

# Reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European

## Schleicher's fable

Schleicher's fable (avis akvāsas ka) is an artificial text composed in the reconstructed language Proto-Indo-European (PIE), published by August Schleicher in 1868. Schleicher was the first scholar to compose a text in PIE. The fable is entitled *Avis akvāsas ka* ("The Sheep and the Horses"). At later dates, various scholars have published revised versions of Schleicher's fable, as the idea of what PIE should look like changed over time. The fable may serve as an illustration of the significant changes that the reconstructed language has gone through during the last 140 years of scholarly efforts.

The first revision of Schleicher's fable was made by Hermann Hirt (published by Arntz in 1939). A second revision was published by Winfred Lehmann and Ladislav Zgusta in 1979 [1]. Another version by Douglas Q. Adams appeared in the EIEC (1997:501). In 2007 Frederik Kortlandt published yet another version on his homepage [2].

### The Sheep and the Horses

Schleicher (1868)

*Avis akvāsas ka*

*Avis, jasmin varnā na ā ast, dadarka akvams, tam, vāgham garum vaghantam, tam, bhāram magham, tam, manum āku bharantam. Avis akvabhjams ā vavakat: kard aghnutai mai vidanti manum akvams agantam. Akvāsas ā vavakant: krudhi avai, kard aghnutai vividvant-svas: manus patis varnām avisāms karnauti svabhjam gharmam vastram avibhjams ka varnā na asti. Tat kukruvants avis agram ā bhugat.*

Hirt (1939)

*Owis ek'wōses-k<sup>w</sup>e*

*Owis, jesmin w̄lənā ne ēst, dedork'e ek'wons, tom, woghom g<sup>w</sup>rum weghontm, tom, bhorom megam, tom, gh'ymonm ōk'u bherontm, Owis ek'womos ewēwk<sup>w</sup>et: k'ērd aghnutai moi widontei gh'ymonm ek'wons ag'ontm. Ek'wōses ewēwk<sup>w</sup>ont: kl'udhi, owei!, k'ērd aghnutai vidontmos: gh'ymo, potis, w̄lənām owjōm k<sup>w</sup>r̄neuti sebhoi gh<sup>w</sup>ermom westrom; owimos-k<sup>w</sup>e w̄lənā ne esti. Tod k'ek'ruwos owis ag'rom ebhuget.*

Lehmann and Zgusta (1979)

*Owis ekwōsk<sup>w</sup>e*

*G<sup>w</sup>ērēi owis, k<sup>w</sup>esjo w̄lhnā ne ēst, ekwōns espeket, oinom ghe g<sup>w</sup>rum wo ġ hom we ġ hontm, oinomk<sup>w</sup>e me ġ am bhorom, oinomk<sup>w</sup>e ġ hm̄enm ōku bherontm, Owis nu ekwobh(j)os (ekwomos) ewewk<sup>w</sup>et: "Kēr aghnutoi moi ekwōns a ġ ontm nerm widn̄tei". Ekwōs tu ewewk<sup>w</sup>ont: "Kludhi, owei, kēr ghe aghnutoi n̄smei widn̄bh(j)os (widn̄mos): nēr, potis, owiōm r̄ w̄lhnām sebhi g<sup>w</sup>hermom westrom k<sup>w</sup>r̄neuti. Ne ġ hi owiōm w̄lhnā esti". Tod kekluwōs owis a ġ rom ebhuget.*

Kortlandt (2007)

*ʃ<sup>w</sup>euis ? keusk<sup>w</sup>e*

*ʃ<sup>w</sup>euis iosmi ʃ uel? n ne? st ? ekuns ? e'dērkt, tom 'g<sup>w</sup>rʃ eum uogom ugentm, tom m'geʃ m borom, tom dgmenm ? o? ku brentm. ? e uēuk<sup>w</sup>t ʃ<sup>w</sup>euis ? kumus: k<sup>w</sup>ntske ? moi kērt ʃ nerm ui'denti ? ekuns ʃ 'gentm. ? e ueuk<sup>w</sup>nt ? keus: kludi ʃ<sup>w</sup>uei, k<sup>w</sup>ntske nsmi kērt ui'dntsu: ʃ nēr potis ʃ<sup>w</sup>uiom ʃ ul? enm subī g<sup>w</sup>ormom uestrom k<sup>w</sup>r̄neuti, ʃ<sup>w</sup>uimus k<sup>w</sup>e ʃ uel? n ne? sti. To'd keklus ʃ<sup>w</sup>euis ʃ e'grom ? e bēu'gd.*

English Translation

### The Sheep and the Horses

[On a hill,] a sheep that had no wool saw horses, one of them pulling a heavy wagon, one carrying a big load, and one carrying a man quickly. The sheep said to the horses: "My heart pains me, seeing a man driving horses". The horses said: "Listen, sheep, our hearts pain us when we see this: a man, the master, makes the wool of the sheep into a warm garment for himself. And the sheep has no wool". Having heard this, the sheep fled into the plain.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schleicher%27s\\_fable](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schleicher%27s_fable)