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Joseph Dainow

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Les Grands Systèmes de Droit Contemporains (Droit Comparé), by René David.* Librairie Dalloz, Paris 1964. Pp. 630.

Professor René David has been studying and teaching foreign and comparative law for a great many years; he is universally recognized as one of the foremost scholars in this field. He has travelled and worked in many countries outside of France, and he recently prepared the Civil Code of Ethiopia. In his course of comparative civil law he has, over the years, covered many different legal systems. In this book he has distilled the essence of a great deal of his experience and thought, and it commands the attention of the legal professions everywhere. It does not take prophetic vision to predict that it will be translated and used in other languages besides the original French.

In the broad scope of his experience, Professor David has found that the legal systems of the various countries can be grouped in what might be called juridical families, and that the comparative study of foreign legal systems can be centered on certain models or types which can be considered as representative of the respective families or groups.

Accordingly, after a brief historical background of comparative law and a short treatment of its nature and purposes¹ he deals with the significant contemporary legal systems in the following groups: the Romano-Germanic family; the Socialist group (Soviet law; laws of the popular democracies); the Common Law family (English law; law of the United States); Religious and Traditional laws (Mohammedan; Hindu; Chinese; Japanese; also Africa and Madagascar). The Scandinavian countries are touched upon in the first family although they are sometimes considered a separate group; Louisiana, Quebec, and Puerto Rico are considered as having preserved their civil law tradition and thereby retain a place in the first family despite admixtures of their common law influences. In each group there is a tripartite treatment: its historical development, its structure, its sources and methods of operation.

A supplement of classified bibliographical information is a great mine of resources even though selected and limited to the western European languages. There is also another supplement

*Professor at the Faculty of Law of Paris.

1. More fully discussed in his earlier book *TRAITÉ ÉLÉMENTAIRE DE DROIT COMPARÉ* (1950); see Book Review, 11 *LA. L. REV.* 271 (1951).

of information about comparative law centers and libraries as well as programs of comparative law study in France and in other countries. The book has a comprehensive index.

Although directed primarily for law students in France, this book will become one of the indispensable tools for comparative law work everywhere.

*Joseph Dainow***

**Professor of Law, Louisiana State University.