

# Re: Etymological Help Needed

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- *From:* "G. Leo Sahakian" <[glsah@xxxxxxx](mailto:glsah@xxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Fri, 10 Jun 2005 04:42:06 +0200
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"Neeraj Mathur" <[neemathur@xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:neemathur@xxxxxxxxxxxxx)> a écrit dans le message de  
news: [d89osu\\$jgi\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:d89osu$jgi$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

>

> "Robert Rosen" <[rosen647@xxxxxxx](mailto:rosen647@xxxxxxx)> wrote in message

> [news:sjlga15si9jgicq868patb75a9n9j0qp13@xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:sjlga15si9jgicq868patb75a9n9j0qp13@xxxxxxxxxxxxx)

>> In looking through words that were derived from the PIE root  
bhel-3 in

>> the American Heritage Dictionary, I noticed that "pall-mall"  
was

>> derived (via obsolete French "pallemaille" and Italian  
"pallamaglio")

>> from Langobard "palla" 'ball.' However, every other Germanic  
word that

>> was derived from PIE \*bh- begins with \*b.

>

> I'm not entirely certain, but I think this is because of what's  
called the

> Second Germanic Sound Shift, or the High German Sound Shift. As  
the (latter)

> name suggests, it affected those dialects of West Germanic that  
were spoken

> in the south of the Germanic area – so southern Germany, Austria  
and

> Switzerland. Standard German exhibits this shift somewhat, but  
not

> completely. The shift as it applies to Standard German has  
affected Germanic

> p, t, and k (this last incompletely) by affricating or fricating  
them

> depending on position; I'm a bit unsure, but I suppose it is  
possible that

> in Langobardic (quite south, to be impacting on Italian) has  
also done

> something to its voiced consonants, thus changing Proto-Germanic  
\*b- to p-.

yes, the langobards (long beards) have given their name to  
lombardy, as the francs to france.

this name contains curiously the 3 voiced stops (probably from gh,

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bh and dh) before the 2d shift, but the name goes back to the romans: lango- or longobardi.

>

> (I'm unsure because, while I've heard it given as standard that 'palla'

> comes from a High German shift from b- to p-, I can't seem to find any

> documented examples of that shift; I don't have many Germanic reference

> books handy at the moment, however).

passau is from MHG. passawa < la. castra batava (neuter pl.).

>

> So the derivation of IE \*bh- > Proto-Germanic \*b- is still correct; the p-

> is the result of a secondary change within Langobardic.

while theoretically germanic b, d, g should become p, t, k in high german, the change was carried through only in the case of d: en/de day/tag, do/tun, drive/treiben, god/gott, lead/leiten, hold/halten etc.; but bed/bett, bear/bär, beard/bart, bite/beißen, good/gut, goose/gans, glide/gleiten,etc.; apart from that in many de. dialects b, g, d are devoiced (but "soft", unlike p, t, k), and at the same time p, t, k are softened, to the point of being confused with b, d, g; since the scribes had no special means of writing down these soft tenues, they sometimes wrote b, d, g, sometimes p, t, k; then the spelling was frozen one way or the other, resulting in the present orthography, leaving very little room for variety, whatever the individual pronunciations; most languages undergo similar processes.

>

>> In addition, I noticed that "psyche" was derived from "psukhein" (<

>> \*bhs-u-kh-), 'to breathe,' whereas every other Greek word that was

>> derived from PIE \*bh seems to begin with \*ph.

>

> It's a standard change in Greek to deaspirate in front of /s/.

For example,

> you can see it in the inflection of the perfect middle; the paradigm in

> Smyth's grammar is here:

>

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0007&query=page%3D%23124&layout=&loc=400>.

> Notice in particular the inflection of the second verb, grapho; the stem is

> graph-, but when it comes into contact with the s- of the -sai ending

> (second person singular), the expected cluster -phs- changes to -ps-

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> (written with the letter psi).

>

ps is a transliteration of Ψ not a transcription.

this is not necessarily true; it is not certain that Ψ (ps)=ϕ (ps) rather than ϕ (phs), similarly χ (x)=χ (chs) rather than ϕ (cs); Ψ is a late addition to the greek alphabet, and before that it was written ϕ; it looks more like ϕ than ϕ; hy. (armen.) and ka. (georg.) have both p and ph (and k and kh) (ph and kh are 1 letter each and stand for aspirated stops), but in el. borrowings they write phs and khs, not ps and ks; e.g. hy. phsiath < Ψϕ, ϕ (psíathos) mat, khsenophon xenophon, ka. phsikhika en. psychics, akhsioma axiom.

> Incidentally, what other descendants of that IE root are given?

It doesn't

> seem to have anything vaguely similar to the syllabic structure of IE

> (putting sibilants after stops, for instance), not to mention the oddness of

> having an aspirated voiced stop before a voiceless sibilant – I'd be very

> surprised if there was no assimilation during the IE phase itself in such a

> case!

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> Neeraj Mathur

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### • *References:*

#### ◆ *Etymological Help Needed*

◇ *From:* Robert Rosen

#### ◆ *Re: Etymological Help Needed*

◇ *From:* Neeraj Mathur

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