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A Bibliography of Translations of Economic Literature to 1850

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A Bibliography of Translations of Economic Literature up through 1850

Introductory Statement

This bibliography, as of September 2024, contains files describing translations into Danish, Dutch, English, Portuguese, and Swedish. Work continues on translations into French, German, Italian, and Spanish, and those bibliographies will be posted after additional editing of existing files. The bibliography includes translations from Greek, Polish, and Russian, but work on translations into those languages is not currently a priority.

The term “economic literature,” as applied in this bibliography, primarily means works relevant to economic thought. To record and describe those was the initial aim. Indeed, the initial major paragraph of the first account of the bibliography begins: "Yet before so doing [describing the project] we need to establish the importance of translations for the migration of ideas. Translations perform indispensable tasks in the transfer and development of economic and business thought."[1]

Works on economic conditions were, of course, also translated, which means that this bibliography also covers agriculture, commerce, finance, fishing, poverty, mining, manufacturing, statistics, transportation, and other related subjects. Not generally included are works on bookkeeping, and most types of manuals for merchants. They could well be a separate project, as could--and should be--works on slavery, a subject not covered except tangentially. No attempt has been made to include every technical work relevant, for instance, to agriculture, but the borderline wobbles. Similarly, it is not always clear whether a work is primarily political or economic. Likewise, some major thinkers, perhaps notably Montesquieu, are not included. A reason behind that omission is that the initial major goal of the project was to show that unexploited resources were available in what was then known as the Kress Library of Business and Economics. Other Harvard libraries collected Montesquieu. Legal treatises and laws are not generally included.

In time, the bibliography goes back to the beginning of printing, but it is around 1750 that a large body of writings on economics began to be published. This bibliography basically covers the century from 1750 to 1850.

A project begun in the 1970s could have been purely enumerative and based on entries in printed library catalogs, but my goal was to show that translations of economic literature differed from the originals, that they were not just the same text in different languages. The commentary, the additions and the omissions often made for substantially new texts. Documenting that required examining the books, ideally the original and translation together, and then producing entries that were necessarily very different from those in library catalogs.

The term "bibliography" is applied to many different kinds of lists of books, and the nature of my bibliographical entries can best be understood if the initial goal of differentiating translations from originals is kept in mind. They tend to be much more than the original in other dress. The fulness of

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[1] "Research possibilities in the history of political economy through a bibliography of translations," co-authored with Fritz Redlich, *History of Political Economy* 5 (1973):168-183.

entries was also shaped by the fact that my work coincided with the growing field of history of the book. Everything relevant to the production of the text, its publishing, its dissemination, and its use became relevant. More recently, the history of translations has become an identifiable field of scholarship, and it may be that entries should be even fuller in certain respects.

The only way to work on such a bibliography in the 1970s and part of the1980s was travel, and the typewriter was the tool used to make entries. Some libraries, in the U.S. and abroad, even supplied me with a typewriter, space to work, and books on book trucks. Eighteenth-century books were then not commonly seen as treasures. Indeed, in 1967 Dorothy Reeves, my predecessor as curator of the Kress Library, had a card file in which she recorded books that had appeared at sale prices exceeding $100; it had only about 75 cards. The typewriter has to some extent shaped this bibliography. Transcriptions do not generally record typographic variations. Various symbols, such as π, were also not available,.

Computers have obviously done vastly more than overcome the limitations of the typewriter as a tool. This bibliography is much fuller and more complete than it would otherwise have been without our digital world. The defects of Google Books need not be described and here lamented. Google could have eased to a greater extent the bibliographer's task, but users of these bibliographies will note that Google's digitization has been essential, as has been that of many libraries. Examination of books in hand is ideal, whenever possible. When a bibliographer turns over, one by one, leaves of a book, discoveries are made that elude the bibliographer who scrolls through a digital file.

This work is, in short, a bibliography based primarily on examining books, though significantly strengthened by digitization, thus making possible entries that go considerably beyond library catalogs. In covering a neglected genre --translations--and in including translations that were published in many languages and sites, it depicts in a uniquely broad way the dissemination of ideas. It begins with the period of the Enlightenment and ends just after the revolutions of 1848. The reader will find that translation practices and purposes varied greatly over that period, with differences among the European cultures.

The Entries Themselves

Entry numbers and arrangement. Entries within the bibliographies are identified initially by source language subdivided by year, and further subdivided by name of the author or first word of the title. Thus, E-Port1799.1, for example, designates the first translation, alphabetically, from English published in 1799. E-Port1799.2 would designate another translation from English published in 1799, this one by an author whose name is lower in the alphabet. The translations from French (F-Port) follow all those from English.

Entries for translations in periodicals. Digitization has not yet satisfactorily provided access to periodicals. Gallica is almost ideal, but even the BnF has not seen filling gaps to be within its purview. This bibliography does include many entries for translations within periodicals, but systematic work has not been possible. Translations published in periodicals have “Per” appended to the entry number.

Entries for reissues. "Reissue" is the other term that is sometimes appended to the entry number, as for example, F-E1799.1Reissue. The addition of "Reissue" is meant to make absolutely clear that the

publication is not a new printing or edition, but, rather, that it consists of the sheets of the earlier printing, that it should definitely not be counted as a new printing or edition.

Entries in brackets. Some entries, usually very brief, are within brackets. The reason is that translations were sometimes made from translations. When that is known to be the case, the full entry is placed under the language of from which the translation was made, with a brief entry in brackets in the section devoted to translations from the original language. There surely are unidentified translations from translations.

Title-page transcriptions. Title pages are fully transcribed except for quotations, which are usually from classical authors. The fact of such a quotation, with the author's name, is given in brackets. Typographic variations and line endings are not shown, but all words are present, including those that identify the author or translator. It might be said that those identifications are the period's equivalent of dust jackets, so they may cast light on the marketing of books.

Imprints. Imprints are fully transcribed, rather than truncated, as tends to be done in library catalogs.

Pagination and collations. Overall pagination is given, as are signature collations when the book has been in hand. My collations are not always standard, partly as a result of ignorance, but partly because of a desire to simplify for non-bibliographers, the major users of this work. This means, for example that a collation may begin as π^1, and blank pages at end are not recorded in the pagination statement.

Contents. The statement of contents that follows pagination and collation is detailed for the preliminary leaves, but the main body of the book may be noted simply as [1]-370 text, with no effort to record divisions within the main body of text, unless they are additions by the translator or others. Printer imprints in the preliminaries or elsewhere ae always recorded

Prefaces of translators, publishers, editors. Prefaces are examined primarily for comment on the nature of the translation, and such statements are often transcribed. Users of the bibliography should be aware that more of considerable interest may be contained in the prefatory material, including in dedications. Dedicatory headings are always transcribed.

Notes. The original text is identified, if at all possible. Should there be differences between the original and the translation that have not been recorded before, those are noted here. If notes have been added, that is noted. Listings in official booktrade publications are recorded, generally with the price as given. Reviews are sometimes noted, but without any effort to be comprehensive. A variety of other information is in the notes. It is a common practice in special collections libraries and departments to provide citations to bibliographies that include a particular work. Behind the practice may be the idea that the bibliography provides additional information. Such references are not recorded here, but references to several databases, such as ESTC, are commonly provided.

Translators and others involved. The full name and dates of translators are given. Increasingly, as work has progressed, a word or phrase to identify the person has been added. A major source is the World Biographical Information System, a digital product that is behind a paywall. Many other biographical sources are, of course, also used. No effort has been made to provide information on printers and

publishers, though some may find it useful that addresses found in the books are always transcribed.

Locations. The basic work on the bibliography was carried out before the digital age, with books in hand, and the names of libraries where a book was examined are included. No effort has been made to locate all copies of a publication, but all copies examined are recorded. If a copy that was seen is subsequently digitized, the fact of digitization is sometimes recorded in parentheses following the library name, as for example, Michigan (Hathi). If Hathi were to be followed by (Michigan), that would mean the original was not physically examined.

Index. An index follows the entries. Indexes for the different languages vary somewhat. They all, of course, records the names of authors and translator, and others involved in the publication or for some reason are referred to. Other headings in the indexes include: All translations by source language; all translations by date; miscellaneous information about translator under various categories, such as whether the translator was also the publisher or clearly had a financial stake in the publication; elements of the book, such as the signer of dedications, that provide a clue as to the party behind the translation; listings for various ways in which originals and translations differ, as, for instance, translations that are extracts; source of translations (manuscript, book chapter, periodical, speech in a legislative body, etc.); translations from translations; other appearances in the language of the translation, i.e., an Irish or Scottish reprint); index of periodicals mentioned; index of societies and government bodies. There sometimes follow my observations on translating in general, but especially, on oddities related to specific books.

Also available is a general index of names of authors and others connected with source editions. Two general chronological indexes also are available, one arranged by the source language and the other by the languages of imports. Those will, of course, be updated, as other bibliographies are made available.

Acknowledgements

The individual bibliographies have some acknowledgements, particularly of institutions, societies, and individuals who made travel possible, but also of various individuals whose help as has been crucial. If one were to dedicate an electronic publication, it would be to Fritz Leonhard Redlich (1892-1978), whose support was crucial in many ways. I also recall William Jaffe (1898-1980), a major historian of economic thought, especially of Léon Walras. At a conference of the History of Economics Society, he notified someone that he wanted to speak to me. I went to where he was seated in a wheelchair, literally knelt so that we could talk face to face. He told me that the translations project was important and strongly urged me to pursue it, a powerful message of encouragement. Several decades later work had become so desultory that it might have died, but for the encouragement and financial support of Erik S. Reinert, and more recently of Professor Sophus A. Reinert of the Harvard Business School who has continued his father's advocacy. Thanks to Ann Blair, Professor of History at Harvard, I have full access to the Harvard Library's resources and services, not something otherwise available to a retired Harvard librarian, but so indispensable for work on these bibliographies.

Many scholars and librarians have contributed in a variety of ways to this long-standing project. I remember them, even if they are not named. A current helper whom I can name is Christine Riggle of Baker Library's Historical Collections. A true collaborator is Karen Nipps, who is coauthor of the

Portuguese bibliography, and has been an invaluable aide in preparing the general indexes. I have also learned from Karen and have greatly profited from our exchange of ideas.

Should users of these bibliographies care to help by pointing out errors, I would be grateful. I would also be happy to be contacted about other matters related to this bibliographical work.

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