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GERMAN EDITIONS OF DAVID RICARDO'S ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AND TAXATION

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The first German edition of Ricardo's *Principles* was published in Weimar in 1821 (Ricardo 1821). The editor and translator of this edition, which was entitled *Die Grundsätze der Politischen Ökonomie oder der Staatswirtschaft und der Besteuerung*, was Christian August Schmidt. Apparently, the print-run of the edition was rather small and the book did not circulate widely. Schmidt's translation was based on the first English edition of 1817 and Ricardo's text was complemented by a German translation of (some of) the "notes explicatives et critiques" which J.-B. Say had appended to the first French edition of Ricardo's *Principles* of 1819, which had been translated by Constancio (cf. Say in Ricardo 1819b). According to an anonymous reviewer in the *Leipziger Literatur Zeitung*, the French translation was much to be preferred over Schmidt's German one ([Anon.] 1821: column 2293). An anonymous reviewer in the periodical *Hermes* likewise suggested that readers would be much better off using the French edition, because Schmidt's translation suffered not only from 'very poor style' but also from 'grave misunderstandings' with regard to both Ricardo's original text and Say's "explanatory notes". Moreover, Schmidt's translation omitted several important passages from Ricardo's text (and also from Say's notes), so that Ricardo's ideas were transmitted to the German readers in a somewhat diluted and partly incomprehensible form ([Anon. (C.E.M.)] 1821: 176-7). Since German intellectuals often had a good knowledge of French (which was often preferred by them over English), many readers in the German-speaking countries would have learned of the theories Ricardo had expounded in his *Principles* through the first French edition – and thus would have been immediately exposed to Jean-Baptiste Say's commentaries on Ricardo's ideas.

In 1837, a new German translation of Ricardo's *Principles* was published by Eduard (Edward) Baumstark under the title *David Ricardo's Grundsätze der Volkswirtschaft und der Besteuerung* (Ricardo 1837). The translation was based on the second English edition (1819), because Baumstark, 'despite all efforts, had been unable to obtain a copy of the third edition in either England or Germany' (Baumstark 1837: iv)¹. In the following year, Baumstark supplemented his translation of Ricardo's *Principles* with a companion volume with "explanatory notes" of just over 800 pages (Baumstark 1838). According to Wilhelm Roscher,

Baumstark deserves credit for truly having introduced Ricardo's powerful mind into German political economy for the first time: and not only through his splendid translation, but also through his 11 commentaries in the second volume. (Roscher 1874: 909)

In fact, Baumstark's rather extensive commentaries are partly quite unrelated Ricardo's text and also exhibit a number of serious misunderstandings of his theoretical propositions and thus may not necessarily have facilitated their understanding. A German translation of the third English edition (1821) of Ricardo's *Principles* was not available until 1877, when Baumstark published a "second edition" of his earlier translation, which incorporated the changes and alterations that Ricardo had introduced in his text in the third English edition. Baumstark's companion volume with his 11 commentaries was not republished on this occasion.

¹ 1 Unless otherwise stated, all translations from German sources are mine.

In 1905, Professor Heinrich Waentig of the University of Halle edited a new German translation of the third English edition, which had been carried out by Ottomar Thiele. Waentig's new edition, entitled *Grundsätze der Volkswirtschaft und Besteuerung* (Ricardo 1905), was supplemented by an extensive commentary by Karl Diehl, who was then one of the leading "Ricardians" in Germany. Diehl's *Sozialwissenschaftliche Erläuterungen zu David Ricardos Grundgesetzen der Volkswirtschaft und Besteuerung* (in two vols, 1905) show a much better understanding of Ricardo's principal propositions on value and distribution than Baumstark's commentaries of 1838. A "second edition" of Waentig's *Grundsätze*, which was published in 1921, must in fact be considered as a new edition, because the editor had deemed it necessary to correct and revise Thiele's translation so thoroughly that he felt it was now appropriate for him 'to assume full responsibility not only for the edition but also for the German translation'. A third edition of Waentig's *Grundsätze*, which contains no new changes, was published in 1923.

The next German edition, entitled *Über die Grundsätze der Politischen Ökonomie und der Besteuerung*, was published in 1959 in the German Democratic Republic (Ricardo 1959). It was based on a new translation, which had been carried out by Gerhard Bondi under the editorship of Peter Thal. In West-Germany, Fritz Neumark edited a new German edition of the *Principles* in 1972. Neumark's edition was based on a slightly revised version of Waentig's 1921 translation and it contained, in addition to an introduction by Neumark, also a German translation of Ricardo's 1810-11 pamphlet *The High Price of Bullion, a Proof of the Depreciation of Bank-Notes* (Ricardo 1972).

The latest German edition of Ricardo's *Principles* was first published in 1994 under the editorship of Heinz D. Kurz with the collaboration of Christian Gehrke and Ottmar Kotheimer (Ricardo 1994). The text is based on a revised version of Bondi's translation, and the volume also contains an Introduction by the editor and a new German translation of Ricardo's *Essay on Profits*, of Sraffa's editorial notes and of his "Introduction" in volume I of the *Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo*. A revised and amended second edition, edited by Christian Gehrke and Heinz D. Kurz, was published in 2006.

While the first German translation of the *Principles* was thus available in 1821, it was only with Baumstark's edition of 1837 that Ricardo's *Grundsätze* first became readily available to German-speaking readers in a reasonably good translation. It should be noted, however, that it was then still very common for German academics to read not only German, but also Italian, French and (less frequently) English. Hence the major sources for the dissemination of Ricardo's doctrines up until the late 1830s seem to have been the original English versions of the *Principles* and, in particular, the French translation of 1819 with J. B. Say's "explanatory notes"². Moreover, it must be recognized that Ricardo's *Principles*, in either the original English version(s) or in the French and German translations, were not the only sources for the popularization of Ricardo's economic ideas in the German-speaking countries. Early on there were German translations of James Mill's *Elements* and of John R. McCulloch's *Principles*, as well as several translations of the popular writings of Harriet Martineau and Jane Marcet³. However, these sources may have been more important for the dissemination of Ricardo's doctrines among students and laymen than among academics.

² On Ricardo's disagreements with Jean-Baptiste Say's "explanatory notes", see Gehrke and Kurz (2001).

³ See Mill (1824), McCulloch (1831), Marcet (1820), and Martineau (1834). The main body of the text should be written using the Arial font and single spacing with 10-point interlining spacing. Be sure your text is fully justified—that is, flush left and flush right. Please do not place any additional blank lines between paragraphs.

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