



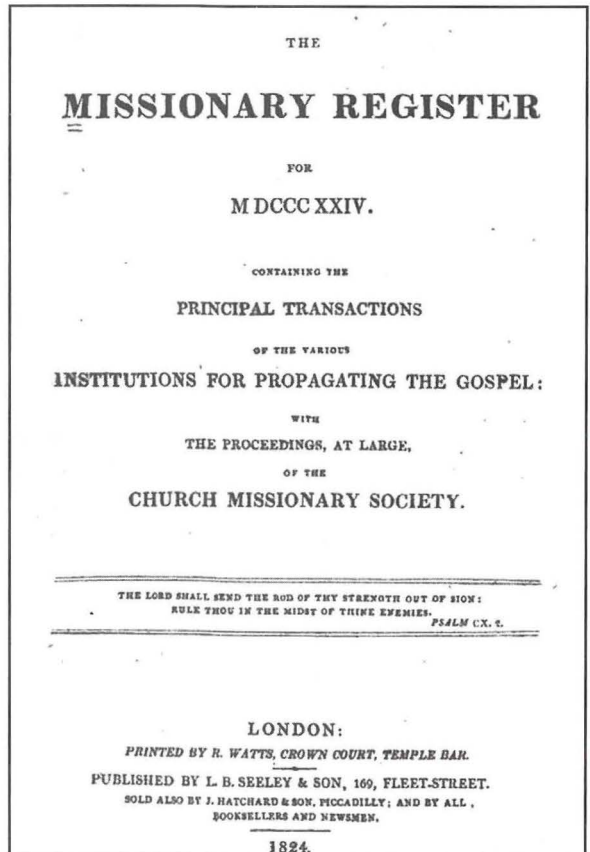
Missjunarju Protestant f'Malta tas-Seklu Dsatax - Deskrizzjoni ta' San Pawl il-Baħar

Missjunarji Protestanti f'Malta

Matul is-Seklu Dsatax, għadd ta' missjunarji Protestanti Amerikani użaw Malta bħala l-bażi tagħhom. Aktar milli f'tentattiv li jikkonvertu lin-nies tal-lokal, Malta serviet għalihom bħala bażi u post minn fejn jilhqqu għadd ta' postijiet fil-Mediterran, fosthom Lixandra (l-Eġittu) u l-Art Imqaddsa. Malta kienet ukoll port importanti u centru fejn jiltaqgħu hafna nazzjonijiet, minhabba fil-kummerċ marittimu. Dan it-tagħrif sibtu fil-Missionary Register Volume 12, ippubblikat fl-1824, taħt il-kapitlu intitolat – *Mediterranean*:

The principal Station, at present permanently occupied within this sphere of Missionary Labour, is Malta: not so much, indeed for its own sake, because the dominant authority of the Roman-Catholic Faith restricts attempts to communicate the Scriptures to the great mass of its inhabitants; but as a secure asylum and centre of action, where under British Protection, benevolent plans for the benefit of the surrounding shores may be matured – labourers may meet, and recover their spirits and strenght – translations may be executed or revised – the press may be put into powerful action – and, hereafter, natives of various countries may be prepared for future service among their own people.

We observe, with pleasure, in the Journals of the Missionaries employed in these parts, that they hold friendly conferences with one another at Malta, in which, by an interchange of knowledge and experience, they endeavour to improve



Il-fontispizju tal-ktieb

their respective plans for obviating the various difficulties of their work and attaining the great object at which they aim.....

.....On one of the means of diffussing Christian Truth round the Mediterranean for which the situation of Malta renders it eminently advantageous – the preparation and circulation of Religious Tracts – we quote some very pertinent remarks by the Committee of Religious Tract Society -



Il-bajja ta' San Pawl fl-imghoddi

Fost dawn il-Missjunarji insibu lis-Sinjuri Temple li waslu mill-Amerika fi Frar tal-1822. Huma komplew bix-xogħol missjunarju tagħhom u f'Novembru tal-istess sena nġhaqad magħhom Rev Jonas King, mill-French Protestant Missionary Society ta' Pariġi. Fl-istess rapport naqraw li f'Jannar 1823 waslu Malta żewġ koppji missjunarji oħra bil-kunjom Goodell and Bird rispettivament. Huma kienu telqu minn New York f'Diċembru 1822.

Is-Sur Temple, li kien studjuż tal-lingwi, kien strumentali sabiex f'Malta infetħet stamperija biex jiġu mitbugħa fiha kotba għat-tixrid tal-Protestantiżmu. Apparti minn dan, hu u l-mara kienu jippriedkaw darbtejn matul il-jum tal-Hadd, f'kamra kbira fid-dar tagħhom, lill-miġemgħa ta' madwar mitt ruħ. Kienu wkoll imorru jxandru l-kelma l-Erbgħa u l-Hamis filgħaxija, lil madwar erbghin jew ħamsin persuna, li kienu jgħixu 'il barra mill-Belt. F'Awwiisu 1822 huma waqqfu *Sunday School* li għaliha kienu jattendu madwar 45 tifel u tifla, l-aktar ta' nazzjonalità Ngliza, iżda magħhom kien hemm ukoll xi Taljani, Griegi u Lhud.

F'Awwiisu 1822 bdiet taħdem ukoll l-istamperija. L-ispejjeż thallsu permezz ta' fondi li ġew mill-Amerika, liema fondi kienu jlaħhqu it-\$3000 fis-sena għat-thaddim tal-istamperija, karti u materjal iehor. L-istamperija kienet timpjega tnejn minn nies fuq bażi full time u apprentist. Dawn kienu jaħdmu taħt id-direzzjoni tas-Sur Temple. Fost l-ewwel xogħlijiet li ġew ippubblikati insibu sitt trattati bit-Taljan u disa' trattati bill-Grieg. Hafna mill-missjunarji f'Malta kienu jbahħru lejn l-Art Imqaddsa u artijiet oħra b'relazzjoni mal-iskrittura.

Deskrizzjoni tal-Bajja ta' San Pawl

F'gurnal Amerikan, *The Boston Recorder*, fl-1824 dehret ittra li s-Sur Temple, li kien jinsab f'Malta, baġhat lill-ħabib tiegħu li kien jgħix viċin Boston, fl-Istati Uniti. F'din l-ittra jgħid li żar San Pawl il-Baħar u jaġhti l-ħsibijiet tiegħu fuq in-nawfragju ta' San Pawl. Se nirriproduċi l-ittra fil-lingwa oriġinali:

ST. PAUL'S SHIPWRECK

Letter from Mr Temple, to a Clergyman in the vicinity of Boston.

Malta, May 24, 1824.

My dear Christian Brother,

You will perhaps think it strange that I should reside more than two entire years in this island, without once visiting, during that period, the spot, where it is supposed the Apostle to the Gentiles was shipwrecked. A few days ago, for the first time, I visited what is here called "St. Paul's Bay," distant from Valetta, the principal city of the island, about six miles. In reading the account of the Apostle's shipwreck, as it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, I have always encountered difficulties, which I could not overcome. The difficulty of understanding this account is much greater in our English translation than in the original. In the English we hear of their "falling into a place where two seas met;" the original is, "eis topon dithallasson," a place washed on both sides by the sea. On the N.W. side of St. Paul's Bay, there is a tongue of land extremely rocky, that extends a half a mile perhaps or more into the sea, in a direction from S.W. to N.E. This, of course, is washed on both sides, as often as the wind blows from the E. or N. E., which was anciently called Euroclydon, but at present, Gregale. The sea, brought in by this wind, dashes upon the point of this tounge of land, is divided, and then sweeps along on both its sides. Upon this point, the natives say the vessel struck, and its present appearance renders this opinion highly probable to my own mind, though others might think differently. The vessle struck upon the rocks probably, for I saw no sand near the place, and I beleive there is none.

Our translation informs us that they discovered "a certain creek with a shore." This language, to me, conveys no idea. A creek without a shore would be a paradox. Who ever saw a creek without two shores? The original is not attended by the difficulty. They discovered "kolpon de tina echonta aigialon," a certain gulf or bay, having a shore, or a convenient landing place. Such in reality is the bay of St. Paul. It can be distictly and easily seen from the ocean, that this bay has a good and convenient shore for landing, while many other parts of the island present to the ocean to bold and appalling shore, where it would be totally impracticable, of not impossible to land, especially during a storm.

The depth of water in this bay is not great, for you can distincly see the bottom when a half a mile or more from the land; and as you approach the land, the depth is gradually diminished, until you would imagine that it were possible to wade, while you are several rods distant from the shore. The bottom is solid rock, and not sand. The bay extends inland, I should think, for we did not measure it, at least a mile, and probably considerably farther, and is perhaps a half a mile in width.

There is a small church standing on the spot where it is said the Apostle gathered the bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, whence the viper came forth and fastened on his hand. A bundle

of sticks might easily be gathered now near the same spot, from the branches of fit-trees, carob trees, and other small trees, growing within the neighbouring encoublers.

Our visit to this bay was by water, and from nearly the same direction in which the Apostle probably was driven by the furious Euroclydon. This bay so well answers to the description given in the Acts of the place where Paul was wrecked, that I can entertain no doubt that it is the same. It has certainly all the prominent features of the place, where the pen of inspiration informs us the ship which bore the Apostle was broken in pieces by the violence of the waves. I am not aware that any other place is pointed out on the island, where that remarkable event is supposed to have happened.

If we reflect on the miraculous preservation of the whole company on board, amounting to 276 persons, wrecked in a tremendous storm upon an unknown coast, the preservation of the Apostle from the mortal bite of the viper, and the succeeding miracle which he afterwards wrought in the island, thus exciting universal attention, it seems to me highly probable, and almost certain, that the spot where he was wrecked, would be ever afterwards well known.

The holy Apostle and his shipwrecked companions, have gone, ages ago, to their long home; the vipers which then infested the island, have long since disappeared: but every winter hears still the loud roar of the fierce Euroclydon, and the shores feel the terrible shock of the mountain waves which it sets in motion; but alas, though the same winds still blow, and the same ocean still roars, the same Gospel which Paul preached, is preached here no longer; the same Saviour whom he adored, I fear, is known and adored only by a very few.

After reading this short description of St. Paul's Bay, and then glancing at the present state of the island, you will unite I trust with me, in praying that God would send hither another Apostle, holy and zealous as Paul, to preach again the unsearchable riches of Christ as the natives believe Paul did, when he was sent by divine providence to visit the island eighteen hundred years ago.

I remain your very affectionate brother,

D. Temple

Referenzi

- *The Missionary Register for MDCCCXXIV, Containing the Principal Transactions of the various Institutions for Propagating the Gospel: with the Proceeding, at Large, of the Church Missionary Society; London – Printed by R Watts, Crown Court, Temple Bar – Published by L B Seeley & Son, 169 Fleet Street. 1824.*
- *The Religious Intelligencer for the year ending May, 1825. Containing the principal transactions of the various Bible and Missionary Societies, with particular accounts of Revivals of Religion. Volume IX. New-Haven: Conducted and Published Weekly by Nathan Whiting – 1824.*