

BOOK REVIEWS

DICTIONARY OF LEGAL, COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL TERMS, Part I: English-German. By Clara-Erika Dietl, Anneliese A. Moss & Egon Lorenz. Second revised and enlarged edition, 1979. Pp. viii, 926. Matthew Bender & Company, Inc. New York.

DICTIONARY OF LEGAL, COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL TERMS, Part II: German-English. By Clara-Erika Dietl in collaboration with Egon Lorenz, Anneliese A. Moss, Wiebke Buxbaum & David T. Donaldson. First edition, 1983. Pp. xi, 782. Matthew Bender & Company, Inc. New York.

Bilingual dictionaries, compared with the familiar monolingual references, are a breed apart; they serve readers who, at home in one language, need help with words in a second. Thus, the reference the German-language reader of English turns to is the "English-German" bilingual dictionary; the words to be defined appear in English and the definitions in German. Similarly, the English-language reader of German turns to the "German-English" bilingual dictionary.

With a single notable exception, no satisfactory German-English/English-German bilingual law dictionary has been available until now. Hanns Kniepkamp published his bilingual *Law Dictionary* in 1941 and a revised edition in 1954.¹ Useful as far as it goes, it is too short (216 pages) and, therefore, is too selective to be of real help. A competitor of sorts is Robert Weissenstein's English-German *Anglo-amerikanisches Rechtswoerterbuch*, published in Zurich in 1950,² which is intended for the German-language reader. Weissenstein's volume is also thin (199 pages), offering fairly full statements in German of a limited number of terms from British and American law. These full statements mean, of course, an even greater selectivity than is found in Kniepkamp's work.

A more ambitious project, if not obviously more successful, is the two-volume Beseler-Jacobs *Law Dictionary*, which first appeared

¹ H.P. KNIÉPKAMP, RECHTSWOERTERBUCH, I. Teil: Englisch-Deutsch, II. Teil: Deutsch-Englisch (rev. ed. 1954).

² R.F. WEISSENSTEIN, ANGLO-AMERIKANISCHES RECHTSWOERTERBUCH (1950).

in 1929; in the latest revision, a thick (888 pages) paperback volume covers the English-German section, and a much thinner (385 pages) volume covers the German-English section.³ Though there are many, many entries, the German-English volume in particular is unsatisfactory. One might have expected strings of defining entries marking different contexts, and also, sub-entries illustrating usage. All one finds, however, is a single defining word or two. As a result, the Baseler-Jacobs volumes look all too much like a dictionary of synonyms, albeit in two languages.

The one exception in this unsatisfactory situation has been Gerhard Erdsiek and Clara-Erika Dietl's two-volume English-German *Dictionary of Legal, Commercial, and Political Terms*, published in West Germany in 1964.⁴ A revised version of "Erdsiek-Dietl", in which Frau Dietl has been joined by Anneliese A. Moss and Egon Lorenz, appeared in 1979. In this work, the first item under review here, the German reader has a full-scale treatment of British and American legal language, from real property to public international law, from "abatement of a fee" to "zoning". Good use is made of the principle of master entries, such as "legacy", followed by a number of sub-entries, such as "abatement of a legacy", "ademption of a legacy", "contingent legacy", "cumulative legacy", "demonstrative legacy", and so on, illustrating actual use. As this reader can attest, the "Erdsiek-Dietl" and its successor, the revised edition, are genuinely useful. For English-language readers, however, the problem with "Erdsiek-Dietl" has been that it does not serve them, and no counterpart German-English volume has been available.

That gap has now been filled with the appearance, in 1983, of the companion volume, Clara-Erika Dietl's splendid German-English *Dictionary of Legal, Commercial and Political Terms*, published in the United States by Matthew Bender.

Law offices with an international practice and academic law libraries generally will want both volumes. Frau Dietl's German-English *Dictionary* has all the virtues of the older "Erdsiek-Dietl", offering master entries for the full range of West German law and for German commerce and politics, too. To illustrate the scope of the work, consider for example her treatment of the German

³ D. v. BESELER & B. JACOBS, *LAW DICTIONARY, ENGLISH-GERMAN* (3d ed. 1976); D. v. BESELER & B. JACOBS, *LAW DICTIONARY, GERMAN-ENGLISH* (3d ed. 1971).

⁴ G. ERDSIEK & C.-E. DIETL, *WOERTERBUCH FUER RECHT, WIRTSCHAFT UND POLITIK*, 1. Teil A-K, 2. Teil L-Z (1964).

"*bestimmen*". Unlike many German verbs, more specific than their rough English-language counterparts, the verb "*bestimmen*" is on many readings fairly general in import and, more serious, systematically ambiguous. That is, it can mean "to determine" or "to set", comparable to the German "*festsetzen*"; "to specify", comparable to the German "*angeben*"; "to define", as in the German "*definieren*" or "*begrifflich festlegen*"; "to designate", as in the German "*bezeichnen*"; "to stipulate", as in the German "*ausbedingen*"; and, specifically in the law, "to appoint", as in the German "*ernennen*"; "to decide" and "to rule [that]", as in the German "*anordnen*"; "to regulate", as in the German "*regeln*"; and so on.

Unlike the treatment of "*bestimmen*" in, say, the old Beseler-Jacobs work, where the reader is left to guess between a couple of English-language defining expressions, Frau Dietl's new *Dictionary* gives "*bestimmen*" an entire column, and the substantive "*Bestimmung*" also gets a column. A host of different English-language readings of "*bestimmen*" are followed by sub-entries, illustrating "*bestimmen*" in use. Thus, "*einen Erben bestimmen*" for designating an heir, "*jemanden zu seinem Erben bestimmen*" for appointing somebody as one's heir, "*eine Frist bestimmen*" for fixing a time-limit, and "*einen Geldbetrag für einen bestimmen Zweck bestimmen*" for earmarking a sum of money for a definite purpose. The treatment of "*bestimmen*" is comparable in scope to the treatment of this difficult verb in each of the three current unabridged dictionaries of the German language, the *Brockhaus Wahrig*,⁵ the *Duden*,⁶ and the East German *Woerterbuch der Deutschen Gegenwartssprache*.⁷ In addition, Frau Dietl's treatment of general terms such as "*bestimmen*" is superior, both in scope and in detail, to both of the general or non-specialized, multi-volume bilingual German-English dictionaries, *Langenscheidt's*⁸ and the *Oxford-Harrap Standard German-English Dictionary*.⁹ In short, the *Dictionary* is valuable not only in the law but as a general bilingual

⁵ BROCKHAUS WAHRIG DEUTSCHES WOERTERBUCH, six vols. (G. Wahrig, H. Kramer & H. Zimmerman eds., 1980 to date) (this work is not yet complete).

⁶ DUDEN: DAS GROSSE WOERTERBUCH DER DEUTSCHEN SPRACHE, six vols. (G. Drosdowski ed., 1977-1981).

⁷ WOERTERBUCH DER DEUTSCHEN GEGENWARTSSPRACHE, six vols. (R. Klappenbach & W. Steinitz eds., 1964-1977).

⁸ LANGENSCHIEDT'S ENCYCLOPAEDIC DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH AND GERMAN LANGUAGES, Part II: German-English, two vols. (O. Springer ed., rev. ed. 1974).

⁹ OXFORD-HARRAP STANDARD GERMAN-ENGLISH DICTIONARY, four vols. (T. Jones ed., 1977 to date) (this work is not yet complete).

reference work as well.

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