

Grimm's Law

First Germanic Consonant Shift (Grimm's law) (LC:46-48)

— first **showed the existence of sound laws** Jacob Grimm

In 1818 Rasmus Rask spelled out the relationship between the Germanic obstruents and the obstruents of the other Indo-European languages. In 1822, Grimm again wrote on this topic, adding to our understanding of the system underlying these relationships. The 'sound laws' existing between the consonants of various Indo-European forms is illustrated here by the correspondences between proto-Indo-European and Germanic. These correspondences although thought of as recurrent were by no means thought of as exceptionless.

PIE	====>	Germanic
p t k k	====>	f h h
b d	====>	p t k k
bh dh h h	====>	b d

that is,

voiceless stops	====> voiceless fricatives
voiced stops	====> voiceless stops
voiced aspirated stops	====> voiced unaspirated stops

Note that some of these changes are reflected in English the difference between the initials of certain inherited roots and the initials of certain borrowings:

inherited	borrowed (from a Non-Germanic source)
[f]	[p]
father	paternity
five	pentagon
fish	pisces
foot	pod-, ped-
[θ]	[t]
three	tripod
tooth	dental
father	paternity

tooth

dental

[h]

[k]

heart

cardiologist

head

capital (e.g. capital punishment)

hundred

century