

Preface

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/plcp.3.preface>

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**Prague Linguistic Circle Papers: Travaux du cercle
linguistique de Prague nouvelle série . Volume 3**

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**[Prague Linguistic Circle Papers / Travaux du cercle
linguistique de Prague N.S., 3]**

1999. viii, 310 pp.

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Preface

Preparing the present volume, the editors approached researchers in different domains of linguistics who have worked in this field with longterm narrow relationships to the ideas and methods of European structural linguistics, and, especially, to those of the Prague School. In most cases, the contributors have offered studies closely connected to lectures they delivered at the Prague conference devoted to the 70th anniversary of the Prague Linguistic Circle and to the centenary of the birth of Roman O. Jakobson, which was organized in the days of March 28-30, 1996, by Charles University and the Circle in cooperation with the Institutes of the Czech language and of Czech Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. At the conference, more than 80 lectures were presented on different aspects of those issues of linguistics, theory of literature and the semiotics of arts the research of which was initiated or inspired by the Circle, and on the extraordinarily rich impact of R.O. Jakobson in all these domains.

Josef Vachek, who, as the Honorary Chairman of the Circle, intended to open the conference, unfortunately was too heavily ill to take part in it; he passed away on March 31, 1996, at the age of 86. The Prague School thus lost one of its best known representatives, the author of fundamental views on historical phonology, on written language and on the history of the Circle, an unforgettable personality who maximally contributed to the fact that the School's significance and impact has been known in its entirety to the linguistic world, notwithstanding all the historical obstacles.

Introducing these contributions, which witness that the tradition founded 70 years ago by the classical Circle still finds its living and active continuation, we would like to thank first of all Bertie Kaal and other collaborators of John Benjamins Publishing House, whose activity was decisive for making it feasible for the volume to appear in a good shape.

Editors

We dedicate this volume to the memory of Professor Oldřich Leška, an outstanding Praguian scholar. Professor Leška contributed substantially to Slavonic studies, to the theory and history of structural linguistics, and to the philosophy of language, and he initiated the revival of the Prague Linguistic Circle and this new series of its Travaux. Professor Leška was fully involved in the preparation of the present volume, but most unfortunately he died (on August 9, 1997) before the volume was ready for publication. Praguian linguistics has lost a unique personality in him.