

## FRENCH TRANSLATIONS OF RICARDO'S ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AND TAXATION

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### ABSTRACT

*David Ricardo's Principles of Political Economy and Taxation was first published by John Murray, Albemarle-street, London, on 19 April 1817 (750 copies) (Sraffa in Ricardo 1951-73, 1:xix). Then, it knew two others English editions during Ricardo's lifetime, always with Murray as editor. The second one, which contained "a few very trifling alterations" (Sraffa in Ricardo 1951-73, 1:l), was published on 27 February 1819 (1000 copies) (Sraffa in Ricardo 1951-73, 1:l), and the third one, "with considerably more extensive [changes]" which appeared in May 1821 (1000 copies) (Sraffa in Ricardo 1951-73, 1:liv).*

#### 1) 1817-1818: PRÉVOST'S TRANSLATION OF EXTRACTS FROM RICARDO'S CHAPTER ON VALUE

As early as November 1817, a first extract of Ricardo's Principles (1st ed.) was translated, published and commented in the Bibliothèque universelle des sciences, belles lettres, et arts, faisant suite à la bibliothèque britannique (Ricardo 1817b). It comprised the first pages of Ricardo's chapter on value where Adam's Smith adoption of labour commanded as an invariable measure of value is criticised (Ricardo 1817a, pp.1-11). The translation of a second and last extract (though it ends with the mention "to be continued") was published in the same journal in January 1818 (Ricardo 1818). It included parts from the rest of Ricardo's chapter on value (Ricardo 1817a, pp.19, 21, 22, 23-5, 31-6, 41-2, 44-8). Both of those translations were commented, the first one by the "translator" the second one by the "redactor". However, there are evidences (Béraud, Faccarello 2012, p. 11-2) that both the "translator" and the "redactor" were one and the same person, the Swiss philosopher and physician Pierre Prévost (1751-1839).

#### 2) 1819: CONSTÂNCIO'S TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST ENGLISH EDITION OF RICARDO'S PRINCIPLES

The first translation in French of the whole text of Ricardo's Principles (1st ed.) was made by Portuguese resident in Paris: Francisco Solano Constâncio (1777-1846). It was published in 1819, in two volumes, by J. P. Aillaud, 21 Quai Voltaire, Paris, under the title: Des principes de l'économie politique et de l'impôt (Ricardo 1819). This translation was accompanied by Jean Batiste Say "explanatory and critical notes". Though this edition is dated 1819, it appears from Ricardo's correspondence, that at least one copies of it circulated in England as soon as December 1818 (see Ricardo 1951-73, 7:361).

The same translation was re-edited twice in 1835: first in Paris, once again by Aillaud, in two volumes (Ricardo 1835a), and second, in Brussels, by H. Dumond, in one volume (Ricardo 1835b). Both editions were presented as "revised, corrected and augmented by a notice on the life and writings of Ricardo published by his family". Though they were introduced as the "second" (for the Parisian) and the "third" (for the Belgian) editions, they were still based on the first English edition and both reproduced the text of the French 1819 translation as well as Say's notes. Sraffa (in Ricardo 1951-73, 10: 379) indicated that the Belgium edition was a "pirate reprint of the Paris 'second edition' of the same year". The "notice on the life and writings of Ricardo" prefixed, in both editions, to Ricardo's writing, was actually not "by his family". It was the translation of the Memoir of the Life and Writings of David Ricardo, Esq., M.P. published anonymously by John Ramsay McCulloch (1789-1864) in 1825.

### 3) 1847: THE CONSTÂNCIO-FONTEYRAUD TRANSLATION

In 1847, Guillaumin et Cie Libraires, Rue Richelieu, n°14, Paris, published the Œuvres complètes de David Ricardo as volume XIII of the Collection des principaux économistes (Ricardo 1847). It was one volume which, with the exception of two papers on Parliamentary Reform, contained all the items given in McCulloch's 1846 edition of The Works of David Ricardo, Esq., M.P. As Sraffa indicated, the French "version of the Principles which it presents is no better than a pastiche of the first and third original editions. It is based on Constancio's translation of ed. 1, revised (e.g. substituting 'rente' for 'fermage') by [Alcide] Fonteyraud [1822-1849] who has also translated the most obvious passages added by Ricardo in ed. 3, including the new chapter On Machinery: the revision however is far from complete and much of the resulting text is still that of ed. 1. In one case indeed a long passage is translated twice, the version of the third edition being inserted after that of the first without noticing that they are almost identical (p. 375, 'N'y aurait-il pas' to p. 377, line 5, 'abondance' and p. 377, 'N'arrive-t-il donc' to p. 378, end of the second paragraph, 'abondance ')" (in Ricardo 1951-73, 10:375-6). This edition of the Principles included Say's notes as well as new ones by Fonteyraud and (one p. 48) by Blanqui. Guillaumin republished this edition of Ricardo's Works in 1882, to which was added a short preface by Maurice Block (1816-1901) (Ricardo 1882). Guillaumin also published a part of this translation in 1884, into Lectures choisies d'économie politique précédées d'une préface et accompagnées de notes par M. H. Baudrillart. This book included an extract of Ricardo's chapter on rent (Ricardo 1847, pp.39-40; 41-5; 46-51) which appeared under the title "La rente foncière" (Ricardo 1884). In 1966, Otto Zeller, Osnabrück, Germany, reprinted the 1847 edition of Guillaumin (Ricardo 1966). Others extracts from the Constâncio-Fonteyraud translation appeared in 1973 into Croissance et progrès? (Ricardo 1973) published by Maison Mame, Tours. This book was a selection, by Jean-Marie Hervé, of texts written by major economists, from Adam Smith to Joseph Alois Schumpeter. In the section devoted to Ricardo were extracts from Chapter 5 On Wages, Chapter 6 On Profits and Chapter 21 Effects of Accumulation on Profits and Interest (Ricardo 1847, pp. 80-3; 84-6; 91-4; 95-6; 98; 264-74). However, neither the notes by Say nor those by Fonteyraud were reproduced. Finally, the 1847 translation by Constâncio-Fonteyraud was re-edited in 1971 and 1977 by Flammarion, with an introduction of Pierre Dockes (Ricardo 1971 and 1977). This edition omitted Say as well as Fonteyraud's notes.

### 4) 1888: THE CONSTÂNCIO-FONTEYRAUD-FORMENTIN PARTIAL TRANSLATION

Guillaumin also published extracts of Ricardo's third edition of the Principles under the title Rente, salaires et profits. This constituted volume VII (XXXIV-224 pages) of the Petite bibliothèque économique française et étrangère and comprised an Introduction and an Avertissement by Paul Beauregard (1853-1919). Though this volume bears no publication date, it is likely to have been published in 1888 (Sraffa in Ricardo 1951-73, 10:376). Extracts from Ricardo's Principles were divided into four parts: Part 1 "Theory of Value" included chapters 1 (On Value) and 4 (On natural and market price); Part 2 "Theory of rent" included chapters 2 (On rent), 24 (Doctrine of Adam Smith concerning the rent of the land) and 32 (Mr. Malthus opinion on rent); Part 3 "Theory of wages" included chapter 5 (On Wages) and Part 3 "Theory of profit" included chapters 6 (On profits) and 21 (Effects of accumulation on profits and interest). The volume also comprised a bibliography and two tables of contents, one of the volume, the other of Ricardo's Principles. The translation was that of Constâncio and Fonteyraud revised by Formentin (1853-193?). As indicated by Beauregard, the 1882 edition of Ricardo's Oeuvres complètes "served to compose the present volume. However we have been led in comparing it to the English text, to re-introduce several forgotten passages and various omitted notes as well as to correct some errors in the translation" (in Ricardo 1880, p. 219). For example, the passage translated twice in the Constancio-Fonteyraud translation, (cf supra), was corrected to appear only once. Finally, the notes of Say and of Fonteyraud were omitted from this edition.

### 5) 1933-1934: THE CONSTANCIO-FONTEYRAUD-DEBYSER TRANSLATION

In 1933 and 1934, Alfred Costes, Paris, published a French translation, in 2 volumes, of E. C. K. Gonner's edition of Ricardo's Principles (3rd ed.). In addition to Ricardo's text, the Principes de l'économie politique et de l'impôt (Ricardo 1933-1934) included the translation of Gonner's 'Preface', 'Introductory Essay', 'Notes', 'Appendices', and 'Analytical Table of Contents'. It also reproduced the bibliographies of 'Works by Ricardo' and of 'Chief Works on Ricardo' included in the original. Like Gonner's publication, the French edition "has been 'paragraphed' by the editor;

that is, divided into 151 numbered sections. The editorial notes indicate some of the variants of the earlier editions and also the minor errors which crept into McCulloch's ed." (Sraffa in Ricardo 1951-1973, 10:365). The translation of Ricardo's text was mainly that of Constâncio and Fonteyraud. However like the "Formentin" version, it incorporated changes by a third translator: Charles Debyser. In 1970, Calman-Levy, Paris, adopted this translation (without Gonner's notes nor the numbering of paragraphs) for his edition of the *Principes de l'économie politique et de l'impôt* (1 vol.) prefaced by Christian Schmidt (Ricardo 1970). However, this edition didn't mention any translator, nor Costes' edition. George Henry Bousquet, who reviewed the book in the *Revue économique*, noted that "the translation which constitutes the basis for this version is that of P Constancio and A. Fonteyraud [...] I believe at least 90% of the text -if not more- is faithfully reproduced. If I am not mistaken their names are not mentioned in this work [...] no name of any translator is mentioned. Someone (unknown) [Debyser] has actually reviewed the original French text and has done it properly. Thus, in Chapter VIII, paragraph 4, page 116, few words omitted by C. and F. are translated; there are also very useful indications in the notes. Finally and for example, in the last chapter, the notes were adapted to match the notes from the original version, while C. and F.'s version displays strange disparities" (Bousquet 1973, pp.530).

#### 6. 1992 : THE SOUDAN *ET AL.* TRANSLATION OF THE THIRD EDITION OF THE *PRINCIPLES*

In 1992 appeared a new translation of the third edition of Ricardo's masterpiece: *Des principes de l'économie politique et de l'impôt* (Ricardo 1992). This translation, published by GF-Flammarion, Paris, was made by Cécile Soudan with the collaboration of Bernard Delmas, Thierry Delmas, François Régis Mahieu, Henry Philipson and Franck Vandeveld. It was accompanied by an unsigned introductory note on the edition and the new translation, as well as a presentation by Mahieu. In the end, Say's notes are reproduced and bibliographies (of works by Ricardo, about Ricardo, or quoted by Ricardo) as well as a chronological table of Ricardo's life were added.

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