

Hammerich, Louis Leonor

b. 31 July 1892, Copenhagen, Denmark

d. 3 November 1975, Hírsholm, Denmark

Life and Work

With a short interval, teaching principles of comparative German philology and the early languages and literature of Germanic people and Celtic language and literature in the academic year 1946-1947 at the State University of Utrecht, Hammerich was a professor of Germanic philology at Copenhagen University from 1922 until his retirement in 1958. In Copenhagen, where he had studied law and German philology, he was a colleague of Otto Jespersen (1860-1943) and Holger Pedersen (1867-1953). In 1918 Hammerich completed his doctoral dissertation called *National og Fremmed. Om den rytmiske teknik hos Heine og Platen* in which he carefully analysed complex metrical aspects, the change of accent for reasons of dialectal factors, in the work of the German writers Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) and August von Platen-Hallermünde (1796-1835). His interest in Dutch language and literature eventually led him to accept a professorship in Utrecht in 1946: in 1925 he spent a sabbatical year in the Netherlands and his wife, Clara Hammerich-Flensborg, translated Dutch literary works into Danish. With Martha A. Muusses he wrote a *Hollandsk Grammatik* (1930). In this grammar Hammerich's stress on the role of spoken language can be found in an extensive description of the sound system of Dutch. He wrote several studies on phonetics in Germanic languages. In 1946 his inaugural lecture in Utrecht -- in 1936 he became a honorary doctorate -- dealt with the problems of the classification and development of germanic languages: these

languages develop gradually as if they were organisms with cells splitting up and generating new languages. One should, however, not forget the socio-historical and cultural factors which influence language development.

His work in German and Germanic philology led to a wide range of publications (in German and Danish) starting with the edition of classical German texts like Der Ackermann aus Böhmen by Johannes von Tepl or with studies of Goethe's West-östlicher Divan. But apart from literary interests he published on German dialects, German legal history (Clamor, eine rechtsgeschichtliche Studie, 1941), sound laws, fairy tales and on medieval and celtic traditions. He also worked on Eskimo dialects (Personalendungen und Verbalsystem im Eskimoischen (1936) and in 1969 he held the Nansen memorial lecture in Oslo on "Eskimo dialects" after several journeys to Alaska) and on specific topics of German grammar: on the preterite tense and numbers. In 1924 he also initiated the publication of a critical Pali dictionary in Denmark which was not completed but was handed over to an international group of researchers.

It is hard to give a well-rounded picture of Hammerich's philological work because he tended to leave a domain of research as soon as he had published on it or thought that there was nothing new to be found. Three main threads of thought, however, can be distinguished in Hammerich's his philological work are: problems of accent and its dialectal source, the study of Eskimo languages and especially its grammatical aspects and the study of Dutch language and literature.

Major Works

(1918) National og Fremmed. Om den rytmiske teknik hos Heine og Platen, København.

- (1921) Zur deutschen Akzentuation, København: Bianco Lunos.
- (1935) Kortfattet tysk Lydhistorie, København: Gads.
- (1936) Personalendungen und Verbalsystem im Eskiomoischen, København: Levin og Munksgaard.
- (1945) K. Fabricius, L.L. Hammerich, V. Lorenzen (eds.), Holland-Danmark, Forbindelserne mellem de to Lande gennem Tiderne, København: Jespersen og Pios.
- (1946) Indeling en ontwikkeling van het Germaans, Utrecht: Oosthoek.
- (1966) Zahlwörter und Zahlbegriff, Mannheim: Duden.

Further Reading

- Paul Diderichsen (1952), "Hammerich et ses méthodes" (repr. from Acta philologica scandinavica vol 21/2).
- H. Bach (ed.1952), Festskrift til L.L. Hammerich på tresårsdagen den 31. Juli 1952, København: Gads.
- (1962) Festgabe für L.L. Hammerich, aus Anlass seines siebzigsten Geburtstags, København: Naturmethodens Sproginstitut.
- Henk Schultink (1976-1977), "Louis Leonor Hammerich", Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde (1976-1977), 50-62.
- (1977) "L.L. Hammerich, 31. Juli 1892 - 1. November 1975". Oversigt over det kongelige danske Videnskabernes Selskabs virksomhed, København.

F. Vonk

671 words