

Titel: BREV TIL: Louis Hjelmslev FRA: Roman Jakobson (1953-01-05)

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY

SLAVIC LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURES

January 5, 1953

ROMAN Jakobson
HOLYOKE 29
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

Professor Louis Hjelmslev
Ordraphøjvej 40
Charlottenlund, Denmark

Dear Louis,

Please accept for both of you Svät'a's and my warmest wishes for the New Year, and please extend these wishes to the whole of Vibeke's family, to which we feel so strongly attached. A really enjoyable New Year's gift I received from Indiana was your "Prolegomena to a Theory of Language". It's a genuine pleasure to have your volume in English, and in such a suitable presentation. I am happy especially for those of my students who were not able to read the Danish version.

The days between Christmas and New Year were this year very tiresome for us since we had in Cambridge and Boston two annual meetings, those of LSA and MLA, and a particularly high number of linguists from all parts of this country came. We had many interesting conversations and discussions, and particularly over drinks with Martinet and Whitfield we often reminisced of you, with a strong feeling of missing you.

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It's a real pity, Louis, that we are so far from each other. So many things could be orally discussed by us in a most productive way. When working on my book I sharply realize your absence. I also complained about the distance which separates us when reading the last issue of Acta Linguistica. It's a real pity that despite being highly honored by the function of the President of the International Council of Acta Linguistica, I was not in a position to read Sørensen's paper on the liquids metathesis before it appeared in the issue I just received. I must frankly say that this paper is in striking contradiction to the high international level of your, or permit me to say our, international review, and it strongly compromises the author. The paper shows a most insufficient knowledge both of the well known Slavic facts he discusses, and of the basic literature of these problems. The majority of his conclusions are in obvious conflict both with the Slavic linguistic diachrony and with the cardinal methodological demands of historical linguistics. I feel obliged to expose the basic factual and theoretical errors of this paper in reviewing it. Of course I will at the same time emphasize that this diletantish paper is to be considered as a mere slip in the glorious history of Acta Linguistica.

Before being able to send you my book, I hope to mail you in a few weeks my study on Slavic comparative metrics, which is appearing in the Oxford Slavonic Papers, and the article I wrote with Cherry and Halle for the first issue of Language 1953 on the application of the mathematical theory of communication to phonemic analysis.

Waiting for your new papers, and hoping to see both of you in the not too distant future,

As ever yours,

Roman
Roman Jakobson

rj/fs

J. 16
July. 12. 1. 53.