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University of Miami Inter-American Law Review

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10-1-1984

At Long Last a Portuguese-English/English-  
Portuguese Legal Dictionary: Dicionário Jurídico-  
Law Dictionary By Maria Chaves de Mello

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### Recommended Citation

Keith S. Rosenn, *At Long Last a Portuguese-English/English-Portuguese Legal Dictionary: Dicionário Jurídico-Law Dictionary* By Maria Chaves de Mello, 16 U. Miami Inter-Am. L. Rev. 431 (1984)

Available at: <http://repository.law.miami.edu/umialr/vol16/iss2/9>

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## BOOK REVIEW

### At Long Last a Portuguese-English/English- Portuguese Legal Dictionary

#### Dicionário Jurídico—Law Dictionary

BY MARIA CHAVES DE MELLO

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL: BARRISTER'S EDITORA, 1984. Pp.503.

*Available in the U.S. through the University of Miami Inter-  
American Law Review for \$15.00*

Publication of the first Portuguese-English/English-Portuguese juridical dictionary is a most welcome event. Until now, those who work with Brazilian and Portuguese legal materials had to resort to Spanish-English legal dictionaries.<sup>1</sup> That situation is now likely to be reversed. Maria Chaves de Mello's Portuguese-English dictionary is so far superior to the slender Spanish-English legal dictionaries that those working with Spanish legal materials will also find her dictionary most helpful.

The author is a Brazilian lawyer who has spent many years translating English juridical terms. She has done an excellent job in rendering the more than 8,600 English entries into Portuguese. It is a pleasant surprise to find accurate Portuguese translations for terms like the Mallory Rule, the Palsgraf doctrine, the abstention doctrine, collateral source rule, yellow dog contract, and the over-breadth doctrine. Even such recently coined terms as palimony are included. On the other hand, the inclusion of certain obsolete English terms such as abbroachment or abbrochment is surprising, and the inclusion of certain non-legal terms such as Xmas and XX Ale is amusing. Such obsolete and non-legal terms are, however, few and far between.

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1. *I.e.*, M. BEAN, HANDBOOK OF SPANISH-ENGLISH AND ENGLISH-SPANISH LEGAL WORDS AND PHRASES (1933); L. ROBB, DICTIONARY OF LEGAL TERMS: SPANISH-ENGLISH AND ENGLISH-SPANISH (1955); J. TESADA Y. SAINZ, SPANISH AND ENGLISH LEGAL AND COMMERCIAL DICTIONARY (1954); G. VANSON, SPANISH-ENGLISH LEGAL TERMINOLOGY (1982).

This dictionary is most helpful for translating English legal terms into Portuguese. It is less helpful for translating Portuguese into English, and its utility is limited for the user who does not understand Portuguese. The dictionary contains nearly 5,900 Portuguese entries, 32 per cent fewer than the number of English entries. Because the author's explanations are given in Portuguese even in the English-Portuguese section of the dictionary, the non-Portuguese reader may occasionally be misguided. For example, the Portuguese word *abalroação* is mistranslated as "allision", but the Portuguese explanation that follows makes it clear that the author meant "collision." Similarly, *absolutória* is mistranslated as "judgment for", but the Portuguese explanation shows that the author meant "acquittal."

Generally speaking, the translations are impressively accurate. Even frequently mistranslated terms, such as *homicídio culposo* (involuntary manslaughter), *dano moral* (pain and suffering), and *penhora* (attachment) are rendered into English correctly. One can quibble about the translations of occasional words, but rarely does one find anything that is plainly wrong.<sup>2</sup>

One minor problem that will hopefully be eliminated in the next edition is a number of literal translations into little used English. For example, *ação petitória* is translated as "petitory action" and *ação pignoratícia* is translated as "pignoratitia action." While technically correct, these translations force most readers to an English legal dictionary to find that petitory action is a suit to establish or enforce plaintiff's title to real property, while a pignoratitia action is one brought to execute a pledge. A dictionary that supplied these definitions directly would be preferable.

Despite these minor flaws, this dictionary is an enormously useful research and writing tool. It belongs in the library of everyone concerned with Hispanic law and is essential for anyone working with Luso-Brazilian law.

KEITH S. ROSENN\*

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2. One exception is negligence *per se*, which is mistranslated into Portuguese as *negligência grave* (grave negligence), *falta grosseira* (gross fault), or *culpa grave* (grave fault).

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