

# Translator's Foreword

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Translation from one current living language to another is a daunting task. A translation of this sort can be considered a true art form if it can transmit the aesthetic sense, mood, connotation, etc. from the originating to the target language in addition to rendering an adequate meaning of the original. The task is even more challenging when one translates historical terms and notions that were in use 500 years ago, especially if those elements were specialized at the time of their use. In the case of the book at hand, Krader's German is contemporaneous with the English translation. Not so his sources, many of which are cited from 15th and 16th century German or Middle High German. Krader frequently referred to sources in which certain terms, particularly those concerning late medieval and early-modern professions, were expressed in their local dialectal variants resulting in different words for one and the same type of work. Sometimes these words referred to professions that were so finely differentiated that it is not clear if they were a local variant of the term or a reference to an entirely different position (see, e.g. *Steiger* and *Hutmann*, *Huntezieher* oder *Karrenläufer*, etc. in the text). I am grateful to Dr. Sabine Sander, a native German speaker, for her assistance in helping me locate sources which enabled me to render many of these today obscure concepts into intelligible English. I bear sole responsibility for any inaccuracies in translation of these and other concepts.

Another persistent problem of translation had to do with the names for organizations of merchants, trades, occupations and the like—*Zunft*, *Gilde*, *Innung*, *Amt*, *Verband*, *Bruderschaft*, etc. One of the most vexing issues had to do with the fact that *Zunft* and *Gilde* are both rendered in English as *guild* in all dictionaries consulted. There is a specialist literature which treats the subtle distinctions among these words as they developed over time. We cite some of this literature but do not follow the intricacies in this translation. I do not vouch for the accuracy of the English words I've used to translate these terms, but I have always included the German originals in the text. Nor are the specifics centrally relevant to Krader's main arguments regarding the beginnings of capitalism in Central Europe.

I deem it necessary to point out several further difficulties in translation which were encountered in this book. For example, the noun *Bürger* in the German-speaking world today is equivalent to the English noun *citizen*, but in relation to the period of the 14th to 16th century, it generally applied to town dwellers as opposed to the peasantry, the aristocracy, the clerics and others more closely tied to the feudal order. Yet the adjectival form *bürgerlich* is more complicated still and can be used with different English words: *civil*, *bourgeois*, *middle class*, *pertaining to towns and cities*. The concept of *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* which frequently appears in this book can be translated as bourgeois society or civil society. The word bourgeois, of course, has entered English via the French which brings with it the 18th century imagery associated with the French revolution and the political writings which both preceded it, and which accompanied and followed it. It also brings with it a flavour of radical politics from Europe and is associated with socialist, communist and anarchist critiques of capitalist societies. In his earlier works following the publication of *The Ethnological Notebooks* (1972) Krader drew a clear distinction between civil society, a category which arches over the Asiatic or communal-social organization of economy and society, classical antiquity and feudalism in Europe and the beginnings of capitalism in Europe and its later spread worldwide. It also encompasses socialist and communist states in which the formal relations of capital and labour are managed differently. In these latter states the formal freedoms of bourgeois society are attenuated and compromised. All of these modes of production lie at the heart of different formations in the history of civil society. According to Krader, they are all to be distinguished from the primitive pre-civil communal organizations without a state, without the separation of public and private spheres and differentiations between social classes. When Krader refers to *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* in relation to Europe in the 15th and 16th century, the appropriate translation is bourgeois society, the form of modern civil society organized along capitalist lines. In Appendix III of Krader's (1979) *Treatise on Social Labor* 'On the

Relations of Civil Society in the Modern Period' he distinguished between bourgeois society and civil-socialist society.

Another issue with regard to translation concerns the German word *Stadt* which can be rendered as city or town in English. Since the cities of Europe in the 15th and 16th century were rather small in terms of geography and population in comparison to their size under high capitalism (Naples, as Krader points out, was the largest city in Europe at the time), I have for the most part translated the word *Stadt* with *town*. On occasion, especially when contrasting *Stadt* with *Land*, I've used the term city as contrasted with countryside or when referring to cities in the period of high capitalism.

Mining and metallurgy are one of the most important elements of the beginnings of capitalism in Central Europe and the terms *Knappe* and *Bergknappe* appear frequently in the text. When used alone or in an earlier context, the term *Knappe* refers to a younger labourer who is new to the job. When used in the composite word *Bergknappe* the reference is to a miner and is translated as such.

With regard to the Hegelian concepts *Aufhebung* and *Momente* I have used the somewhat awkward term *sublation* in English for the former which is meant to capture the simultaneous sense of cancellation and elevation in the German original. I have used non-Hegelian terms to translate *Momente* which removes the concept from the Hegelian reference in which Krader was deeply versed. Moments, elements, aspects and other such words do not do justice to the Hegelian *Momente* which implies members of an organic whole that are taken up singly and then in their significance within a growing process that gives it new significance in relation to the developing whole without losing their sense as something particular. This plays an important role in Krader's distinction between sporadic appearances of capitalism and their systematic development as well as between the elements of capitalism and its system.

The word *Kunst* and the plural *Künste* have in some instances proved difficult to translate. In modern parlance they fit nicely with the English words—art and the arts. And in some cases, these are appropriate translations. But when they are used, for example, to refer to classifications of labourers in mining in the 15th and 16th century they can't be so easily rendered. In this usage *Kunst* and *Künste* refer to a kind of expertise, knowledge, specialty with a practical component. Practical art or practical arts might fit in some instances. But in the examples of *Kunstmeister*, *Kunstknechte*, *Kunstschmied*, *Kunstjunge*, an English translation is difficult to find. It implies know-how and can relate to various sports, hobbies, activities of the body. All kinds of craftsmanship are referred to as *Künste* although Grimm points to the distinction between the free and unfree arts. [For a complete survey of the word *Kunst*, see Grimm, *Wörterbuch*, volume 11, columns 2666–2684]. The

*Kunstmeister*, for example, would be a knowledgeable master in some trade or craft. The *Kunstknechte* would be those servants involved in specialized crafts or occupations.

The words *Genossenschaft*, *genossenschaftlich* have been rendered corporative association, corporative. The word *Genossen* in modern German is the word for comrade and has been used by members of Communist parties and their sympathizers as a means of address to one another. The Nazis used the term *Volksgenossen* to refer to a party member or a member of the 'Aryan' or Nordic race, who was racially 'pure'.

The *Genossenschaft* has played an important role in the history of law in both Germany and England. In Germany, it was the subject of a prodigious four volume work in the late 19th century by Otto von Gierke (1868). Entitled *Das Deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht*, it challenged the notion of corporate personality as a fictive person first clearly enunciated by Pope Innocent IV, with a realist theory of the living organicity of corporate groups. In the former theory, the legal personality of the group was seen as a fictitious creation of the law to treat cases of such matters as group ownership, group liability, group inheritance, etc. Frederic William Maitland, an English translator of von Gierke, suggested in the translator's introduction to a section of Volume III of Gierke's work, that the notion of corporate personality had been associated with the image of the joint-stock company, linked to the notion of society or *Gesellschaft* in German. Accordingly, the only way to deal with corporate entities in the law was by means of a legal fiction, that is, by treating the group as a whole as having a legal persona as a legal fiction. Maitland, following Gierke, however, championed a notion that those groups which had a traditional, living, communal foundation ought to be recognized as an organic, living entity in the law because they are real. Hence, the term *Genossenschaft* ought not to be translated into English by words that were derived from notions of *societas*, with its individualistic connotations but rather by notions that emphasize the collective, communal character of traditional, non-voluntary group life. As Maitland (Gierke, 1900 xxv–xxvi) explained it: "It was in a Germany that was full of new ideas and new hopes that a theory was launched which styled itself 'the German Genossenschaftstheorie.' Even the hastiest sketch of its environment, if it notices the appearance of the joint-stock company, should give one word to the persistence in Germany of agrarian communities with world-old histories, to the intricate problems that their dissolution presented, and to the current complaint that Roman law had no equitable solution for these questions and had done scant justice to the peasant ... A name was wanted which would unite many groups of men, simple and complex, modern and archaic; and *Genossenschaft* was chosen. The English translator must carefully avoid Partnership; perhaps in our modern

usage Company has become too specific and technical; Society also is dangerous; Fellowship with its slight flavour of an old England may be our least inadequate word ... our German Fellowship is no fiction, no symbol, no piece of the State's machinery, no collective name for individuals, but a living organism and a real person, with body and members and a will of its own. Itself can will, itself can act; it wills and acts by the men who are its organs as a man wills and acts by brain, mouth and hand. It is not a fictitious person; it is a *Gesammperson*, and its will is a *Gesamtwille*; it is a group-person, and its will is a group-will." The reader of this translation of Krader's work will understand that my use of 'corporative' is but an inadequate contrivance to render the sense of the German *Genossenschaft*.

