

*As is well known, there are two types of scholars, those who leave an eternal imprint upon their respective fields of research, and those who do not leave such an imprint. This is true of linguistics as well. And it seems that fate drew at least two linguists of the former kind into connection with the University of Ljubljana, namely Lucien Tesnière and the somewhat younger Roman Jakobson. Roman Jakobson was offered a post at the University of Ljubljana at the time when his then home country, Czechoslovakia, was threatened by German occupation. Had Roman Jakobson followed the call to come to Ljubljana, he would have had to flee again in a year or so, when Slovenia was occupied by Germans, Italians and Hungarians. Wisely, Roman Jakobson decided to accept a post in Sweden, from where he continued to the US. There I had the honour of meeting him at Harvard University, and was the object of his special attention, precisely because I was a Slovene, as he himself explained to me.*

*Today we have the opportunity to celebrate the other great linguist connected with Slovenia, Lucien Tesnière. Much will be said about him and his work at the present symposium, so that I can be brief. The history of modern linguistics shows that no school of linguistic thought can escape using - in one way or another - Tesnière's ideas, notably his valency theory. Even transformational generative grammar, although otherwise closely tied to the American tradition in language research, has had to incorporate valency into its own view of language and languages. Moreover, Tesnière's ideas are not only implemented but are also being developed further. Here I can mention a perhaps less known, but very serious Scandinavian, more precisely Danish, effort in this direction, to be presented in this symposium. The way the Danish school treats valency makes it clear that valency is not only an important tool in the description of any single language but also in language typology.*

*It is no wonder that Tesnière became interested in the Slovene dual, this being a rare phenomenon in European languages. What is more astonishing is his own scholarly achievement in this field: his publications on the Slovene dual have stood the test of time, and remain among the best treatises written about the Slovene language. The special status of Tesnière within Slovene linguistics is indisputable. The Slovene*

*Academy of Arts and Sciences recognized this by electing Lucien Tesnière a corresponding member of the academy back in the fifties. On the other hand, it is only to be deplored that the Academy never bestowed a similar honour on Roman Jakobson.*

*At the end I wish to point out that Tesnière stands out also as one of those Frenchmen who, when travelling abroad, not only insist on being members of a great nation but prove with their work outside France, in this case in Slovenia, that the insistence on their home country being great is no empty boast, but something that is proved time and again through the positive action of its subjects.*

*Janez Orešnik*

*Member of Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences*