

INTRODUCTION.

I am not at all surprised at the common prejudice existing against etymology. As the subject has been treated, it is justly liable to all the objections urged against it. But it is obvious that Sir W. Jones had given very little attention to the subject, and that some of its most common and obvious principles had escaped his observation. His opinion with regard to both articulations and vowels is unequivocally erroneous, as will appear from the following list of words, taken from modern languages, and respecting the identity of which, that gentleman himself, if living, could not have the slightest doubt.

ENGLISH.	SAXON.	DUTCH.	GERMAN.	SWEDISH.	LATIN.
draw, } drag, }	dragan,	trekken,	tragen,	draga,	trahō.
give, } foot, }	gifan,	geeven,	geben,	gifva,	
feet, }	fot, fet,	voet,	fuss,	fot,	pes. Gr. ποῦς.
hook, }	hoc,	haak,	haken,	hake,	
day, }	dag, dæg,	daag,	tag,	dag,	
have, }	habban,	hebben,	haben,	halva,	habeo.
	(Fr. avoir, al, as, a, avone, avez, out.)		lauten,	lypa,	
leap, }	hleapan,	branden,	brennen,	brinna,	
burn, }	willan,	willen,	willen,	willja,	volo, velle.
will, }	stan,	steen,	stein,	sten,	
stone, }	bred,	breed,	breit,	bred,	
broad, }	eorth,	aarde,	erde,	jord, Dan. iord.	
earth, }	hwa,	wie,	who, Dan. hvo.	sökja,	
seek, }	secan,	zoeken,	suchen,	böma, Dan. böme.	sequor.
beast, }	bean,	beon,	bolne,		

Here are scarcely two words written with the same letters in two languages; and yet no man ever called in question their identity, on account of the difference of orthography. The diversity is equally great in almost all other words of the same original. So in the same words we often find the vowel changed as in the Lat. *facio, feci; ago, egi; sto, steti; vello, vidi*. Nothing is more certain than that the Welsh *gyog*, and the English *wood*, are the same word, although there is one letter only common to them both. It is pronounced *gooyth*, that is, *g*, and *tyeth*; as *guard* for *ward*.

3. CHANGE OR LOSS OF RADICAL LETTERS.

There are some words, which, in certain languages, have suffered a change of a radical letter; while in others it is wholly lost. For example, *word*, in Danish and Swedish is *ord*; *wort*, a plant, is *urt*; the Saxon *gear*, or *ger*, English *year*, in Danish is *aar*, in Swedish is *år*, in Dutch *jaar*, and in German *jahr*.

In the word, *yoke*, and its affinities, we have a clear and decisive example of changes in orthography. *Yoke*, the Latin *jugum*, is from the Chaldean, Syriac, and Arabic *yh*, *yug*, to join, to couple; a word not found in the Hebrew. The Greeks retained the original letters in *ζυγος, ζυγοι*; the Latins changed the first letter to *j* in *jugum*, and inserted a casual *n* in *jungo*. From the Latin, the Italians formed *giogo*, a yoke, and *giungere*, to join; the Spaniards, *yugo*, a yoke, and *juntar*, to join; the French, *joug*, a yoke, and *joindre*, to join. In Saxon, *yoke* is *geoc* or *ioc*; in Dutch, *juk*; G. *joch*; Sw. *ok*.

One of the most general changes that words have undergone is the entire loss of the palatal letter *g*, when it is radical and final in verbs; or the opening of that articulation to a vowel or diphthong. We have examples in the English *bog*, from Saxon *bugan*, to bend; *big*, from *bucgan*; *brown*, from *bræg*; *lay*, from *lagan*, or *legan*; *say*, from *sagan*; *fail*, from *fager*; *flail*, from the German *flegel*, Lat. *flagellum*; French *nier*, from Lat. *nego, negare*.

The same or similar changes have taken place in all the modern languages of which I have any knowledge.

The loss and changes of radical letters in many Greek verbs deserve particular notice. We find in the Lexicons, *παρῆναι, παρῆναι, παρῆναι*, are referred to *παρῆναι*, as the theme or root; *τετραῖναι, τετραῖναι, τετραῖναι*, to *τετραῖναι*, and *παρῆναι*, to *παρῆναι*. This reference, so far as it operates as a direction to the student where to find the verb to which the word belongs, and its explanation, is useful and necessary. But if the student supposes that these words are formed from the theme, so called, or the first person of the indicative mode, present tense, he is deceived. I am confident no example can be found, in any language, of the palatals *γ* and *ξ*, formed from the dentals and sibilants, *γ* and *ξ*, nor is *παρῆναι*, or any similar word formed by the addition of the dental to a verb ending in a vowel. The truth is, the last radical in *παρῆναι* is lost, in the indicative mode, and in *παρῆναι, παρῆναι*, it is changed. The radical lost in *παρῆναι* is *δ* or *δ*; the original word was *πεδῆναι* or *πεδῆναι*, and the derivatives *παρῆναι, παρῆναι*, were formed before the radical letter was dropped in the verb. No sooner is the verb restored to its primitive form, than we recognize its connection with the Irish *radham*, to speak; Saxon *rad*, speech; *radan*, to read; German *rath*, Dutch *raad*, &c.

The original root of *παρῆναι*, was *παρῆναι, παρῆναι, or παρῆναι*, and from this were formed *παρῆναι, παρῆναι*, before the last radical was changed. No sooner is the original orthography restored, than we see this to be the Teutonic verb.

German *brauchen*, Dutch *gebruiken*, English *bruger*, Sw. *bruka*, Sax. *brutan*, to use, to practice, and hence the Danish *brøker*.

The same remarks are applicable to *τετραῖναι* and *παρῆναι*; *τετραῖναι* and *παρῆναι*; *αλαγῆναι* and *αλαγῆναι*; *χαρῆναι* and *χαρῆναι*, and many other words of like formation. In all these cases, the last radical letter is to be sought in the derivatives of the verb, and in one of the past tenses, particularly in an aorist. This fact affords no feeble evidence that in Greek, as in the Shemitic languages, the preterit tense or an aorist, was the radix of the verb.

But it is not in the Greek language only that we are to seek for the primitive radical letters, nor in what is now called the root of the verb, but in the derivatives. The fact is the same in the Latin, and in the English. The Latin *fluctus* and *fluvi*, cannot be deduced from *fluo*; but the orthography of these words proves demonstrably that the original root was *flugo*, or *fluco*. So in English *sight* cannot be deduced from *see*, for no example can be found of the letter *g* introduced to form the participles of verbs. *Sight*, in Saxon *gesicht*, D. *zigt*, G. *sicht*, Dan. *sigt*, Sw. *sicht*, is a participle; but the verb in the infinitive, in Saxon is *seon*, *gescon*, Ger. *sehen*, D. *zien*, Dan. *seer*, Sw. *se*; in which no palatal letter is found, from which *g* or *ch* can be deduced. The truth then is that the original verb was *segan*, or in Dutch *zeggen*; the *g* being lost as it is in the French *nier*, from the Lat. *nego*.

In the change of letters in the Greek verbs before mentioned, the process seems to have been from *γ* or *ξ* to *σ*, and then to *τ* and *δ*; *παρῆναι, παρῆναι, παρῆναι*. This is certainly a process which is natural and common. The Latin *brachium* thus became in Spanish *brazo*, and then in French *bras*; and thus in the Italian, *Alexandria* has become *Alessandria*.

When the last radical of a Greek verb is a dental, it may not be certain whether the original letter was *d*, or *th* or *t*. We find the Greek verb *εργαζομαι*, to draw, forms its derivatives with *ε, εργαζα, εργασι*, and this is probably the Armor. *spaza*, from which we have *spay*. So *παρῆναι, παρῆναι*, and *παρῆναι*, are evidently of the same family. It is not improbable that the original letter might have a compound sound, or it might correspond nearly to the Arabic *ḍ* or *ḍ*, or the English *dh* or *th*, or *ds*, so as easily to pass into *d* or into *s*.

It is equally clear that many Greek words have lost an initial consonant. The letter most generally lost is probably the oriental *ϑ*, but obviously the palatals, *γ* and *ξ*, have, in many instances, been dropped. There seems to be no question that the Greek *ολος* is the English *whole* and perhaps *all*. This in Welsh is *oll* or *holl*, in Saxon *ol* or *geall*; and this is undoubtedly the Shemitic *ḥl*. So the Gr. *ολοι* is the Welsh *colli*, to lose; and *ολος* may be the English *coil*, Fr. *cueillir*.

In like manner, the Greek has, in many words, lost a labial initial, answering to the English *b*, or *p*. The Greek *ειδω* is undoubtedly the Latin *video*; *εργα* is from the same root as *work*; *ειδω* is from the root of *vid*, in the Latin *video*.

divido, and *individus*, that is, separate, and from the Arabic, *ḍ*, *badda*, to separate.

In many instances, the Latin retained or restored the lost letter; thus *harmaxa*, for *αμαξα*; *harpago* for *αργασι*; *harmonia* for *αρμονια*; *video* for *ειδω*.

If the marks of breathing, called spiritus asper and spiritus lenis, now prefixed to Greek words, were intended to represent the letters lost, or to stand in the place of them, they answer this purpose very imperfectly. The spiritus asper may stand for a palatal or guttural letter, but it does not designate which letter, the *η*, or the *ϑ*; much less does this or the other spiritus justify represent the labials, *b, f, or w*. Whenever the Latins wrote *h* in the place of the Greek spiritus, we may conclude that the original letter was *η* or a cognate letter; and we may conclude also that the *n* in *viduo*, and in *divido*, *viduo*, *individuo*, stands for the original labial lost in *ειδω*, and *ειδω*. But there are many words, I apprehend, in which the lost letter is unknown, and in which the loss cannot be recovered, by any marks prefixed to the words. We may well suppose that *hymnus* exhibits the correct written form of *hymn*; but what is there in the Greek *ωπ*, to lead us to consider this word as the English *woof*, and *ωπω*, to be the same as *weave*? Both the Greek words have the spiritus asper.

That proportion of Greek words have been contracted by the loss of an initial or final consonant, cannot, I apprehend, be determined with any precision; at least, not in the present state of philological knowledge. It is probable the number of contracted words amounts to one fourth of all the verbs, and it may be more.

Similar contractions have taken place in all other languages; a circumstance that embarrasses the philologist and lexicographer at every step of his researches; and which has led to innumerable mistakes in Etymology. We know that the Swedish *år*, and Danish *aar*, a year, have lost the articulation *g*, and that the English *y* in *year*, is the representative of *g*; as *j* is in the Dutch *jaar*, and German *jahr*; for the *g* is found in our mother tongue; and in a multitude of words, one language will supply the means of deter-

* *Κραύω*, in Greek, is to cry like a crow or rook; but the last radical is changed from *γ*, as in the second aorist, it forms *κραυγῶ*. Now in Danish, *crow* is *krage*, in Ger. *krabe*, in D. *kraai*, in Sw. *kråka*; a fact that demonstrates the last radical letter to be a palatal, which in English is opened to *o*, in *crao*.