

# THE MALTA PROTESTANT COLLEGE

Salv. Mallia

## PART 1 : THE SET-UP

In the 19th century Malta was a centre of Anglican missionary activity in the Mediterranean. Among the many means of Protestant propaganda, the Malta Protestant College (MPC) was a unique institution.

## THE FOUNDATION

The Malta Protestant College was established in 1846, but the idea of an English College in the Mediterranean had first been broached by the Marquess of Hastings, Governor of Malta from 1824 to 1826, in a conversation with the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury in Italy.<sup>1</sup> The project was in abeyance for some time, but it gradually forced itself on the attention of several philanthropic persons in England<sup>2</sup> as a means of promoting the “religious and social regeneration”<sup>3</sup> of the millions of inhabitants of the East.

A “Provisional Committee” was formed by a group of some forty philanthropic gentlemen, among whom were Members of Parliament, ecclesiastics, noblemen, gentry and University dons, under the chairmanship of the Earl of Shaftesbury. In 1845 property was bought at St. Julian’s<sup>4</sup> and the organisation of an educational establishment began.

*This article is based mainly on contemporary journal reports, and some correspondence and publications. My attempts to trace the whereabouts of the MPC archive materials in England proved fruitless.*

<sup>1</sup> *(The) M(alta) T(imes)* 27.vi. 1861, p.1. Bishop Gobat of Jerusalem, who had been the first Vice-Principal of the MPC, said he had conceived the idea of such a College towards the end of the 1830’s when he had retired from missionary labours in Abyssinia owing to ill-health. (*MT* 9.xi.1852, p.2) According to *MT* 14.iv.1846, p.1, the originator of the project was a physician (Dr A. Crawford?) who had also retired to Malta for health reasons. There was probably a convergence of views.

<sup>2</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> See p.826 of *JD*, i.e. *Journal of a Deputation sent to the East by the Committee of the Malta Protestant College, in 1849: containing an Account of the Present State of the Oriental Nations, including their Religion, Learning, Education, Customs, and Occupations: with Outlines of their Ecclesiastical and Political History; of the Rise and Decay of Knowledge among them; and of the Doctrines and Discipline of the Ancient Christian Churches*. By a Lay Member of the Committee [presumably Dr Crawford]. London, J. Nisbet & Co., 1854. Part I (xl, pp.1-343), Part II (vii, pp. 344-886), illus., maps, plans, tables.

<sup>4</sup> See FN 31.

## AIMS OF THE MPC

The primary object of the institution was “to spread the pure light of revealed religion, with the blessings of moral and intellectual cultivation”<sup>5</sup> among some 100 million inhabitants of the regions of the East, who were then still living in great ignorance and degradation: in Abyssinia, Arabia, Armenia, Asia Minor, Egypt, some districts of East Africa, Greece, and in the countries of Europe contiguous to the Mediterranean, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Persia, Syria, Tartary and Turkey in Europe.<sup>6</sup>

The best way of achieving this aim was to educate Oriental natives and send them back to diffuse the light of the Gospel and promote civilisation: “youthful orientals of good character and of fair abilities” would be trained free of charge in the several branches of useful knowledge and given a course of theological instruction.<sup>7</sup> They did not necessarily have to be exclusively missionaries or catechists: if qualified by natural gifts and divine grace they would receive pastoral and theological instruction for the purpose;<sup>8</sup> otherwise, they would be given a sound secular education together with a knowledge of Holy Scripture, and on returning home, they would engage in trade, act as interpreters, schoolmasters, or Government agents, or go on to become lawyers, physicians, etc.<sup>9</sup> It was necessary to train such natives in some large Protestant institution, so that it would become “a beacon light”,<sup>10</sup> “AUXILIARY” to all the Anglican missionary societies, “A GREAT NURSERY AND STOREHOUSE” providing native labourers of every description.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time it was considered desirable to attach to the College a school for paying pupils, which would enable the College to make itself as much as possible self-supporting. Many Protestant families of British, German or Swiss origin settled on the shores of the Mediterranean had long felt the need of a school “providing a sound and complete system of education in a central part of the Mediterranean.”<sup>12</sup> The pupils would be the sons of missionaries, chaplains, consuls, military and naval officers and merchants, from as near as Sicily and as far away as India;<sup>13</sup> they would

<sup>5</sup> *MT* 12.v.1846, p.4.

<sup>6</sup> *JD*, Part I, xi-xii.

<sup>7</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1.

<sup>8</sup> *MT* 10.vii.1862, p.1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* and *JD*, p.828.

<sup>10</sup> *JD*, p.840.

<sup>11</sup> *JD*, Part I, p.xiii. The London Committee wished to send out annually fifteen to twenty qualified natives after taking them through a course of studies lasting on an average six years. For this a permanent income of £4000 a year was required. (*JD*, Part I, xiv).

<sup>12</sup> *MT* 22.iv.1845, p.4.

<sup>13</sup> *MT* 10.vii.1862, p.1.

receive “a sound and liberal European education” “based upon the principles of the Bible”<sup>14</sup> which would fit them for the Universities, or for a mercantile, diplomatic or military career.<sup>15</sup> Parents would not have to educate their children at great expense and inconvenience in the north of Europe,<sup>16</sup> exposing them to great risks.<sup>17</sup> Even British residents in India would find the MPC suitable because of the “comparative mildness and salubrity” of the Maltese climate; while the rapid and frequent means of communication would enable parents to pay an occasional visit to their children at reasonable expense. European students qualifying for mercantile and diplomatic careers in the East would have the means of acquiring a knowledge of Oriental languages and literatures.<sup>18</sup>

### WHY MALTA?

Malta seemed the ideal place to achieve both aims, uniting as it did the greatest number of advantages for siting such a college. “Its very central position, as the advanced post of the West, and the key of the East”, being “the principal channel of communication between Europe and Asia,” would enable it to become “a site of great missionary enterprise” for evangelising Asia, Africa and southern Europe.<sup>19</sup> Malta was also a British possession.<sup>20</sup> It offered good facilities for frequent and rapid communication with all countries of the East and with Europe by means of steam navigation. Its climate was mild, the necessities of life were cheap, large and suitable buildings were available at moderate prices, and hence any educational project would be less expensive than in England.<sup>21</sup>

There was another advantage. Being far from home, Oriental students would be less exposed to the temptation to leave school as soon as they had acquired a modicum of English in order to find a job as dragomen, merchants’ clerks or in minor government offices.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Bishop Gobat hoped that boys educated at the MPC would, when settled on the shores of the Mediterranean later on, become “real helpers” in spreading the light of the Gospel. Missionaries used to complain that merchants, officials, etc., were often “the greatest impediment to the spread of the Gospel.” (*JD*, Part I, pp. xvi-xvii)

<sup>16</sup> *MT* 22.iv.1845, p.4.

<sup>17</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1.

<sup>18</sup> *MT* 22.iv.1845, p.4.

<sup>19</sup> *JD*, p.775.

<sup>20</sup> *JD*, Part I, p.xii, and adds: “It seems, indeed, as if Malta had, in the merciful designs of a gracious Providence, been placed under the dominion of this great Protestant nation, in order that the means might there be provided, for again sending forth the light of Divine truth among the nations of the East, and for raising up a strong spiritual bulwark against the renewed and strenuous efforts of the Papacy, to prolong and extend her baneful sway over those once-glorious regions.”

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *JD*, p.227.

## CHARACTER OF THE MPC

The Constitution of the MPC left no doubt as to its Anglican inspiration and foundation. Article VI specified that education was “based on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, embodied in the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England, and as set forth, generally, in the Homilies and other writings of the eminent divines and champions of the English Reformation. No theological opinion shall be taught as a fundamental article of faith essential to salvation, not declared to be so by the Church of England.” And in Article VII the members of the Executive Council protested “against the errors of the Church of Rome, as exhibited in the Decrees of the Council of Trent, and in the Creed of Pope Pius the Fourth,” and testified to the “supreme authority” of Scripture as “the sole and complete rule of faith, and only Divine rule of practice”, as well as to “justification by faith only”, etc.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, in their “Original Proposal for the foundation of a College at Malta for the education of Natives of the East and others” the founders called it a “Protestant Institution”.<sup>24</sup>

Dr George Tomlinson, Bishop of Gibraltar and Visitor of the College, declared his satisfaction that the MPC was “a Church of England Institution”, “a seminary of SOUND PROTESTANT INSTRUCTION, (*hear hear,*) wherein the *true* principles of our Reformers are understood and taught”.<sup>25</sup> The “paramount importance” of

<sup>23</sup> *JD*, pp.875-6.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in *The Malta Observer*, 24.vii.1862, p.3.

“The College was in fact called ‘Protestant’ as being intended to hold forth a faithful protest, both within & without its walls, against every form of religious error.” According to Clause 1 of its Constitution, the MPC’s primary object was to “promote the glory of God and the Salvation of souls” “by the diligent use of all means, except compulsion, for the true conversion to pure Christianity of the students & pupils” admitted into the MPC. Religious instruction (i.e. “pure Scriptural truth”, “the pure faith of the Gospel”) was not “merely *secondary* to the Secular Instruction”, it “should always constitute a *primary* & essential object.” And it was on this understanding that contributions were made.

At some time it was proposed to alter this principle and introduce another one, “widely different, if not wholly opposed” to the foregoing: students professing creeds other than the Protestant should be “left to pursue their studies without any attempt to induce them to change their religion, however erroneous. – Thus the Roman Catholic – Greek &c is only to be addressed privately by the Protestant Teachers on those points on which they are agreed, and the Mohametan is not to be spoken to about Christianity. In fact, all attempts at conversion are to be prohibited, beyond the religious instruction given at morning and evening family prayers.” It was contended in rebuttal of this principle that it would “almost completely” defeat the primary object of the Founders and would be calculated to stop at once all further contributions. This new principle was “most objectionable in policy, as well as scarcely consistent with christian faithfulness”. (Undated document SE/M/18 at Shaftesbury Estates, Dorset)

<sup>25</sup> *MT* 6.iv.1852, p.2. The Bishops of Calcutta, Gibraltar, Jerusalem, and Melbourne were Patrons of the MPC. (*JD*, p.,865) Later on, the Bishops of Bombay and Madras were added. (*MT* 8.ix.1859, p.4)

Scripture in the course of education at the MPC was stressed by the Ven. Archdeacon Irwin, Principal of the MPC in 1853.<sup>26</sup>

And when the Rev. Miles, Principal in 1862, endeavoured to convince the Maltese that “any spirit of religious sectarianism” was “absolutely extraneous” to the MPC, he was attacked not only by *L'Ordine*, a Catholic periodical, but also by Anglicans.<sup>27</sup>

A clergyman visiting the MPC in 1853 could not detect “anything like Romanism” and found the whole system of the College “Evangelical”.<sup>28</sup>

## THE SITE

The site of the new college consisted of twenty statute acres at St Julian's Bay, “a delightful and salubrious spot, about two miles from Valletta, possessing unusual advantages for promoting the health and comfort of the students”.<sup>29</sup> Mr John Watson, an English merchant, had had a house built there and had brought over an expert from England to lay out the grounds.<sup>30</sup> The London Committee bought the property for £2,500 and disbursed another £500 to make it ready for the reception of fifty students and for the accommodation of the masters.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *MT* 24.v.1853, p.3.

<sup>27</sup> *The Malta Observer*, 11.viii.1862, p.2, letter of H. Innes, quoting and translating from *L'Ordine* 18.vii.1862, p.3.

<sup>28</sup> Letter in *JD*, Part II, p.xxxii.

<sup>29</sup> *MT* 12.v.1846, p.4.

<sup>30</sup> “Early Days of the Malta College” in *Letters and Notices* (Newsletter of the English Province of the Society of Jesus), April 1884, p.88. This College was St Ignatius' College (1877-1907), which was sited on the same property.

It had what was considered “the finest *private* garden in Malta.” “It runs, or rather steps, down the hill smartly towards the bay, being in three extensive sloping levels, with a descent between each of perhaps twelve steps.” Incidentally, the first chameleons, now widespread in Malta, were brought from the East by some member of the MPC staff, (*Ibid.*, p.93) and thence they spread all over the Island. The College grounds were abundantly planted with orange trees and other shrubs. “There was a fine view seaward as far as the coast of Sicily”, and Mt Etna could often be distinguished on the horizon. (William Tallack, *Malta under the Phenicians, Knights and English*. London, 1861, pp.235-6)

<sup>31</sup> *MT* 12.v.1846, p.4.

On 22 October 1844 Lachlan Mackintosh Rate of Bishopsgate, London, “desirous of investing £4000 in property in Malta,” Henry Innes of HM Dockyard acting as attorney, bought the property of the late John Watson in St Julian's, consisting of “a House, garden and fields, commonly called the ‘Belvedere’,” for £2500. N(otarial) A(rchives) V(alletta) (Not. Stephen John Assenza, 18/536, f.1136 ff.) Rate was acting as a trustee on behalf of the College Board of Trustees, made up of the Rt Hon. Anthony Ashley Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, the Rt Hon. John Winston Spencer, Marquis of

After six years plans were drawn up to erect new buildings,<sup>32</sup> for accommodation was becoming too small and a rapid increase of pupils was envisaged. The small houses contiguous to the original College premises, which had been lately purchased or rented, could provide only limited space for more pupils and, since they were at some distance from the main building, pupils were exposed to the vagaries of the weather in their frequent journeys to and from classes, and discipline was more difficult to maintain.

There was a deficiency of suitable accommodation for masters and servants; moreover, more spacious classrooms and a chapel were needed. The whole building would accommodate 250 persons – 220 students and 30 staff. The present building, which was used as the Collegiate school, would be incorporated into one wing and, with additions, would accommodate about 120 boys. The wing corresponding to that occupied by the school would house the college and could accommodate about 100 students. The centre building was designed to house a large lecture-room, library, museum, apartments for the Principal, the professors and occasional visitors. This building would be connected with the school by the chapel and with the college by the dining-hall. Rooms would be provided for a chemical laboratory, printing premises, work-shops. The courts would be surrounded by a covered colonnade to provide shelter from rain and sun.

The £18,000 required for the building would be raised by special contributions to a building fund. In actual fact, only a small part of the planned buildings was put up.

Blandford, the Rt Hon. William, 8th Earl of Waldegrave, the Rt Hon. Dudley, 2nd Earl of Harrowby, the Hon. Frederick Calthorpe Gough (later Lord Calthorpe), the Hon. Arthur Kinnaird, M.P., and Mr Robert Lee Cooper Bevan, banker.

Rate transferred this property “for the consideration of ten shillings” to the Trustees by deed of conveyance signed in London on 20 June 1851 and registered in Malta on 10 September 1851 in the acts of Not. Charles Curry. (NAV, 19/749, f.309ff.)

On 12 May 1853 Hamilton Dickson Robert Henning, RN surgeon, Treasurer of the MPC, bought the house and garden at Mrabat, St Julian’s, (later known as the Mission House) from Giovanni Silvio Bonavita, for £500. He purchased this property as a trustee of the above-mentioned persons. With £1020.4s.4d. belonging to the trustees he also bought in 1850-3 eight parcels of landed property in Strada Kirxa. All this property he transferred to the trustees by a deed of conveyance signed in London on 31 December 1855 and registered in the acts of Not. Charles Curry on 27 May 1856. (NAV, 23/749) From 1862-5 there were several exchanges of property between the Government and the MPC for the construction of a street roughly parallel to Strada Collegio; this did not materialise. These exchanges were formally ratified on 4 December 1867. (NAV, Not. Dr Luigi Vella, 104A, f.1039 ff.)

<sup>32</sup> See “Report on the New Buildings Proposed to be Erected for the Malta Protestant College” in *JD*, Part II, pp.iii-vi; plan on p.vii.

## FUNDS

The necessary funds to run the MPC were to be raised by donations and the fees of paying pupils. These would serve to provide and maintain buildings and accommodation together with furniture and fittings, pay salaries, and to form a fund to establish lectureships in certain subjects. It was intended to expand the school to take 150 or more students and pupils.<sup>33</sup>

By 1846 £5,000 were available, but £15,000 were required.<sup>34</sup> About £1,000 were required annually to maintain twenty-five “free” (i.e. non-paying) Oriental students. The annual income available was insufficient and sometimes debts were incurred.<sup>35</sup>

## CORRESPONDING OR RECRUITING AGENTS<sup>36</sup>

The MPC recruited agents in various Eastern countries to disseminate a knowledge of the objectives and advantages of the Institution by circulating its Prospectus in different languages and by having it occasionally noticed in some of the local periodicals; they were also commissioned to choose prospective scholarship pupils. These agents examined the candidates personally, assessing them through a questionnaire set by the MPC; if the candidate lived too far away, the agent appointed a qualified person to gather the required information.

The information required included name, place of residence, religion, occupation (including that of his parents), previous education, knowledge of living and ancient

<sup>33</sup> *MT* 22.iv.1845, p.4.

In order to avoid publicity, which would have aroused the hostility of the Catholic Church in Malta at the very beginning, and because of the peculiar Maltese law which allowed “the seller of houses or lands to redeem them at any time within a year after the sale”, the necessary funds for the preliminary expenses were obtained in donations of £100, £50 and £25 by the Committee or in answer to confidential applications signed by Lord Ashley. (*MT* 14.iv.1846, p.1)

<sup>34</sup> *MT* 12.v.1846, p.4.

Meetings were occasionally held in London to help raise funds for the MPC. Such meetings were held in 1856 and 1857. (See FN 95)

In April 1860 a public meeting, chaired by the Lord Mayor, was held at the Mansion-House in London in aid of a special fund of £10,000 for the College. The fund was intended to liquidate a debt of £2880 and to enlarge the buildings to admit a larger number of Oriental missionary students (*MT* 17.v.1860,p.2)

<sup>35</sup> *JD*, Part I, xiv.

<sup>36</sup> *JD*, Part II, Appendix VII, pp.868-71.

Among such corresponding agents were the Rev. Lieder, agent of the Church Missionary Society in Cairo, (*JD*, p.10) the Rev. E. Winder, British Chaplain at Alexandria, (*JD*, p.91) and the Rev. F.A. Hildner, who managed the scriptural schools maintained in Syra, Greece, by the Church Missionary Society. (*JD*, p.754)

languages, whether the candidate possessed superior intelligence and good character, why he wanted to be enrolled and his attitude to the Gospel, together with references.

The completed questionnaire, together with a certificate signed by the candidate or, if a minor, by his father or guardian, was transmitted to the head of the MPC for the Executive Council's approval. The agent also supervised the requisite arrangements for the pupil's voyage to Malta.

The agent was also expected to procure contributions to the funds for the gratuitous education of native (i.e. Oriental) pupils, to impress upon the minds of the candidates the liberality of the Christian donors in Great Britain in the hope that they would promote the welfare and spiritual interests of their countrymen, to supply parents with information about the MPC and to endeavour to procure paying pupils, both Europeans and natives.

## ADMINISTRATION

The London Committee of Management (made up of members from the Provisional Committee) made policy and chose the staff. But an Academical Council, consisting of the Principal, the Vice-Principal (both Church of England clergymen) and the Headmaster, superintended the management of the property and the affairs of the establishment and regulated the courses of study.<sup>37</sup>

Later on, the London Committee found it more expedient and profitable to interfere less in the daily running of the MPC and to give the Academical Council a freer hand in carrying out their policies.<sup>38</sup>

## COURSES OF STUDY<sup>39</sup>

The MPC comprised a school for boys and a college for adults, which consisted of two departments: one offering courses in general literature and science to train merchants, interpreters and future members of the professions, and a theological department to train missionaries, Scripture-readers and schoolmasters.

Although there were some differences in the various courses of study, there were also inclusive general rules. The chief aim of study being "*accuracy in elementary*

<sup>37</sup> *MT* 22.iv.1845, p.4.

<sup>38</sup> Tallack, *op.cit.*, p.235.

<sup>39</sup> *JD*, p.867 (Nos. 12, 13), p.870 N.B., Appendix VIII on pp.871-2 (General Rules). Detailed syllabuses on pp.873-5.



*principles*, rather than the attainment of a large amount of superficial knowledge”, care was taken not to require the pupils to engage in too many subjects at a time. Although the courses were programmed over four years, it was expected that its subjects could be extended over six years or more, depending on the age and previous acquirements of the pupils.

Foreign languages, including the Greek, were taught by native speakers “having a pure accent”.

Oriental pupils who could not speak English spent their first year mainly studying that language. While the grammatical study of Oriental languages was taken up in the last two years of the course, Eastern students and pupils were expected to have, once or twice a week, “reading in their native languages, with their respective teachers, in order to obviate the risk of their forgetting their own language.” The course of study included religious and moral instruction according to Anglican principles, English, Latin, ancient and modern Greek, French, Italian, German, Arabic, Turkish,<sup>40</sup> Arithmetic and Mathematics, History, Geography, Writing, Book-Keeping, Moral, Physical and Natural Sciences<sup>41</sup> and the “art of teaching”. All pupils were taught singing; private lessons in drawing and music were also available.

No pupil under eight could be admitted into the school or permitted to remain after seventeen; only those who were fifteen years or older could enter the college. Natives of Eastern countries “by birth and parentage” and “of superior intelligence and good morals” could be admitted as non-paying pupils, receiving free board and education.

<sup>40</sup> “A Resident in Turkey”, writing from Constantinople, suggested that Turkish (which had not been mentioned in the 1845 Prospectus) should be added to the study of modern Greek and Arabic because it was “the medium of diplomatic and official intercourse throughout the Sultan’s dominions and a knowledge of it is equally essential to the merchants and to those employed in public business.” (*MT* 20.v.1845, p.3) Another correspondent, this time in Malta, called this “a very judicious proposition” and added that Turkish was “an indispensable qualification for our Consular and diplomatic appointments in the Levant, and the want of it cannot but make our officials there less efficient, and be occasionally productive of serious mischief”. He suggested that arrangements be made with the Foreign Office and the Ambassador in Constantinople to ensure that the appointments of dragomen, attachés and consuls would be given to the MPC students who had distinguished themselves. He added that only students “thoroughly English both the father and the mother - no Hybrids - but English, with english feelings, courage and truth, and even english prejudices” were suitable. (*MT* 3.vi.1845, p.3)

<sup>41</sup> Moral and physical sciences included political economy, jurisprudence, “the art of teaching” and natural sciences. (*JD*, p.874)

In presenting a microscope to the MPC, Governor Sir W. Reid, himself a distinguished geographer, expressed his wish that natural sciences should be studied “by way of amusement and recreation”, since the study of languages did not permit much study of the subjects. (*MT* 6.iv.1852, p.2)

In order to encourage people to help the MPC, patrons who paid £100 or more were granted the privilege of nominating pupils to the Institution.

Fees ranged between £20 and £60 per annum depending on age, the course of studies undertaken and other circumstances. Non-resident students paid £10 to attend classes.

A report on each pupil, separately assessing his studies and general conduct, was transmitted to the parents every half-year.<sup>42</sup>

The summer vacation was taken between 15 July and 1 October; there were also recesses from 24 December to 2 January and from Good Friday to Easter.<sup>43</sup>

#### EXAMINATIONS AND PRIZE-GIVINGS<sup>44</sup>

Examinations were held in all classes every week, on a day set apart for the purpose, and a general oral examination was held at the end of the scholastic year, followed by the distribution of prizes.<sup>45</sup>

Up to 1858 annual examinations were held during two days in April, May, July, or most often in June. Relatives and friends of students and pupils as well as well-wishers and supporters of the MPC were invited to attend. Each master examined his class orally, and sometimes external examiners were invited from among clergymen, Services personnel and other prominent people. The examinations were followed immediately by the Prize-giving: besides addresses by one or more of the MPC officials, it often happened that distinguished guests addressed the assembly during the prize-giving ceremony or later when refreshments were served. It was also customary on such occasions for the students and pupils to give recitations in various languages, provide musical entertainment (vocal and instrumental), exhibit specimens of writing and drawing, and show off the gardens they cultivated. Book prizes were given to pupils for each subject in each class, and on a few occasions for essays on a given subject.

In 1859 the Principal, the Rev. Miles, abolished oral examinations before an invited audience and introduced a new system:<sup>46</sup> three written examinations, held at

<sup>42</sup> *MT* 22.iv.1845, p.4. It is not clear if this was kept up.

<sup>43</sup> *JD*, p.868.

<sup>44</sup> Based on Prize-giving Reports in *MT*.

<sup>45</sup> *JD*, p.872. The Prize-givings were presided over in later years by distinguished personalities: the Bishop of Gibraltar (1852, 1857, 1861), Admiral Lord Lyons (1858), Lt Gen. Sir John Pennefather, K.C.B. (1859), Rear-Admiral Codrington, C.B. (1860, 1862), Admiral Austin, C.B. (1863).

<sup>46</sup> *MT* 7.vi.1859, p.2.

Christmas, Easter, and immediately before the summer vacation early in July. A printed paper with eight to twelve questions for each subject was prepared. A definite number of marks was assigned to the work performed and, according to the number of marks obtained, the student or pupil took his place in a classified list. This list was printed, posted in a conspicuous place, and forwarded to the boys' parents and to the London Committee. By 1862 the Easter examination was dropped and the examination extended over eight days. The Prize-giving ceremony was held on a separate day. Prizes were donated by the Principal and Committee members to pupils and students with the highest aggregate of marks in all subjects examined.

### GOOD CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

As in every educational establishment the heads watched over the conduct of the pupils. To determine the "moral standing" of the pupils a conduct-book was kept with a daily numerical register. Marks for every particular offence were given by all masters and monitors who superintended the boys. The result was therefore "not the judgment of an individual, but the condensed eye and ear-witness" of all those who were with the pupils, closely observing them all the time.<sup>47</sup>

Up to 1852 it was customary to give prizes for good conduct during Prize-givings, but thereafter those whose behaviour was exceptional were singled out for praise during the annual distribution of prizes.

The ultimate punishment was sometimes dealt for breaches of discipline: by 1853 three free Oriental pupils had been dismissed.<sup>48</sup> Some others were "retired" because they were "totally incapable of directing their minds to mental occupation."<sup>49</sup>

One of the MPC's rules stipulated 'lights out' for both masters and pupils by not later than ten o'clock, for "the habit of keeping late hours" was "very detrimental to health", making everyone unable to cope with his duties, and increased expenses "by the undue consumption of lights."<sup>50</sup>

### TEACHING

The intellectual training of the boys was mainly based on the principles of Pestalozzi and "tended to strengthen the understanding by exercising and developing the

<sup>47</sup> *MT* 26.v.1857, p.1.

<sup>48</sup> *JD*, Part I, p.xxxi.

<sup>49</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1.

<sup>50</sup> *JD*, p.872.

perceptive and reasoning faculties” of the mind; education was “of a solid practical nature, and directed especially to those branches of knowledge most wanted in the present social condition of the people of the East.”<sup>51</sup>

Besides a qualified staff of masters there were also pupil-teachers: this was an innovation introduced by the Rev. Bryan after his tour of the East. The older and more advanced students helped in the instruction of the juniors. These pupil-teachers were young men “of decided piety” who had already given “proof of good natural talents for teaching”, and as non-paying students following a course of education fitting them ultimately for missionary work, would devote some time to superintending other classes. They would also exert a beneficial influence over students, especially the Orientals. The actual cost of maintaining these pupil-teachers would be considerably less than paying a salary to masters, thus saving a goodly sum of money. Such young men would be easy to select and they would be depended upon to work harmoniously with the heads of the MPC “so that none but kind Christian feelings shall pervade the whole community.”<sup>52</sup>

The number of pupils and students after the first few years ranged from 33 to 79, of whom from ten to twenty-five would be non-paying Oriental pupils or students.

The missionary students resided in the Mission House about a furlong distant from the College itself. They attended lectures and dined in the main building but spent most of their time at the Mission House in private study, especially of modern languages. Each had a room to himself or shared one with a companion. Most of these Orientals seemed to lack religious zeal, and only about one in ten engaged later in missionary or ministerial service, preferring immediate employment as interpreters, or in commerce and other “avocations.”<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *JD*, p.2. See also *JD*, p.620.

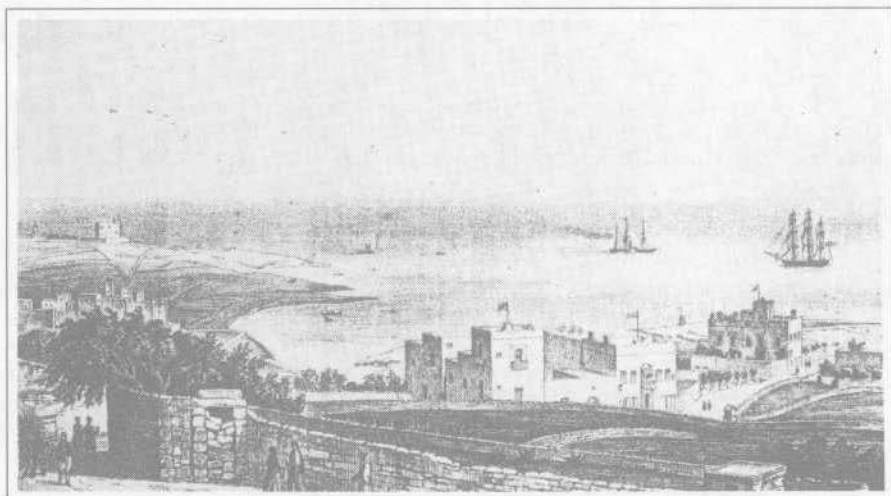
*JD* was very critical of Jesuit methods of teaching at their college in Beyrout, asserting that it consisted “chiefly in the mere mechanical exercise of the memory, instead of the pupils’ being taught to think and reason for themselves,” “for one of their great objects in striving so earnestly to obtain the direction of public education has been to banish from the schools this most dreaded exercise of the reasoning faculties, in order to train up the masses of the people as UNTHINKING SUBMISSIVE MACHINES.” (*JD*, p.234) It also attacked the schools run by the Lazarist Fathers in Alexandria as “deplorably defective”, (*JD*, p.90) and those run by the priests of the ancient Christian churches at Smyrna, Alexandria, etc., were “not calculated either to exercise and strengthen the reasoning faculties, or to cultivate the moral principles, so as to train up the pupils as rational and responsible beings.” (*JD*, p.564) It was also suggested that some of the Oriental students could learn at the MPC how to teach the blind to read “by the use of embossed letters”, for it was intended to print portions of the Psalms and Proverbs, and some elementary schoolbooks on grammar, geography, etc., translated into Arabic, for use in native schools. (*JD*, p.63)

<sup>52</sup> *JD*, p.8 FN.

<sup>53</sup> Tallack, *op.cit.*, p.234.

Most of these Oriental students were academically very backward when they first arrived at the MPC. Some were men in the prime of life, others were very young boys.<sup>54</sup>

The poor results obtained by such pupils induced Principal Miles to undertake a visit to the East to impress upon his helpers the need for requiring higher qualifications than heretofore and to select boys rather than adults, who were “totally unused to discipline, and naturally averse to scholastic employment.”<sup>55</sup>



Lithograph of St. Julian's Bay showing the Malta Protestant College (c. 1849).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.236. In the table of free Oriental pupils accepted at the MPC till 1853 there are listed four adults, one of them 40 years old, twelve in their twenties, fourteen in their teens and one boy of nine. (*JD*, part I, xxv-xxxii)

<sup>55</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1.

## PART II : GROWTH AND CLOSURE

The Collegiate School (as the MPC was originally called) opened on 3 February 1846,<sup>56</sup> with the Rev. Samuel Gobat as its first Vice-Principal. He was a Swiss Lutheran minister and had spent many years as a missionary in Abyssinia and was known for “his unaffected character, genuine piety, and theological attainments”.<sup>57</sup>

There were only seven pupils when Gobat opened the College with a prayer to God for its blessing. He immediately introduced the custom of “THE WHOLE COLLEGE LIVING TOGETHER AS ONE FAMILY.”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> MT 12.v.1846, p.4.

The MPC was opened without even asking for the requisite licence of the Malta Governor. Fr B. Esmonde, S.J., who had an uphill struggle to open the Jesuit College of St Paul in Mdina in 1844, wryly commented: “with them omnia licent, on the principle I suppose ‘tu fili, semper mecum es, via mea tua sunt.’” (*Extracts from Journal of Revd B. Esmonde in Malta on suspension and restoration of faculties to Padre Rillo and establishment of the “Convitto” of St Paul in Notabile*, f.30, at the Archives of the English Province of the Society of Jesus)

<sup>57</sup> MT 9.xi.1852, p.2.

Samuel Gobat (1799-1879) born at Cremines, Bern Canton, Switzerland, 26 Jan. 1799, died at Jerusalem, Palestine, 11 May 1879. He served in the Mission House in Basel 1823-6, then went to Paris and London, whence, having acquired some knowledge of Arabic and Ethiopic, he went out to Abyssinia, under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society. For the next 13 years he served as a missionary, with two intervals in Europe. The unsettled state of the country and his own ill-health prevented his making much headway. In the period 1839-42 he was in Malta supervising the translation and printing of the Bible in Arabic. In 1846 he was appointed Bishop of Jerusalem under an Agreement reached between the British and Prussian Governments in 1841 for the establishment of a joint bishopric for Anglicans and Lutherans in the Holy Land. He carried on a vigorous mission as Bishop for over 30 years, founding schools and hospitals throughout Palestine, his diocesan school and orphanage at Mt Zion being especially noteworthy. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., 1910, vol.XII, p.165) and *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1961 ed., vol. XII, p.740)

Gobat gave “invaluable advice” to the London Committee about the organisation of the MPC, being “eminently qualified by his great experience as a missionary in the East, to judge of the need of such an Institution; and so convinced was he of its importance, that he accepted the office of its first ruling head.” (*JD*, Part I, xv) Besides his considerable knowledge of European, Oriental and Classical literature united to “solid worth, sound judgement and sterling piety” (local Almanack quoted in *MT* 10.ii.1846, p.3) he was fluent in English, German, French, Italian, and Arabic and had a thorough knowledge of Abyssinian. (*MT* 9.xi.1852, p.2)

Since, according to the fundamental Laws of the MPC, the Principal and the Vice-Principal had to be presbyters of the Church of England, Gobat, who was an ordained minister of the Lutheran Church, received deacon’s orders from the Bishop of London on 10.viii.1845 and priest’s orders later in Malta from the Bishop of Gibraltar. (*MT* 2.ix.1845, pp.2-3)

<sup>58</sup> He adds: “It is really cheering to see the Principal, with his family and the masters, take their meals together in free conversation, and with as little noise as can be expected, and unite, morning and evening, in family prayer, when a simple exposition of a portion of Scripture is given alternately by several masters, which cannot fail to make a salutary and lasting impression on most of the pupils. I could scarcely have expected that, upon this system, so much quiet and order could have been kept in

Only six weeks after the College opened<sup>59</sup> Gobat was offered the Anglican Bishopric of St James in Jerusalem; this was the desire of the King of Prussia,<sup>60</sup> and both Lord Ashley, the head of the MPC, and Chevalier Bunsen, His Prussian Majesty's Ambassador in London, encouraged him to accept. Gobat only accepted when he was assured "that it was the opinion of the heads of the College, that he ought to regard it as a call of Providence, inviting to a new scene of labours in the East."<sup>61</sup>

The Rev. John Hickman, M.A., of St. John's College, Cambridge, the First Master (i.e. Headmaster), had arrived on 10 February 1846,<sup>62</sup> and the new Principal, the Rev. George Horatio Hadfield, late of the Charter House School, arrived in September of that year.<sup>63</sup>

Almost immediately there was a clash. The Headmaster admitted the first Roman Catholic boy to the College, exempting him from attending morning and evening prayers. When the London Committee directed the new Principal to investigate and report on the matter, Hickman acted insubordinately and was dismissed.<sup>64</sup>

In April 1847 a Mission House was opened at the MPC for the reception of Catholic priests who had "abjured the errors of the Church of Rome" and wished to enter into communion with the Church of England. But the Committee would receive only those who had quit for "conscience (sic!) sake, and are disposed to labour in any suitable field of usefulness which may present itself, in accordance with their profession and with the principles of the English Reformation." Candidates were to produce satisfactory testimonials of moral conduct and character, and would during a period of two years pursue a regular course of studies and prepare themselves by theological and language studies for an active life as missionaries or

the prayer-room, in the dining-room, and in the dormitories, with boys and youths coming from so many different countries, and frequently with bad and disorderly habits at their arrival." (*JD*, Part I, p.xvi)

<sup>59</sup> *MT* 9.xi.1852, p.2.

<sup>60</sup> *MT* 12.v.1846, p.3.

<sup>61</sup> *MT* 25.viii.1846, p.3.

On 11.xii.1846 Bishop Gobat came back to the MPC for a farewell visit; then, embarking with his family on H.M. steamvessel *Hecla* he left for Jerusalem. (*MT* 15.xii.1846, p.3)

<sup>62</sup> *MT* 17.ii.1846, p.3.

<sup>63</sup> *MT* 8.ix.1846, p.3.

<sup>64</sup> *The Malta Observer* 11.viii.1862, p.2.

This, according to H.Innes, former Auditor and Treasurer of the MPC, showed that there could be no tampering with the Church of England principles which inspired the school.

otherwise after leaving. The College was also responsible for maintaining them during their residence. After finishing the course of studies, they would be furnished with testimonials from the Bishop of Gibraltar and the Principal to help them find suitable employment according to their qualifications.<sup>65</sup>

The first community, led by Dr Giacinto Achilli, leader of the “Italian Church” in Malta, entered on 15 April but left shortly afterwards following a disagreement with Hadfield.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> *MT* 4.v.1847, p.3, and *L'Indicatore* 1.v.1847, pp.7-8.

An incident in 1848 shows the readiness of the MPC authorities to help apostate priests. On 5 October 1848 Hadfield pleaded with the Malta Government for a Sicilian ex-Capuchin friar by the name of Père Bonaventure de'alli, who had a passport issued by the French ambassador at Constantinople and vised in Malta on 20 September 1848, but who now wished to travel to Tripoli with an English passport under the “assumed or, as he says, resumed” name of Sebastiano Fiumara. The Sicilian Consul had refused to grant him a passport, and the Chief Secretary to the Malta Government had done likewise.

In his letter of 5 October, Hadfield referred to a conversation with the Chief Secretary and argued that his decision should be reversed in order to “relieve from great embarrassment” the London Committee of the MPC, “whose object was more properly Education” but who had “for the last two years been urged to open a Refuge in Malta for seceding Priests, and almost any amount of money is obtainable for the purpose.” Because of the Chief Secretary’s refusal, the Sicilian, who had sought refuge at the MPC six months before, had “become a *detenu* in Malta,” “where refugees of all other kinds find an asylum, with liberty to come and go, as they please” and which “ought not to be, and cannot be, a sort of prison to a person” in Fiumara’s position. His French passport, which did not tally with the truth, “would be no safe-conduct at all, but rather, under the name of a pass, in effect a just cause of suspicion, and an available excuse to stop him.” Hadfield asked the Malta Government “in its wonted liberality” to concede Fiumara a British passport which would “place beyond doubt his safe reception at Tripoli.”

The Governor, the Rt Hon. R. More O’Ferrall, after inquiring into the practice of the Passport Office, saw no reason for reversing the decision, and added that such a concession “would form a most inconvenient precedent of which impostors of all kinds might avail themselves in defiance of the Consul of their own nation.” (Hadfield’s letter in *Bundle of Letters 1848*; Chief Secretary’s reply of 7.x.1848 in the same bundle or in *Letter Book of Chief Secretary to Government to Individuals 23.i.1848 - 17.xi.1851*, at N(ational) A(rchives) M(alta)).

<sup>66</sup> Giacinto Achilli, born in Viterbo in 1803, joined the Dominican Order but was dismissed for alleged immoralities. He fled arrest to Corfu and was there protected by L. Lowndes, the Presbyterian secretary of the Biblical Society. Achilli founded there the “Italian Church”. In 1844 he came to Malta as a “missionary”, organised the “Italian Church” in Malta and directed the periodical *L'Indicatore*. He projected the foundation of a college for “converted” Catholic clerics but did not find the necessary funds. He was Theological Professor at the MPC for some time. Achilli returned to Rome after the proclamation of the Republic. Arrested after its fall, he managed to go to London, where Cardinal Wiseman unmasked his unsavoury past. The restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England produced a violent anti-Catholic reaction, fomented also by Achilli’s denunciations of the Church of Rome. John Henry Newman exposed Achilli’s “moral turpitude” and consequently libel proceedings were instituted against Newman, who accused Achilli of many defamatory facts like those named in his lectures, specifying the time, date and circumstances, during the trial 21-24 June 1852. The jury,



In October 1848 the Theological Department of the MPC was opened as well to students from all social classes who proposed to enter into holy orders. The course of instruction comprised lectures on the Greek Testament, “the evidences of Christianity”, the Articles of the Church of England and the duties of the pastoral office, together with the study of Arabic and other living languages. The aim was to afford young men “of decided piety and sound Protestant principles” the opportunity of preparing themselves for missionary labour not only in the “interesting countries surrounding the shores of the Mediterranean but also in the British colonies”. Also ex-R.C. priests and those from the Eastern Churches would be able to pursue their studies under the “teaching of clergymen of the Church of England.”<sup>67</sup>

In 1848 Mr George S. Willis was appointed Headmaster. He appeared to have brought to his job “a large stock of talent, and an indefatigable industry. He is accustomed to tuition and wherever he has been engaged has always succeeded in

influenced probably by the judge’s summing-up which was biased against the defendant, gave a verdict against Newman, who was fined £100. The expenses of some £14,000 were defrayed by public subscription to which many foreign Catholics contributed. (Cf *DNB*, XL (1894), article on Newman, pp.345-6, and *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Rome I (1960) p.144). Completely discredited by the trial, Achilli left for America and was not heard of any more.

A letter of the Bishop of Gibraltar, dated 14.v.1847, (document SE/NC/25(3) at Shaftesbury Estates, Dorset) throws some light on this “disagreement”. Achilli and his two fellow priests left the MPC, apparently because they disagreed with the conditions made by Hadfield, among them that they had been placed *in statu pupillari*, something which the Bishop considered “incompatible” with Achilli’s “character and position”: “a man of talent a professor of Theology of many years standing in the Colleges of Italy and moreover a Roman of high spirit and warm temper.” The Bishop gave Achilli a letter to Lord Ashley to enable him to explain to the London Committee “both his views and the cause of his leaving the College.” The Bishop of Gibraltar desired to help Achilli’s project “of establishing Congregations of Reformed Italians at Malta in Switzerland etc. so as to organize a Regular Reformed Italian Church.” For Achilli and his followers the “Nationality” was “a point of great importance, otherwise they would have no objection to fight under the banner of the English Church”. Achilli was “a most valuable person” and the Bishop would be “grieved if we should lose him, or if he should weaken his own cause by forming connexions with the Dissenters.” The departure of Achilli from the MPC was “a serious check” to plans for admitting apostate priests at St Julian’s, especially at a time when the authorities in Rome were becoming apprehensive of the “organization and extension” of the Church of England in Malta, for the “existence and progress of a pure Church among them” was to them “a more serious matter” than “individual enterprise”. The Bishop was hoping that the Theological Department would be of “very considerable importance to the cause of Reformation.” He suggested that the clergyman in charge of this branch of the College should be not only a theologian but also acquainted with the Italian language and accustomed to deal with foreigners, and that the apostate priests should be received as “guests”.

<sup>67</sup> *MT* 29.viii.1848, p.3.

In July 1847 Hadfield had discussed in England the immediate development of the Theological Department and the raising of the efficiency of the school. (*MT* 20.vii.1847, p.2)

making himself esteemed, loved, and respected.”<sup>68</sup> During his tenure of office, “his former experience and accurate knowledge of character” “enabled him, in spite of constant difficulties, to introduce a marked and substantial improvement in every branch of the school.”<sup>69</sup>

Late that year the Rev. Mr Dwight, a member of the American Independent Church, who had been active in missionary work for 20 years, visited the MPC and was “quite charmed” with all he saw. He found the College “under good discipline, and the religious influence exerted on the boys is sound and evangelical”; he considered the Institution “a very important one for Malta, and for all the Mediterranean.”<sup>70</sup>

Early in 1849 the Rev. Hadfield resigned.<sup>71</sup>

At this time the Rev. Reginald Guy Bryan, M.A., the Vice-Principal,<sup>72</sup> and Dr A. Crawford, M.D., a member of the London Committee, undertook a tour of the Near East to inquire into the religious, moral and intellectual condition of the inhabitants of the East and to disseminate as widely as possible the awareness that the MPC had been established for the free education of native youths who were to be employed eventually as lay or ordained Protestant missionaries in their respective countries.<sup>73</sup>

Owing to Bryan’s absence and Hadfield’s resignation, Willis and H. Seddall, the Acting Asst Headmaster, were saddled with complete responsibility for the English and Classical Departments.<sup>74</sup>

Later that year there were “unfavourable reports” that the College would close down, but the increase in the number of students apparently put an end to these fears.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>68</sup> *MT* 3.vii.1849, p.3.

“His firmness of character and kindness of disposition” gained him the respect and affection” of the students. (*MT* 13.vii.1852, p.2)

<sup>69</sup> *MT* 13.vii.1852, p.2.

<sup>70</sup> Letter dated November 1848 to the Rev. Mr Sewell, chaplain to the British Embassy at Constantinople, in *MT* 17.iv.1849, p.3.

<sup>71</sup> *MT* 27.iii.1849, p.2. 28 clergymen and laymen signed a letter addressed to him expressing their regret “on the withdrawal of one whose character, spirit and labour have commended him so much to our deep respect and sincere affection.” (*Ibid.*)

<sup>72</sup> *MT* 21.viii.1849, p.4.

<sup>73</sup> They published their findings in the two-volume *JD, op.cit.* Its publication was expected to help the Committee promote the propagation of the Gospel Message and restore Christian civilisation to these nations. It was also aimed at convincing the British public to assist in this endeavour and at helping Oriental students studying at the MPC gain a better knowledge of their own countries. (*JD*, Part I, iv)

<sup>74</sup> *MT* 3.vii.1849, pp.2-3.

<sup>75</sup> *MT* 20.x.1849, p.3 (citing *Galignani’s Messenger* that the MPC was on the point of being abandoned).

In April 1851 Willis was ordained at St Paul's Collegiate Church in Valletta by the Bishop of Gibraltar, who spoke of his "exemplary conduct."<sup>76</sup>

The public examinations of 1851 were postponed to the following Christmas because Bryan's wife was seriously ill. But private examinations were held by several masters in the presence of a few parents and friends of the pupils. In the examinations, held on 10 and 11 July, the pupils acquitted themselves, in the opinion of eye-witnesses, "most creditably and gave universal satisfaction."<sup>77</sup>

That same year Dr Achilli was dismissed after rejecting Hadfield's authority and because of alleged immoralities by inmates of the Mission House.<sup>78</sup>

In October 1851 Bryan returned to Malta; his wife, completely cured, returned later.<sup>79</sup>

On 13 November Mr C. Goolden presented the College with a very handsome flag, a white ensign with the initial letters MPC worked in the centre. A half holiday was given. The pupils assembled on the house top, Bryan made a speech for the occasion and the flag was hoisted; all joined in singing the National Anthem and gave "hearty and unrestrained cheers." Two smaller flags for the College boats were made. On the same day a new playground was opened. On the following day the new flag floated above the College to commemorate the arrival of the new Governor, Sir W. Reid.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> *MT* 29.iv.1851, p.3.

<sup>77</sup> *MT* 15.vii.1851, p.3.

<sup>78</sup> The *MT* attacked Achilli. It considered him "unfitted for his work" with respect to "humble mindedness, self-denial, contriteness of heart and spirit." His spirit was that of a "popish Ecclesiastic in the garb of a Protestant professor and missionary." (*MT* 5.viii.1851, p.2)

At the libel trial against Newman in June 1852 Hadfield gave witness that Achilli had defended the reputation of two of his friends, apostate ex-RC priests living at the Mission House and accused of committing adultery in that house and of having had frequent communication with prostitutes. Shaftesbury described Achilli's connection, now ended, with the MPC, adding that, instead of assisting in the enquiry about his accused friends, Achilli had sent out of the country one of the parties most necessary for the elucidation of the circumstances. He added that the Committee had closed down that branch of the College.

Dr Bonavia, a master at the College, referring to conversations with Achilli on the subject, said Achilli had lost his temper and told him: "You are too scrupulous because you are married; if you were a bachelor, you would, perhaps, do worse than they." (*MT* 29.vi.1852, p.3)

In his summing up, Lord Campbell made only short passing observations concerning the "transactions in Malta, the sending away of Zaccariz, the action of the London Committee thereon." (*MT* 6.vii.1852, p.1)

<sup>79</sup> *MT* 21.x.1851, p.2.

<sup>80</sup> *MT* 18.xi.1851, p.2.

In 1852 the students, on their own initiative, without help or guidance of the masters, set up a Literary and Scientific Institute, a filial institute of the oonymous Society in Valletta. Lectures were given by the students themselves each week, usually on Wednesdays, on a variety of subjects: scientific (e.g. the ant, geology, astronomy), geographical (e.g. Switzerland, Lapland), historical (e.g. the Knights of Malta, the Conquest of Granada, the Rise and Progress of Islam, the Voyage of Columbus), lives of famous men (e.g. Julius Caesar, Wellington, Columbus, Nelson, Tasso, Cowper, Sir Walter Scott), and miscellaneous subjects (e.g. Navigation, Ruins of Niniveh, History of Philosophy).<sup>81</sup>

On Prize Day 1852 Willis explained his belief in the principle of rewards and punishments as being both Scriptural and divine, enlarging on the incalculable advantages and benefits of Bible instruction in education.<sup>82</sup>

At about this time, Willis resigned. For some time past he had “manifested dissatisfaction with his situation and a willingness to resign”. He had then intimated to the London Committee that he would only withdraw his resignation if the Committee adopted the “*proposed change* in the mode of instruction” which the Committee had already “definitively rejected”. The Committee considered it most advisable for both parties to separate amicably and accepted his resignation.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *MT* 22.ii.1853, p.2.

<sup>82</sup> Willis first explained the principle involved in the giving of prizes. While admitting that “the stimulus of competition, the desire of reputation, and the love of praise are very questionable motives for exertion”, he affirmed that rewards and punishments had a scriptural and divine principle. As for praise, “in which some think, I am on these occasions, rather too liberal”, he told those who became “intoxicated” by what was intended as “a gentle stimulant” that “praise affords very little satisfaction to a truly great mind” and he was convinced that a boy so vain that he was injured by a judicious bestowal of praise would sustain *more* injury from his own self-congratulation, if praise were withheld. And Christ himself bestowed praise. Prize winners, he added, should consider words of praise as “creditable tokens” of the profit made by their studies and encouraged the others to apply themselves more diligently, “to study with all your powers to honor God and religion.” And they should begin when young and at school, for what they were at school would largely determine what they would be in later life. To non-prize winners he also said they should rejoice in their companions’ success and imitate them, pointing out that nearly all intellectual superiors were known “for their excellent principles, habits and dispositions.” Previous to his coming to Malta he had been in some eight schools, most of them very large and none of them inferior to the MPC in respectability, but in none of them did the boys compare with the MPC students for “*character and moral excellence*.” He considered that the cause of “this truly happy difference” was the prominence given to the Bible and Bible instruction, which was “a sealed book” in the other schools. Willis encouraged the boys to study and love the Bible. (*MT* 6.iv.1852, pp.1-2)

<sup>83</sup> *MT* 13.vii.1852, p.3.

The *MT* was very critical of the Committee’s decision, considering it to be lacking in “their usual wisdom and sagacity” and trusted Shaftesbury would institute a “strict enquiry into the reasons of this untoward and extraordinary step very prejudicial to the best interests of the Institution.” (*MT* 27.iv.1852, p.3)

In July 1852 the Rev. Henry Carr, M.A., the new Headmaster, arrived.<sup>84</sup> He was followed in September by the new Principal, Archdeacon Henry Irwin, B.D., who was rowed with his family to the MPC in the College barge.<sup>85</sup>

On 30 October 1852 Bishop Gobat, first Vice-Principal of the MPC, returned to spend some time in Malta. He was welcomed by the heads of the MPC, who came in the College boat: the fourteen-strong boy crew rowed the boat, carrying the Bishop and his family, to St Julian's.<sup>86</sup> On Friday, 3 November, in the central court of the College, Bishop Gobat addressed a large audience for almost 1½ hours, telling them about his labours in Jerusalem.<sup>87</sup> He was very pleased with the progress made in the six years since the opening of the MPC.<sup>88</sup>

On Prize Day held on 21 May 1853 Irwin mentioned the "paramount importance" of Scripture in the studies at the MPC, and Carr alluded with "genuine gratification" to the "unanimity and goodwill" among the candidates, "a disposition of friendship and mutual assistance."<sup>89</sup>

In a "numerously and respectably signed communication" the parents asked Shaftesbury and the Committee to reconsider their acceptance of Willis's resignation, for they considered his "disconnection" from the school "which he has been instrumental in organising and conducting with such distinguished ability and success, as deeply to be regretted, if not likely to produce a prejudicial effect on the interests of the Institution in Malta, and throughout the Mediterranean," (*MT* 11.v.1852, p.2)

In their reply, the London Committee reiterated their acceptance of Willis's resignation and added that they felt their position enabled them "to take a more enlarged view of the general interests of the College and school than could be realized without that peculiar advantage". (*MT* 13.vii.1852, p.3) They thought it advisable to continue with those arrangements and expressed the hope that the memorialists themselves would be favourable once they had experienced the beneficial effects of their decision. (*Ibid.*)

Willis left for Constantinople after a farewell visit to the MPC on 6 July; he was given a piece of plate as token of the boys' gratitude and an address signed by 39 students. (*Ibid.*)

<sup>84</sup> *MT* 20.vii.1852, p.3.

<sup>85</sup> *MT* 7.ix.1852, p.2. Irwin had been Secretary of the London Committee. (*MT* 23.ix.1851, p.2 and 24.v.1853, p.3)

<sup>86</sup> *MT* 2.xi.1852, p.2.

<sup>87</sup> *MT* 9.xi.1852, p.2.

<sup>88</sup> During his stay Gobat was agreeably surprised to perceive that the actual progress and blessing which had been bestowed upon the College surpassed by far his expectations. (*JD* Part I, xv) No wonder! At that time, there were at the College over 80 youths "of various nations, countries, and complexions; Abyssinians and Egyptians, Syrians and Persians ... Moslems and Jews, Copts and Greeks, Nestorians and Papists, &c." Nor had he ever seen "a school in which the boys were better behaved" and he had the impression that "upon the whole, what is taught is TAUGHT THOROUGHLY, and that from principle, as well as from their natural tendency, most of the present masters will avoid being superficial." (Gobat's letter of 29.xii.1852 in *JD*, Part I, xv-xvii)

That same year Gobat sent an Abyssinian youth to the MPC (*JD*, p.350) and with a sum of money collected by the College boys he opened a Bible school in Gilead beyond the Jordan. (*MT* 9.xi.1852, p.2)

<sup>89</sup> *MT* 24.v.1853, p.3.

In October of that year Irwin resigned to return to Ireland. On Friday 14 the pupils presented him with a copy of Pool's *Annotations on the Bible* and his wife with a handsome filigree plate of Maltese manufacture. Irwin left Malta on 25 October on the *Teneriffe*.<sup>90</sup>

An interesting occurrence of the year 1854 was the baptism on 9 July in the Scotch Free Church in Valletta of two young Turks, brothers, one aged 19 and the other 16, who had been enrolled as non-paying students at the MPC.<sup>91</sup>

On 1 January 1855 the Rev. Henry Carr was appointed Vice-Principal instead of the Rev. Bryan, who left soon after. The new Headmaster, the Rev. Henry Sadler, B.A., arrived later.<sup>92</sup> The departure of three teachers of English in September 1854 and the retirement of Bryan had caused some difficulties which were overcome by the exertions of the new Vice-Principal with the temporary assistance of Mr Howard, Professor of English Language and Literature at the Royal University of Malta.

During a speech held on Prize Day on 14 June 1855 Carr mentioned that writers on educational reform in England publicly referred to the MPC as an "actually existing proof of the practicability of combining religious and secular Instruction with a due regard to their relative importance in the formation of character."<sup>93</sup> Henry Innes, former Auditor of the MPC, referred to the opposition to the College from some English residents in Malta who were "among the worst enemies of the College, using every exertion to destroy it."<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> *MT* 1.xi.1853, p.2.

The external examiners at the Midsummer Exams in May 1853 signed a certificate expressing their "unqualified satisfaction at the general proficiency and progress of the students and pupils"; several pupils had "distinguished themselves in a manner which would have reflected credit on any Theological Seminary or academical Institution in England." (*MT* 13.ix.1853, p.2)

<sup>91</sup> *MT* 11.vii.1854, p.2. Their parents had been baptized in the same church some 18 months before, but it was deemed expedient to let the children wait till they could make an intelligent and credible profession of Christianity themselves. The father, too, attended several branches of the course of studies at the MPC. The youths were anxious to return as missionaries to their countrymen. This Turkish family, which included the merchant's wife, his four children and his sister-in-law, was considered the "first Turkish family in Europe" which "had openly renounced Mahometanism and received Christian baptism." Hailing from Salonica, they had travelled to Constantinople and then, to escape a dangerous predicament, come to Malta. (*Ibid.* and *JD*, p.648)

<sup>92</sup> For Carr's appointment see *MT* 4.ix.1855, p.3 and 2.i.1855, p.2. Sadler, first listed as Headmaster in the MPC advert in *MT* 21.viii.1854, p.4, arrived in 1855. (*MT* 19.vi.1855, p.2)

<sup>93</sup> *MT* 19.vi.1855, p.2.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* He referred to an abusive article in the *Malta Mail* of the previous year. Besides the "open enemies (Papists, Jesuits and ungodly men)" the MPC had other English, and worse opponents, viz., a) employees of the Civil Government who, though professedly Protestant, had "a horror of being thought

In 1856 and 1857 meetings were held in London to raise support for the MPC.<sup>95</sup>

In February 1858 the Rev. Ewart, the new Principal, arrived in Malta. It was hoped that his advent would “mark a new order of things”.<sup>96</sup> Soon after, the newly appointed Headmaster, John Patterson, B.A., came to the MPC. He had directed a large public school in Greenock for 15 years and was said to be a first-rate mathematics scholar with high Classical attainments.<sup>97</sup>

In May 1858 Lady Franklin, wife of the celebrated Arctic explorer, Sir John Franklin, visiting these shores, where Sir John had commanded a ship of war attached to this station, paid a visit to the College, in whose welfare she expressed deep interest; she gave a handsome donation and asked to be enrolled among its permanent subscribers.<sup>98</sup>

The Rev. Charles Popham Miles, M.A., became the new Principal early in 1859<sup>99</sup> and immediately introduced the new system of examinations mentioned before.

Early in 1861 Miles undertook a journey to the East, inspected the educational establishments in Constantinople, Bebek and Smyrna, and personally communicated

zealous in their sect”; b) those “occupying some little position in society” who would usually be the patrons and supporters of local associations but were in this case vexed at having no influence or power in managing the MPC or over its affairs; c) those sending “cold and frequently erroneous” reports to England, including “sectarian animosities”, e.g. that the MPC was “a medium of Tractarian teaching”. (*Vindication: The Malta Protestant College. Three Brief Letters to the Rev. Dr. Duff 1856*. Malta, 1856, pp.5-8. This is document SE/P/28 at Shaftesbury Estates, Dorset. There are three letters by Henry Innes and one by Dr Duff.)

<sup>95</sup> On 30 April 1856 a public meeting was held at Willis’s rooms in St James with Shaftesbury presiding. Layard, the archaeologist and M.P., spoke of the need to support the MPC, which was important both politically and religiously, for it had a part to play in gently inculcating the views of Europeans and turning Mohammedans into Christians. The MPC had two things to do: to educate European subjects residing in the East and to educate the natives of Turkey. Since many consuls married Levantine women, who were influenced by confessors and relatives in the education of their children, Layard thought it important that children of consuls and other British residents should be placed in establishments where they would improve their knowledge while “acquiring English principles and feelings.”(*MT 26.v.1856*)

Another meeting was held at Kinnaird’s residence a year later, on 14 April 1857, to consider plans and operations of the College. Kinnaird’s proposal to form a South West London Auxiliary Committee to raise funds was approved. Dr Livingstone, the famous missionary-explorer, was one of the speakers.

<sup>96</sup> *MT 16.ii.1858*, p.3. His first cousin had zealously espoused in the House of Commons the cause of the Maltese 20 years before.

<sup>97</sup> *MT 23.ii.1858*, p.2.

<sup>98</sup> *MT 1.vi.1858*, p.2.

<sup>99</sup> *MT 7.vi.1859*, p.2. For changes in the system of examinations see pp.266-267.

to missionaries, consuls and chaplains, the need for recruiting better-qualified students - boys, not adults - from among Orientals as non-paying students, and of finding students from the more respectable Oriental classes who would be able to pay at least in part for their education.<sup>100</sup>

In May 1861 *The Malta Times* complained of a “growing spirit of intolerance” in Malta against those professing Church of England principles and mentioned the example of a leading Maltese merchant who wanted to educate his son at the MPC because he did not consider that this would interfere with his faith. But he was forced to withdraw him because he had received an intimation by order of the Bishop that his Easter precept “bulletin” (i.e. certificate) would otherwise be refused. Since such a “bulletin” meant that the holder had conformed to the rites of the Church, its withdrawal meant that he was outside the pale of the Church and he would be denied Christian burial in case of death. Such a threat together with the mothers’ influence backed by a “crafty priesthood” would deter the most strong-minded, the periodical said.<sup>101</sup>

At the Prize-giving of 1861 the Rev. Miles raised the matter of religious tolerance. Hoping to see Maltese boys attending the College if no proselytism was practised, he insisted that pupils of whatever denomination were given “full liberty” “for the free exercise of their religious faith” and to attend the public worship of their Church; while (as the MPC Constitution enjoined) they would be given a practical, non-controversial exposition of Scripture morning and evening.<sup>102</sup> At the Prize-giving of the following year, when referring to the “original design” of the College, “with the fervent hope that any *misapprehensions* on this point [the aims of the MPC] might be removed”, Miles reiterated his assertion concerning the freedom of worship of non-Protestant students. Miles’s remarks signalled the start of a polemic carried on between Henry Innes, former Auditor and Treasurer of the MPC, writing in *The Malta Observer*, and the editor of *The Malta Times*. Innes’s main charges were: 1) Miles was failing to carry out the founders’ primary object of training Oriental missionaries, and “comparatively if not completely” setting aside the aims

<sup>100</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1.

<sup>101</sup> *MT* 2.v.1861, p.2.

<sup>102</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1. Friends of the MPC were “astounded” and “offended” by this statement, and there were several protests (though not in the press). (*The Malta Observer*, 11.viii.1862, p.2) See also FN 24 regarding the proposal to change the principles governing the MPC.

The MPC did in fact indulge in proselytism. The “pastors” used to offer some money to the Maltese attending their functions; from this fact the people of Sliema (probably because St Julian’s was contiguous to Sliema) came to be called “the people of the shilling”, “tax-xelin”. (Mgr Enrico Dandria’s evidence in *Malta Royal Commission, 1931, Minutes of Evidence*, London, H.M.S.O., 1932, p. 301)



of the Institution for purely secular ones, 2) “a plausible flashy intellectualism” was taking the place of religious instruction, and 3) money was being obtained on false pretences by representing the MPC in England as a missionary institution and elsewhere as a secular institution with nothing to offend the susceptibilities of non-Protestants. In defence of Miles *The Malta Times* replied that the MPC had two aims and both were being followed, namely, religious instruction, which still held an important place at the College, and in adherence to the founders’ original intention a comprehensive scheme of studies that embraced the moral, spiritual and intellectual education of all classes. He also underlined Miles’s principles and successes at the MPC. Innes finally declared himself satisfied with the statements made in the London Committee’s 11th Report, but pointed out that the missionary aims of the College were being placed in jeopardy, and made suggestions for improvement.<sup>103</sup>

In February 1863 Dr Tomlinson, Bishop of Gibraltar and Visitor of the MPC, died; the College pupils attended his funeral.<sup>104</sup>

On 31 March, the Governor of Malta, Sir John Gaspard le Marchant, visited the College and was shown round the premises. The 25 non-paying students from the East were brought forward according to nationality in the central court, while the Principal related the circumstances under which each had been admitted and the kind of education they were receiving. The Governor conversed with several of them, inquiring about their intentions for the future and about their countries. The 54 paying pupils, who hailed from as near as Sicily and from as far away as Bombay, and who were being trained for business or the professions, then paraded, two by two, before the Governor.<sup>105</sup>

A week later, during the Easter holidays, the Principal led a group of over 40 persons, including three ladies and about half the College boys, on a tour of Sicily, which they thoroughly enjoyed in spite of some bad weather.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>103</sup> *MT* 10.vii, 17.vii and 31.vii.1862 and *The Malta Observer* 10.vii., 14.vii., 24.vii. and 11.viii.1862. Innes’s point (3) finds an echo in document SE/M/18, *op.cit.* The anonymous author writes: “if the Islington Clergy had been told at the late public meeting that no attempt would be made for the conversion of the four free Oriental Students whom they engaged to maintain, and that they might profess such erroneous creeds as the Greek the Popish or the Mohammedan, they surely would never have consented to such a proposal. – If Miss Portal, when sending her money for the young Maronite Emirs, had been informed that their Education was to be purely *secular*, & that these youths were to be allowed to continue in their soul destroying errors, she also, no doubt, would have withheld her gift.”

<sup>104</sup> *MT* 12.ii.1863, p.2.

<sup>105</sup> *MT* 2.iv.1863, p.2.

<sup>106</sup> The tour is described in six instalments of the *MT* from 23.iv. to 25.v.1863.

The College closed down, it seems, after July 1865.<sup>107</sup>

## EPILOGUE

Why did the MPC close down after less than 20 years? No doubt, it had to face many difficulties because it was a novel project in a foreign land, and the authorities often had to plan on an *ad hoc* basis to ensure the survival and development of the project.<sup>108</sup> It was also difficult to find just the right persons to put into practice the intentions of the London Committee. The College had many enemies, both open and secret; among its “most zealous detractors” were some English residents who, one would have thought, might have been among its warmest supporters: a probable reason for their hostility could have been the College’s “bold and faithful scriptural character.”<sup>109</sup> Because it was to some extent a hybrid institution, combining missionary students with ordinary pupils, there was a conflict of aims. University graduates, however able, exemplary, and admirably suited to train youths for commercial or official life, were not the persons best qualified to teach Orientals, whose abilities and character were so different. A different kind of person was required to win the confidence of Orientals and understand their background; he had to be a man of God, preferably a missionary with experience, and fluent in several Oriental languages.<sup>110</sup> But probably the crucial difficulty was the recruitment of suitable Oriental students:<sup>111</sup> some were too young, some too old, some had had hardly any education to start with. Others were unwilling or unable to receive moral and intellectual instruction,<sup>112</sup> and it seems that all too many were motivated by the wish to get an education free of charge and find a good job in their own country rather than to serve God and their fellow-men. For these reasons, the “beacon light” was doomed to be extinguished.

<sup>107</sup> I have been unable to find the exact date. The Rev. Miles left Malta with his wife on board the *S.S. Kedar* bound for Liverpool via Gibraltar on 14 August 1865. (*Arrivals and Departures*, Vol. 216, entry 64 (a), NAM)

On 26 March 1872 the Trustees sold the MPC property to Dr Pasquale Mifsud LL.D. and Carlo Maria Muscat, merchant and Council member, for £2200, (N A V, Not. Achille Micallef, 6-7/995, f.35 ff.) after the Committee had unanimously decided to sell or rent it at a meeting held on 5 Dec., 1871. (*Ibid.* f.54)

As soon as the MPC closed down, the Bishop of Gibraltar, the Rev. Trower, felt it his duty to supply members of the United Church of England and Ireland resident in Sliema and St Julian’s with a place of worship. Some £4000 were required for a chapel (*MT* 22.ii.1866, p.1) The foundation stone was laid by the Acting-Governor, Major-General Ridley, on 20 September 1866. The architect was G.M. Hills of London and the work was carried out by Webster Paulson, C.E. (*MT* 27.ix.1866, pp.1-2) Bishop Trower consecrated the church, which was dedicated to the Most Holy Trinity, on 23 April 1867. (*MT* 25.iv.1867, p.2)

<sup>108</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1.

<sup>109</sup> *MT* 19.vi.1855, p.2.

<sup>110</sup> *The Malta Observer*, 11.viii.1862, p.2.

<sup>111</sup> *MT* 27.vi.1861, p.1.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*