

A French-Canadian *Pride and Prejudice*, published in Montreal, Presses Sélect Ltée, 1977, in the style of a Harlequin Romance. Note the misquote under the florid illustration, a remark actually made by Sir William Lucas, here attributed to the darkly brooding hero.



In this Chinese *Pride and Prejudice* not only the text, but also the face of Jane Austen has suffered a transliteration. The publisher is Taipei, Taiwan.

## Seeking Jane in Foreign Tongues

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During a vacation in Quebec in 1939 my wife and I were pleased to find a number of French translations of the Austen novels. This gave us the idea of accumulating whatever might be available in other languages as well. George Borrow in *Lavengro* said "... translations may be only a faint echo of the original." But these echoes have a fascination of their own.

David Gilson in Section "C" of his *Bibliography of Jane Austen* enumerates 249 translations with a terminal date of 1977. Many of the items he lists were first seen by him when he visited Alberta and me in March 1975. I have prepared a tabulation of these translations by language and by novel including *Lady Susan*. Many of the translations appeared in paperback only, but others first appeared in cloth and later in paperback.

In 1941, we were delighted to receive from a friend in Innsbruck a copy of *Elisabeth und Darcy*, the first German translation of *Pride and Prejudice* which we had seen. Other friends also became interested in finding translations for

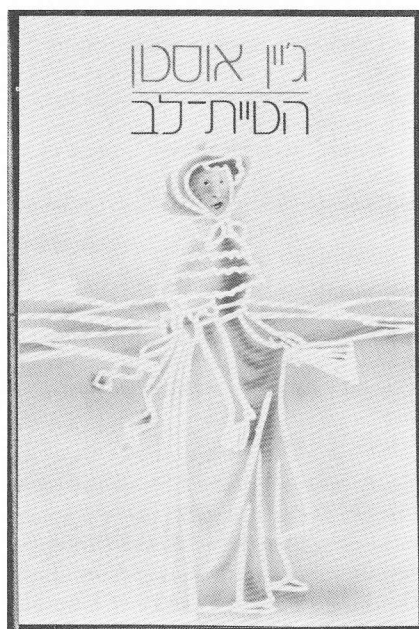
us, so that we soon wound up with a Russian *Pride and Prejudice*, a Chinese *Pride and Prejudice*, and three volumes in Japanese, which included *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion*. As souvenirs of friends' trips to South America, Spanish and Portuguese translations also arrived. We were amazed to find the Scandinavian countries had fallen in line, particularly Finland which had published a complete set of the six novels.

Most surprising of all was an encounter in Copenhagen when we found that there had been a Danish translation of *Lady Susan*. The book unfortunately was out of print but a call to the publisher revealed that in addition to a defective copy they also had a perfect copy, which they would be happy to present to us. Needless to say, we travelled across Copenhagen to acquire this treasure. Greece, Holland, Belgium and Yugoslavia also made their contributions. Many of these were ephemeral paperbacks, probably inspired by the *Pride and Prejudice* movie with Laurence Olivier and Greer Garson. Although our first translations had been in German and French, we soon found that these were far outstripped by the 28 volumes which we acquired in Italian. Garzanti published *Emma* in 1951 and 1965, with two different introductions by Mario Praz. Mondadori and Rizzoli also produced scholarly translations, frequently with fine notes and introductions. In these translations, *Pride and Prejudice* led the list with *Emma* trailing behind. *Persuasion* and *Mansfield Park* also came in frequent editions.

While we were unable to cope with the texts, we could struggle over the titles because frequently original efforts were made by the translators instead of merely accepting the English version. A French translation of *Persuasion* in 1822 appeared as *La Famille Elliot*. In 1959, the same idea was adopted by an Italian translator, who published *Emma* as *La Famiglia Woodhouse*. The idea of using personal names instead of abstract titles like *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion* goes back to the first American edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, which appeared as *Miss Elizabeth Bennet*. A Dutch translation used the title *The Bennet Sisters*. *Sense and Sensibility* seemed to produce special difficulty for the translator. In Amsterdam in 1950, it appeared as *Feeling and Understanding*, and a 1948 French translation published in Lausanne appeared as *The Heart and The Reason*. In Spanish and Italian, it was published as *Reason and Sentiment*.

The abstract titles were most generally modified in translation. *Persuasion* appeared as *Anne Elliot* in German; *Northanger Abbey* also appeared as *Catherine Morland* with either a "C" or a "K" in French or in Italian. Perhaps, the sentimental idea was carried too far in an Italian translation of *Persuasion*, which appeared as *Ritorno A Te*.

In *Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays* published by the Cambridge University Press, Andrew Wright presents a sampling of translations under the title "Jane Austen Abroad." With the help of specialists in the various languages, he uses three texts from *Pride and Prejudice* as tests of the effectiveness of *Pride and Prejudice* in Chinese, German, Spanish, Romanian, Russian and Swedish. For his sample texts from *Pride and Prejudice*, he selects the first chapter, Mr. Collins' letter, and the interview between Elizabeth and Lady Catherine. He finds that in many instances the subtleties are not translatable and strangely enough, the situations might appear more familiar to a Chinese reader than to a Mexican reading the Spanish translation. He also discusses the title *Pride and Prejudice* and points out that the word "pride" has both a negative and positive meaning. In Romanian, these two meanings were



A Hebrew *Persuasion* published by Keter (Crown), Jerusalem, 1983.

גאווה ומשפט קדום  
ג'יין אוסטן



A Hebrew *Pride and Prejudice* published by Maariv Book Guild, Tel Aviv, 1984.

translatable by different words. In German, the word “Stolz” emphasizes the negative meaning carrying with it the sense of arrogance. Thus, the meaning of the words take on a different colouring in different languages.

When I was in Tel Aviv in 1975, a cousin told me how much she enjoyed Jane Austen in English but was astonished to hear that there had been a Hebrew translation of *Pride and Prejudice* in 1952. She thought it incredible. I offered to send her photocopies of the first chapter and when she had an opportunity to read them, found that the translator had succeeded in capturing the historical milieu of Jane Austen. The Hebrew title was also interesting—instead of the alliterative title, the translator used a rhyming title, *Ahava V'gava*. This means love and pride but the Hebrew word for pride carries the pejorative implication of arrogance or haughtiness like the German “stolz.”

In addition to the approach which Andrew Wright used, it might be interesting to compare various translations of the same novel in the same language. Judging by the number of Italian translations of *Emma* and the numerous Italian and German translations of *Pride and Prejudice*, this might be a good starting point. Certain passages have always been recognized as particularly resistant to translation. Naomi Royde Smith selected as her favourite example of the untranslatable, the dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet after Elizabeth has refused Mr. Collins and Charlotte Lucas has accepted him.

"Indeed, Mr. Bennet," said she, "it is very hard to think that Charlotte Lucas should ever be mistress of this house, that I should be forced to make way for her, and live to see her take my place in it!"

"My dear, do not give way to such gloomy thoughts. Let us hope for better things. Let us flatter ourselves that I may be the survivor."

This was not very consoling to Mrs. Bennet, and, therefore, instead of making any answer, she went on as before,

"I cannot bear to think that they should have all this estate. If it was not for the entail I should not mind it."

"What should not you mind?"

"I should not mind any thing at all."

"Let us be thankful that you are preserved from a state of such insensibility."

"I never can be thankful, Mr. Bennet, for any thing about the entail. How any one could have the conscience to entail away an estate from one's own daughters I cannot understand; and all for the sake of Mr. Collins too! Why should he have it more than anybody else?"

"I leave it to yourself to determine," said Mr. Bennet.

Recent and exciting translations which postdated the Gilson list were Hebrew translations of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion*. Like other translations, the translator, Naomi Carmel, has taken liberties with the *Persuasion* title. The Hebrew title, *Hatayet Lave*, literally means *Inclination of Heart*. I am not sure whether the translator was thinking of Anne's heart or Captain Wentworth's. She could have meant either.

The title *Pride and Prejudice* has been literally translated into Hebrew. The Hebrew phrase for prejudice, "Mishpat Kadum," means ancient judgment and is reminiscent of *First Impressions*. There is also a new translation of *Emma* into Hebrew, but no copy has yet appeared in the United States.

David Gilson is updating the *Bibliography* for a new edition. How many numbers will be added to Category "C" and into what new and strange languages will it take us?