

TWO PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE IN MALTESE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Amos 1,1-10 in Maltese Bibles: An evaluation of
P.P. Saydon's and C. Sant's translations*

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1. *Preliminaries*

This paper is a preliminary attempt at analysis and comparative study of the two professional translations of Amos 1, 1-10 in Maltese carried out so far this century.¹ The first one by Professor Peter Paul Saydon was published for the first time in 1952. The second translation to be analysed will be that of Professor Carmel Sant published in 1984. One should keep in mind though the information given in the *Preżentazzjoni* to the Bible by Sant himself on p. XI; there he informs the reader about the scholars who prepared the first drafts of the various biblical books; Rev. Valentin Barbara OP is said to have drafted the basic text for Amos and the other Minor Prophets. The present writer has to date been unable to consult this original draft in order to be in a position to give dues respectively to the original translator and to the general editor who was Professor Sant himself. Professional scholarship requires that the study of the various redactional stages be made in order to reconstruct the proper history of Bible translation in Maltese; this task of identifying the several stages of the final redaction of the text will be left to someone else.

The choice of the Biblical text for this specific study is absolutely subjective.

1 This study would not take account of Karm Zammit's version *Il-Bibbja Mqaddsa. It-Testment il-Qadim u t-Testment il-Ġdid skond il-Verżjoni Awtorizzata maqluba għall-Malti mill-Ingliż* (Trinitarian Bible Society; London 1980?) because as its subtitle professes, it is a translation of a translation; the translator states in the preface that he made frequent references to "the Greek text".

2. Texts Used

P.P. Saydon's translation of Amos has appeared no less than three times. The first time it was published in 1952, *Ktieb il-Profeti ż-Żgħar*, 1, (*Il-Kotba Mqaddsa bil-Malti*, 27; The Empire Press, Malta 1952) together with Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah. This translation saw a second printing in 1990 in *Bibbja Saydon*, 2, *Il-Kotba tal-Għerf u l-Kotba tal-Profeti (Soċjetà tad-Duttrina Nisranija*; Malta). In the preface by the *Kummissjoni Bibbja Saydon* it is said that Rev. Carmel Attard edited the manuscript which had to be retyped from the original, and wrote both the introductions and footnotes. Towards the end of 1995 Librerija Preca printed the whole of Saydon's translation in one elegant volume in order to celebrate the centenary of the translator's birth (1895-1971). In the Foreword written once again by the *Kummissjoni Bibbja Saydon*, we find the editorial options they had to make: "*It-test li għandek f'idejk huwa l-istess bħall-edizzjoni tal-Bibbja Saydon li s-Soċjetà MUSEUM ippubblikat fi tliet volumi (1976, 1982, 1990), b'reviżjoni minima ta' xi kelmiet 'l hawn u 'l hinn. Minhabba l-qies tal-ktieb thallew barra n-noti li jinsabu f'dik l-edizzjoni u nkitbu introduzzjonijiet u noti godda għal kull ktieb...*" No one is credited with the notes. So for the purpose of this paper we have three editions of Saydon's translation which we shall identify as *Say1952*, *Say1990* and *Say1995*. The translation which we are identifying with Professor Carmel Sant as the General Editor was first published by the Malta Bible Society and Media Centre in 1984 in *Il-Bibbja*. This Bible became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church on the Island. In 1992 the Malta Bible Society set up a revision commission in order to go through the 1984 Bible and to prepare a second Edition of the same. The Revision Commission started its work on January 16th, 1992 and has finished its task in June 1996. The present writer was the co-ordinator of this Revision Commission as well as its secretary; he was also the General Editor of this new edition. The minutes of this Commission were taken down but unfortunately their final draft has not been finished; so that concerning the Commission's revision for Amos he will be able to say which changes were suggested and why, but cannot yet quote the volume of the minutes in which eventually they will be written down. In the near future this service will be given and scholars will be able to make use of this material for their own studies on this translation of the Bible in Maltese. In 1996, of course, the Second Edition was available for anyone to compare with the 1984 first edition. We shall be referring to this latter edition as *Sant 1984*.

3. *Pocedure*

P.P. Saydon was not a simple pioneer handling materials he could barely manage. He was a consummate biblical scholar and linguist.² Naturally he followed the prevalent scholarly trend in Bible translation, that of formal reproduction of the source text into the receptor text. And this will be seen in the short abstract we shall be studying. What is important for us at this junction is to understand that Saydon set the paradigm regarding the understanding of the text and its rendering into Maltese. This means that his translation limited the range of vocabulary that could be adoperated by later translators and at the same time paved the way for how they were to interet the Biblical text. In our analysis we shall take *Say1952* and *Sant1984* as the primary translations, compare them as to their understanding of the Hebrew text (what modern translation theory would term 'fidelity' and 'proximity' to the Source Language), as well as to the readability of their translation (what today would be called 'intelligibility' and 'idiomaticity').³ The two other editions we shall be considering, *Say1990* and *Say1995* are not faithful reproductions of *Say1952* but re-editions and revisions and have to be evaluated on their own merits. Just to mention a point of detail. *Say1952* reproduced in Maltese the three cola disposition of the Hebrew text (formal reproduction). *Say1990* and *Say1995* follow *Sant 1984* in distributing the text in verse form (not stichwise); but their distribution is sometimes unnatural as can be seen from the treatment of Hebrew v.3c into two separate lines (not in *Sant 1984*). *Say1990* did not have the constraints of paging as *Say1995* so that the distribution therein reflects their understanding/misunderstanding of both Hebrew text and *Say1952*.

Amos 1, 1-2

Saydon's influence on subsequent Maltese exegesis and translation strategies can

- 2 Cfr. Carmel Sant, *Bible Translation and Language*. Essays into the History of Bible Translation in Maltese (Melita Theologica Supplementary Series, 2; Malta 1992) 145-151. I would suggest one reads Appendixes 1-3 (pp. 267-322) which are essays on Bible translation into Maltese written by P.P. Saydon himself.
- 3 Cfr. Ernst R. Wendland, "Culture and the Form/Function Dichotomy in the Evaluaton of Translation Acceptability" in Johannes P. Louw (ed), *Meaningful Translation* (UBS Monograph Series 5; Reading 1991) 8-12.

be seen in the renderings of Amos 1, 1. *Say1952* translates the text quite literally, at times slavishly reproducing the Hebrew original. "*Kliem Ghamos li kien mir-raghajja minn Tequgha, li hu ra ghal Israel*", Saydon's exegesis of *dibrê*, words, would take the term as technical for 'saying'. The same exegesis is echoed in James L. Mays' commentary: "The term is an accurate classification of the book's contents, for it is made up primarily of speeches in which Amos delivered the message sent to Israel by their God."⁴ But such exegesis would stumble on the verb *hazah* 'to see': how can one see a word? Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman saw the difficulty and interpreted the opening *dibrê* differently. The prophecy of Amos consists of oracles of Yahweh not sayings of the prophet. Hence the title refers to the 'matters' of Amos, that is, his 'story', or rather materials connected with his name. ... Thus we conclude that *dibrê amôs* means 'the Story of Amos', or 'Amos' Record' or 'Amos' Report'. We must then interpret the following clauses in this fashion: 'The record of Amos - who was one of the sheep raisers from Tekoa - who had visions concerning Israel'.⁵ But Andersen's and Freedman's new translation of *dibrê 'amôs* does not differ at all from Saydon's, Sant's and Mays': "the words of Amos"!

Say1952 also determined the translation of Hebrew *noqedîn* "rghajja" [Sant corrected its morphology 'rghajja'⁶; *Say1990* and *Say1995* repeated the mistaken morphology notwithstanding their radical transformation of Saydon's orthography]. Mays rendered the term "herdsman" while Andersen and Freedman argued for "sheep raisers".⁷ Saydon was probably following the accepted translation (cfr RSV). Today I would prefer the more technical "rahhâl" "herdsman"⁸ even though "raghajj" is not totally wrong. Saydon correctly parsed the *be* of *bannoqedîm* as partitive⁹, though his translation with two *minn*'s is rather heavy. Sant improved the translation by substituting the second *minn* with *ta'*: "li kien mir-rghajja ta' Tekugha". The

4 *Amos. A Commentary* (SCM Pres; London 1969) 19.

5 *Amos. A New Translation with Introducton and Commentary* (AB 24A; Doubleday, New York 1989) 184-185.

6 Consult Joseph Aquilina, *Maltese-English Dictionary*, 2 (Midsea Books; Malta 1990) 1182-1183.

7 *Amos*, 187.

8 Cfr Aquilina, *Dictionary*, 2, 1177.

9 Cfr Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 186-187. Mays parses this *be* as locative creating thus an awkward translation "who was among the herdsman of Tekoa".

two subsequent Saydon's editions did not feel the need to introduce this improvement, as they ignored also Sant's spelling of the place-name "Tekugħa". The entire phrase would sound better in current Maltese "li kien ragħaj/raħħal minn Tekugħa".

What remains of verse 1 in *Say1952* contains also a few problems. There is first the translation of *hazah* by the simple verb "ra", "which he saw". Technically it is not impossible (Andersen/Freedman); but suppose we translate as *dibrê* 'things' 'events' and *hazah* as the terminus technicus for 'having visions'.¹⁰ So *hazah* may be rendered "li hu kellu f'vizjonijiet" or, if it is taken to refer to Amos, "li kellu l-vizjonijiet"; Andersen/Freedman translate "who had visions...". The present writer prefers the second rendering. Sant parses 'asher as referring to *dibrê* and introduces an unnecessary "dwar" to link vv. 1b to 1a. The 1992 Commission deemed this 'dwar' superfluous and clumsy, and deleted it, starting a new sentence in v.1b "Dak li ra dwar Izrael fi żmien..." But Sant improved over *Say1952* in translating the preposition as 'dwar' 'concerning'¹¹ and not 'għal'; it is true that the preposition 'għal' in Maltese may carry this nuance,¹² but it is not its primary meaning in current usage. So Sant's 'dwar' is by far superior to Saydon's 'għal' (repeated in 1990 and 1995). The same may be said about Saydon's translation of the two occurrences of *bîmê* "in the days of", which he rendered literally "f'jiem". Sant's "fi żmien" is better understood, is more idiomatic and should have been preferred by *Say1990* and *Say1995*. Saydon's strategy in translation surfaces in his rendering Hebrew *hara* 'ash through the less used (alone) "teħżiża", the shaking, quaking, in

10 Cfr Mays, *Amos*, 19-20. In this study a number of versions of the Bible and other studies will be referred to by the following signs: **

ABU: *La Bibbia in Lingua Corrente* (1985); BDB: F. Brown/S.R. Driver/C.A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1907, 1974); BHK: R. Kittel (ed.), *Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart 1937); BHS: *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart 1967, 1987); CCB: *Christian Community Bible* (c.1988); CEI: *La Bibbia di Gerusalemme* (1974); CEV: *Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version* (1995); Diodati: *La Sacra Bibbia. Traduzione di Giovanni Diodati* (1988); GNB: *Good News Bible* (1993); GNBD: *Die Bibel. Die Gute Nachricht in heutigen Deutsch* (1982); BJ: *La Bible de Jerusalem* (1978); KJ: *King James Version* (1980); Luzzi: *La Sacra Bibbia (Dott. Giovanni Luzzi)* (1991); LXX: *Septuaginta*, Alfred Rahlfs (ed) (1935); MT: *Masoretic Text*; Paoline: *La Bibbia. Nuovissima Versione dai testi originali* (Edizioni Paoline); REV: *Revised English Bible* (1989); RBV: *Revised Berkeley Version* (1974); RSV: *Revised Standard Version* (1946, 1966); TOB: *Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible* (1991).

11 Cfr Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 190.

12 Cfr Aquilina, *Dictionary*, 2, 951.

place of the more common term of Italian origin “terremot” (Sant’s incorrect ‘terrimot’). The term ‘tehżiża’ alone hardly expressed in modern Maltese the nuance of ‘earthquake’: we usually say “tehżiża ta’ terremot”, but it reflects Saydon’s strategy of avoiding words of romance etymology: “I have always striven to give a purely semitic turn to the Maltese construction, avoiding at the same time, as much as possible, all foreign influences. Hence I have invariably avoided all foreign words for which there is purely Maltese-Semitic equivalent... In order to eschew as far as possible the use of words of foreign origin I have used words which, though registered in our vocabularies, are today obsolete, archaic, not easily comprehensible by the average reader...”¹³

The translation of verse 2 is insidious; Saydon steered past hidden pitfalls; the subsequent versions have not escaped unscathed. The translation of the link-word *wayyo’mer* requires of the translator that he defines his exegetical strategy concerning Amos 1,1-2. Some read these two vv. as introduction to the whole collection of *dibrê* ‘amos for which reason the subject of *wayyo’mer* is left vague; *LXX* translates *kai eipev* to be followed by the Vulgate: “Et dixit”. One should note that the modern editions of these two ancient translations distinguish verse 2 from verse 1 by printing the former on a fresh line. *Say1952* follows the standard Hebrew text (presumably *BHK*) closely indeed: Saydon translates the *wayyo’mer* by the simple “qal”: printed in the same line as the closing words of verse 1. The editorial disposition of the MT and Saydon seems to reflect their understanding of vv. 1-2 as one literary unity; the same holds for their leaving the subject of *wayyo’mer* vague: both Yahweh and Amos are equally possible as being referred to. If the former is meant, the couplet qualifies the opening term *dibrê* seen during Amos’ visionary experiences. If the latter is understood, Amos as the subject is describing the Lord’s revelatory activity through his own ministry.¹⁴ Naturally the contribution of an editor linked the two vv. together and thus gave verse 2 the double duty of prelude the entire book and of encasing, together with Amos 3, 8, the oracles against the nations unit.

Saydon’s close reproduction of MT’s formal disposition and exegesis was not followed by either *Sant1984* or the two re-editions of Saydon’s work (1990, 1995).

13 P.P. Saydon, “The Maltese Translation of the Bible” originally published in *Melita Theologica* XVI (1964), 1-22. Reproduced in Carmel Sant, *Bible Translation and Language*, 300-322. For this quote cfr p. 312.

14 Cfr Mays, *Amos*, 21; Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 219.

The three follow the general trend of specifying the subject of *wayyo'mer*: "Hu qal". *Say1990* and *1995* adopt this exegesis but keep the original's printing of the clause on the same line as verse 1. *Sant1984* prints verse 2, including the introductory speech formula, as a separate verse just like *LXX* and the Vulgate and the rest of modern versions. One wonders whether the three Maltese versions subsequent to *Say1952* were conscious that the slight changes they were introducing constituted a fine shift in exegesis.

This two-bicola hymn¹⁵ presented Saydon and Sant (as other versions) with a number of difficulties. One difficulty concerns the tenses of the verbs, another the relationship of v.2a to v.2b. Like most versions Saydon took the four verbs as present; in this he differed from both *LXX* (aorist) and Vulgate which translates the verbs in v.2b as preterite. *Sant1984* followed Vulgate not realising perhaps that they are a construct chain:

dbielet il-hdura tal-merghat tar-raghajja
u nixfet il-quccata tal-Karmel

Andersen and Freedman prefer to read the imperfects of v.2a as preterite and the 'perfect' verbs of v.2b as stative,¹⁶ and quote *LXX* translation as their justification. The writer/editor's wish to draw an Inclusio with 3,8, as we have seen, weighs the balance in favour of a present/future parsing of all the verbs of the two bicola. Besides, Saydon defines the relationship of the two bicola by subordinating v.2a to v.2b

Meta l-Mulej minn Sijon ighajjat
u minn Ġerusalem jaghti lehnu,
jitbikkew l-imrag tar-raghajja
u tinxef ras il-Karmel

Sant improves over Saydon's rendering on several points: with most versions he

15 Mays, *Amos*, 21. For a description of its structure cfr Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 222 and D.A. Dorsey, "Literary Architecture and Aural Structuring Techniques in *Amos*", *Biblica* 73(1992) 305-330.

16 One should note though that neither verb in v.2b is included in a list of the "most common stative verbs" found in Paul Joüon/T. Muaoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Subsidia Biblica 14/1; Pontifical Biblical Institute; Rome 1991) §41f.

retains the parataxis, leaving the link of the first part to the second to the reader's imagination. Secondly, his translation of *yish'ag* is more precise: "Il-Mulej irieghed minn Sijon". "Irieghed", thunders, is closer to the standard rendering "to roar"; however he is incoherent when in 3,8 he translates *sha'ag* like Saydon: "l-iljun ighajjat". Sant's, again, is superior to Saydon's translating *yitten qôlô* by "jsemma' lehnu". Saydon's "jaghti lehnu" is hardly good Maltese idiom (*Say1990* and *Say1995* saw no need of improvement of the original translation here). Both Sant and the two subsequent editions of Saydon's had to translate *Say1952*'s rendering of *ne'ôl*, imraġ, meadows, grazelands; "imraġ" which is both obsolete and a very rare word,¹⁷ and had to be replaced in the more recent versions and editions. Sant thought of explaining the term and rendered it "il-hdura tal-merghat" (the green grass of the meadows/pastures). *Say1990* kept *Say1952* faithfully (including the writing of "raghajja"). *Say1995* followed Sant's modern translation but not to the letter; they reproduced this colon as "jitbikkew il-merghat tar-raghajja" which is better than Sant's, I would say; the latter unbalanced the stichometry. Sant translates also the metaphor in *'abêlû* which Saydon renders 'jitbikkew' 'moarn' with most versions; Sant's may be reflecting a textual operation which the frequent combination of the two verbs *'bl* and *(y)bsh* has suggested;¹⁸ he reads "dbielet" (incongruences of tenses, though, he may be following the Vulgate here: 'et luxerunt speciosa pastorum'). Naturally, neither Saydon nor Sant would consider reading the subject of the verb *'abêlû* to be *harô'im*, the shepherds, which Andersen and Freedman would deem it a possible option;¹⁹ "the powerful influence of the doctrine of synonymous parallelism in Hebrew poetry would preclude such an untraditional solution: "and the shepherds mourn for pastures," ("U jitbikkew ir-raghajja ghall-merghat"). This

17 Cfr Aquilina, *Dictionary II*, 863.

18 "The powerful influence of the doctrine of synonymous parallelism in Hebrew poetry is seen in many translations and commentaries on this verse. In some, the frequent use of the roots *'bl* and *(y)bsh* in similar contexts has suggested secondary meanings or textual adjustments to bring them closer together here. The verb *'abêlû*, 'they mourned' can be changed to *nabêlû* 'withered' ('dry up' [NIV], 'scorched' [NEB], or simply given that alternative meaning.... Or, *yabêsh* can be brought into line by reading *yêbosh*, 'it is ashamed', continuing the figurative language. We do not think such changes are needed. The doctrine of synonymous parallelism in a bicolon should not be overstressed. The shift in focus from colon to colon permits both aspects of the disaster to be included in a single picture. Everything has dried up; people mourn everywhere. There is merism between the two colons. Not just the meadows and the peak are ruined by drought, but everything in between as well", Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 227.

19 Ibid., 227.

solution would restore the merismus: man and nature (the whole of reality) are all in pains and would avoid the need for searching secondary meanings for the verb 'bl (cfr Mays' 'dry up'). The main difficulties for such a translation is that *ne'ôl* is governed by no preposition ('bl usually takes 'al when motivation for mourning is indicated).²⁰ One last difference between Saydon and Sant I would comment about is their translation of *ro'sh hakkarmel*: as usual the former gives a literal rendering, "ras il-Karmel", while the latter translates "il-quċċata tal-karmel" which constitutes the precise equivalent in modern Maltese.

The Damascus Oracle (v.3a-c)

Hekk qal il-Mulej;
Minhabba tliet dnubiet ta' Damaskus
u minhabba erbgħa, ma nreġġa' xejn lura

The opening verses (1-2) introduce the entire Amos anthology; they cap also a string of eight oracles against the nations who lived on some part of Syrian-Palestinian territory. The oracles are constructed according to a fixed pattern and are moving towards a climatic point in the Oracle against Israel in 2,6-16 (demarcation debated). As we have to steer away from a detailed exegesis of our text we refer to the commentaries of Mays and Andersen/Freedman for a comprehensive analysis of the literary form and structure being employed here.²¹

Saydon's translation of the Hebrew preposition 'al by causal "minhabba", though correct, has made the colon rather too long and heavy; Sant's change to the natural "ghal" has been an improvement, as was his rendering of the second element of the proverbial form adoperated by the Hebrew poet/prophet:

Dan ighid il-Mulej;
Għal tliet dnubiet ta' Damasku,
-erbgħa anzi-

Saydon's translation of *pish'ê* with the religious term "dnubiet" was retained by

20 Cfr David J.A. Clines (ed) *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 1 (Sheffield Academic Press; Sheffield 1993) 107. Henceforth cited as *DCH*.

21 Mays, *Amos*, 22-28; Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 206-218.

Sant; the term derives from the semantic domain of politics and denotes 'rebellion' 'revolt' (cfr 1Kgs 12, 19; 2Kgs 8, 20).²² With only a few possible exceptions (*LXX* for instance which renders the word, *asebeia*), versions usually avoid the theologically loaded term 'sin' for a more neutral word: transgressions (*KJ, REV, JB*)(*RSV*), 'crimes' (*Mays*), 'violations' (*Andersen/Freedman*), 'misfatti' (*Luzzi, Diodati, CEI*), 'prevaricazioni' (*Paoline*), 'rebellions' (*TOB*).²³ Saydon may have chosen the term because of its semitic derivation, Sant because of translation tradition. But he could have chosen the term 'delitti', crimes, very apt to stand for the sort of actions the prophet is going to denigrate the nations about: cruelty in war, slave trade, desecration of the dead, and violations of international treaties. Sant's enclosing within dashes the emphatic "erbgha anzi", improved *Say1952*; his translation highlights the prophet/poet's desire to underline the fourth item which is the only one to be identified. One should note, though, that Sant's handling divides the second Hebrew colon into two, putting *lo' 'ashbennû* on a separate line (the same takes place in *Say1990* and *1995* with Saydon's own translations). *Say1952* reproduces the stichometry of the Hebrew text.

Ghal tliet dnubiet ta' Dmasku,
-erbgha anzi-
ma nreġgax lura kelmti

This translation by Sant of the clause *lo' 'ashîbennû* constitutes a further departure from Saydon's "ma nreġga' xejn lura", 'I shall bring nothing back'. While the verb *hêshîb* is well known and the text offers no textual problems, translations and exegetes found it difficult identifying the referent to the pronominal suffix. Exegetes are usually agreed in taking *lo' 'ashîbennû* as "an expression of strong conviction and assurance that a decision has been made, and will not be reversed",²⁴ but differed as to what the pronominal suffix refers to;²⁵ with Andersen and Freedman the present writer would see it referring to *qôlô* of v.2 uttering judgement on the nations to be

22 Cfr Gerhard von Rad, *Teologia dell'Antico Testamento*, I, Teologia della tradizioni storiche d'Israele (Paideia; Brescia 1972) 302-303: "la parola più grave nel significato di 'peccato', specialmente in bocca ai profeti".

23 One should also say that the connotation 'sinful behaviour versus God' is not to be excluded especially in this prophetic text. Cfr von Rad, *ibid*; Mays, *Amos*, 27-28; Andersen/Freeman, *Amos*, 230-231. But in the context this connotation may not be the predominant one.

24 Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 234-233.

25 *Ibid.*, 233-236.

mentioned in the series.²⁶ Saydon chose a likewise vague expression “ma nreġġa’ xejn lura” while Sant identifies the “it” with “kelmti”, my word, the articulation of ‘his voice’. Technically both are possible, although Sant’s is more likely to be understood by the average reader. Saydon’s and Sant’s rendering of Damascus’s crime as defined in Amos 1, 3c (MT) almost coincide: “għax huma dirsu ’l Gilgħad bi xtabi tal-hadid”. Sant simply drops the personal pronoun ‘huma’ as being superfluous since the meaning comes out without the need for specifying the subject of ‘dirsu’. This translation follows tradition.²⁷ Sant follows Saydon as to the formal disposal of the line into one whole stich: *Say1990* and *1995* divide the stich into two lines without clear criteria for this division.

V.4 Saydon’s reproduction in Maltese of the Hebrew text goes so far as to include grammatical features: the waw consecutive in *weshillahtî* he renders “u jien nibghat”, and the indefinite *’êsh* he translates simply “nar”. This translation appears to forget that we are dealing here with a prophetic oracle where the waw formally corresponds to the more common *lakên* which connects what Klaus Koch²⁸ would call the “indications of the situations” (v.3) to the “prediction of disaster” (vv.4-5). The latter editions of Saydon (1990, 1995) corrected the original by changing the simple conjunction into “għalhekk” and capitalising (their capitalising the ‘j’ of the pronoun ‘Jien’ has been less fortunate). Sant and a number of modern translations allowed the reader to supply the link between the two parts of the oracle: “Nibghat in-nar fid-dar ta’ Hażajel” (cfr Childs; *JB* and *TOB*). Saydon’s translation of *’êsh* with indefinite ‘nar’ ignores that in a prophetic context it refers both to the mythical as well as to some “typical actions and outcomes of war”.²⁹ The suppression by Sant of Saydon’s personal pronoun ‘jien’ is also an improvement as it lightens the verse and makes it flow more smoothly.

Both Saydon and Sant opt to translate the metaphorical in the verb *we’akelah* to “consume, eat, devour” (*BDB*); the former renders the verb “jahraq”, the latter

26 Cfr Mays, *Amos*, 21-22 for this interpretation of *natan qôlô*.

27 Cfr Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 234-239 for a detailed discussion of vocabulary and images used.

28 Cfr *Was ist Formgeschichte?* (Neukirchener Verlag; Neukirchen 1964, 1967). ET: *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form-Critical Method* (trans. S. Cupitt) (Charles Scribner; New York 1969); W. Eugene March, “Prophecy” in John H. Hayes (ed), *Old Testament Form Criticism* (Trinity University Press; San Antonio 1974) 160.

29 Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 239.

“jeqred”. Both are possible, of course. But the context would probably favour a strictly literal translation to maintain the metaphor; besides, the verb ‘kiel’ in Maltese is of itself bearer of non-literal meanings.³⁰ Another change I would make in the two versions is the translation of ‘armenôt. Saydon followed the usual trend and translated the term “palazzi” [KJ(1978); *REV*; Paoline; *CEI*; *JB*, *TOB*]; this rendering probably reflects the exegesis “that the ‘armenot are the luxury apartments of a well-stocked harem,”³¹ nowadays we take the word to refer to “the battlements on the defensive walls of the city, so well known from Assyrian reliefs. It was part of the siege warfare to get them on fire by igniting the timbers that were part of the construction. This reading would follow the assumption that we take the reference to fire literally; if it is a divine fire sent from heaven it will burn anything and everything. Alternatively, the movement from wall to citadel could describe the conflagration of the city from outer defences to acropolis”.³² The second stich of v.4, therefore, would read “u jiekol il-fortizzi ta’ Benhadad” (the translation of the waw in *we’akelāh* through relative pronoun “li”, preferring subordination to co-ordination, is not to be excluded; parataxis though would make it clearer that a sequence of events was intended).

V.5 *Say1952* set the pattern for both exegesis and translation in colon (a) “inkisser l-istaneg ta’ Damaskus”. Sant repeats his predecessor faithfully except in the transliteration of the place name Damasku (accepted by *Say1990*. 1995). This translation implied three basic options: (i) Saydon and Sant have not accepted the suggestions made by some exegetes to change the order of the cola in v.5.³³ TM order is to be maintained as it sustains the Inclusio Damascus/Aram.(Andersen/Freedman). (ii) The term *berīah* is rendered through the plural ‘staneg’ without justification; the choice of the singular has been deliberate: the Qal of *shabartī* often takes a singular object;³⁴ besides, “the word can be used by synecdoche for complete gate-system (Jdg 16,3; 1Kgs 4,13; Jer 51,30; Lam 2,9)”.³⁵ (iii) They

30 Cfr Aquilina, *Dictionary*, 1, 649-650.

31 Cfr T.F.K. Laetsch, *Bible Commentary: The Minor Prophets* (Concordia; St Louis 1956) 12-13.

32 Cfr Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 243 and *DCH*, 1, 382.

33 J. Morgenstern, “Amos Studies IV”, *HUCA* 32 (1961) 300.314; Mays, *Amos*, 29.

34 Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 250-252.

35 Ibid.

translated the Qal *shabartî* through intensive “inkisser” which is correct.³⁶

Say1952’s rendering of the second stich in v.5a “u neqred minn wied Awen, lil min ighammar hemm” follows tradition in taking *yôshêb* as referring to the inhabitants of the locality mentioned. *Say1990* follows suit without alterations. *Say1995* divides the stich without clear criteria:

u neqred minn Wied Awen lil min
ighammar hemm

The place-name Wied Awen *Say1995* has taken from *Say1990* and may well be a correct rendering of *Biq’at-’awen*. Sant has opted for a translation of the term *biq’at*, “valley of Awen” “wied Awen”, but then incoherently takes its parallel term in the next stich as *Bet-gheden*. Both clusters should have been parsed as hyphenated placenames, with the second name beginning with a small letter as Sant’s *Bet-gheden*. Sant’s translation of the stich plausibly contains a misunderstanding: the prophet/poet writes that the Lord will cut off *yôshêb* from *Biq’at-’awen*, the emphasis being on the locality: He is stating that he will depopulate this area, if *yôshêb* is taken as meaning “inhabitant”. Sant’s “u neqred lil dawkl jghammru f’wied Awen” seems to be focusing on the inhabitants rather than on the locality. Andersen and Freedman³⁷ propose to read *yôshêb* as “a title of a human ruler”, perfect parallel of *tômek shêbet*: “and I will cut off the sovereign from *Biq’at-Awen* and the scepter from Beth-Eden”. It’s normal to consider *tômek shêbet* as a reference to someone wielding power, but only Andersen/Freedman take *yôshêb* as referring to a similar institution. And yet these two stiches have only the verb *wihikrattî*, to govern them. The present writer considers this proposal favourably and would translate: “u neqred minn Biq’at-awen lil min joqghod fuq it-tron u lil min iżomm ix-xettru minn Bet-gheden”. One last comment on the verb ‘neqred’ to translate Hebrew *wehikrattî*. Sant follows Saydon in this translation which agrees rather with LXX’s *exō lethreusō*, “I will utterly destroy”. It is an interpretation rather than a literal translation. The verb *krt* is used elsewhere for cutting trees: Dt 19,5; 20, 19,20; 2Kgs 19,23; Jer 6, 6; 10, 3. So a metaphorical use of *qata’*, to cut off, may have been intended by the original writer of Amos: “u naqta’ minn Biq’at-awen lil min qieghed fuq it-tron u lil min iżomm ix-xettru minn Bet-gheden”. Saydon/Sant’s

36 But one should read the study of Andersen and Freedman on pp. 250-252 for this use of *Qal Shabartî*.

37 Amos, 253.

rendering tones down the force of this verb which means “removal or extermination by execution, violent or premature death.”³⁸

The last stich of verse 5 created a few problems to our translators, the main one being how to translate the plural Qal perfect *wegalû*. Saydon chose a technical term “siba/seba”: (1) “to ravage, to plunder; (2) to snatch away people and carry them into captivity”.³⁹ This verb created two difficulties: it is a predominantly transitive verb unlike the Hebrew *glh* which technically means “to go into exile”.⁴⁰ So Saydon had to adoperate the seventh form of the verb siba/seba in order to translate *wegalû*: “u jinseba’ l-poplu ta’ Aram lejn Qir”. *Say1990* reproduced this text without alteration. *Sant* and *Say1995* were committed to a more functional translation so they had to translate “jinseba’, which is obsolete, into some more understandable lexical unit. *Sant* chose the more neutral “jittiehed”; “u l-poplu tas-Sirja jittiehed f’Kir”; *Say1995* “jingarr”; neither edition specifies further the action word, allowing the verb to remain vague, and so undertranslate both Saydon’s “jinseba” and Hebrew *wegalû*. Actually they could have translated *wegalû* “u jmur fl-ezilju l-poplu tas-Sirja f’Kir”. Maybe *Sant* leaves out the specification “fl-ezilju” to avoid the slightly awkward construction “u jittiehed fl-ezilju ... f’Kir.” But his option resulted in a translation that is less accurate. *Idem* for *Say1995*. *Sant*’s translation of Aram by Sirja (influenced by *RSV*?), though it is better understood by the average modern reader, was not perhaps necessary as elsewhere he normally leaves this place name untranslated. He was not followed by the later editions of Saydon in this (nor in the translation of *qîrâ* as “Kir” which is better); but *Say1990* and *Say1995* followed his lead in rendering the concluding formula ‘amar Yhwh as “jghid il-Mulej” over against Saydon’s “qal il-Mulej”.⁴¹

The Gaza oracle (vv. 6-8)

Several elements of this oracle appeared in the Damascus oracle (vv. 3-5) and we shall refer the reader to the relevant parts there. So except for the place name Gaža which *Say1952* renders “Ghažza” (the two later editions follow *Sant*’s rendering),

38 *Ibid.*, 252.

39 *cfr* Aquilina, *Dictionary*, 2, 1306.

40 See *DCH*, II, 349.

41 Andersen/Freedman opted for this punctiliar translation: “Yahweh has spoken”.

there is nothing new to say on v.6a-b. The next stich, though, presents us with a complicated situation for we have no less than three different translations. *Say1952* opted for formal lexical reproduction of the Hebrew: “ghax huma sbew sibjiet shah”. “Sibjiet shah” recalls the clause *hashshibya 'asher shebûtem* of 2 Chron 28, 11: literally “They took into captivity an entire captivity” (Andersen/Freedman). The term *galût* is singular; but the original author’s intention of intensifying the concept may well be seen in the unusual combination with the adjective *shelema* (Andersen/Freedman). Saydon’s plural “sibjiet” therefore is probably meant to capture this intensifying intent (This translation of *galût shelema* is found in some modern versions: *JB* “ont deporté des populations entières”; *CEI*: “hanno deportato popolazioni intere”; *Say1995*: “ġerrew fl-eżilju popli shah”). The intensification by plural may be correct, but I wonder whether the author was not thinking of an exemplary event: “The crime specified as an illustration of Gaza’s guilt is an isolated border raid of the kingdom for which there would hardly be any historical attestation. Gaza captured and deported the entire population of some place and handed the captives over to Edom. Whose territory was raided is not said, though the geographic probability points to Israel’s or Judah’s”.⁴² So the singular would be preferable in this case (*Mays*: “an entire population”; *TOB*: “en masse des deportes”; *CCB* “They carried a whole people into captivity”; *Paoline*: “una deportazione completa”). Sant’s rendering, therefore, which not only avoids the obsolete “siba” but captures the meaning of *galût shelema* in its entirety, is preferable: “ghaliex kaxkru fl-eżilju poplu shih”. His translation, though, gives rise to a methodological question. He renders the hiphil infinitive of *galah* by “kaxkru fl-eżilju”, which is probably superior to “ġarrew fl-eżilju” of *Say1995*. However in v.5 Sant employs the verb “ittiehed” the sixth verbal form of root “ħa” “to take, confiscate, accept, receive, adopt”.⁴³ (Saydon 1995 maintained the same verb “ġarr”, to carry away in both instances). Was Sant to maintain the principle, ferociously followed by Saydon, RSV and others,⁴⁴ to translate terms consistently, by the same terms? I find the verb “kaxkar fl-eżilju” more colourful than “ittiehed (fl-eżilju)” and would have preferred to see it used in v. 5. But even if one would normally not opt to render verbs or words in the source language with consistently the same lexemes in the receptor language, should that variety appear within such a short literary unit such as Amos 1-2?

The last stich of v.6 sees the three Saydon versions in perfect concord: “biex jerħuhom lil Edom”. Sant has found a more literal and probably better alternative: “biex jaghtuh f’idejn Edom”. In modern Maltese this is better understood and one

42 Mays, *Amos*, 32.

43 Aquilina, *Dictionary*, 1, 461-462.

cannot understand *Say1995*'s scruples in not adopting this version.

Verse 7 is more or less a repetition of v.4 and I would refer the readers to our considerations of that verse. As usual *Say1952* offered a formal reproduction of the Hebrew text: "U jien nibghat nar fis-swar ta' ..." This rendering of *behômat* as strictly locative⁴⁵ is less acceptable than "f'dar" of *bebêt* in verse 4. Sant's "fuq is-swar" "upon the walls" is probably more graphic and suits the immediate context better given the nature of the building mentioned. Most modern translations reflect this option (Mays: I will send fire on Gaza's wall: *TOB*: je betterai le feu aux murs de Gaza; *GNB*: I will send fire upon the city walls of Gaza) or they translate the metaphor altogether (*EV*: I will burn down the walls ...; *GNBD*: "Ich lege Feuer an die Mauern"; *ABU*: "io darò fuoco alle mura de Gāza"). Though strictly singular, *hômat* has been translated by Saydon and Sant by the plural "swar". In this they are not alone (cfr *TOB*; *GNB*; *ABU* etc).

What we wrote about verse 5b-c except for place names fits verse 8a-b as well since they are almost identical. Saydon made a slight change in his translation. In v.5 he renders *yôshêb* as "min ighammar hemm" while in v.8 as "min ighammar (fiha)". As a literalist translator Saydon nurtured scruples concerning the resumptive pronoun "fiha" and enclosed it within brackets. The editor of *Say1990* and the revisers of *Say1995* had no such scruples: "u neqred minn Asdod 'il min ighammar fiha". On the other hand they stuck to Saydon's manner of writing the place names "Asqalon" (Sant's "Askalon") and "Ghekron" (Sant's "Ekron").

Verse 8c presents a metaphor from the domain of the military (cfr Is 1, 25; Zech 13, 7; Ps 81, 14) or perhaps of agriculture (cfr Jer 6,9). Usually it is either translated literally (at times woodenly) like Andersen's and Freedman's, "And I will bring back my hand against Ekron" while in the notes⁴⁶ they report the exegesis translation of W.R. Harper⁴⁷: "strikes with repeated blows" as the precise meaning of the idiom *hashîb yad 'al*. Or else the metaphor is simply translated: "I will strike down Ekron" (*CEV*); "colpirò duramente la città Accaron" (*ABU*); "I will punish

44 cfr Jean-Claude Margot, *Traduire sans Trahir* (Éditions l'Âge d'Homme; Lausanne 1979) 23.

45 But of course it is possible, and it has found followers: *JB*: enverrai le feu dans le rempart...
Paoline: "manderò fuoco entro le mura di Gaza".

46 *Amos*, 259.

47 *A critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (ICC; T. & T. Clark; Edinburgh 1906) 26.

the city of Ekron" (*GNB*); "die Stadt Ekron mache ich dem Erdboden gleich" (*GNBD*).

The Maltese translators tend to stay within a middle third group of versions which assume that we have here both a metaphor and an idiomatic expression. They take it for granted that the reader understands straight away these two options of our writer and hence offer no clarifications for their translation. Saydon reproduces the Hebrew text as usual: "U ndawwar idi ghal Gheqron". Sant specifies further the action involved in the prepositoin '*al*: "u ndawwar idejja ghal fuq Ekron" (the translation "idejja" for *yadû* is definitely wrong given the idiomatic character of *hashib yad*). His version of the place name Ekron is superior and one can see no reason why *Say1990* and *Say1995* opted to maintain Saydon's original form.

The next stich in verse 8, *we'abedû she'êrît pelishtîm* has generally been misunderstood and the two Maltese translations follow the normal uncorrect rendering. The problem concerns the translation of *she'êrît* which is generally translated 'remnant': *RSV*: "and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish"; *Say1952*: "u jintemmu fdal il-Filistin"; *Sant 1984*: "u jintemmu l-fdal tal-Filistin"; *JB*: "et ce qui reste des Philistin périra"; *TOB*: "et le reste des Philistins périra"; *REV*: "and the Philistines who are left will perish"; *Paoline*: "e perirà il residuo dei Filistei"; *CEI*: "e così perirà il resto dei Filistei"; *GNB*: "and all the Philistines who are left will die"; *ABU*: "e moriranno tutti i Filistei remasti". I quoted this relatively long list of witnesses coming from different approaches to translation, in order to show how often traditional renderings stick to their place and no really new approach that may be termed of the Hebrew text is attempted. These translations take *she'êrît* as meaning: "ce qui subsiste d'un groupe décimé par une catastrophe" as the note in *JB* defines it (similar notes will be found in *CEI* and *TOB*). Now if these translations would have taken the suggestion in *BDB* previous to the one they have opted for, they could see an element of intensification in the choice of the term here. In a number of tests, starting with our text, (but adds *Is 14, 30; Am 9, 12; Jer 11, 23; 25, 20; 50, 26; IChr 4, 43* etc.) *BDB* (p. 984) gleans the remnant as "the last nuance",⁴⁸ and coming at the end of a list of communities of Philistines that are going to be decimated, intensification may well have been intended in *Amos 1, 8d*. A few versions have captured this nuance. Andersen and Freedman (whose parsing of the stich is rather queer) read; "and the Philistines will perish, even to the remnant",

48 This suggestion is made by Julius Wellhausen, in *Die kleinen Propheten, mit Notizen, (Skizzen und Vorarbeiten 5; Alfred Töpelmann; Berlin 1893)*⁶⁹. Cfr Mays, *Amos*, 32.

CEV: “and that will be the end of the Philistines”; GNBD: “kein einziger Philister soll mit dem Leben davonkommen”. To return to my Maltese translations, I propose to rephrase v.8d as follows: “u jintemmu l-Filistin, sa l-inqas wiehed.”

The Oracle against Tyre (vv. 9-10)

The similarity of v.9b-d to v.6 must have led Prof. Sant and a number of translators astray. Say1952 translates ‘*al hasgîrām gālût shêlēmā*’ of 9c as “ghax huma rhew sibja shiha lil Edom” which is technically correct. The intensive *galût shêlēmā* of verse 6 is now in the singular “sibja shih (In v. 6 it was ‘sibjiet shah’ and the verb *sgr* is once again translated by verb “reha”. The subsequent editions of Saydon, and Sant’s translation had to manoeuvre around the obsolete ‘sibja’. Say1990 retained the text as the original translator left it; Say1995 were committed to change the text to modern spoken Maltese and rendered v.9c as follows “ghax huma rhew poplu shih imur fl-eżilju f’Edom” which is completely wrong. May be they had Sant’s version for model which reads: “ghaliex kaxkru fl-eżilju poplu shih biex jaghtuh f’idejn Edom”;⁴⁹ this is equally unprecise. It is evident that Sant was misled by the similarity of this verse to verse 6. In the latter the infinitive construct expressive of the crime of the culprits is that of verb *galah* which Sant rendered “kaxkru fl-eżilju”. In the former (v.9) the verb in the same position is *sagar* “to hand over”. “The Phoenicians ‘handed over’, suggesting that they were the middlemen in the transaction, as in so many other trading ventures.”⁵⁰ They participated in an economic rather than a military transaction: they ‘handed over’ [a number of modern translations interpreted the verb as an ‘act of business’: “...und die Bewohner ganzer Dörfer an die Edomiter verkauft” (GNBD); “Ha venduto come schiava la popolazione di interi villaggi alla gente de Edom” (ABU)]. In the light of the above the present reviewer would translate v.9c “ghaliex bieghu folla shiha ta’ lsiera/eżiljati lil Edom”.

The last stich of verse 9 gives rise to two questions; one concerns the precise

49 Likewise CEV “and dragged off my people from town after town to sell them as slaves to the Edomites.” The Phoenicians have not done the looting itself but acted as middlemen in the dirty market of human slaves. The merchandise was “an entire captivity” (Andersen/Freedman: this phrase makes little sense in modern English; “a whole bunch of prisoners/exiles” would read better.

50 Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 261.

translation of the main verb *welo' zakarû*; the other touches upon the relation of this violation to that described in the previous stich. The greater part of translations coordinate the two sentences in line c of verse 9, just as the Maltese translations did: *Say1952*: "u ma ftakrux fil-ghaqda tal-ahwa"; *Sant*: "u ma ftakrux fil-patt ta' l-ahwa"; *RSV*: "and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood"; *GNB*: "and did not keep the treaty of friendship they had made"; *ABU*: "e non ha mantenuto il patto di amicizia che aveva fatto"; Andersen Freedman: "and did not remember the covenant of brothers". This approach to the text means that Tyre is in fact accused of both slave-trading and of breaching an international treaty. The *welo'* construction would seem to be prompting this interpretation. Other translations instead would subordinate one action to the other. *REV* translates: "because, ignoring the brotherly alliance, they handed over a whole community..." *JB*: "...entières de captifs; sans se souvenir d'une alliance entre frères; *TOB*: "...ont livré des déportés en masse à Edom, sans avoir gardé la mémoire de l'alliance entre frères". One should observe the footnote⁵¹ to this sentence: "En déportant des Israélites chez des ennemis, les Phéniciens tenaient pour lettre morte les anciens traités d'alliance qui les unissaient à Israël, d'où la gravité du forfait". The note then makes reference to 1Kgs5,26;9,13. A similar note is offered by *JB* and the standard commentaries on Amos.⁵¹ A few comments are in order: (a) Our prophetic writer left the reference as vague as he could so that the 'brotherly covenant' involved could simply refer to any international treaty between Tyre and any of the surrounding nations; this means that while references to the Scriptural texts mentioned may offer telling parallels of what a *berît 'ahîm* could signify, Amos may be referring to a different reality. (b) Although it is granted that the *welo'* construction may have been used to distinguish the misbehaviour as consisting of two separate actions, the adverbial cluster may link the selling of slaves/prisoners to the forgetting of the brotherly alliance as effect to its cause (this is clearly stated in *REB*, tacitly understood in *CEV* and *GNBD*). Tyre is here being accused that they put financial considerations before any other principle. (c) Rendering *zakarû* by the verb 'to forget' is not impossible; we should keep in mind that this verb is technical in international treaties of the ancient Middle East for breaking the stipulations of a treaty.⁵² (d) Saydon's "fil-ghaqda ta' l-ahwa" cannot be taken to mean in modern Maltese 'an international treaty'; 'ghaqda' does not signify treaty. So one cannot understand how *Say1995* has not adopted Sant's

51 Cfr Mays, *Amos*, 33-34; Andersen/Freedman, *Amos*, 261.

52 Cfr Michael L. Barré, "Treaties in the Ancient Middle East", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6 (Double day; New York 1992) 655.

more modern rendering “fil-patt ta’ l-ahwa.” Likewise the qualification ‘brotherly’ “ta’ l-ahwa”: it forms part of the jargon of the same literary genre.⁵³ In modern Maltese the equivalent could be “fthem/patt ta’ hbiberija”. Translation proposed for v.9c-d: “ghaliex bieghu il Edom folla shiha ta’ eżiljati/prigunieri u/billi nsew (kull) patt ta’ hbiberija”.

Provisional Conclusions:

a) With such limited extension of the text no one could pretend to arrive to a definitive evaluation of any of the two translations that have been examined. But the present writer hopes that narrowness in extension has been counterbalanced by depth in treatment so that we may have a decent indication of where an investigation into a wider textual extension would eventually lead to.

b) Our primary concern in this study have been *Say1952* and *Sant 1984*. If we mentioned the two later editions of Saydon’s translation, it was to complete the Saydon part of the story since these editions are supposed to reproduce the 1952 text as faithfully as possible. The service of a proper professional review of these editions has not been given yet. This study does not intend to offer this important critical reviewing to the three volumes of the *Bibbja Saydon* or of its 1995 one-volume edition.⁵⁴

c) From this in-depth reading of Amos 1,1-10 one may provisionally conclude that both basic translations moved within the parameters of biblical scholarship; both reflect the scholarly biases of their time.

d) The principles that guided their attempt at translating the original text were different though. Saydon was guided only by his wish to remain faithful to the original text as much as he could; so he produced, like his scholarly colleagues in the first half of the twentieth century, a formal reproduction of the Hebrew original. Sant’s translation was influenced by the theory of dynamic equivalent developed by Eugene Nida of the United Bible Societies. This developed in him and his

53 Ibid., 654.

54 The first draft of this lecture inspired one of the participants in the Second Symposium of Maltese Biblical Scholars, Mr Joe Felice Pace, to write a short paper, “The 1995 (Museum) edition of Saydon’s translation of the Bible. A Linguistic Comment.” A slightly changed edition of this short essay was published in *The Sunday Times*, April 14, 1996. This contribution provoked reactions from two or three readers, *The Sunday Times* 21st, 28th April 1996.

colleagues working with him awareness that the translator has to be faithful not merely to his Source Text which the Hebrew Bible or the Greek New Testament, but also to his eventual readers/listeners. Therefore in the choice of language for their translation, the scholars in who gave us *Sant 1984* had to find words, idioms, expressions, and syntax which the man in the street could understand without undue difficulty. Theirs was a translation in the so called "common language." This difference in options and strategies can be seen also in this short abstract.

e) As Saydon's preceded Sant's chronologically, the former couldn't but influence the latter in the choice of vocabulary and in exegesis. But the latter reacted positively and had to find different solutions when fidelity to the targeted audience demanded that morphology and syntax be adjourned so that the final product will be of use for the modern Maltese reader. Each one of the two translations may be considered as a monument to the Maltese language in this century as well as to the Church who formed these men of calibre.

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