

Proposal for a thematic workshop at the 14th ICHoLS Paris 2017:

On the Place of Rasmus Rask in the history of the linguistic sciences

In 1817, i.e. 200 years ago before this Congress is being staged, Rasmus Rask (1787-1832) obtained a grant from the King of Denmark to publish his prize essay on the Origin of the Old Norse or Icelandic Language (Rask 2013: *xxxvii). This occasion seems to warrant a new appraisal of the place of Rask's oeuvre in the history of Linguistics and accordingly we have contacted a number of scholars who have worked with Rask's various writings. They were all willing to contribute papers on the subject.

Rasmus Rask (1787-1832) ranks among the founding fathers of the science of comparative linguistics (Robins 1967:170; Meillet 1924: 414). Nevertheless, there seems to be agreement that Rasmus Rask's influence on the mainstream of linguistics was channeled via Jacob Grimm so that it was only through the second edition of the *Deutsche Grammatik* that Rask's fame was established. It is a peculiarity of Rask's that he wrote most of his prolific oeuvre in Danish and that he had numerous projects going on at the same time so that when he died he left an enormous collection of manuscripts for eternity. And it probably also hampered his international influence (as much as his ability to finish his grand projects) that he did not obtain a steadily salaried tenured position in Denmark which allowed him to follow his own interests until a year before his death.

We welcome the opportunity of the ICHoLS in Paris 2017 to assemble a number of scholars who have recently worked with various aspects of Rasmus Rask's writings in order to take a fresh look at his place in linguistics: Has he – despite the fact that he did not publish too much in an internationally accessible language – had a decisive impact so that he should be counted among the founding fathers not only of Indo-European comparative scholarship but also of theoretical linguistics in general (Hjelmslev 1951)? The publication of Niels Ege's translation of the Prize Essay into English (Rask 2013) makes it possible for a new audience to read his theoretical ideas and to gauge how he put them into action in his empirical work. In short, Rask merits a new audience and this audience will be in need of a discussion of precisely what place Rasmus Rask should take in precisely what history of precisely which linguistics.

We have obtained consent to participate from the following list of researchers but we would also like to invite contributions from other scholars relevant to the theme:

Preliminary schedule (as of now 11 slots (= at least 1½ days) of 30 minutes, i.e. 20 minutes for presentation and 10 minutes for discussion):

Introduction to the workshop (one slot): On Rask and his place in the history of the language sciences, by the organizers

Leonid S. Chekin: *Rask's Russian life. On Rasmus Rask's letters and diary from his sojourn in St. Petersburg and beyond.*

Bernard Laks and John Goldsmith: *From Dialectology to Corpus Linguistics: some Remarks on empirical Linguistics in the 19th Century and today. De la dialectologie à la linguistique de corpus : quelques réflexions sur la linguistique empirique au 19^{eme} siècle et aujourd'hui.* (OBS! two slots)

Hans Basbøll : *From Jens Pedersen Høysgaard to Rasmus Rask and on to Karl Verner – a unique tradition in Danish linguistics*

Frans Gregersen : *Rask's view of the relationship between sound and letter and his phonetic vocabulary, a study of the prize essay (Rask 1818) in relation to the Orthographic treatise (Rask 1826)*

John Joseph : *Rask - Saussure – Hjelmslev, a continuous line of thought ?*

Jurij Kusmenko (conditional on support): title *tba*

Viggo Bank Jensen: *Rasmus Rask on the Vowel System of Romance.*

Final discussion : (OBS TWO slots :)

On the Place of Rasmus Rask in the history of the linguistic sciences :

Themes, i. a.: Rask as a rationalist vs. Rask as a Romanticist, the possible (lack of) influence from Herder ; Rask, Bopp and Grimm ; Rask as a forerunner for structuralism (Hjelmslev vs. Diderichsen) ; Rask and W. v. Humboldt