like this' (*Cork Examiner*, 24 January 1882).

## 6 Conclusion

In line with Pym's recommendation regarding 'humanizing' translators, we have identified and 'humanized' a number of interpreters who in fact were not in large urban centres but instead were based in quite small places – particularly Queenstown – where shipping and trade provided opportunities. The foreign consuls who acted as interpreters all appear to have been well educated and enterprising with a very good knowledge of English and a number married local Irishwomen. They also had an advantage in that they attended the courts frequently in their role as consuls and would have been familiar with court processes and legal terms. Consuls, vice consuls and consular agents played a central role in sourcing interpreters for the courts. Their presence in court

was of value because they acted as safeguards in interpreted cases. However, as most consuls spoke only English, they were not in a position to comment on the accuracy of interpreting, something that put the citizens of the countries they represented at a disadvantage. Sometimes, possibly when nobody else was available, those consuls who spoke the relevant language took on the role themselves. However, this could be complicated because consuls knew a lot about the cases and most likely formed their own opinions. In some cases, as we have seen, they were not impartial.

Interpreters who were not consuls may also have found it difficult to be impartial. For example, Reverend Gerald Brennan was also a prison chaplain and got to know defendants quite well, so much so that on at least one occasion, as we have seen, he appealed to the court on behalf of a defendant charged with murder. There was some awareness of the importance of impartiality with an interpreter being sourced from London for the Caswell mutiny trial. Similarly, Captain Seymour, consul for Norway, counselled that a coasting pilot depended on Norwegian captains for work. Overall, the provision of interpreters was ad hoc, and while we have seen that accuracy was clearly an issue in the cases of the teenage boy and the Norwegian coasting pilot, we do not know what the level of accuracy was overall. Apart from court cases and Board of Trade inquiries, it is clear that there were many commercial opportunities for interpreters; clearly language skills were extremely useful in Cork Harbour at the time.

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