

EVA TICHY: *A SURVEY OF PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN*. BREMEN,
HEMPEN VERLAG, 2006, 144 PP.^[*]

reviewed by Lenka Dočkalová

In the pre-history of individual Indo-European languages we can differentiate between four to five evolutionary phases the oldest of which is the Proto-Indo-European one. “An unrecorded reconstructed common ancestor of Indo-European languages”, so is usually characterized the Proto-Indo-European language (PIE) whose existence was for a long time a matter of dispute among scientists, though nowadays it is taken for granted as an important part of historical-comparative research. The problem of the Proto-Indo-European language has become interesting and appealing for a great many linguists who have been, for over more than one century, trying to take a stand on it in their monographs and innumerable articles. Even at the beginning of the 21st century it is still in the center of linguists’ interest, and new works are being published. One of them is a book by Eva Tichy *A Survey of Proto-Indo-European* (Bremen, 2006).

The book under question is a translation (by its author in cooperation with James E. Cathey, University of Massachusetts Amherst) of the original German version called *Indogermanistisches Grundwissen für Studierende sprachwissenschaftlicher Disziplinen* (Freiburg, 1999), accompanying Eva Tichy’s lectures at the University of Freiburg.

The text is clearly organized into 17 chapters mapping the most important topics of respective linguistic disciplines. The chapters generally correspond with the traditional sequence used in European grammars: general introduction, phonology, morphology and syntax. Moreover, the book is supplemented with two appendices, one presenting the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and the other the Greek alphabet. This is indeed a commendable fact, as the reader can refer to it without needing additional textbooks. The book also contains an index. The list of chapters follows:

1. The Indo-European Family of Languages
2. Theoretical Bases I: Sound Laws
3. The Proto-Indo-European Sound Systems
4. Theoretical Bases II: Laryngeals, Morpheme Structure, and Ablaut
5. Parts of Speech, Sentence Structure and Intonation, Word Accent
6. Theoretical Bases III: Morphological Analysis
7. Thematic and Athematic Inflection
8. Nominal Composition
9. Nominal Inflection: Case, Number, Gender
10. Theoretical Bases IV: Accent-Ablaut Classes

[*] Previously unpublished. [Editor’s note]

11. Verbal Inflection: Person, Number, and Diathesis or Voice
12. Verbal Inflection: Perfect and Stative
13. Verbal Inflection: Moods
14. Verbal Inflection: Root Presents and Thematic Presents
15. Further Present Formations
16. Theoretical Bases V: Verbal Duration (Aktionsart), Tense, and Aspect
17. Verbal Inflection: s-Aorist and Root Aorist

The scope of the book can be guessed from the titles of the chapters. The first one introduces readers to classification of the Indo-European languages and language families derived from the PIE, providing basic information about concrete languages, such as when they were spoken with or where their speakers lived. Moreover, it makes an overview of extant texts and the most important linguistic features.

That there is a genetic relationship between Indo-European languages can be convincingly demonstrated on sound correspondences; these together with so-called sound laws are the central theme of the next chapter. Another topic of phonological descriptions is the PIE inventory of phonemes, laryngeal theory and subsequently reconstruction of the PIE morphematic structure in connection with the question of the PIE ablaut, as virtually all PIE roots can be understood as realizations of some simple radical structure if the laryngeal theory is taken into account. The PIE intonation and word stress are approached from the perspective of their unity with particular parts of utterances and sentence structure.

Morphological analyses presented in the book study particular morphemes of PIE words, i.e.: (reduplication +) root (+ primary suffix) (+ secondary suffix) + ending. The chapter on thematic and athematic nominal and verbal roots anticipates further exposition of the morphology of nouns and verbs. Nominal inflection includes at the same time commentaries on the meaning and use of individual morphological categories as well as different ways of formation of composites. The PIE verb is described in the same manner, i.e. from the perspective of morphological categories: person, number, voice, mood, tense and aspect. Out of the verbal tenses Tichy focuses in detail on present, perfect and aorist.

The exposition of the linguistic situation in the PIE phase is supported by numerous illustrative examples from the Indo-European languages mentioned, while Sanskrit, Latin and Greek are covered most. All information is laid out clearly and comprehensibly. Explained are also basic terms of respective disciplines (e.g. sound laws, ablaut, root reduplication etc.). The author either describes a particular phenomenon and then gives the term by which it is usually known in linguistics or the term is mentioned first and then explained. This mirrors the educational character of the book. The literature used is listed right in the text, next to concrete problems dealt with at that point. New hypotheses and references to other and more comprehensive researches are mentioned throughout the description of the PIE linguistic situation. Every chapter is in addition supplemented by a set of questions intended for the reader to review his understanding of the given topic.

In conclusion, it can be said that in showing PIE from the perspective of particular linguistic sub-disciplines the publication *A Survey of Proto-Indo-European* offers a general overview of the essentials of Indo-European comparative linguistics. It is not merely a description of the linguistic situation at a given point in time but it reconstructs the PIE situation as such. That is to say, an attempt is made to explain the genesis of the grammatical system of the period before the first major differentiation, i.e. around the year 3000 BC,

together with the origin of grammatical categories and primary functions of morphemes expressing them. Tichy focuses her attention particularly on the central plane of language system, the morphological level, though not without considering the origin of Indo-European ablaut, primary function of stress and so on. Though intended for students, the book will no doubt be found interesting by everyone wanting to learn more about methods and terminology of this multifarious area of scientific research. The description is not concerned with individual languages but is directed on the original language system stemming from historical linguistic comparison, based on language history if known, and from comparative reconstruction.