

LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE FOR THE DISPERSION OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

This article is based to a great extent on the author's doctoral dissertation,
Phonological Similarities in Germanic and Hebrew

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a dynamic phenomenon in the culture of any people. It changes and grows as the people expand their knowledge, acquire new ways of meeting their needs, or come in contact with other languages and cultures. In our day, modern technology, the sciences, and electronic media have accelerated the acquisition of new words but, at the same time, have standardized spelling and pronunciation to a remarkable degree. In the past, languages acquired new words more slowly but, at the same time, were more likely to incorporate spelling and pronunciation changes. Some elements of language transformation have occurred over decades; others have taken centuries.

One of the major sources of language change occurs when two groups of people, each speaking a different language, come in contact with each other. For example, the different dialects of American English tell of the migrations of groups of people from different countries and language backgrounds as they have retained some of the characteristic features of their native languages. For example, French speakers in Quebec and in Louisiana have left their mark on the English language of those areas, German immigrants have influenced the English in the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wisconsin, and the southwestern states show influence from Spanish. Likewise, linguists who study ancient language changes can learn much about newcomers into specific areas by observing their impact on the native languages.

HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND BIBLE PROPHECIES

By 721 B.C. most of the northern Kingdom of Israel had been destroyed including the capital city of Samaria (2 Kings 17:6, 18:9-11). By 700 B.C. much of Benjamin and Judah had been overrun as well (Isa. 10:28-32, 2 Kings 18:13). During the Assyrian campaign against Israel (734-701 B.C.), some of the Israelites were killed, others fled; many were taken captive, and their cities were destroyed. Only Judah still existed as a political entity (2 Kings 17:18).

According to the prophecies of the *Old Testament*, the Israelites were to scatter in all directions (Gen. 28:14, Ps. 107:3, Isa. 11:12), and they were to spread into all nations (Deut. 4:27, Ezek. 36:19, Amos 9:8-9, James 1:1). Jeremiah placed more emphasis on the north countries as the geographical location where they would later be found (Jer. 3:12-18, 16:14-16, 23:7-8). He seems also to have suggested that they would travel westward (see Jer. 18:17, Hos. 12:1).

My research is based on the premise, that as the ancient Israelites fled or were driven from their homeland, their Hebrew language would have influenced the languages of the countries where they settled. I am suggesting that we can determine by linguistic evidence where many of the Israelites went, approximately when, and in about how great of numbers.

HISTORICAL SETTING IN EUROPE

Historians have discovered that in Europe the centuries following 700 B.C. were marked by tremendous outside influence. For example, archaeologists have identified 700 B.C. as the beginning of

the Iron Age in Europe, a period when peoples from more technologically advanced civilizations entered Europe, bringing their knowledge and skills with them, including the use of iron.¹ The Iron Age in the Middle East had begun and had spread throughout much of the Mediterranean by 1000 B.C. However, the earliest uses in Europe were among the immigrant Celts in Hallstatt, Austria during the 7th Century B.C. and among the immigrant Swedes in Scandinavia about a century later. Most of Europe was influenced by these immigrants, particularly the Celtic nations in the West and the Germanic nations in the North. The Celts spread throughout central and western Europe, but gradually became more concentrated in Britain, France, and Spain. The Germanic tribes covered Scandinavia, the Low Countries, Germany, and, eventually, Austria and Switzerland in the south, and England and Iceland in the northwest.

Linguists, likewise, have identified 700 B.C. as the beginning of a period of tremendous outside influence on Europe.² During the 700-400 B.C. time period, many of the languages of Europe, particularly the Germanic and Celtic languages in the north and west, but also the Romance languages in the south, underwent major pronunciation changes and absorbed new vocabulary. These pronunciation changes were the most pronounced and systematic in the Germanic dialects, and the total vocabulary in Germanic increased by as much as one-third.³ Linguists have not been able to explain the cause of the "Germanic Sound Shift," as the pronunciation changes have been called since they were found most consistently in the Germanic languages, or the increase in vocabulary. The Germanic family of languages included several ancient languages, such as Old Norse, Gothic, Old Saxon, Old Frankish, Old Frisian, and Anglo-Saxon, out of which developed the modern languages of English, Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, Afrikaans, German, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Icelandic. All of these languages were affected by the sound changes and increased vocabulary.

My hypothesis, which has been startling to some scholars, is that these changes resulted from an influx of Hebrew-speaking people into Europe, particularly into the Germanic and Celtic-speaking areas. Such a claim comes after several years of investigation. My initial discoveries are included in my doctoral dissertation, *Phonological Similarities in Germanic and Hebrew*. During my subsequent studies, I have been in contact with scholars in the United States, Europe, and Israel. Though research will undoubtedly continue for many years to come, I feel it appropriate, at this time, to present some of the research that has already been completed, and which has led me to the conclusion that many of the Israelites spread into Europe, and into other parts of the world, following the turmoil of war, destruction, death, deportation, captivity, bondage, and fleeing which they experienced in the Middle East.

THE GERMANIC SOUND SHIFT

Germanic is just one branch of one of the earth's major families of languages—the Indo-European family. Most of the languages of Europe belong to one of the Indo-European subgroups, which include Germanic, Celtic, Italic, Hellenic, Balto-Slavic, and Indo-Iranian as the major groups. These have evolved over many centuries from a common ancestor language, referred to as Proto-Indo-European. For

¹Sherratt, 322-5.

²For a discussion of the development and spread of Iron in Europe, see Geoffrey Bibby, "Iron Age" in *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1970, XV, 464, and Gerhard Herm, *The Celts* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), p. 121.

³"The proportion of these [non IE words] in Germanic is exceptionally high, about one-third of the basic stock being of unknown origin....which must therefore be attributed to an unknown source." See Lockwood, 123.

many years, the peculiarities in Germanic, which were caused by the sound changes, kept linguists from recognizing that Germanic was an Indo-European language. However, early in the nineteenth century, two scholars, Rasmus Rask from Denmark (1818) and Jakob Grimm from Germany (1819-22), both linguists, showed that the Germanic languages were indeed part of the Indo-European family, but that their differences in pronunciation were caused by a systematic shift in the sounds of six consonants. These changes involved two groups of consonants, [p, t, k] and [b, d, g]. At the time of the sound shift, the pronunciation of each of these six consonantal sounds changed respectively to [ph, th, kh] and [bh, dh, gh].⁴ In the various dialects, these new sounds were usually represented in writing by the letters *p* > *ph* = *f*, *t* > *th* = *th/p*, *k* > *kh* = *h/ch/x*, *b* > *bh* = *v/f*, *d* > *dh* = *ð/dh/th*, *g* > *gh* = *gh/h/z/j*. Observe specific examples of the Germanic Sound Shift in Table 1 while comparing IE, or an early representative of IE such as Latin, with English and other Germanic languages:

Table 1: AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE GERMANIC SOUND SHIFT

| SOUND SHIFT | WRITTEN SYMBOLS | EARLY IE ¹ > | GMC EXAMPLES ² |
|-------------|---|--|---|
| [p > ph] | <i>p</i> > <i>f</i> | L <i>pater</i> > | E <i>father</i> , OS, Goth <i>faðar</i> |
| [t > th] | <i>t</i> > <i>th</i> or <i>p</i> | L <i>tū</i> > L <i>trēs</i> > | E <i>thou</i> , OE <i>þu</i> E <i>three</i> , Goth <i>þreis</i> |
| [k > kh] | <i>k</i> or <i>c</i> > <i>h</i> , <i>ch</i> or <i>x</i> | L <i>cornū</i> > L <i>casa</i> > IE <i>*puk-</i> > | E <i>horn</i> , ON <i>horna</i> , <i>horn</i> E <i>house</i> , OE <i>hūs</i> , MD <i>huus</i> E <i>fox</i> , OHG <i>foha</i> , G <i>Fuchs</i> |
| [b > bh] | <i>b</i> > <i>v</i> or <i>f</i> | IE <i>*geb-</i> > | E <i>give</i> , ON <i>gefa</i> , OFris <i>jeva</i> |
| [d > dh] | <i>d</i> > <i>dh</i> , <i>ð</i> or <i>th</i> | IE <i>*reid-</i> > IE <i>*gad-</i> > | E <i>ride</i> , OS <i>rīðan</i> , ON <i>rītha</i> E <i>gather</i> , OS <i>gaðer</i> |
| [g > gh] | <i>g</i> > <i>gh</i> , <i>h</i> , <i>ch</i> or <i>j</i> | IE <i>*leug-</i> > | E <i>light</i> , ME <i>liht</i> , G <i>Licht</i> |

¹The asterisk indicates that these are hypothetical IE words which etymologists have reconstructed based on their frequent occurrence within the IE family of languages.
²Abbreviations used are: IE = Indo-European, ON = Old Norse, Go = Gothic, OFris = Old Frisian, OS = Old Saxon, E = English, OE = Old English, ME = Middle English, OHG = Old High German, G = German, L = Latin.

What Rask and Grimm discovered and described has since become one of the most studied elements in Germanic historical linguistics. Though far more frequent and systematic in Germanic, scholars have also noticed much of this same influence in the Celtic and Romance languages. For the sake of clarity, I have limited this study to the linguistic similarities between Hebrew and the Germanic

⁴The brackets indicate that emphasis is on the sounds of the letters rather than on the letters themselves. The phonetic symbols *ph*, *th*, *kh* and *bh*, *dh*, *gh* in this study represent fricatives, as is customary in Jewish studies, rather than plosives or stops, as is customary in IE studies. These same fricatives in IE linguistics would be represented by [f, þ, x] and [v, ð, ʒ].

languages. Linguists generally agree that the changes began taking place sometime after 700 B.C.,³ and that the influence causing the sound shift continued to effect the Germanic dialects for several centuries, at least until 400 B.C., and possibly as late as the Christian Era. What the linguists have not been able to agree upon is the cause that brought these changes into the language.

Linguist John T. Waterman, in his popular text, *A History of the German Language*, expresses the inability of linguists to explain this sound shift in Germanic:

The many explanations of the cause of the sound shift have one feature in common--inadequacy. In this area our ignorance is almost complete. There are, to be sure, a number of reasonable assumptions we may make, as well as a few observations of probable significance. For instance, it is reasonable to assume that a non-Germanic substratum had some influence upon the language of those Indo-Europeans who migrated to the area in northern Europe which later became the Germanic homeland.

In other words, after 147 years of searching, from the time of Grimm's discovery in 1819 until Waterman first published his book in 1966, no satisfactory explanation for the cause of the Germanic Sound Shift had been given, although the possibility of foreign influence had been suggested by some scholars.

THE HEBREW SOUND SHIFT

The shift of the six special consonants noted above is the central focus of Germanic linguistics. However, it is equally important, in studying Hebrew phonology, to recognize that these same six consonants served a special function in ancient Hebrew. They carried a dual pronunciation. In Hebrew, the sounds of the letters [p, t, k] and [b, d, g] shifted in pronunciation to the sounds [ph, th, kh] and [bh, dh, gh] when they began a syllable which was preceded by a long vowel or schwa, or when they ended a syllable; otherwise they did not shift. In other words, the ancient Hebrew language contained the critical sounds and the shift which spread through Europe, and the shift was still functional in Hebrew.⁴

³John T. Waterman, in his popular text, *A History of the German Language*, gives his professional opinion concerning the date of the Germanic Sound Shift. After reviewing the opinions of other linguists on this matter, which range from as early as 2000 B.C. to as late as 1 A.D., and after discussing the various possibilities, he concludes that it began probably not much before the fifth century B.C., and that it was essentially completed by the last pre-Christian century (p. 28). He bases his conclusion upon the evidence that because words borrowed from Greek into Germanic during the fifth century B.C. did eventually undergo the shift, but words borrowed from Latin during the first century B.C. did not, the shift must have taken place during that interval, some time between the fifth and, but not including, the first century B.C. On the other hand, Heinz F. Wendt believes that the shift had been essentially completed by 500 B.C. (p. 101).

⁴In this article, for the sake of the readers of various backgrounds and languages, I have attempted to minimize as much as possible the technical terms. The technical difference between the shift which took place in Hebrew and in the Germanic dialects was that the shift in Hebrew was phonemic, meaning that it shifted back and forth as it was spoken depending upon the position of the letter in the word, whereas in Germanic, as seen by linguists, the shift was phonetic, meaning that these letters, under foreign influence, shifted and then remained shifted without shifting back and forth. However, Priebsch and Collenson point out that in the early Germanic dialects, these sounds continued to shift back and forth phonemically for several centuries, at least down to the 1st Century B.C.

The Hebrew two-word phrase *beghadh-kephath* was even coined, later, to represent each of these six letters in either the initial or post-vocalic position, as a reminder to Hebrew students of their dual pronunciation. Thus, the Hebrew word for "Spain" *separad* was pronounced [sepharadh], illustrating the shift of these letters after vowels, and the word for 'sign' (also 'sign of the covenant, token, proof') though spelled 'ôṭ, was pronounced ['ôth] in Biblical times (compare English *oath*).

The similarity in the sound shifts caught my attention. I felt that the similarity was significant since, before the shift, the fricative sounds [ph, th, kh] and [bh, dh, gh], so prevalent in Hebrew, were nonexistent in the Germanic dialects before the Germanic Sound Shift took place. Even what had been considered to be exceptions to the rules for the Germanic Sound Shift were explained in Hebrew. The Germanic exceptions to the shift were that whenever one of these six consonants appeared in the middle of a word, immediately following a consonant, or when it doubled, it did not shift. What had appeared to be exceptions in Germanic followed Hebrew rules, which state that the shift does not occur when the letter is preceded immediately by a consonant (and silent schwa), or when the consonant is doubled. For example, Hebrew *harkanah* "to incline the ear, to listen" and English *harken* both contain an unshifted *k*, and Hebrew *mashpekh* and English *aspen*, though not related, both contain an unshifted *p*. Likewise, Hebrew *guddar* "to enclose, contain" and English *gutter* [d > t] both contain doubled, unshifted consonants.

Grimm also noted that the last group of consonantal sounds [b, d, g] frequently shifted to [p, t, k] in Germanic, especially in initial position, in gemination, and immediately after consonants. Compare Indo-European **geulo-* and English *coal* [g > k]. Though not part of the Hebrew dual pronunciation, this phenomenon was common within Semitic languages. Hebrew speakers tended to use strong breathiness in the pronunciation of these three letters in certain positions (i.e., when they appeared at the first of words, when doubled, and after consonants). Thus, [b, d, g], when spoken by the Israelites, could well have sounded more like [p, t, k] to the indigenous Europeans. Even within the Hebrew language itself, these shifts occurred anciently, which becomes apparent while studying the ancient vocabulary. For example, Hebrew *bara'* "to create" and *barah* "to bear children" both shifted the [b] to [p] in the related Hebrew forms *para'* "to bear oneself along swiftly, to run" and *parah* "to bear offspring, fruit, etc.," illustrating the shift of [b] to [p] among related words.

The similarity in the Germanic and Hebrew sound shifts, and the timing of the dispersion of the Israelites with the occurrence of the sound shift in Germanic, seems to suggest that Hebrew-speaking people migrated to Europe and imposed their pronunciation on the languages they were attempting to speak. In other words, it appears that the Israelites spoke Germanic and other European languages with a Hebrew accent, and that their numbers were sufficient to leave a distinctive mark on the languages of their newly adopted countries.

My initial discovery of similarities between Hebrew and Germanic pronunciation, and the realization that Germanic phonetics may have been influenced by Hebrew during pre-Christian times, suggested the need for a more thorough comparison of the two languages. I began such a study and have since found many similarities between ancient Hebrew and Germanic, which first occurred in the Germanic dialects at the time of the sound shift—and which followed the date of Israel's fall, captivity, and dispersion. The linguistic similarities fall into three general categories—phonology (sounds, pronunciation), morphology (grammar, syntax), and lexicology (vocabulary).

SIMILARITIES OF GEMINATION

The phonological similarities deal primarily with the similarities of the sound shifts, described above, and with other sounds which were common to Hebrew but not to the Indo-European languages in general, but which entered the Germanic languages during this period of influence. For example, both Hebrew and Germanic consonants, which appeared between vowels, regularly doubled when the preceding vowel was short and unstressed. This doubling of consonants, referred to as gemination, became a

characteristic feature of Germanic, but not of the other Indo-European languages. For example, alongside the Hebrew root word '*akar* "to dig, cultivate, farm" there is the form '*ikkar* "farmer" with a short vowel and a doubled consonant, illustrating the doubling of consonants in Hebrew. By comparison, Indo-European *abel* became English *apple* (*b* shifting to *p* and doubling to *pp*) illustrating the doubling of consonants in Germanic. Also, in Hebrew, if a suffix beginning with a vowel was added to a word containing a short vowel in the final syllable, then the final consonant doubled, as in *sāl* "basket" and *sāllim* "baskets," which compares with the tendency in English, when adding suffixes, to double the final consonant if the vowel preceding it is short, as in the examples *dropped*, *beginning*, and *forgetting*. These modern spellings reflect the ancient Hebrew rules for gemination. Also, in Hebrew, almost half of the verb conjugations required the doubling of the medial consonant and the shortening of the preceding vowel. Compare Hebrew *shabar* "to break" and the related form *shibber* "to shatter." Likewise, in Germanic almost half of the verbs doubled the medial consonant and shortened the preceding vowel: Indo-European *sad-* and *bad-* became *settan* "set" and *biddan* "bid" in Old English. Even the same exception to the rules for the doubling of consonants appeared in both languages—neither the [r] nor the gutturals [x] doubled in Hebrew or in Germanic; instead, the vowel preceding them lengthened, as in Hebrew *bērekh* "to bless" and Old English *hēran* "to hear."⁵

SIMILARITIES IN VOWELS

It is believed that the general population among the Israelites did not read or write at the time of this dispersion (700 B.C.). Neither did the Germanic tribes, but by the time they had adopted the Roman alphabet (Christian Era), the Germanic peoples were widely dispersed, leaving each linguistic group to choose its own method of deploying the Roman alphabet characters which best represented the sounds of its native language. Vowels were the least systematic from dialect to dialect. For example, in one instance, the English chose the letter *o* and the Germans chose the letter *e* to spell the same word in the two languages, producing the two forms *work* and *Werk*. This was usually determined by the form of the word which first entered the language. In one language the word may have entered as a noun, but then with the same vowel was also used as a verb, while in another language it may have entered first as a verb, but then with the same vowel was also used as a noun. In Hebrew the vowels were not written, but certain consonants represented or were associated with certain vowels. They have come to be referred to as semi-vowels because they often can represent vowels as well as consonants. For example, the *Yodh* (*y*) was usually associated with, or represented, both the [i] and [e] sounds, the *Waw* (*w*) (modern *Vav* or *v*) represented both the [o] and [u] sounds, and the *He'* (*h*) represented the [a] sound. Therefore, it is not surprising to observe among the dispersed Israelites that the *o*'s and *u*'s and *w*'s often interchanged, as in English *book* and German *Buch*; and also that the *i*'s and *e*'s and *y*'s often interchanged as in English *ride* and German *reiten* or notice the variance between *i*, *ie*, and *y* in the suffixes on personal names when comparing Swiss Heidi, German Stephanie, and English Terry or Jerry or Sammy.

Considering the long span of time and the wide dispersion of the people in Europe before the Roman alphabet was adopted, and considering the relationship of *o*'s and *u*'s and of *i*'s and *e*'s in Hebrew, it is often surprising just how much consistency there was with the spellings of words spread throughout Europe. In the next section we will learn that there was even more consistency with the use of consonants—first, as already illustrated by the close parallels between Hebrew pronunciation and the

⁵ *Bērekh* is the *pi'el* form which would normally shorten the first vowel and double the medial consonant. In Hebrew only *r*'s and the four gutturals do not double; the vowel lengthens instead to compensate for its inability to double. This is also the tendency in the Germanic languages with the spelling in the West Germanic languages indicating this tendency the clearest. For a more complete explanation of gemination in Hebrew and in all Germanic languages, see my dissertation, pp. 41-57.

Germanic Sound Shift, and secondly by next comparing the verbs and tenses of Hebrew with the Germanic languages.

GRAMMATICAL SIMILARITIES AND TENSES

The grammatical, or morphological, similarities between Germanic and Hebrew are numerous and deserve a separate study of their own. These include similarities in the number of grammatical cases. Indo-European originally had eight cases; there is evidence that Hebrew, prior to the captivities, for sure had three cases, nominative, accusative, and genitive, and there is strong evidence of at least one more at an earlier period, the dative.⁶ At first, Germanic, at the time of the sound shift, had four cases and later, in most of the western languages, these were reduced to three--subject, object, and possessive--the same three as in ancient Hebrew. German retained all four.

On the other hand, Indo-European had six tenses; Hebrew had only two tenses, properly called aspects, which dealt with actions either completed or not completed. Germanic, likewise, originally had only two tenses, called past and present. Other tenses in Germanic developed out of combinations of these two original tenses.

Even the verbs in their conjugated forms provide additional similarities, including similar vowel alternation patterns. Compare Hebrew *kom, kam, kum, yikom* "to arise, come forth" with English *come* and *came* and Old English *cuman*, and with German *kommen, kam, gekommen* "to come forth, arrive, arise."

Also compare the following Hebrew verb forms of *barach*.⁷ It carried multiple meanings. One meaning was "to break," as in "to break or bend the knee, to kneel and receive a blessing." A second meaning was "to break," as in "to break out, break away, escape, flee, run away." An extended meaning of this definition was "to bring" as in "bring to safety, break through barriers, deliver." The forms and meanings of the verbs *break* and *bring* in ancient Germanic were very similar to Hebrew *barach*, and it was not unusual for two or more different verbs in ancient Hebrew to develop out of the same original root. In German, *bring* took regular endings and *break* took irregular ones apparently to help differentiate them. The German preterite or simple past tense has preserved many of the consonants, vowels, and inflectional endings which compare with Hebrew, though obvious attrition has taken place. In the following table notice the similarities in the various forms of Hebrew *barach* and of German *brach* and *brachte*:

⁶For a discussion of nominative, accusative, and genitive in Hebrew prior to the Babylonian Captivity, see William Chomsky, 55-56, and William Gesenius' *History of the Hebrew Language* and his *Hebrew Grammar*, 247-254 (§89-90), and for the dative, p. 381 (§119s).

⁷Original Hebrew had only relatively few root words which often carried multiple meanings, out of which many new spellings developed as the speakers wished to differentiate between subtle differences in meaning. In this case *barakh*, spelled with *chaph*, was the older root and carried the meaning "to break, to bend the knee, to give or receive a blessing." On the other hand *barah*, spelled with *chet*, carried the meaning of "to break away, flee, deliver." Originally *barakh* carried both meanings. Because I believe that English and the other Germanic languages broke off from, or were influenced by, Hebrew prior to the separation of the two words above, I have chosen to show the *barakh* conjugation forms; although both forms conjugate quite similarly.

**Table 2: SAMPLE PRETERITE VERB CONJUGATION SIMILARITIES
IN HEBREW AND GERMAN**

| Hebrew "break/bring" | German "break" | German "bring" |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>barech</i> (Pi'el. inf.) | <i>brechen</i> (inf.) | <i>bringen</i> (inf.) [ng = tone] |
| <i>barachti</i> (qal, 1st person) <i>barachta</i> (2nd person, m.) | | <i>brachte</i> (1st & 3rd person) |
| <i>baracht</i> (2nd person, f.) | <i>brach(s)t</i> (2nd, singl. / pl.) | <i>brachte(s)t</i> (2nd singl. / pl.) |
| <i>barach</i> (3rd person, m) | <i>brach</i> (1st & 3rd "brake") | |
| <i>barachnu</i> (1st person, pl.) | <i>brachen</i> (1st, 2nd, 3rd pl.) | |
| <i>brachten</i> (2nd, pl., f.) | | <i>brachten</i> (1st, 2nd, 3rd pl.) |
| <i>baroch</i> (qal. inf.) | <i>gebrochen</i> (broke, broken) | |
| <i>yibrach</i> (qal, imperfect) | | <i>gebracht</i> (pp: brought) |

VOCABULARY SIMILARITIES

The similarity between the Germanic and Hebrew sound shifts, which was the subject of my doctoral dissertation, has attracted the scholarly attention of linguists ever since its completion in 1981. This is because, over the years in the past, they actively sought an explanation of the Germanic Sound Shift. However, the Germanic and Hebrew sound shifts, in spite of their detailed similarities and the consistency with which they were employed in both languages, still, by themselves, remain in the realm of theory as far as suggesting Hebrew influence is concerned. However, when grammar and vocabulary are also similar, these all help to make theory into reality. When we can consistently put a Germanic word through the rules of the sound shift and produce a word which is similar in form and meaning to a Hebrew word, then the implications of the sound shift similarities take on significance.

Linguists have already recognized that about one-third of all Germanic vocabulary is not Indo-European in origin.⁸ That is, about one-third of the words in Germanic can be traced back to the Proto-Germanic period (700-100 B.C.), but they are not found in the other Indo-European languages and, therefore, cannot be traced back to the common Indo-European base. Dictionaries tracing word origins list most of these new words as of "unknown" or "uncertain" origin. It is these words, which entered Germanic after the 700 B.C. time period, that compare favorably in both form and meaning with Hebrew vocabulary. Though the original Hebrew roots numbered only in the hundreds, these roots, by adding prefixes and suffixes and changing vowels, produced thousands of usable words in Hebrew with subtle differences in meaning. Likewise, a complete listing of words found in the Germanic languages of apparent Hebrew origin and the various words related to them also numbers in the thousands. I also compared this vocabulary with the vocabulary of other Semitic languages, which made it clear to me that it was Hebrew, and not one of the other Semitic languages, that had influenced Germanic.

At first, I began noticing a few of the obviously similar words, but the number of similarities

⁸Lockwood, p. 123.

between Hebrew and Germanic reached into the thousands once I discovered the following formula for comparing Hebrew with English and the other Germanic languages.

The formula for recognizing the Hebrew origin of Germanic

These new words, which were brought into Germanic at this time, had a tendency to modify in spelling three ways. When these three modifications are taken into account, the similarity of the words to Hebrew can be recognized. First, the words in Germanic, in most dialects, changed in spelling according to the sound shift (eventually to include initial position⁹), whereas in ancient Hebrew they changed only in pronunciation. Notice the effects of the shift on the written word when comparing Hebrew *para'* "to walk, run, or travel swiftly" with Old Norse and Old Frisian *fara* (**p** > **f**), which also meant "to travel, move swiftly." These compare with Modern English *fare*, though less used, and German *fahren* "to travel."¹⁰ Some Germanic dialects, as in Hebrew, initially changed only the spoken sounds. Compare Hebrew *gader*, pronounced [gadh^{er}], with Old English *gader*, also pronounced [gadh^{er}], and Modern English *gather*. The modern spelling has finally indicated the change in pronunciation. Anglo-Saxon indicated the [dh/th] sound with an *ð*; compare AS *gaðer*.

Second, because Hebrew words usually carried the accent in the last syllable, the unstressed vowels in the initial syllables frequently dropped out of the written Germanic forms. This appears to have been due partly to the fact that these vowels were unstressed, and partly to the fact that the six consonants in Hebrew which carried a dual pronunciation were pronounced so strongly at the beginning of words (this strong pronunciation was referred to in Hebrew as *daghash*) that they influenced what we now call a stress accent at the beginning of words in the Germanic languages, as compared to a tonal accent usually at the end of words in Hebrew. Compare Hebrew *darag* and English *drag*. Occasionally, if the initial consonant was weak in sound, the entire syllable dropped out, as in Hebrew *walad* (mod. *yalad* / *yeled*) "male offspring, son" and English *lad*, and as in Hebrew *nafal* "to fall" and English *fall*,

⁹In Hebrew these letters normally did not shift at the beginning of words unless a prefix ending with a long vowel or schwa was added to the word, or if a closely associated word preceded the letter and ended with a long vowel or schwa the shift occurred; thus *torah* "law" with an added prefix becomes *wəthorah* "and a law." This was also the case in the Germanic languages for several centuries. However, eventually, due to the influence of the definite article and other words which ended in an open syllable, the shift of these six letters eventually included initial position as well. Thus, IE *te puk* became *the fox* [t > th, p > ph/f, k > kh/x].

¹⁰Because this word has so many meanings in Modern Hebrew, I would like to clarify it by recounting its development, which Gesenius makes available to us. The original root word was *bara'*, which in the masculine meant "to create" and also "to cut, form, and shape." In the feminine *barah* meant "to bear children," a feminine way of creating. It was also used for "to bear fruit, to bear burdens, loads" and "to bear loads swiftly" as an ox or donkey or horse would do. It was at this early stage that this word came into English as *to bear*, and it contained all of the above meanings. It also came into several other European languages. Subsequently, in Hebrew, when its meaning was "to bear burdens swiftly, to travel" or "to bear fruit, be fruitful," it changed its spelling to *para'* and *parah* [b > p]. Other meanings developed in Hebrew, such as *par* "bull," related to the ancient masculine form *bara'* with its definition of "to cut" because of its horns, or perhaps because bulls pulled carts, and *parah* "cow," because it follows the ancient feminine definition of "to create by being fruitful"—cows give milk.

and compare Hebrew *ward*¹¹ "rose" and *warod* "rose colored" and German *rot* "red" and English *red*.

Third, the Hebrew tonal accent was often represented in the Germanic words by one of five tonal letters, *l, m, n, ng, r*. Compare Hebrew *satat* "to place, found, base, begin" with English *start*, which appears to have added an *r* simply to represent the Hebrew tone. This was not consistent from dialect to dialect; for example, Gothic *stath* [t > th] had no *r*. Apparently the *r* in the English word kept the *t* from shifting to *th*. In Hebrew when a consonant is immediately preceded by a consonant with a silent schwa, it does not shift. Also compare Hebrew *parak* "to be free, to liberate" with English *frank* "free, free speech" (shift *p* to *f*, delete unaccented *a*, and add *n* to represent the Hebrew tone).

The Biblical Hebrew language contained relatively few root words, out of which many words were formed by exchanging vowels, adding prefixes or suffixes, and doubling consonants according to certain rules. Words similar to these same roots, as well as to the multiple forms which developed out of these roots, appeared in the Germanic dialects during the 700-400 B.C. time period, suggesting the number of Germanic words from Hebrew origin to be in the thousands. One example is the Hebrew word *'agad* "to bind, be bound together, held tight," also "arched, vaulted work." Out of this root grew other roots and forms in Hebrew, such as *'akad* [g > k] "to bind, fortify, strengthen," *'achad* [k > ch] "to unite, join together, collect oneself," and *giyd* "to bind, couple, link together." The proper name *Gad* is related to this root and means "band" or "troop." Also related is the Hebrew word *gadar*, including the forms *gidder* and *guddar*, meaning "to surround, to enclose, to confine, to collect, to hold, to restrict." The noun form *gader* meant "wall, enclosure, or fence."

The Hebrew words above compare with several words in Germanic which deal with the same concepts. The Old English and Old Frisian form *gader* "to collect, bind, unite" developed into Modern English *gather* and *together* [d > dh/th]. English *gutter* [d > t] "collects rain water." German *gitter* are "bars surrounding a cage." German *Gaden* are the walls of a house. German *Gatte* means "spouse, bound in marriage." German *Gatter* comes from Middle Low German *gader* which meant both "fence" and "gate." A *gate* (OHG *gat*) is a "restricted opening in a wall" and frequently served also as protection; some *gates* were made of an "arched, vaulted work," as the Hebrew word defines.

When the letter *r* is added in some dialects to some words to represent the Hebrew tone, more similarities become apparent. English *girth* "binds a load to a beast of burden," and *garth* means "enclosed yard or garden," and the words *garden* and *yard* [g > y], by definition, are "enclosed pieces of ground." A *girdle* "binds," as does German *Gurt* 'strap' and *Gürtel* "belt." A *garter* also "binds," as does the word *gird*. *Garter* comes into English by way of Celtic through the French, illustrating some of this same influence in those languages. A *guide* not only leads but also restricts and confines people, as does the word *guard*. These two words come by way of the Romance languages, while a *guild* (l for tone) binds skilled craftsmen together and, in Europe, first appeared in Germanic territory. The verbs *get* and *catch* [g > k] and [d > t] also belong to this group of words. *Catch* originally meant "to surround or enclose with a fence." All of these Germanic words deal with the idea of binding, or uniting, holding, surrounding, enclosing, collecting, protecting, restricting, or confining as the ancient Hebrew roots did, and all of these words entered the European languages after the 700 B.C. time period.

Comparative dictionaries show that the same word can develop different but related meanings among peoples who have separated themselves from each other. A good example of this development is with the Hebrew root word *balak*, which also appears in the forms *billək* and *hibhliyk*. The root of this word meant "to make empty, void." As an example of how language can change, this word in modern Hebrew has developed the meaning of "to destroy, lay waste," but the development of this word in Europe was different. Also related to the original Hebrew meaning of "to make empty, void," this word

¹¹According to Ernest Klein (p. 192), this word may originally have been borrowed from Iranian, which then subsequently spread throughout the Middle East, influencing Aramaic, Arabic and Hebrew.

balak came into English as *black* "void of light." *Black* is listed in the dictionary as being of unknown origin. On the other hand, the Hebrew root could also be interpreted to mean "void of color" rather than light. This apparently produced the English word *bleak* "pale, void of vegetation, barren," and the word *bleach* [*k > ch*] "to remove color, to whiten," similar to the Hebrew forms above. The Old Norse spelling added an *r* for tone, *blakkr* "pale." With *n* added to represent the Hebrew tone, the form *blank* "void of all marks" appears. This last word is obviously related to the French word *blanc* meaning "white." These opposite meanings of "black" and "white" were even found within the same language, Old English. The Oxford English Dictionary lists the forms *blaec*, *blace*, and *blacan* for "black" and the related forms *blac* and *blanc* for "white" in Old English. Thus we see that a Hebrew root can develop a variety of related meanings among different peoples. In this case we can see that even the opposite meanings of "black" and "white" can come from the same root *balak*, originally meaning "to make empty, void."

Another example, showing how a word can develop, is the Hebrew word *dun* or *don*. The root is *dwn* and is related to the root 'adan "to judge, rule, descend, be low, area ruled or judged, area of domain." The proper name *Dan* "judge" is related to this root. Out of this root also developed the Hebrew word 'adon "Lord, Master." In English, the word *down* appears, which comes from Old English *dun* and from Anglo-Saxon *adun*. Two meanings developed in Anglo-Saxon which remind us of the Hebrew definitions: one meant "to be on high ground from which one could see and/or rule" (castles were frequently situated on high ground); the other meant "to descend, hence to be low." In shifting the *d* to *t*, we recognize the relationship of *down* to *town* (Old English *tun*) with its meaning of "area ruled or judged, area of domain." Anciently, in Israel, cities were either fenced or walled in order to define the boundaries or area of that town's rule. Therefore, it is not surprising that the etymological dictionaries relate the English word *town* to the German word for fence, *Zaun*, a boundary marker, and we have the word *zone*, also a specifically designated area, and the *tongue* is known as the organ which rules. Quite possibly related, though with an added suffix, is where criminals were thrown—down into the deep, dark *dungeon*, and *dung* [*n > ng* = tone] is something which drops down. To raise our sights a bit, it might also be of interest to compare the Hebrew word 'adon 'Lord, Master' and its root 'adan 'to rule, judge' with *Odin* and *Wodan*, two titles or names of common origin found in different dialects for the same (or perhaps different), most recent and highest Germanic god.

I wish to elaborate upon one final example before showing some apparent cognates by merely listing them. This word is Hebrew *tarad*, meaning "to drive, pursue, chase" and also "to continue on, be repetitious." A basic, older form of this word is *dar* meaning "generation, enduring, continuing." Other forms of *tarad*, for comparison, are *tered*, *tarod*, *tered(ah)*. The first word which comes to mind, and which implies continuity in that it occurs day after day because it is a profession, is *trade*. Another repetitious activity is to take one step after another, for which we have the words *tread*, past tense *trod*, early forms in Old Norse are *tredja*, *trad*, *troda*, in Old Frisian *treda* "tread," and in Old Saxon *trada* "trade." Closely related is English *trudge*, and for a horse it is *trot*. If a saying is mentioned too often, it could become *trite*; or it might become a *trait*, and, if it catches on, it might become a *trend* [*+ n* = tone]. A *thread* [*t > th*] continues on, and somehow the word *treat* seems to fit in here with the idea of pursuing with a reward. In a more negative vein, we have those who *abandon* a cause. They are *traitors* and are a *threat* which often *intrudes*. Lastly, with some Jewish influence on Latin, this word comes to us as *tradition*, definitely implying "repetition."

The table below compares a sampling of words from modern and ancient Germanic languages with ancient Hebrew vocabulary. The criteria is that they must be similar in both form and meaning, to be included in this comparison. The development of each of these words could be elaborated upon, as in the examples in the text above. It is the oldest Germanic spellings, such as those found in Old Norse, Old Frisian, Gothic, Old Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, Old English, Old Dutch, Old High German, and Old Franconian, and their original meanings, which come closest to the original Hebrew. Most of these

Germanic words are listed in the dictionaries as being of "unknown" or "uncertain" origin. The following list is a sampling of the thousands of similarities found. For references, see both Gesenius and Klein; though both are correct, there are often subtle differences in opinion regarding definition and coverage; Gesenius frequently lists the oldest forms and meanings. (See Table 3):

Table 3: SIMILAR VOCABULARY IN GERMANIC AND HEBREW

| Table 3: SIMILAR VOCABULARY IN GERMANIC AND HEBREW | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------|--|
| ABBREVIATIONS: NIsr = North Israel, Jud = Judah, Gmc = Germanic, E = English, OS = Old Saxon, AS = Anglo Saxon, OE/ME/E = Old/Middle/English, OFris = Old Frisian, ON = Old Norse, Icel = Icelandic, Sw = Swedish, Dan = Danish, Nw = Norwegian, OHG/MHG/G = Old High/Middle High/German, ODu/MDu/Du = Old/Middle/Dutch, Fl = Flemish (non Gmc: OIr = Old Irish, OW = Old Welsh, Cor = Cornish, Fr = French) | | | |
| HEBREW VOCABULARY | PRONUNCIATION | SHIFT | GERMANIC VOCABULARY |
| <i>sapah, sippah</i> "to form, carve, scrape, smoothen" | [shapháh] (Judah) [skapháh] (NIsr) ¹² | s > sk (Gmc) + r (tone) | <i>shapa</i> Jutish (AS) "shape" <i>skapa, skafa</i> ON, AS, OS <i>sceap, scippe</i> OE, <i>shape</i> E ¹³ <i>scrape</i> E |

¹²that Judah frequently also pronounced [sh] in place of [s]. In my research, while comparing Biblical Hebrew with the Germanic Languages, I have concluded that there was no [sh] sound in Proto He In Judges 12:6 there is a reference to the fact that some of the tribes, particularly some of those east of the Jordan, could not pronounce the [sh] sound. 1 Kings 16:24 provides evidence brew, and that Judah gradually shifted the sound of [s] to [sh], but that the northern tribes, at the same time, particularly those west of the Jordan, must have gradually shifted the [s] to [sk] or [st] instead. All Germanic tribes, who entered Europe during the 700 to 400 B.C. time period, pronounced [s] or [sk] or [st] where the Bible records [sh], not only with proper Biblical names such as *Saul* vs. *Shaul*, and *Jerusalem* vs. *Jerushalaim*, but in everyday words such as *skapa* vs. *shapah* as well. The only exception was the Jutes, who, like Judah, pronounced the [s] as [sh] as in *Shapa* above. Likewise, Hebrew *sor* "steer, bull" shows up in Germanic on the Swedish national arms as *stora* "bull, steer" as the earliest symbolic name for the country. The plural for this word in Hebrew is *svarim*. This unusual plural in Hebrew is because the *waw/vav* serves as the vowel *o* in the singular, but as the consonant *w* or *v* in the plural. However, it is interesting, and a bit odd, to note that the plural for the 24 founding cities on the Swedish arms, and which eventually came to serve as the name for the country, would also change the *o* to *v* and leave out the *t* in the word *Sverige*, pronounced [svaryø]. Because Ephraim's symbol was a bull and his color was black, this word in early times came to mean "black bulls," and was distantly related to English *swarthy* and German *schwarz*. The Hebrew letter *Vav* in earliest times was pronounced as a [w] and later as a [v], and in Europe these two letters sometimes interchanged as well.

¹³Jutish was influenced by immigrants from Judah, and by the shift of [s] to [sh], during the 700 B.C. Migration. All other Germanic tribes carried the pronunciation from North Israel. English and German received later influence from the Jews of the A.D.70 Diaspora, and not until then did they shift the [s] to [sh], as in English *ship* and *shape* and German *schaffen* and *schöpfen* "to form, create."

Table 3: SIMILAR VOCABULARY IN GERMANIC AND HEBREW

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <i>darag, d̥aragah</i> "to go by steps, to walk or ascend with difficulty as when carrying a load" | [darágh] [d̥aragháh] | + n (tone) d > t | <i>drag</i> E, <i>draga</i> ON, OFris <i>dragan</i> OE, OS, Go <i>tregi</i> ON, <i>trag</i> AS, <i>träge</i> G "tiresome movement" |
| <i>dor, dur</i> "turn aside, dwell, rotate, circulate, go around, generation, eternal" | [dôr], [dûr] | d > t + n (tone) | <i>door</i> E, <i>dor, duru</i> OE, <i>dore, dure</i> OFris, <i>dora, duru</i> OS, <i>Tor, Tür</i> G "gate, door" <i>dyrr</i> ON; Celtic: <i>dor</i> OCor, Bret, W, <i>dorus</i> OIr, OScot <i>turn, tour, duration, endure</i> |
| <i>kahal, kahalah</i> "to call" | | h = Ø | <i>call</i> E, <i>kalla</i> ON |
| [‘abar] ‘ober "to cross over, pass by, pass over" | [‘ôver] | b > bh/v | <i>over</i> E, <i>obar</i> OS, <i>ofer</i> AS, <i>über,</i> <i>Ober</i> G, <i>Ufer</i> G "bank of [across] a river" |
| [kalah] <i>killah, kullah</i> "to destroy, annihilate" | | + n (tone) | <i>kill</i> E, <i>kille kulle</i> ME <i>kullen</i> OFris, OE; <i>claw</i> E |
| <i>napal, napalah, hinnapel,</i> <i>hippiyl, happel</i> "to fall, fall apart, let fall, to fell" | [nafál, hinnafél, hippîl, happél] | p > f <i>na, hinna, hi,</i> <i>ha</i> = Ø | <i>fall, fell</i> E, <i>fallen, fiel</i> G, <i>falla</i> ON, OFris |
| <i>pazal, puzzal, pozel</i> "to squint, strain eyes, be confused" | | | <i>puzzle</i> E, <i>poselen</i> ME |
| <i>wered, warod, weruddah</i> "rose, rosy, reddish" | [weréd, waród, weruddáh] | we-, wa = Ø | <i>red</i> E, <i>rōd</i> OS, <i>rood</i> Du, <i>rot</i> G, <i>rād</i> OFris, <i>rauths</i> Goth, (Celtic: <i>rudd</i> OW, <i>rud</i> Corn) <i>ruddy</i> E <i>rudi</i> ME, <i>rudig</i> OE "reddish color" |
| <i>kanah, kinnah, kunnah,</i> <i>kinnui</i> "to name, surname, relatives" | | | <i>kin</i> E, <i>kin, kun</i> ME, <i>cynn</i> AS, <i>kinn, kenn</i> OFris, <i>kuni</i> Goth, <i>kunni</i> OS, <i>kunni, chunni</i> OHG, <i>kunne</i> Du, <i>kyn, kin</i> ON |
| <i>daras</i> [s > sh] <i>darash, deresh, doresh, dush</i> "to tread, trample, beat, thresh, thrash" | | d > dh / th s, sh > sk d > t | <i>thrash, thresh</i> E, <i>dreschen</i> G, <i>dorschen</i> Du, <i>doschen</i> LG, <i>threskja</i> ON, <i>threscan</i> OE, <i>trash</i> E, <i>tros</i> ON, <i>tras(s)</i> Du, G |

Table 3: SIMILAR VOCABULARY IN GERMANIC AND HEBREW

| | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>zud, ziyd, ziydon</i> "to boil, cook, seethe, boil over, soothe, prepare food for a journey" | [zûdh, zîdh, zîdhon] | d > dh / th + r (tone) | <i>seethe</i> E, <i>suth</i> Gmc, <i>soth</i> ON, <i>sieden</i> G, <i>sedon</i> , <i>suden</i> OE, <i>sauthr</i> ON, <i>sauths</i> Gth "a sheep, a burnt offering, to soothe the gods" |
| <i>šatat, satat</i> "to base, found, begin, establish" | [shathath] ¹⁴ [sathath]NIsr | t > th + r (tone) | <i>start</i> E, <i>stath</i> Gth, <i>staart</i> Du <i>stert</i> OFris, <i>stertr</i> ON |
| <i>galal > yalal, yəlaləh, yillel, yeled, huyal, w/vaiyayel</i> "to wail, howl, lament, cry" [intensified] | | g > y + n (tone) | <i>gala</i> ON, <i>galan</i> OS, OE, OHG <i>yell</i> E, <i>yellen</i> ME <i>gillan</i> OE, <i>gellen</i> G <i>howl</i> E, <i>heulen</i> G, <i>huilen</i> Du <i>wail</i> E, <i>vala</i> , <i>vaela</i> ON |
| <i>padar, puddar, peder</i> "nourishing, fattening" | | p > ph / f d to t | <i>food</i> , <i>fodder</i> , <i>fat</i> E <i>Futter</i> , <i>Fett</i> G |
| <i>shanah, shinnah, shunnah, -shiyen, shəney</i> "to change, repeat, seasons, year, to shine, be bright" | [skinnáh] NIsr [shinnáh] Jud [sunnáh] NIsr [shnê] | s > sk + n (tone) s > sh | <i>skîna</i> OFris, ON <i>scînan</i> OS/E/HG <i>shine</i> , <i>sheen</i> E, <i>schijn</i> Du <i>schinen</i> ME, <i>schijnen</i> Du <i>sun</i> E, <i>sunna</i> ON, OS, OHG <i>sunne</i> OFris, OE, <i>Sonne</i> G <i>Schnee</i> G, <i>snow</i> E |
| <i>sapah, sippah, suppah</i> "to lick, suck up liquids" | | | <i>supa</i> ON, <i>supan</i> AS <i>sip</i> , <i>sup</i> , <i>sop</i> , <i>soup</i> E |
| <i>ʿup, ʿap, ʿoppah, ʿupi</i> "to rise, be up over" | | p > f | <i>up</i> , <i>upon</i> E <i>uppi</i> ON <i>up</i> , <i>op</i> , <i>uppa</i> OS, OFris <i>uf</i> OHG, <i>auf</i> G |
| <i>kara', kriy'a</i> "to cry out, to call" | [kri'á] | | <i>kria</i> ON <i>cry</i> E < <i>cri</i> , <i>crier</i> OFr, Fr |
| <i>bara', bore', bare', bere', ber'ah</i> "to create, form, beget" | | + n (tone) | <i>bear</i> , <i>bare</i> , <i>bore</i> E "to bear, carry" <i>bera</i> ON, OFris, <i>beran</i> OE, OHG, <i>baíran</i> Goth |

¹⁴In Hebrew if the first syllable is a closed syllable (ie. ends in a consonant), then the consonant at the beginning of the second syllable will not shift (example: *harkanah* contains an unshifted *k*). This same influence apparently applies in Germanic when a vowel drops out at the beginning, or when a consonant is added at the end, of words, as in *start* above. Note that the [t] shifted to [th] in Gothic where the *r* was not added. The same development can be seen when comparing Hebrew *satar* "to break out, burst forth" with English *star* (cf. Gesenius & Klein).

Table 3: SIMILAR VOCABULARY IN GERMANIC AND HEBREW

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|--|
| <i>bar</i> (rel. to <i>bara'</i> above) "son, male child" | | + n (tone) | <i>barn</i> OS, AS, OE, Goth "child, son" |
| <i>harab</i> , <i>harap</i> , <i>herep</i> [b > p] "to dry up as in autumn, to cut or mow down crops" | [harav] [haraf, heref] | b > bh / v p > ph / f + r (tone) | <i>harvest</i> E, <i>haerfest</i> OE, OFris, <i>harfr</i> ON, <i>herfst</i> OFris, Du, <i>herbhst</i> OS, <i>Herbst</i> G |
| <i>harap</i> , <i>harapah</i> (> above) "to pluck, harp at, scold" | | | <i>harp</i> E, <i>harpa</i> ON |
| <i>kana'</i> , <i>kinne'</i> "to kneel, bow down, be humble" | [kinē] | | <i>knē</i> ON, <i>kne</i> ME, <i>knī</i> OFris, <i>knīe</i> Du, G, <i>knee</i> E <i>kneel</i> E, ie. "kneel to God" |
| <i>leb</i> , <i>libbab</i> , <i>lubbab</i> , <i>lobab</i> "heart, to live" "life" "to love" "to praise" | | b > bh / v + n (tone) | <i>libba</i> , <i>liva</i> OFris, <i>libban</i> <i>leben</i> G, <i>libbe</i> , <i>libbath</i> OE <i>livan</i> Goth, <i>live</i> E <i>lib</i> OHG, <i>Leib</i> G, <i>lif</i> OE, <i>life</i> E <i>luba</i> Goth, <i>Liebe</i> G, <i>love</i> E <i>Lob</i> , <i>loben</i> G "praise, to praise" |
| <i>hayil</i> , <i>heyl</i> , <i>hal</i> "strength, power, might, success" | [hail], [heil] [hāl] | | <i>Hail</i> E, <i>Heil</i> G, <i>heill</i> ON, <i>Hails</i> Goth, <i>hail</i> , <i>heil</i> ME, <i>hailen</i> , <i>heylen</i> ME, <i>hāl</i> ME, E |
| <i>hayah</i> , <i>hiyyah</i> , <i>hai</i> "to live, life, health, vitality, happiness, prosperity" | | | <i>hi</i> E, <i>hiya</i> OE "used to greet" "Good Life," "Good Health," "Prosperity, success, fortune" |

THE HIGH GERMAN SOUND SHIFT

About a thousand years after the first sound shift, the Germanic dialects in Northern Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Southern Germany began a second phonetic change involving the same six consonants, [p, t, k] and [b, d, g]. Beginning in the south about 450 A.D., and slowly spreading northward through Switzerland, this second sound shift, which linguists refer to as the "High German Sound Shift" (since it originated in the highlands of the Alps), spread through the southern half of Germany by 750 A.D. Later, in the 16th century, Martin Luther popularized the High German dialect through his translation of the Bible, so that it became, eventually, the accepted, standard form of German throughout Germany.

The major difference between the Germanic Sound Shift of 700-400 B.C. and the High German Sound Shift of 450-750 A.D. was that the [t], which shifted to [th] in the first sound shift, shifted consistently to [s] in the second one. This caused the word *water*, for example, to be pronounced *Wasser* in the High (South) German dialect and the word *white* changed to *weiss* [t > s].

On the other hand, the shift of [t] to [s] is important to this study in identifying the source of influence for this second sound shift in southern Germanic territory. At the time of the dispersion of the Jews from Palestine, about 68 to 72 A.D., the Jews were speaking Aramaic as their every-day language.

Aramaic had been the popular international language throughout the Middle East, and the Jews gradually acquired this language after returning from the Babylonian captivity in the Sixth Century B.C. The Jews in Babylonian Captivity as well as those in Africa were not influenced by this Aramaic.

The Aramaic sound shift was similar to the Hebrew sound shift. One notable exception was that in Aramaic the [t] shifted to [s] rather than to [th] as in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. Thus, for example, the Hebrew words *gerot* and *gariyt*, (from *gerah* "grain, roughage, groats, grits") changed to *garas* and *gariys* [t > s] among the Jews under Aramaic influence. By comparison, similar German words with similar meanings, *grot* and *griet*, also changed to *Grutze* and *Griess* with this second sound shift. The consistency of the shift of [t] to [s] in both the Aramaic, which the Jews were speaking, and in the south German dialects, suggest a possible influence of one on the other. This supposition is strengthened by the fact that additional Hebrew vocabulary were added to the southern German dialects during this later period, which also suggests Jewish influence.

The Jews in Judea obviously did not learn perfect Aramaic, but Aramaic elements and influence are definitely observable. Under Aramaic influence, and without knowing Germanic, they learned to shift [p] to [pf], which is halfway to [f], at the beginning of words, and commonly in gemination, and after closed syllables (ending in a consonant), and to [f], just as in Hebrew, after long vowels and at the end of words. Similarly [t] shifted to [ts] (written z), half way to [s], under similar circumstances. [K] remained [k] at the beginning of words but shifted to [ch] after vowels, and [b, d, g] did not shift consistently, showing that these people, like the Jews, also did not speak Aramaic perfectly. It is also possible that Aramaic itself had deteriorated somewhat by this time. Instead the southern German dialects devoiced or pronounced these last three letters, in final position, as [p, t, k]. In other words no longer shifting these sounds to fricatives, they felt the need to devoice them. Therefore they pronounced [b, d, g] as [p, t, k] at the end of words.

Much of this Aramaic/Jewish influence can be seen in the German Language during this time period. For example, compare Hebrew *pered* "swift running animal, beast of burden, mule" with Modern German *Pferd* [p > pf] "horse." The older Middle Low German form was *pered*). Also notice the Aramaic/Jewish influence on German when comparing English *pipe* and *pepper* with German *Pfeife* [p > pf, p > f] and *Pfeffer*, English *ten* and *tame* with German *zehn* [t > ts/z] and *zahn*, and English *make* with German *machen* [k > kh/ch]. Other changes which took place were for initial [d] to shift to [t], as in English *do* and *door* which shifted in German to *tu* and *Tür* [d > t], and initial [th], which did not belong in Hebrew in initial position anyway, shifted to [d] in German. For example, English *think*, *thank* and *that* shifted to *denk*, *dank* and *das* [th > d, t > s].

The dispersion of the Jews from Judea, including the Christianized Jews, occurred about 70 A.D. During the years which followed, many of these Jews made their way northward into Europe, seeking the refuge of the Italian Alps to escape Roman persecution. By 450 A.D. they had established a sizable population there and, with further persecution, they began to spread northward, adopting and influencing the Germanic dialects in Switzerland, Austria, and southern Germany. The migrations of the Jews have already been well documented by historians, but it has not been recognized, previously, where the Christianized Jews went, nor that these people influenced the indigenous languages which they encountered. Though they eventually spread throughout Switzerland, Austria, eastern France, and southern Germany, some remained bonded together in Switzerland united by their Christian faith, and their religious zeal prevented them from joining the Catholic Church, claiming that they had authority directly from one or more of the apostles. In the year 1200 the Inquisition put a stop to their religious opposition by destroying 22 of their villages. Many died, but many fled northward into Germany and the Netherlands. Their influence can be seen in the languages. Though southern German dialects and to a limited extent England adopted the [sh] sound shortly after the Jews entered those two countries, it was

not until the 13th Century that the [sh] sound entered northern Germany, the low countries, and England fully. Though this migration made quite an impact in Europe and in Britain; it did not reach Scandinavia or the islands of Friesland. It was at this time, for example, that the word *scôni* in Germany changed to *schœne* [sk > sch] "beautiful,"¹⁵ and OS *skama* became *schame* "shame" in Middle English, Middle High German, and Middle Dutch, all in the 13th Century.

These comparisons, suggest that an influx of Hebrew-speaking people caused both major sound shifts in the Germanic languages. The first, the Germanic Sound Shift, appears to have been caused by North Israel. It affected the early Germanic dialects during those centuries following the time period of the Assyrian captivity of Israel (700 –400 B.C.). The second, the High German Sound Shift, appears to have been caused by South Israel (Judah). It affected the southern Germanic dialects during those centuries following the dispersion of the Jews from Palestine.

I conclude that what Grimm called a "Germanic Sound Shift" was actually a Semitic or, more precisely, a Hebraic sound shift, which influenced the Germanic dialects at two separate periods of history--the first, during the centuries from about 700-400 B.C., and, the second, from about 450-750 A.D. My research also suggests that the linguistic mark of the sound shifts, supported by other linguistic similarities, especially the vocabulary, can be used as a means of tracing the Israelites wherever they have spread in large enough numbers throughout the world.

¹⁵In Germany this was also the beginning of the practice of Umlauting, so prevalent in Hebrew, in which the vowel of the suffix influences the pronunciation of the main vowel, as in *scôni* and *schoene* above.