My copy of Marcilio’s third edition, which I purchased three years ago, is already dog-eared and its binding shows wear. So, I was very pleased when Peter Gergay, chair of ATA’s Dictionary Review Committee, contacted me to review the fourth edition, which I was already planning to acquire.

If you are surprised that I referred to the dictionary by its author’s first name, that is just a Brazilian thing and how the Brazilian translator community refers to the dictionary both within and outside of Brazil. In the U.S., we have Webster’s and the Michaelis; in Brazil we have the Aurélio and the Marcílio.

About the Author

In an interview by Naomi Sutcliff de Moraes that appeared in the October 2011 issue of PLData, the newsletter of ATA’s Portuguese Language Division, we learn that Marcilio Moreira Castro has a degree in law from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. He is also a Tradutor Público Juramentado, meaning he has passed a certification exam in one of Brazil’s 26 states, so his signed translations are binding in the Brazilian courts. We also learn that an internship at the Secretaria de Direito Econômico do Ministério da Justiça, whose work is comparable to that of the U.S. Department of Justice Antitrust and Tax Divisions, confirmed Marcilio’s interest in the financial-economic segment of law. The author is very well known and highly regarded in the Brazilian Portuguese translators’ and interpreters’ communities. Marcilio offers online courses and maintains an active blog (Dicionário Marcílio) that allows subscribers to send in questions, which he is pleased to answer.

Layout

This hardcover dictionary boasts 856 pages. The publisher’s information, table of contents, author’s comments, and two forewords occupy pages VII through XVI. These sections are followed by a very complete introduction (pages XVII through XXV), where Marcilio provides a brief explanation of how the dictionary came about and the method used for compiling and organizing the terms included therein. He also expresses the importance of this type of work in Brazilian Portuguese.

Regarding the dictionary itself, I was surprised to note that the new edition was physically smaller and lighter than the previous one, though it was advertised to contain more entries. It fits much better in my briefcase, and I am grateful for that. The new edition has a few other novelties, including bookmark ribbons for each language, and a vertical banner on the edge of the long side of the pages identifying the letters and language sections (e.g., a black banner for the Portuguese section, a gray banner for the English). The fonts used are also smaller, but that does not interfere with the ease of reading.

The foreword for the third edition by Danilo Nogueira, reprinted in the fourth edition, states that this is “a different type of dictionary.” The fourth edition also boasts a second foreward, in which Sandra R. Mattos Rudzit, a lawyer and translator, states that Marcilio’s book is her most important resource. Their feelings are shared by many translators working in the English/Brazilian Portuguese language pair, myself included.

Content

The Dictionary of Law, Economics and Accounting is geared toward translators and other professionals who work in those areas in both English and Portuguese. It offers a multi-
dimensional view of terms, covering meaning, usage, and applicability. Marcilio offers straightforward translations, practical examples, support for differentiations, and false cognates that include citations from renowned works in the specific field (or fields) to which the entry applies.

Besides the new entries and the physical differences noted above, some entries have been expanded: for example, vigência (perder vigência); “arm’s length” (“price”). Marcilio provides a nice, though not exhaustive, list of new and expanded terms following the table of contents. I was happy to see the term “turnkey contract” (contrato de empreitada global) included. Among the terms I missed, the one that stands out is “gross negligence.” I am never satisfied or comfortable with negligência grossa, and was hoping Marcílio would save me from using that.

A comparison between the same terms in Marcílio’s and my other Brazilian law dictionary illustrates the superiority of his work. For this review I will focus on the term negociar. Mauricio’s dictionary gives us 51 lines of text distributed over two columns, with eight individual subentries in the form of phrases with derivative terms and usage, plus examples of sentence construction and references. The cross reference has the reader looking for “bargain,” “negotiate,” “negotiable,” “trade” (verb), and “trading,” thus providing a very complete and encompassing understanding of the term. My other legal dictionary provides the reader with three lines of text for negociar. There are no examples and, in terms of cross-references, the same dry list of words without references or usage notes is provided. In Marcilio’s work, words are shown as multidimensional. They are not just a string of letters with meaning attached, regardless of how the word is applied or in what domain.

One of the most useful sections of this dictionary starts on page 769. In the Anexos section of the book, Marcilio regales us with information, recommendations, observations on usage, and comparisons of style, form, and purpose. The reader will also find observations regarding terminology, translation, and the appropriateness of terms used based on the impact of the civil law and common law systems.

Overall Evaluation
I consider the Dictionary of Law, Economics and Accounting to be one of my treasures. Still, I wish we could get it in electronic format. I have found some fault with the editing, but nothing I would consider serious. Still, such errors cause me to do a double-take, such as “rodshaw” instead of “roadshow” (page XI), referring to the last entry on page 696, and “relif” (as in “interlocutory relief”) on page 589. You might accuse me of nitpicking here, and you would probably be right.

Overall, Marcilio’s dictionary is an essential tool for professionals (not just translators or interpreters) who work in both English and Brazilian Portuguese. The dictionary complements monolingual and bilingual dictionaries that focus on any of the fields covered.

Notes

Information and Contacts

Giovanna L. Lester is the co-founder of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Florida (ATIF), an ATA chapter. An ATA-certified Portuguese>English translator, she has worked in the translation and interpreting profession since 1980. She is a past administrator of ATA’s Interpreters Division. She created Speaking Out!, ATIF’s quarterly newsletter, as well as CMI Tides, the newsletter of the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters. Contact: giolester@gmail.com.

Have an idea for a dictionary you would like to see reviewed? Contact Peter A. Gergay, chair of ATA’s Dictionary Review Committee, at pgergay@aol.com.