

PREFACE

The present volume wants to develop some of the ideas of the late Professor V. Mathesius, the founder of the Prague Linguistic Group. In his conception, linguistic characterology introduces into linguistic analysis "the conceptions of value and synchronistic interrelations." He insisted on the fact that linguistic characterology deals only with important and fundamental features of a given language and tries to ascertain the relations existing between them. These fundamental features, it should be added, stand out most clearly if the examined language is confronted with some other language by the method of synchronistic comparison. This, of course, by no means excludes subsequent diachronistic approach to the facts revealed by this comparison. On the contrary, it is only the combination of both kinds of approach which may lead to the fullest possible comprehension of what are the really essential, characteristic features of the examined language systems.

It is hoped that the studies included in the present volume may throw some new light on English by showing which of its features stand out in comparison with Czech and some other Slavonic languages. At the same time, by pointing out some of the typical features of English, the contributions may prove helpful to Czech teachers of English as well as to translators from English into Czech (or, conversely, from Czech into English).

Brno, June 1960.

