

LEXICON GRAMMATICORUM

Who's Who in the History of World Linguistics

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Diez, Friedrich Christian, b. Mar. 15, 1794. Giessen, Germany, d. May 29, 1876, Bonn, Germany; founder of Romance philology.

D. studied Class. at Giessen, 1811–3, then mod. langs. and lit. at Giessen, 1814–6, and Göttingen, 1816–8. His studies were interrupted by his decision to take part in the Fr. campaign after the battle of Leipzig, 1813. In 1818, D. met Goethe in Jena. After being employed as librarian (Darmstadt) and tutor (Utrecht), 1818–20, he obtained his doctorate from Giessen 1821, and completed his *Habilitation* at Bonn 1822. From 1823 he was *prof. extraordinarius*, from 1830 *ordinarius* for "mittlere und neuere Lit." at Bonn Univ., where he stayed for the rest of his life.

D.'s chief merit and one which deservedly entitles him to be called the founder of Romance philol., strictly speaking of Romance langs. and history of literature as acad. branches, is that—working with a comp. method—he was the first to grasp that all Neo-Lat. langs. derive from variants of spoken Lat. (VLat.), and not from OProv., as his Fr. colleague F. → Raynouard erroneously presumed.

His attention reportedly drawn by Goethe to Raynouard's *Choix des poésies originales des Troubadours* (1816–21), D. decided to undertake his own study of the works of Prov. troubadours; this led to his first publ. (1818, 1825, and, much more important, 1826 and 1829), the latter of which also make D. the initiator of Prov. studies in Germany, as it was the first systematic presentation of Med. lyrics in southern France and contiguous territories.

These studies and the awareness of J. → Grimm's *Dr. Grammatik* (1819–37) and F. → Bopp's *Vergl. Grammatik des Skr., Zend, Armenischen, Gr., Lat., Litauischen, Aitsl., Got. und Dt.* (1833–52) provided the impetus for D.'s *Grammatik der Romanischen Sprachen* (1836–43), a comp. approach to Neo-Lat. lang., their interdependence and relations to class. Lat. In this work, D. proves that VLat. is the connecting link between CLat. and the Romance langs. Neo-Lat. langs. are classified into *ostromanisch* (It., Rum.) and *westromanisch* (Fr. and Prov., Sp. and Port.). The first part of

the *Grammatik* (1836) deals with phonetics, discerning phonetic change as the origin of all ling. changes. The second part is on morphol. (1838), the third on syntax (1843). A comprehensive introd. furnishes the hist. framework for the linguistic phenomena described.

The *Grammatik* was suppl. by the *Etymol. Wh. der Romanischen Sprachen* (1853), which illustrated and developed the ideas of the former work and constituted a considerable advance in the study of etymol. In his preface to the dict., D. defined what he referred to as the *kritische Methode*—as a systematic approach to the etymol. of a word, supported by the consideration of dial. and hist. sources, and thus fundamentally different from the rather subjective and arbitrary etymol. of his predecessors.

D. publ. several minor works, such as eds. of texts (1846, 1852, 1865) and studies of troubadour-inspired med. lit. in other countries (1863). The last paper publ. in his lifetime deals with word-creation in Romance (1875).

The importance of D.'s works is proven by early transl. into Fr., E. and other European langs. The *Grammatik* and *Wörterbuch* are milestones in the development of the Romance national philols. which took place in the first half of the 19th c. The socio-cultural and ideol. background of G. Romanticism (e.g. the transl. of It., Sp. and Port. med. poetry into G. by August Wilhelm Schlegel, the studies of A.W.'s brother F. → Schlegel on Boccaccio, Ludwig Tieck's transl. of Don Quijote and the genl. discovery and vogue of Med. and Renaissance lit.) should not be neglected in any attempt to evaluate the importance of D.'s sci. theories and their impact on contemporary and even mod. scholarship. This applies above all to the assessment of troubadour lyrics. Moreover, D.'s down-to-earth views on ling. developments and med. lit., in considerable contrast to the views of many of his colleagues, provide another indication as to why a large portion of his work continues to be relevant today.

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Wolfgang Schweickard