



BUSTED RIBS AND BROKEN ENGLISH

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All Post Oaks Are Not Created Equal

I recently had the honor to get my hands on the German version of *Post Oaks and Sand Roughs* (thanks to Hubert Straßl), entitled *Rauher Sand und Wilde Eichen*, which translates literally to “Rough Sand and Wild Oaks”. Although my German is very poor (despite 4 years of study in High School), one thing struck me immediately; this version is vastly superior to the English version!

The sole English edition was published by Donald M. Grant in 1990. It is now out-of-print (although I do have a copy for sale if anyone needs one, see my web page for details).

The German edition I have was published by the “Erster Deutscher Fantasy Club” (“First German Fantasy Club”) in 1994 as #93 in their “Fantasia” series. The ISBN is 3-924443-74-2.

Now, I can’t comment as to the quality of the translation. My German is far too poor for that. But the presentation is excellent.

The main improvement is extensive footnotes. These give vital translations of the fictionalized names (such as “Talon and Bow” = “Spear and Fang”). This is much more useful (and seemingly more complete) than the “Index” at the end of the English version. They also give very informative information. For example, on page 39 of the English version, “Steve Costigan”

states, concerning confession stories:

“I don’t believe I could write that sort of stuff”

and in the German edition we get the footnote Howard nevertheless wrote some stories of this type — four of them brought to light in: Price, Robert M.: LURID CONFESSIONS #1, Mount Olive, NC 1986. “A Matter of Age”; “The Curse of Greed”; “The Voice of the Mob” and “The Devil in His Brain”. All are still unavailable in German.

True, some of the footnotes are strictly for German audiences (such as explaining what a “barber pole” and an “ice cream soda” are), but the majority would be insightful even to American readers.

There are other, less important improvements. No less than eleven photographs of REH, as well as photos of Truett Vinson and Tevis Clyde Smith. Many nicely done drawings by Bodo Schäfer. The story “Spear and Fang” and the poem “A Man” (in both English and German, to the best of my knowledge the only publication of this poem). A map of Texas. Several drawings made by REH in his letters.

True, there are some items in the English edition omitted from the German, such as the poem “The Seven-Up Ballad”. But overall, the German edition looks like a true labor of love by committed fans. Should a new English edition ever be produced, the publisher would be well advised to study and emulate the German version.