



Some remarks on the etymology of **teutā*, *πληθος*, *plēbs*

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ABSTRACT

Traditional etymological reconstructions show that in a quite close-knit European area many words denoting the social aggregation of ‘people’ and ‘crowd’ derive from stems with similar meaning, linked to notions ranging from ‘fullness’ to ‘swelling’. In this paper some words deriving from the reconstructed form **teuteh₂* (<**teuH-* / *tuH-*) are analyzed and special attention is paid to the Greek and Latin words τὸ πληθος / ἡ πληθύς, *plēbs* / *plēbēs* (<**pelh₁₋*). Etymological reconstructions proposed thus far are set out and discussed, with special attention to the phonological and morphological structure of the words at issue. Moreover, the hypothesis that the words derived from **teutā* have not an Indo-European origin, but rather belong to the so called “North-West vocabulary” is addressed. New insights into the etymological reconstruction of the terms at issue are provided by assigning a key role to the semantic content. First of all, the socio-institutional meaning of the terms is assessed by taking into account both linguistic evidence and historical reconstructions. Second, the semantic development that led from the meaning “swelling”, “fullness” of the two stems **teuh₂₋* / *tuh₂₋* and **pelh₁₋* to the meaning “folk, people” is interpreted in the light of the cognitive notions of ‘metaphor’ and ‘metonymy’.

KEYWORDS: Indo-European reconstruction, semantics, theory of metaphor.

1. Introduction

IE languages did not use only a single stem to derive words meaning ‘people’. Still, traditional etymological reconstructions show that in a quite close-knit European area many words meaning ‘people’ and ‘crowd’ – understood as a social aggregation – derive from stems with similar meaning, linked to notions ranging from ‘fullness’ to ‘swelling’¹: on the one hand Western dialects (Celtic, Italic, Germanic, Baltic) used **teuh₂₋* / *tuh₂₋* (“schwellen, stark werden”, LIV 639-640), on the other hand Greek, Latin, and, to an extent, some Germanic languages used the stem **pelh₁₋* (“sich füllen”)².

¹ See DEVOTO (1958: 92), EIEC (*s.v. people*) and below § 4.

² Following MEISER (1993), RIX (LIV 482-483) proposes the reflexive meaning “sich füllen, voll werden”, although he admits «außerhalb des Gr. spricht allerdings nichts klar für urspr. fientive

In this paper some words deriving from the reconstructed form **teuteh₂* (<**teuH-* / *tuH-*) are analyzed and special attention is paid to the Greek and Latin words τὸ πλῆθος / ἡ πλῆθυσ, *plēbs* / *plēbēs* (<**pelh₁₋*).

Etymological reconstructions proposed thus far have focused especially on the formal facets of the words at issue. We believe that a semantic analysis is important as well. As Lazzeroni (1998: 6) states, «mediante la ricostruzione etimologica si ricostruiscono [...] non realtà materiali, ma ideologie: le forme, cioè con cui una determinata comunità ha interpretato e ordinato i dati dell'esperienza»³.

In other words, in addition to analyzing both the phonological and morphological structure of the words at issue, it is necessary to explain the semantic development that led from the meaning “swelling”, “fullness” of the two stems **teuh₂₋* / *tuh₂₋* and **pelh₁₋* to the meaning “folk, people”.

2. Words derived from **teutā*

In order to mean ‘people’ or ‘tribe’ (at any rate some sort of autonomous political unit, see Haudry, 1993)⁴, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, and Baltic dialects use the following set of words (IEW 1080 ff.)⁵:

Bedeutung, die praktisch auf das gr. Medium beschränkt ist». According to IEW (798 ff.), it means “füllen, Fülle”.

³ “Through etymological reconstruction it is not material entities, but ideologies that are reconstructed, i.e. structures by which a given culture has conceptualized and organized the data given by their experience with the world”.

⁴ In some cases words within this series mean both “people” and “land”. For this double meaning, see KRAHE (1954: 66): «Die Bedeutung des Wortes **teutā* schwankt [...] zwischen “Land” und “Volk”; und diese Doppelbedeutung darf man mit ziemlicher Gewißheit auch für die vorgeschichtlichen Perioden voraussetzen».

⁵ Some proper names have to be added to the set mentioned above: i.e. ethnic *Praetūtii* (RIX, 2000b: 201); Illyr. *Teutana* and Gaul. *Toutonos* (see footnote 16; see DELAMARRE, 2003: s.v. *teuta*, *touta*); Thrac. *Tautomedes*; Pel. Τευταμίδης (Il. 2.843); Gr. Τευτάμος (names of Bias of Priene’s father and son). See PROSDOCIMI (1978: 56 ff.) for other Italic names derived from **teutā*. There has been a long-standing debate about Hitt. *tuzzi-* “army, military forces; military camp” concerning its membership in this derivational series: nowadays scholars (OETTINGER, 1994; KLOEKHORST, 2008) tend to reject this hypothesis. Greek and Latin words that POKORNY (IEW 1080 ff.) derives from the same stem are few and with a very doubtful etymology. Two of Hesychius’ glosses are worthy of mention: ταῦς μέγας, πολὺς and ταῦσας, μεγάλωνας, πλεονάσας (see DE LAMBERTERIE, 1990: 171 ff.). Also Lat. *tumēō* “to swell” and its derivatives *tumor* “swelling, tumor”, *tumidus* “swollen”, etc. (see DE VAAN, 2008: s.v.) are very likely derived from **teuh₂₋* / *tuh₂₋*.

- Osc. *touto*; Umbr. *totam* (acc. sg.); South Pic. *tútas* “Stadtgemeinde, civitas” (Untermann, 2000: 779-781);
- OIr. *túath* “people, tribe”, MW *tūt* “people, country”, Co. *tus* “people”, MBret. *tut* (MoBret. *tud*) “id.”⁶; several Gaulish names: e.g. *Touto*, *Touto-bodiaci*, *Teutana*, etc. (Matasović, 2009: s.v. **towtā*; Delamarre, 2003: s.v. *teuta*, *touta*);
- Go. *þiuda* “people, nation”, OHG *diot(a)* “id.”, OS *thiod(a)* “id.”, OE *þēod* “id.”, OI *þjóð* “id.” (GED);
- OCS (*s/š*)*tūždŭ* “foreigner” (most likely a loan from German);
- Latv. *tāuta* “(foreign) people”, OPruss. *tauto* “country”, OLith. *Tautā* Lithuanian name of Germany (LiEW 1069-70).

More precise information about the traditional translations quoted above is needed.

Prosdocimi (1978) reconstructs the system of institutional terms in which *tota* is placed and has a specific value. By analyzing the Iguvine Tablets and comparing Umbr. *tota* with the other nouns in opposition with it (*ocri*, *trifu*, *poplo*)⁷, Prosdocimi states that *tota* denotes the fundamental civic unit, the unmarked term in the civic field. Put differently, Umbr. *tota* includes what Latin distinguishes in *urbs* and *civitas*, i.e. «[...] l’arcillesema (“città”) con pertinenza anche territoriale» (Prosdocimi, 1978: 37)⁸. Outside Umbrian communities, **teutā-* is found in the whole Oscan area and even in Sicily, but with different intension⁹.

Two facts emerge clearly from Prosdocimi’s (1978) and Rix’s (2000b) analyses. First of all, **teutā-* has a mainly socio-institutional value and could be translated with Lat. *civitas* only by narrowing its meaning. Second, it is very hard – if not impossible – to restore the exact *designatum* of a (socio-) institutional term, if the system of relations in which that term lies and gains

⁶ In Breton, *tud* “people, men” is used as the suppletive plural form of *den* “person, man” (CUZ-ZOLIN, 1993: 328; PRESS, 2010: 443).

⁷ The word *ocri* «in fase pre-urbana rappresenta l’unità – a funzione politica ma a valore sacrale – attorno a cui ruota la comunità, TOTA, che in esso si riconosce» (PROSDOCIMI, 1978: 38; “in the pre-urban phase denotes the unit – with political function but sacral value – around which the community (TOTA) that identifies itself in it revolves”); *trifu* denotes the “territory (as a giuridical-political unit)”, i.e. it is the territory seen as political delimitation; *poplo* means the “(group of) citizens fit for the army” (hence it shares the oldest meaning of Lat. *populus*: see HARVEY and BALDI, 2002).

⁸ “[...] the archilexeme (‘city’) with territorial relevance too”.

⁹ RIX (2000b) explains the differences between the meanings of Italic words from **teutā* in the light of the deep sociopolitical changes that Umbrians and Samnites underwent from at least the fifth century B.C.

its meaning is unknown¹⁰.

It is impossible to avoid the comparison with the state of things in Rome. According to Prosdocimi (1978: 52), «OCRI e TOUTA sono la coppia istituzionale fondamentale delle genti italiche già in data anteriore al VI secolo: lo sono quindi, *tout court*, per gli Italici in Italia»¹¹. But Rome innovates. In comparison with the Italic pair, the Latin terms *urbs* and *civitas* (*arx* stays in the background: see Prosdocimi, 1978) show traces of an institutional development greatly different from that in the other Italic cities:

In conclusione noi abbiamo qui non solo una eredità lessicale indoeuropea che lega gli Italici, [...] ma una comune struttura istituzionale cui partecipa, o ha partecipato, Roma, che pure non ha o non ha più la stessa espressione lessicale (Prosdocimi, 1978: 68)¹².

Whether the word **teutā-* is maintained in Lat. *tōtus*, *-a*, *-um* is under debate¹³.

In order to explain Lat. *-ō-* < **-eu-*, scholars (DÉLL; Bonfante, 1958; Szemerényi, 1962) usually appeal to dialectal influence (cf. Lat. *rōbur* < **re-udb-os*), Umbrian-Sabine in particular (Szemerényi, 1962). Still two features need to be explained: the lack of formal derivational suffixes in the development noun > adjective; and the semantic evolution from ‘people’ – as a socio-institutional entity – to ‘whole’. Prosdocimi (1978: 68) proposes the following: *teutā* originates as a noun and is found in Italic as *touta* and in Umbrian as *tota*; the Umbrian word is then introduced into literary Latin, with both semantic and functional change. This hypothesis would also explain the absence of formal derivational suffixes, since «il passaggio da

¹⁰ Referring to the Venetic phrase *u teuta-* “on behalf of the city”, PROSDOCIMI (1978: 57) writes: «È termine isolato, e, pertanto, fuori da contesti oppozionali, non fornisce più che il lato formale (conservazione della parola) e, latamente, quello semantico (“comunità”), senza possibilità di inquadramento istituzionale (sincronico) che non provenga da uno pseudo-istituzionalismo» (“It is an isolated term. Hence, outside a proper oppositional context, it conveys only the formal aspect (preservation of the word) and a broad semantic facet (‘community’). But it cannot be placed in a (synchronic) system of institutions unless the latter derives from a kind of pseudo-institutionalism”).

¹¹ «OCRI and TOUTA are the two fundamental institutional terms for Italic peoples already before the sixth century: therefore, they are so, *tout court*, for Italics in Italy”.

¹² “In conclusion, here we have not only a lexical IE inheritance that connects Italics, [...] but a common institutional organization in which Rome takes, or took, part, even if it does not have or no longer has the same lexical encoding”.

¹³ BENVENISTE (1969: 366) rejects the derivational chain **teutā* > *tōta* and, following LEW, compares the latter word with Lat. *tōmentum* “stuffing”. On this hypothesis, see DE VAAN’s (2008: s.v.) skeptical caution. Moreover he also rejects as very unlikely ZIMMER’s proposal (1985) *tōtus* < **to-īe/ot-o* “sich fest dazustellend”.

lingua a lingua è imprevedibile precisamente per queste categorizzazioni» (Prosdocimi, 1978: 68)¹⁴. In other words: it is possible that the semantic change that occurred in the transfer from Umbr. *tota* to Lat. *tōtus* is related to the broader process of reorganization of Roman society and institutions. Once the system of relations by which *touta* gained its semantic value no longer existed, the word lost its socio-institutional meaning (“social whole” > “whole” with loss of the feature [+social])¹⁵. Then, as shown by Bonfante (1958), it conflicts with *omnis* and, with the passage of time, it evolved from being the marked term of the opposition to being the unmarked term.

Watkins (1966), briefly discussing Celtic communities depicted in the Irish Law Tracts (VII-VIII sec. AD), draws a parallel with the Italic communities. **Teutā* was the highest social unit in the Italic peninsula just as *túath* was in ancient Ireland: «an amorphous collection of joint families (Ir. *fine*) ‘ruled’ by a “petty-king” (Ir. *rí*)» (Watkins, 1966: 44). In ancient Ireland any larger social entity was purely a personal relationship (usually one of obligation) between the *rí* and an “over-king”, the *ruiri* (< *ro* + *rí*), «who might himself be under a personal obligation to a “king of over-kings” (Ir. *rí ruirech*)» (Watkins, 1966: 44). The *rí ruirech* had no rights of administration or government or levy over the *túath* of the *ruiri*, nor did the *ruiri* over the *túath* of the *rí*. As shown by eDIL, *túath* could indicate not only the people living in a specific territory, but also, by synecdoche, that territory. That is why Watkins (1966: 46) draws a parallel between OIr. *túath* and Umbr. *trifu* (not Umbr. *tota*), since «it [*scil. trifu*] is the highest Umbrian sociopolitical (as well as geographical) unit».

However, according to Prosdocimi’s (1978) thorough analysis of Umbrian institutional terms (see above), Umbr. *trifu* cannot be considered the Italic counterpart of OIr. *túath*, since it refers only to the territory seen as political delimitation. If we wish to maintain the parallel proposed by Watkins (1966), Umbr. *tota* may be a better (though not perfect) fit, because it denotes the fundamental civic unit with territorial relevance too.

The Gothic word *þiuda* “people” – and the series linked to it – must be understood as a social (if not institutional) term as well. The evidence for this interpretation comes indirectly from the word meaning “king”, morphologically derived from **teutā*–: Go. *þiudans*, OI *þjóðann*, OE *þēoden*, OS

¹⁴ “The transfer from one language to another is unpredictable exactly in relation to these categorizations”.

¹⁵ See BADER’s (1997) study of some IE ethnic names: for **teutā*– she posits the meaning “social whole”.

thiodan (GED)¹⁶. Every term is derived with the IE suffix **-no-*, which means “chief of a social group” (or forms some divine names): Go. *kindins* “governor”, OI *drōttin* “prince”, OHG *truhtin* “lord, ruler” (GED). In Latin there are *dominus* “master (of the *domus*)”, *tribunus* “chief of the *tribus*”, or more appropriately, “he who represents the *tribus*” (Watkins, 1966: 45; Leumann, 1977: 608)¹⁷. In Serbo-Croatian there is *žúpān* “ruler of a *žúpa*”, i.e. of a “territorial or administrative unit” (Watkins, 1966: 45).

The socio-institutional meaning of the terms analyzed thus far is thus explicit. The most controversial aspects of the etymological reconstruction of those terms pertain to the formal level.

All the terms mentioned at the beginning of this section are traditionally (IEW, LEW, EWAia) traced back to the IE stem **teuh₂- / tuh₂-* “to bloat, to become strong” (whence OIn. *tavīti* “to be strong, mighty”). However, some scholars have claimed that **teutā* does not have IE origins. This hypothesis is based on some key considerations, summarized by Beekes (1998: 465) as follows:

- 1) the word is unmotivated in IE;
- 2) the word is found only in a restricted (geographical) area;
- 3) the word is found in a continuous area which often shows non-IE loans;
- 4) there was probably no word for the notion of ‘people’ in PIE;
- 5) words for the concept of ‘people’ are often loanwords.

Observation (1) is addressed below.

As for (2), Szemerényi (1962, 1977) cites Morgenstierne’s (1942) data, according to which NPer. *toda* “heap, stack, tumulus” and Buddhist Sogdian *twō’k* “mass, aggregate” would reflect an IE **teuto- / teutā* «retaining the concrete and prob[ably] original meaning of the well-known IE word denoting “(collection of) people”» (Morgenstierne, 1942: 266). Moreover,

¹⁶ To this set of words GED also adds the Illyrian proper name *Teutana* and the Gaulish proper name *Teutonos* (cf. references in GED: *s.v. piudans*; for Gaulish names, see DELAMARRE, 2003: *s.v. teuta, touta*).

¹⁷ DE VAAN (2008: *s.v. dominus*) proposes a slightly different translation: *dominus* “he of the house”, Go. *piudans* “he of the people”, *kindins* “he of the *gens*”. Moreover, he adds: «[*dominus*] does not have to mean “he who possesses/profits from a house” (like *Bellōna*, *Portūnus*, *colōnus*)». However, DE VAAN’s (2008) translation risks belittling the role played by the *dominus*, the *piudans*, the *kindins*, and the deities mentioned above (see also BENVENISTE, 1969: 301 ff. with due precautions). The *colōnus* is a different matter: in fact he does not play any particular (social) role. Still, it is worth noticing that the word *colōnus* is deverbal, not denominal: it is reasonable to assume that in this case the suffix **-no-* has a different meaning (see LEUMANN, 1977: 608).

following Benveniste (1955: 329), Szemerényi (1977: 102) proposes that the equivalent of BS *twδ'k* is the Christian Sogdian *twdy qty* and translates it as “(the water flowing downhill) was made into a mass, a wall”. As a general remark we might recall that, in order to acknowledge or deny the sociological (or institutional) meaning of a given word, a direct and thorough analysis of the linguistic context in which it is used is needed.

All the other considerations of Beekes’s (1998) list are – at most – possibilities and do not seem cogent¹⁸.

Because of some phonetic characteristics¹⁹ of the terms derived from **teutā-*, some scholars have suggested either that IE origin was improbable, or that those terms did not belong to the original IE core. This hypothesis was first made by Krahe (1954, 1959) and then restated by, among others, Lazzeroni (1964), who includes those words in the so called “North-West vocabulary”.

Following Beekes (1998), we can maintain that **teutā* is a loanword from a substratum language, but adapted so well that its foreign origin can no longer be seen. In fact, Beekes (1998: 465) himself acknowledges: «we have no hard, formal evidence for non-IE origin».

Another acceptable hypothesis is that **teutā* is a true IE word that in a quite compact group of languages came to denote the ‘people’ – understood as a socio-institutional unit – through a semantic development common to other IE words meaning ‘people’.

3. Words derived from **pelh₁-*

Greek τὸ πλῆθος / ἡ πλῆθὺς and Latin *plēbs* / *plēbēs* derive from the stem **pelh₁-* (Beekes, 2010; de Vaan, 2008) and mean ‘crowd’, ‘people’.

Because of the remarkable resemblance between the Greek and Latin terms on both the formal and the semantic levels, scholars have often proposed etymological reconstructions to explain Latin terms on the basis of the Greek and vice versa²⁰. Some remarks about this methodology, although it is legiti-

¹⁸ DELAMARRE (2003: 296) considers BEEKES’s (1998) arguments not convincing as well.

¹⁹ In particular, the Baltic *-au-* presents some problems. BEEKES (1998: 462), among the various explanations mentioned, proposes to consider the Baltic word a borrowing from German. This hypothesis would also explain the absence of a circumflex root, which is expected from the laryngeal at the end of the stem **teu_h₂-* / *tuh₂-*.

²⁰ Some scholars (for instance DÉLL; ERNOUT, 1965) have suggested that *plēbēs* is a loanword from Greek.

mate in principle, are required. We believe that not taking into account the chronology of the terms at issue is a methodological mistake and, as will soon be shown, can be misleading for a proper etymological interpretation.

3.1. *Some proposals concerning Gr. πλήθος / πληθύς*

The two current etymological dictionaries, GEW and DÉLG, do not provide much information about τὸ πλήθος and ἡ πληθύς (*s.v.* πίμπλημι): they are derived from the same stem as πίμπλημι and are considered synonyms.

GEW follows the analysis proposed in LEW²¹, which basically accepts Brugmann's (1916a) reconstruction: Lat. *plēb-* would come from the protoform **plēd^huēs*, whose zero grade is represented by Greek πλήθύς. Therefore GEW relates πλήθος and πληθύς “Fülle, (Volks)menge, Haufe” to Lat. *plēbēs*, but at the same time considers the doubts expressed in DÉLL well grounded (“wohlbegründete”): according to DÉLL (*s.v.* *plēbēs*), Brugmann's hypothesis is a «hypothèse ingénieuse, mais où l'on ne peut voir plus qu'une possibilité, la seule admissible, il est vrai, parmi les étymologies indo-européennes proposées».

There is no reference to an etymological relationship between the Greek and Latin terms in DÉLG, which provides little information. The term πλήθος means “grand nombre, foule” and is used in Homer, Ionic-Attic, Doric, and Arcadic. By contrast, the use of πληθύς (“foule, grand nombre”) is more restricted (Homer, Ionic, and late prose) and translates Lat. *plēbs*; πληθύς could derive from πληθύνομαι “to have the majority” (Aeschl., *Ag.* 1370), starting from πλήθος and modeled on μηκύνομαι²².

Beekes, in the new etymological dictionary of Greek published in 2010, adds little to what has been said so far: he just agrees with the hypothesis that πληθύς compares to Lat. *plēbēs* from the reconstructed form **pleh₁-d^huh₁-*.

Szemerényi (1962) proposes a completely new etymology. He claims that, outside the Greek area, the neuters with *-tas-* in Sanskrit are the only formations comparable with the neuters with *-θος*. Based on this relationship, he suggests that the Greek neuters with *-θος* derive from **-tos*, hence πλήθος < **plē-tos*. Then, under the influence of πλήθος, πληθύς would have been created to replace the original form **πλη-τύς*.

²¹ According to LEW (*s.v.* πίμπλημι), ἡ πληθύς is just the Ionic variant of τὸ πλήθος and they both mean (only) “Menge”.

²² The relationship τὸ πλήθος : πληθύνομαι = τὸ μήκος : μηκύνομαι is proposed in DÉLG, but it is neither justified nor argued.

Even without entering into details of the etymological reconstructions seen so far (GEW, DÉLG, Szemerényi, 1962)²³, it is certain that they are all invalidated by an underlying methodological error: they did not draw any chronological distinction between πλῆθος and πλῆθῦς²⁴.

In Homer τὸ πλῆθος is attested only twice in the Iliad (*Il.* 17.329-30; *Il.* 23.639) and in both cases it means the abstract concept of “numerical majority”. In order to denote the ‘crowd’, the Homeric poems use the feminine noun ἡ πλῆθῦς (seventeen times), with a collective meaning: it is made clear also by the use of the verb in the 3rd pl. in conjunction with a sing. nominative (*Il.* 2.278; *Il.* 17.304-5). Analyzing each occurrence of πλῆθῦς shows that most of the time it is used with the meaning of “mass” of the army, often in opposition to the ἄριστοι (*Il.* 17.295-6), the ἡγεμόνες (*Il.* 2.487-8; *Il.* 11.304-5), or the κοίρανοι (*Il.* 2.487-8 again). Otherwise πλῆθῦς can be found in opposition to the single heroes, who bravely fight at the very front of the army (*Il.* 22.458-9; *Od.* 11.514-5) or mingle with it to hide from the enemy (*Il.* 11.360; *Il.* 17.31 = *Il.* 20.197; *Il.* 17.304-5; *Il.* 20.376-7). Sometimes πλῆθῦς denotes entire communities (*Il.* 17.221) or ethnic groups (*Il.* 5.676; *Il.* 9.641); only once (*Il.* 2.143-4) is it used to denote the group of soldiers summoned by Agamemnon for an “assembly” (ἀγορή).

The social value of the term is therefore apparent and it is confirmed by West Locrian, where πλῆθος means “majority”. This meaning is considered by Ruijgh (1957) a natural development of ‘crowd’, «car elle a un parallèle dans οἱ πολλοί» (Ruijgh, 1957: 110)²⁵. We believe that the variants Locr. ἡ πλῆθια and Boeot. ἡ πλειθια (*Supp. Epigr.* 3.342.19) “assembly” or “majority in the assembly” can be explained in the same way.

In the literature subsequent to the epic poems, the semantic values encoded by ἡ πλῆθῦς are subsumed by τὸ πλῆθος: the first term is used only in epigraphy (Gortyn and Locri, fifth century BC) and by authors who prefer obsolete poetic terms (de Lamberterie, 1990: 637; Martínez García, 1996:

²³ Many objections can be offered to SZEMERÉNYI’s (1962) proposal, here presented briefly: among them we recall that OIn. *-t-* does not usually correspond to Gr. *-th-* (further observations, for instance, in MARTÍNEZ GARCÍA, 1996). For SZEMERÉNYI’s etymological reconstruction of *plēbs*, see § 3.2.

²⁴ See footnote 26 for what we mean here by “chronological distinction”.

²⁵ The comparison between πλῆθῦς and οἱ πολλοί can go further. With a partitive gen., οἱ πολλοί means “the most part (of)”; without a partitive gen. it means “mass, the commonalty” (for instance, in opposition to οἱ μείζω κεκτημένοι in Thuc. 1.6. and to οἱ κομψότεροι in Plat., *Rp.* 505b). With reference to the Roman society, it specifically means “plebs” (e.g. Pol. 1.11.2).

224-233); the latter has many meanings. Here we mention some of the main ones found in LSJ: “great number, multitude”, especially of people (Aesch., *Pers.* 432; Hdt. 9.73.2); “the commons” (cf. Pl., *Plt.* 291d; Hdt. 3.81); “assembly” (Lys. 12.42; Pl., *Ap.* 31c; IG12.10.21, 22).

The data presented here show that τὸ πλῆθος with the meaning “multitude, mass” is used later than ἡ πλῆθυσ; therefore:

- 1) it is very unlikely for ἡ πλῆθυσ to be the outcome of a derivational chain that begins with τὸ πλῆθος (this is the hypothesis of DÉLG);
- 2) it is very unlikely for ἡ πλῆθυσ to have the aspirated plosive because of the influence of τὸ πλῆθος (Szemerényi’s hypothesis, 1962);
- 3) it is advisable (at least in principle), when proposing any etymological reconstruction, that the newest term be kept apart from the oldest one²⁶ (contrary to what GEW proposes).

The Locrian and Boeotian variants mentioned above confirm what was already noticed in DÉLG: from the root πλῆ- a considerable number of nominal and verbal derivatives is created with the suffix -θ-. Among them, there are πλῆθω “to become full”²⁷ and the following denominals: πλῆθύω, πλῆθύνομαι “to be on the side of the majority” (later also in the active diathesis πλῆθύνω “multiply”)²⁸, πλῆθωριάω “to be excessive in style/profuse”, πλῆθωριέομαι “to be full”²⁹. Moreover DÉLG observes that the series πλῆθος ~ πλῆθω ~ πέπληθα shows the same suffix as βριθός ~ βριθω ~ βέβριθα «avec la même fonction». Determining the exact function of -θ- (< IE *-dʰ-) is not an easy task.

Chantraine (1933) already acknowledged the importance of the suffix -θ- (< IE *-dʰ-) in verbal and nominal derivational processes and identified a close relationship between nouns and verbs that have the suffix -θ-:

L’élargissement -dʰ- semble avoir joué un certain rôle, souvent il est attesté

²⁶ With “newest/oldest term” we refer to the unit constituted by form plus meaning. Therefore, we are not suggesting here that the word πλῆθος developed later than πλῆθυσ (this hypothesis is ruled out by the aforementioned Homeric data), only that πλῆθος was used to mean “the mass” later than πλῆθυσ.

²⁷ For the meaning of πλῆθω see below.

²⁸ The active diathesis πλῆθύνω is attested only from the Septuagint, whereas the middle voice is found already in Aeschylus (*Ag.* 1370, *Suppl.* 604), although it shows textual problems. For a discussion of the derivational chain that yielded the denominals πλῆθύω and πλῆθύνομαι see DE LAMBERTERIE (1990), and for a different view MARTÍNEZ GARCÍA (1996).

²⁹ Παμπλήθω “to be plentiful” (from the adj. παμπλήθης “in/with their whole multitude”) must also be added to the previous group of verbal derivatives: it is attested in the Old Testament (Aq. *Iob.* 36.31) and is not mentioned in DÉLG.

dans les formes verbales en même temps que dans les formes nominales et du point de vue grec il fait partie de la racine (Chantraine, 1933: 420).

It is not easy – as we have just said – to define the specific function of the IE suffix **-d^h-*. Brugmann (1916b: 372 ff.) give up trying to determine its role on the comparative level. Benveniste (1935), in the chapter dedicated to the analysis of **-d^h-*, acknowledges its relevance but at the same time notes that little research has been devoted to it: «**-dh-* joue dans la dérivation, préhistoriquement et historiquement, le rôle le plus considérable, mais probablement le moins bien connu» (Benveniste, 1935: 188).

The analyses carried out recently by Elisabetta Magni (2004, 2008, 2010) shed new light on the role played by **-d^h-* within the verbal system of Greek. She follows the definition given by Haspelmath (1993) of the relationship between an inchoative verb and the corresponding transitive verb³⁰, and she concludes that *-θ-* was used to encode the inchoative sense and all the different meanings radiating from this core notion³¹, e.g. passive, reflexive, incrementative³². In opposition to the inchoative form, there is a causative “double”, a verbal form created from the same root but without the inchoative suffix: in particular, *πλήθω* “to become full” (not “to be full”) is the inchoative – more precisely, the incrementative – verb, whereas *πιμπλημι* “to fill” represents the (intransitive) causative counterpart³³.

On the basis of the translation for the stem **pelh₁-* given by LIV “sich füllen” (see footnote 2), here the suffix **-d^h-* should strengthen the basic value of

³⁰ «It is a pair of verbs which express the same basic situation (generally a change of state, more rarely a going-on) and differ only in that the causative verb meaning includes an agent participant who causes the situation, whereas the inchoative verb meaning excludes a causing agent and presents the situation as occurring spontaneously» (HASPELMATH, 1993: 90).

³¹ See HASPELMATH (1987), revised in MAGNI (2008, 2010).

³² According to BERTINETTO (1986: 300), the incrementatives are a class of verbs that literally «indicano un processo di progressiva accumulazione di una certa proprietà da parte di un dato soggetto [...] ad es.: *impallidire, ingrandire, invecchiare, ingiallire, crescere* [...]» (“[they] denote a process of progressive accumulation of any property by a given subject [...] e.g.: *to turn pale, to enlarge, to get old/older, to turn yellow, to grow* [...]”). Within this class BERTINETTO and SQUARTINI (1995: 20-21) distinguish (α)-verbs, that «focus on the comparison between (at least two) different stages of the same event», from (β)-verbs, that «denote the attainment of a relevant (and pragmatically determinable) stage». Therefore Gr. *πλήθω* can be classified as an incrementative (β)-verb.

³³ HASPELMATH (1993) distinguishes three main types of the inchoative/causative pairs. According to this distinction, *πλήθω* / *πιμπλημι* can be classified as an equipollent non-directed alternation, that is «both [verbs] are derived from the same stem which expresses the basic situation, by means of different affixes» (HASPELMATH, 1993: 91). Another similar case is *βαρύνω* “to weigh down, make heavier” ~ *βαρῶθω* “to grow heavy”. See MAGNI (2004, 2008) for Homeric examples of the opposing use of *πλήθω* and *πιμπλημι*.

the stem **pelh₁*³⁴. In this regard, let us recall Benveniste's words (1935):

L'affixe **-dh-* exprime l'état, spécialement l'état achevé; les racines auxquelles il s'attache montrent une valeur neutre ou intransitive, que celle-ci leur soit conférée par l'élargissement ou qu'elle y soit seulement renforcée par l'addition de **-dh-* (Benveniste, 1935: 189).

The meanings of the suffix *-ῥ-* identified by Magni are specific to the verbal system, which represents the only linguistic domain where the suffix is used in a systematic and (semi-)productive way. With regard to the domain of nominal derivation, we have fewer pieces of relevant data: they grant us only a glimpse of the function that **-d^h-* could have had earlier³⁵. Therefore, all we can do is observe that the meanings of the suffix *-ῥ-* identified by Magni are entirely compatible with the meaning of the nouns at issue, *πληθῦς* and *πληθῖος*: collective, sometimes abstract, and with a low degree of agentivity.

One last consideration. The little group of nouns with *-υ-*, archaic terms often with an obscure etymology, is semantically quite heterogeneous (Chantraine, 1933: 120; Martínez García, 1996). It is a little less heterogeneous if we consider only the feminine nouns, among which there are a set of anatomical terms (e.g. *γένυς* “jaw”, *νηδύς* “stomach”, *ὄφρυς* “eyebrow”, etc.) and a very small set of abstract nouns: beside *πληθῦς*, there are *ἄρπυς* (Parth.) “love”, *ἰσχύς* “strenght, might”, *κῆκυς* “id.”, *οἰζύς* “sorrow”. Moreover, the group of nouns in *-υ-*, already very small, would undergo a tendency that replaced them with nouns of other declensions (but with the same meaning): for instance, *δάκρυ* “tear” is replaced with *δάκρυον*, *νέκυς* “corpse” with *νεκρός*, *ἰγνύς* “part behind the thigh and knee” with *ἰγνύα*, etc. (Chantraine, 1933: 119-120); *πληθῦς* with *πληθῖος*, we may add.

By contrast, the group of nouns in *-ο/ες-* is bigger and semantically more homogeneous. It consists of inanimate (often abstract) nouns with low agentivity, that «expriment l'idée non pas en tant que force agissante, mais comme un état passif» (Chantraine, 1933: 418); and again: «le sens “passif”

³⁴ On the contrary, if one believes that the original meaning of **pelh₁* is that provided by IEW (cf. footnote 2), **-d^h-* has to be assigned the function (or at least the ability) of modifying the meaning of the bases to which it is affixed.

³⁵ For instance CHANTRAINE (1933: 420) identified some series in which terms with the suffix are opposed to terms without it: *ἄχος* “burden, grief” and *ἄχθομαι* “to be loaded, grieved” vs. *ἄχος* “grief”; *βριθος* “weight” and *βριθω* “to be heavy / mighty” vs. *βριαρός* “strong”; *γῆθος* “joy” and *γέγηθα* “rejoice” vs. *γαῦρος* “exulting”; *πληθῖος* and *πληθῖω* vs. *πῖμπλημι*.

des abstraits en *-es- -os-* a eu pour conséquence que ces noms désignaient un résultat, un objet» (Chantraine, 1933: 419).

The higher productivity of the latter group, its semantic compatibility with the values of *-θ-* mentioned above, and its semantic uniformity could have favored the replacement of *πληθύς* with *πλήθος*.

3.2. Some proposals concerning Lat. *plēbs* / *plēbēs*

The etymological reconstruction of the Latin terms *plēbs* / *plēbēs* has been under debate for a long time. Before analyzing the proposals offered thus far and their problematic aspects, we present the less doubtful facts.

First of all, let us address the question of the fluctuation between the fifth and third declensions, already noticed by ancient grammarians (Char. gramm., *De nomine* 46; Serv., *Aen.* 1, 587). There is wide agreement among scholars (LEW; DÉLL; Ernout, 1965³⁶; Leumann, 1977; de Vaan, 2008) that *plēbs, -is* is more recent³⁷ than *plēbēs, -eī*. This hypothesis is also supported by Priscian's statement (3, 475): *antiqui uero et plebes plebei dicebant quod nunc plebs plebis dicimus et fames famei quod nunc famis*³⁸.

Therefore we must reject Szemerényi's analysis (1962), as Leumann (1964)³⁹ does. Szemerényi (1962) claims that, from an alleged IE **plētus*, gen. **plē-tu-os* "fullness" (see § 3.1), Latin developed the noun **plē(t)s*, gen. **plēpos* from **tu-* > *-p-*; the sequence *p-p* evolved then into *p-b* because of dissimilation or the influence of *pū-bēs*, giving rise to *plēbs, plēbis*. In this case too, as with the Greek terms (*mutatis mutandis*), the author does not take into account that one term (*plēbs*) is more recent than the other (*plēbēs*).

On the semantic level, the socio-political connotation of the Lat. term *plēb(ē)s* is apparent. It usually refers *ex negativo* to the body of non-patrician

³⁶ See ERNOUT (1965: 16) for reference to inscriptions of Republican age and to *tituli* of the magisterial offices in which *plēbēs, -ei* (nom. also *pleps*) appears. He states that Latin authors of the Classical age used *plēbēs, -eī* to archaize their style (e.g. Stat., *Theb.* 8.271) or in fixed formulas (e.g. Liv. 3.65.4 *tribunos plebei* – the Oxford edition presents the variant *plebi*). ERNOUT's claims will be examined by means of a thorough analysis of the occurrences of *plebes* at another time and place. Here it will suffice to say that, like *plēbēs, ἡ πληθύς* survives in the post-Homeric literature with an archaizing function (cf. § 3.1).

³⁷ The shift of *plēbēs* to the third decl. would have taken place by analogy with the noun *urbis* (DÉLL; LEW; LEUMANN, 1959: 119).

³⁸ "Ancients actually said *plebes plebei* where now we say *plebs plebis*, and *fames famei* where now we say *fami*".

³⁹ «Die Erklärung scheidet m. E. von Anfang an daran, daß das Nomen im Altlatein nach der 5. Deklination ging [...], und erst allmählich in die 3. Deklination übertrat» (LEUMANN, 1964: 115).

Roman citizens⁴⁰, who were allowed to hold specific magisterial offices, such as *tribunatus* and *aedilitas*. In particular, *plēb(ē)s* can denote (ThLL, LS), with a special focus on the social aspect, the “mass” (e.g. Ter., *Ad.* 898; Caes., *Gall.* 6.11.4; Cic., *Att.* 7.7.6); with accessory notion of contempt, the “populace” (e.g. *p. infima* in Tac., *Hist.* 2.38.3 and 2.91.2; *p. sordida* in Tac., *Hist.* 1.4.3; *perdita p.* in Cic., *Att.* 7.3.5); or the lowest elements of a human (e.g. Tac., *Hist.* 4.70), animal (e.g. Verg., *Georg.* 4.95), or divine (e.g. Ov., *Met.* 1.173) group.

An analysis of the meaning of Lat. *plēb(ē)s* must not leave out historical events and the “Conflict of the Orders”.

Roman historical tradition handed down a representation of the *plēb(ē)s* with well-defined social and political characteristics: *plēb(ē)s* consisted of the lower classes that, since the beginning of Rome, were opposed to patricians (Cic., *Rep.* 2.16; Dion. 2.9; Plut., *Rom.* 13)⁴¹. However, some contemporary historians⁴² have shown that the image of a static society characterized from the beginning by internal conflict between patricians and plebeians is merely the result of incorrect historical interpretation. As Cornell (1995: 242) states, «late republican annalists interpreted the events of the struggle in terms of the political divisions of their own day»⁴³. On the basis of this interpretation, new hypotheses about the social composition of the *plebs* and its relationship to the rest of the Roman population have arisen. However, there is no general consensus among historians so far.

For the earliest age of Rome, Momigliano (1967a, b) restores a very complex socio-political structure, based on a system of binary oppositions. The opposition *populus* vs. *plebs*, found in the archaic formula *populus plebs-que* (cf. footnote 40), allows Momigliano to identify the plebeians with the

⁴⁰ Patricians are usually referred to with the following terms: *patricii*, *patres*, *senatus*. With a technical-political meaning, *patricii* or *patres* constituting the *senatus* can be identified also by the term *populus*. In this regard, see the expression *populus plebsve / -que* (Cic., *Balb.* 33, *Mur.* 1; Liv. 25.12.10), referred to by MOMIGLIANO (1967a, b) and CORNELL (1995) in their historical reconstructions; see also the linguistic analysis by HARVEY and BALDI (2002: 148).

⁴¹ Passages from ancient authors (both Greek and Roman) referring to the origins of patricians and plebeians are quoted in CARANDINI (2011).

⁴² The debate about the complex relationship between patricians and plebeians and about the “Conflict of the Orders” is still very intense in historiography. For proposals different from those here reported see for instance contributions to RAAFLAUB (2005a) and the critical review by LETTA (2009).

⁴³ «There was no “Conflict of the Orders” (properly so called) until the fourth century [...]. Only at this period are we justified in speaking of a struggle between patricians *qua* patricians and “plebeians” in the sense of other Roman citizens who were not patricians. [...] In the fifth century matters were rather different» (CORNELL, 1995: 244).

group of the *infra classem*: they fought as lightly-armed soldiers to back the *classis*, i.e. the hoplite phalanx constituted by the *populus*. In particular, the plebeians should be visualized «as artisans, laborers, merchants, and small-holders too poor to qualify for legionary service and in any case lacking the protection of a patrician patron who could have made their qualification possible» (Momigliano, 1986: 187). Only around the middle of the fifth century were *plebs* opposed to *patres*, as «[...] il risultato di un movimento rivoluzionario della prima metà del V sec. a.C. che polarizzò le varie forze, i vari elementi sociali di Roma, in un contrasto semplificato patrizi-plebei. Il movimento plebeo degli *infra classem* crea la plebe: non viceversa» (Momigliano, 1967a: 218)⁴⁴.

In his doctoral thesis, Richard (1978) argues that the *plebs* arose around the middle of the fifth century, when the patricians started to shut themselves off in a sort of “caste”⁴⁵: everyone not included – for any reason – in this élite group began to constitute the very core of what later would have become the *plebs*⁴⁶:

A supposer que le mot *plebs* ait, dès cette époque, appartenu au vocabulaire des classifications socio-politiques en usage dans la Rome archaïque, tout suggère que, fidèle à son étymologie, il servait exclusivement à désigner une réalité collective indifférenciée, s’il est vrai qu’englobant la totalité des familles étrangères aux lignages patriciens, elle était objet de quantification plus que de qualification (Richard, 1978: 194).

In 2005 Richard proposes a revised version of his thesis, clarifying cer-

⁴⁴ “The outcome of a revolutionary movement dating to the first half of the fifth century BC, which polarized the different forces, the different social parts of Rome, in a simplified contrast between patricians and plebeians. The plebeian movement of *infra classem* gives rise to the *plebs*: not the other way around”.

⁴⁵ RICHARD refers to the phenomenon that modern scholars, following G. DE SANCTIS (1907-1923), sometimes define as *serrata del patriziato* (“closure of the patriciate”). According to RAAFLAUB (2005b: 201), the “closure of the patriciate” must be interpreted «not in the sense that nonpatrician members of the aristocracy were excluded. Rather, the aristocracy was fixed as it was, membership was frozen, no one else was admitted thereafter – neither immigrant nobles from other communities nor upstarts in Rome itself».

⁴⁶ TORELLI (1999) shows that societies of Etruria, Latium and Campania from the eighth century at least were characterized by a high social mobility, both horizontal and vertical. Moreover, gentilitarian aristocrats attracted and even requested in Etruria and Latium foreigner (mostly Phoenician and Greek) artisans in order to satisfy their wealthy status. In Rome the “closure of the patriciate” determined the end of the social mobility and eventually led to the origin of the plebs, constituted of the high number of foreigner artisans, merged with other socially subordinate figures (e.g. clients and fugitive slaves), who were not fully integrated in the Roman society.

tain points. In particular, he claims that «before the moment when, during and after the first secession, it gave itself an organization, the plebs could be defined only negatively, as the total of the non-noble families, the mass of Quirites» (Richard, 2005: 112). Moreover, he rejects Momigliano's hypothesis according to which the *plebs* consisted of the poorest elements of the urban population⁴⁷. Following Guarino (1975: 167-168), he maintains that «[i]t would therefore clearly be wrong to seek the active and leading elements of the plebeian revolution in the urban milieu (where, at any rate, the *difficultas annonae* was much more severe than in the *ager*)» (Richard, 2005: 118).

Before Richard (2005), Cornell (1995: 256) already doubted that during the monarchy and early Republic «the rest of the population outside the patriciate was envisaged as a definite element in society, still less that the term “plebeians” was applied to all of them». Cornell (1995) proposes again the picture first drawn by Momigliano (1967a), according to which the Roman society was characterized by binary oppositions⁴⁸ and a high internal dynamism⁴⁹: «*patres* and *plebs* were at opposite ends of a complex social hierarchy, and were separated by intermediate groups who could themselves be variously classified and differentiated. The *plebs* were opposed not just by the patricians, but by those who had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo [...]» (Cornell, 1995: 258).

We would like to conclude this socio-historical background with the words used by Momigliano (1967a) at the beginning of his work, because we believe that they capture best the whole question:

Il fatto fondamentale della storia di Roma repubblicana è che, per la logica stessa della politica di conquiste e vassallaggi, gli antichi ordini si dissolsero [...] e con essi sparirono anche o almeno fortemente si attenuarono le ideologie corrispondenti [...] (Momigliano, 1967a: 199)⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ The same position is held by ZIOLKOWSKI (2000: 66-67). According to him, at the beginning the plebeian organization was constituted mostly of those independent farmers who fought in the phalanx (*classis*).

⁴⁸ «We are dealing with a pattern of overlapping and intersecting status categories, characteristic of a society that was sufficiently complex for the same person to belong to several different groups at the same time, and in which there was a very large range of possible combinations» (CORNELL, 1995: 258).

⁴⁹ «Rome was a dynamic and constantly changing society, with a diverse and ever growing population whose most striking characteristic was its capacity to absorb and integrate new elements» (CORNELL, 1995: 244).

⁵⁰ «The fundamental event of the history of Republican Rome is the dissolution of the ancient orders due to the policy of making conquests and vassalages [...], and with the dissolution of those orders the corresponding ideologies also vanished, or at least were greatly attenuated”.

The socio-institutional value of *plēb(ē)s* is therefore certain. It is the nuance in its meaning that changes according to variations within society and institutions through time⁵¹.

The linguistic debate over *plēb(ē)s* has focused on etymological reconstruction.

As said earlier, the close resemblance between the Latin words and Gr. $\pi\lambda\eta\theta\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ / $\pi\lambda\eta\theta\omicron\varsigma$ – on both the formal and the semantic level – often led scholars to reconstruct a common form. The Greek words presuppose a form like **pleh₁-d^b-*, where the root is associated with the suffix *-d^b-*.

In Latin, IE **-d^b-* usually gives *-d-*. The development **-d^b-* > *-b-* is allowed only in specific contexts (Sommer, 1914; Sommer and Pfister, 1977; Leumann, 1977; Sihler, 1995):

- before *l*: e.g. *stabulum* < **stablom* < IE **sth₂-d^blo-*;
- before *r*: e.g. *glaber* < **glabr-* < IE **g^blh₂d^b-ro-*;
- after *r*: e.g. *verbum* < IE **uerh₁d^bh₁-o-*;
- after *u*: e.g. *iubeō* < IE **Hioud^b-*;
- before *u*: e.g. *lumbu-s* < IE **lond^b-uo-s*⁵².

Therefore, the phonetic development IE **-d^b-* > Lat. *-b-* cannot find an appropriate explanation within the hypotheses formulated by: Reichelt (1901: 273), who reconstructs an *-i-* stem **plēdhēi-s*; Solmsen (1910: 78), who posits **plē-dhis* for *plēbs*, a word distinct from *plēbēs*; or Kronasser (1940: 88), who supposes an origin from **plēdhē-* < **plēdh-ēu-* with the (unexplained) loss of *-u-*⁵³.

Brugmann (1916a) proposes the most satisfying phonetic explanation: he reconstructs the form **plēdhue-s* (IE **pleh₁-d^bueh₁-s*), the zero grade of which is found in $\pi\lambda\eta\theta\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$.

The question becomes much more complex when addressing the morphological level and the reconstruction of the paradigm of *plēb(ē)s*.

On the basis of Brugmann's proposal (1916a), Pedersen (1926: 62 ff.)

⁵¹ As stated by PROSDOCIMI (1978: 30), «[I]a considerazione del lessico istituzionale mette in evidenza altri aspetti del problema. [...] anche il *designatum* istituzionale [...] è strutturato secondo sistema/funzioni per la sua pertinenza sociale [...]: i problemi di isomorfia nel variare, specialmente diacronico, e nel DIA generale diventano inestricabili» («[t]he analysis of the institutional vocabulary highlights other facets of the question [...]: the institutional *designatum* [...] is also structured depending on systems/functions related to its social relevance [...]: problems of isomorphism in variation – especially diachronic variation, but in the DIA in general – become inextricable”).

⁵² The IE forms are quoted from DE VAAN's (2008) etymological dictionary.

⁵³ All the reconstructed words quoted here are in the form proposed by each author respectively.

posits for *plēbēs* a proterodynamic inflection⁵⁴: nom. **plēd^hū*, gen. **plēd^huēs* (< **plēd^hueh₁s*). Latin would have generalized the full grade, and then the resulting noun *plēbēs* would have joined the fifth declension⁵⁵.

Sixty years later, Beekes (1985) addressed the topic again. Analyzing the inflection of Gr. *πληθῦς*, *πληθύος*, he doubts that «Greek would have generalized the zero grade if both nominative and accusative had **-ēs*, *-ēn* from **pleh₁d^hueh₁s*, *-ueh₁m*» (Beekes, 1985: 39). Therefore the divergent development of Greek and Latin is better understandable if based on **-d^huh₁s*, *-d^hueh₁m*.

The latter hypothesis is borne out by Schrijver (1991: 380), who proposes the following hysterodynamic paradigm: nom. **pléh₁d^huh₁(-s)*, acc. **plh₁d^hueh₁-m*, gen. **plh₁d^huh₁-ós*. In Greek the form of the suffix in the acc. sg. was ousted and modeled on the cases with the zero grade. Regarding Latin, Schrijver (1991) starts by considering the phonetic development of the PIE paradigm in Italic, which would yield the Proto-Italic paradigm: **plēfūs*, **plēfēm*, **plēfes*. However, nom. **plēfūs* made the paradigm unique. Therefore, it was soon replaced with **plēfēs*, modeled on the acc. The resulting paradigm was inflectionally identical to **spēs* and **fidēs*, and like *spēs* and *fidēs*, *plēbēs* joined the fifth declension.

In opposition to Beekes' (1985) and Schrijver's (1991) hypotheses, Kortlandt (1997) recalls that Lat. *-b-* derives from IE **V-d^hu-V*, not **V-d^h-V* (as in *vidua* < **uid^h-eu-*). Instead of a hysterodynamic paradigm, which implies **-d^huH-*, a proterodynamic inflection has to be assumed, as Pedersen (1926) did.

Finally Meiser (1998: 149), in agreement with Klingenschmitt (1992), proposes the following hysterodynamic inflection⁵⁶: nom. **pl^hh₁d^h-ē(u)*, acc. **pl^hh₁d^h-eum*, gen. **pl^hh₁d^huēs* (> Gr. *πληθῦς*, *-ύος*). The protoform **pl^hh₁d^h-u-*

⁵⁴ First PEDERSEN (1926) distinguishes between two different types of nominal ablaut: the proterodynamic inflection type and the hysterodynamic inflection type. In the case of the former, the accent shifts between the stem and the suffix within the inflection of a word (inflectional forms quoted in the text above are from PEDERSEN, who does not specify the original accent). In the case of the latter, the accent shifts between the suffix and the ending. The alternation of apophonic grades zero, **e*, **o* is related to this accent shift.

⁵⁵ PEDERSEN (1926) emphasizes that *plēbēs* is the original form in Latin and stresses that the fluctuation between inflectional classes is due to the shift of *plebes* from the fifth to the third decl. (in the form *plēbs*), not the other way around. All this emphasis seems to suggest that when PEDERSEN was writing it was uncertain whether *plēbs* was an earlier term than *plebes*.

⁵⁶ As in the case of PEDERSEN's proterodynamic inflection (cf. *supra*, footnote 54), here we are quoting the inflectional forms proposed by MEISER (1998: 149), who does not specify the original accent. For other shortcomings of the phonetic notations and transcriptions in MEISER's volume, see VINE (2001: 122-123).

would have developed in *plēβ- (through †plād-ϝ-), according to the analogy with *plēnus*; *plēbēs* joined the fifth declension because of the nom. sg. *plēβē and, foremost, of the acc. sg. *plēβēm.

The key points emerging from this debate are:

- 1) in both Greek and Latin the zero grade or the full grade of the suffix was early generalized, bringing about a complete remodeling of the inflection;
- 2) in order to explain the development of the Latin word, the full grade $-d^h\acute{u}eh_1-$ has to be assumed.

The latter point has the advantage of explaining Lat. *-b-* < IE * $-d^h\acute{u}-$, but it raises another question: in view of the generalization of the full grade in the suffix, how can the concurrent generalization of the full grade in the root within the whole inflection of *plēb(ē)s* be explained?

We can only offer some hypotheses, none of which can be proved beyond doubt⁵⁷. The only clear fact is that already in ancient times deep analogical leveling affected Gr. ἡ πλῆθῦς / τὸ πλῆθος and and Lat. *plēb(ē)s*, partially blurring the derivational processes.

3.3. Other terms derived from *pelh₁-

In IE languages there are other words that are derived from the same root *pelh₁- and have a meaning related to the notion of ‘multitude’, ‘crowd’, ‘people’⁵⁸:

- OHG *folc* ‘heap, people’, AS *folc* ‘army, people’ > E *folk*, OFris. *folk* ‘id.’, OI *folk* ‘id.’ (IEW 799)⁵⁹;
- Go. *filusna*, related to German **felu* < *pleh₁- / *pel-, which translates the

⁵⁷ At least one hypothesis is proposed here. The full grade root could have been generalized in the inflection of *plēb(ē)s* by analogy with other Latin words derived from the same stem: e.g. adj. *plē-nus* ‘full’ (see KLINGENSCHMITT, 1992: 127 and MEISER, 1998: 149) and the derivatives *plē-nitas* / *plē-nitudo* ‘fullness’, adv. *plē-niter* ‘fully’, adj. *plē-rus* and *plē-rusque* ‘the most’; verbal compounds with *pleō (*im-plēre* ‘to fill’, *com-plēre* ‘to make complete, to fill’, *ex-plēre* ‘to fill up’, etc.). This hypothesis supposes that the analogy took place when the etymological relationship between those words and *plēb(ē)s* was still clear.

⁵⁸ We follow MASTRELLI (1965) in rejecting SCOVAZZI’s (1952, 1957) proposal that Germ. *litus* and *stedus* derive from the same protoform *pleh₁d^hu- that gave rise to πλῆθῦς and *plebes*. Nor do we approve SZEMERÉNYI’s (1962) analysis: he explains – in a hasty fashion – *litus* and *stedus* on the basis of IE *plētus, assumed for the Greek and Latin words (see § 3.1).

⁵⁹ We completely agree with the objections of BALDI and PAGE (2006: 2204-2205) to VENNE-MANN’s (2003) article, according to which Germ. *Volk* would have a Semitic origin.

Greek terms *πληθός*, *πλείον*, and *ὑπερβολή* (Köbler, 1989: 154).

Besides these traditional data, Osc. *plifriks* has to be taken into account. In 1998 and 2001 respectively, two inscriptions (dating to the second half of the third – beginning of the second century BC) were discovered in Northern Campania, in the area of ancient Sidicini, attesting for the first time in full to the magisterial office of *tribuf plifriks*⁶⁰. The first, a votive dedication to Apollo, was found by the theatre of *Teanum Sidicinum* (De Caro, 1999). The second, a public stela mentioning the construction of some streets, was found in Treglia (the ancient *Trebula Balliensis*) and it reads the plural form *tribúns pl.* (De Caro, 2002).

It is uncertain whether to consider *plifriks* a loanword from Latin. We should not, if we agree with Adiego (2001). Based on Untermann's (2000) data, he proposes a comparison with Osc. *lúvfreis* (= Lat. *liberi*) < IE **h₁leudh-ero-*, where the sequence *-fr-* is the result of IE **-d^ber-* with syncope of *-e-*. In the case of *plifriks*, the presence of *-f-* would confirm Lat. *-b-* < **-d^b-*, since in Oscan and Umbrian **d^b > f*. Following Rix (2000a), Adiego (2001) traces *plifriks* back to **plēd^br-īko-s*, which in turn is derived from the adjectival form **plēd^bro-* < **pleh_fd^bro-* by means of the suffix *-īko-*. Comparing Osc. **pleh_fd^bro-* with Greek nouns *πληθός* and *πληθῦς*, he proposes that this is some kind of suffixation system similar to “Caland’s law”⁶¹, according to which from the same root adjectives in *-ro-* (**pleh_fd^b-ro-*) and *-u-* (**pleh_fd^b-u-*, which yields ἡ *πληθῦς* by means of a nominalization process)⁶² and nouns in *-os* (**pleh_fd^b-os > πλῆθος*) can be derived.

⁶⁰ DE CARO (1999) notices that the use of the adj. *plifriks* (= Lat. **plebicus*) instead of a genitive is analogous to the Oscan formula *meddis túvtiks* “*magistratus publicus*” (vs. Lat. *magister populi*). Therefore, the phrase *tribuf plifriks* corresponds to Latin *tribunus plebeis*. The parallelism seems to be limited to the linguistic aspect, since the exact nature of the Oscan magistracy is uncertain: namely, specific duties, rank in the *cursus honorum*, and possibility of collegiality are questioned (POCCETTI, 2005).

⁶¹ ADIEGO (2001: 6, footnote 11) talks about “Caland’s law” only in the loose sense, as a «juogo de sufijaciones asociado a una misma raíz» (“set of suffixes related to a single root”) and without wishing «entrar en consideraciones sobre el sentido y funcionamiento exacto que tal sistema tenía en la morfología del indoeuropeo» (“to take into consideration what was the meaning and how exactly this system worked within the IE morphology”). ADIEGO himself acknowledges that the derivational system he proposes for the stem **pleh_f-* lacks derivatives in *-i-*, which are crucial in “Caland’s law”. Cf. COLLINGE (1985), MEISSNER (1998).

⁶² The presence – not attested, though – of an adjective †*πληθῦς* has also been posited by DE LAMBERTERIE (1990: § 221, 320 2b) to explain *πληθύνομαι* (*/πληθύνω*) in light of his “chaîne de dérivation”. DE LAMBERTERIE’s proposal is based, among other things, on the traditional assumption (CHANTRAINE, 1942, 1945) that verbs in *-ύω* would derive from nouns, whereas verbs in *-ύνω* would derive from adjectives (objections to DE LAMBERTERIE, 1990, in MARTÍNEZ GARCÍA, 1996).

Rix's (2000a) and Adiego's (2001) hypothesis would allow us to put the Greek and Latin words under consideration in a wider IE derivational system. However, the linguistic data at our disposal (one adjective in *-ro-*, perhaps two nouns in *-u-*, one in *-a*, and one in *-os*) are too scanty to posit the existence of an entire system.

Moreover, we cannot disregard Poccetti's (2005) observations. He points out that in the Campanian-Samnite area and, on a linguistic level, in the Italic institutional vocabulary there is no trace of a socio-judicial entity similar to the Roman *plebs*. Therefore, the magisterial title at issue is very likely to be a calque from Latin: a semantic calque if we suppose an Oscan form *tribufi* independent of Latin, otherwise a phrase calque.

In conclusion, we have to be very careful about including Osc. *plifriks* when analyzing Latin and Greek data. Overall, we can claim that the use of the stem **pelh₁*- "to fill" to mean the social aggregate of 'people' is not limited to Greek and Latin only, but it is spread across a broader geographic area. What is limited to Greek and Latin is the use of the suffix **-d^b(u)*- in the process of nominal derivation.

4. *Toward a hypothesis of etymological reconstruction (and beyond)*

The major points of the analysis carried out thus far are summarized below.

First of all, regarding the theoretical-methodological level, we would like to stress again how difficult, if not entirely impossible, it is to restore the exact socio-institutional meaning of a word without knowing the system of relations in which that word lies and gains its meaning. The linguistic context in which a word occurs, the terms to which it is opposed, the *designatum* to which it refers may give significant clues for its etymological reconstruction.

Moreover, in comparing different words one has to determine whether some of them are newer than others: in that case, the older ones could testify to more archaic derivational processes or morphemes.

Regarding the etymological reconstruction, we acknowledge that some aspects of our analysis should be further examined and clarified. For some other aspects, however, offering some plausible explanations will suffice⁶³.

⁶³ HARVEY and BALDI (2002) proceed in the same way in their etymological analysis of Lat. *populus*.

This is the case, for instance, of Lat. *plēb(ē)s*. By comparing it with Greek $\pi\lambda\eta\theta\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$, we posited a protoform $*pl(e)h_1-d^b u(e)h_1-$, but it is not possible to determine exactly every single stage of development. In fact, a deep analogical leveling that occurred in ancient times blurred the derivational processes that yield *plēb(ē)s*.

The semantic aspect of the etymological reconstruction has been left on hold. Once the socio-institutional meanings of the words at issue have been established, it remains to be explained why IE languages used roots meaning “to bloat” and “to become full” to denote the ‘people’. Those roots have an incrementative meaning: they denote the gradual approach to a goal, in other words a process of progressive accumulation of any quality by a subject who has no control over it (the event is therefore presented as spontaneous).

We suppose that in the (Western) IE area the ‘people’ – in its various social nuances – at one point were conceptualized metonymically⁶⁴ as an expanding and growing entity: therefore ‘people’ must be intended as ‘social aggregation, gathering’.

The emergence of this concept is likely to reflect a change in the social order of the communities that developed it, the change that Devoto (1958: 91) calls – using a quite anachronistic term – “democratic revolution”.

Porzig (1954: 200) points out that to denote the “Volksstamm” Western IE languages replaced $*ueik-$ with a word that means “Gemeinde” and is derived from $*teutā-$. The stem $*ueik-$ (Skr. *viś-* “settlement, people”, Lat. *vīcus* “village”, Gr. $\phi\acute{o}\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma, \omicron\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ “house”, Lit. *viš-pats* “lord”, Go. *weihs* “village, settlement”, etc.), a very ancient IE word appearing almost everywhere in the IE area,

⁶⁴ Here we are referring to the tradition of cognitive linguistics that considers metaphors and metonymy cognitive tools (LAKOFF and JOHNSON, 1980): they allow human beings to organize their experience by means of mappings between different cognitive domains (metaphor) or within one domain (metonymy). The debate about metaphor and metonymy (and about the differences between these two cognitive processes) is very intense nowadays. For an introduction, see PANTHER and THORNBURG (2007), and references therein; see SWEETSER (1990) and TRAUOGT and DASHER (2005) for an integration of the topic into the theory of semantic change. For a concise definition of the differences between metaphor and metonymy, see NERLICH and CLARKE (1992: 137): «using words for the near neighbours of the things you mean (metonymy) or using words for the look-alikes (resemblars) of what you mean (metaphor)». DURKIN (2009: 240-241) acknowledges that the processes of metaphor and metonymy are relevant also for etymological studies: «the metaphorical and metonymical meaning developments found in the histories of particular words are not accidental, one-off affairs, but instead reflect characteristic patterns of thought. This is potentially of very great importance for work in etymology, because identification of such typical patterns would in theory provide a means of assessing the plausibility of the meaning development assumes in a particular word history».

denoted the unit formed from several families (Benveniste, 1969: 251 ff.)⁶⁵.

Prosdocimi (1978: 63) adds precision to Porzig's (1954) analysis: although the distribution of the words is almost complementary, nonetheless «*Weik* e TEUTA non sono paritetici: e non solo TEUTA è elaborazione posteriore: vi si realizza un livello semantico-istituzionale che *weik* non attinge»⁶⁶. The difference between the social entity **ueik-* and the social entity **teutā-* is not a matter of size: «Non è la crescita delle stirpi che porta secondariamente a riempire la forma con un concetto più ampio, ma era la parola, per la sua natura semantica, atta ad assumere questo spazio; spazio, funzione, posizione appunto, non semplice cosa»⁶⁷ (Prosdocimi, 1978: 64).

Devoto (1962) goes further in specifying what he meant by “democratic revolution”:

Il popolo come assemblea, o TEUTĀ, trionfa non soltanto del termine concorrente LEUDHO-. Coinvolto nel grande rivolgimento sociale, esso trionfa anche [...] del REXS. E l'assemblea, vista sotto questa luce, non è più il tradizionale “consiglio degli anziani”, che, come comunemente si insegna completa e condiziona l'azione del re. Essa ne è piuttosto un sostituto, sia pure non destinato a durare indefinitamente⁶⁸. Il principio della sovranità personale e individuale, corrispondente al concetto dell'*imperium* romano, viene sopraffatto da una visione *territoriale e organizzativa* [*emphasis added*]. Ad essa si riferiscono anche termini diversi da TEUTĀ: tali in greco *plēthys* già presso Omero che ha legami con il latino *plebs* [...] (Devoto, 1962: 320)⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ These examples show that in some languages the word for a social unit has been transferred to the material sphere which delimits that unit (BENVENISTE, 1969: 308). As BENVENISTE (1969: 308) states, in different languages the representation of ancient **ueik-* enters into given specific series and so in each language acquires the sense assigned to it by its place in the series.

⁶⁶ “*Weik* and TEUTA are not equal: not only is TEUTA a later development, but it realizes a semantic-institutional level that *weik* cannot reach”.

⁶⁷ “It is not the growth of families that fills the form with a broader meaning in a second time, but the word itself, by its very meaning, was able to assume this space: space, function, position, not just a mere thing”.

⁶⁸ DEVOTO (1962: 320) proposes relating this “social change”, which “destroys or distorts one third of the IE vocabulary”, to the Ūnĕtice culture and the Urnfied culture. However, as suggested by one of our anonymous reviewers, great caution must be urged in relating linguistic reconstruction to archaeological evidence.

⁶⁹ “The people understood as assembly, or TEUTĀ, does not prevail only over the competing term LEUDHO-. Involved in the deep social change, it prevails also [...] over REXS. The assembly, seen under this new light, is not the traditional ‘council of elders’ anymore, which completes and influences the king’s action, as commonly thought. Rather it substitutes for it, although not permanently. Personal sovereignty, which corresponds to the concept of Roman *imperium*, is overpowered by a *territorial and organizational* [*emphasis added*] perspective. Words other than TEUTĀ refer to it too, such as Greek *plēthys* (already in Homer), which is related to Latin *plebs* [...]”.

In order to forestall any anachronistic reading, a little caution is needed. According to our data, we may rephrase Devoto's point in the following fashion: words derived from **teutā-* and **pleh₁-d^b*- denote the 'people', the 'social aggregate' seen as a propelling and proactive force that eludes the control of ancient authorities. Direct expression of a new organizational and territorial – hence social and institutional – order, this 'people' needs new words to denote it, words that do not occur where this socio-institutional change did not take place⁷⁰.

The linguistic material used to express this new concept is represented by different roots that nevertheless have similar semantic and syntactic characteristics: **teuh₂- / tuh₂-* is an incrementative (α)-verb, **pleh₁-* an incrementative (β)-verb⁷¹. Semantic and conceptual relations between the metaphor here identified and the words derived from **teuh₂- / tuh₂-* (OIn. *tavīti* "to be strong, mighty", *tavás-* "strong"; Av. *tavah-* "strength" etc., cf. IEW 1080) would lead us to consider **teutā-* to be Indo-European. Another, equally plausible, hypothesis might be the following: in order to express an IE conceptual metaphor, within a close-knit geographical area speakers used linguistic material partially derived or mixed with a substratum constituting the so called "Western IE vocabulary", which was shaped by different interweaving traditions. In particular, **teutā-* would belong to the group of words that «si caratterizzano per una specializzazione formale e semantica di elementi attestati anche altrove e, specialmente, in sanscrito e in iranico» (Lazzeroni, 1964: 42)⁷².

One last consideration. **Teutā-*, Devoto wrote (see *supra*), prevailed over the other root that yielded words related to the notion of 'people': **h₁leud^b-* "steigen, wachsen" (LIV 248-249). From **h₁leud^b-* are derived (IEW 684-5): OHG *liut* "people, nation", AS *lēod* "id.", Lit. *liáudis* "id.", Latv. *lāudis* "id.", OCS *ljudīje* (pl.) "id." and *ljudinŭ* "Gemeinfreie, freeman", Gr. ἐλευθερος "free", Lat. *liber* "id." (pl. "sons") and *Liber* (theonym, Italic god of fertility).

⁷⁰ See also LEHMANN (1996: 252): «For higher ranks and larger units we have only negative evidence from the absence of appropriate lexical items. Words for "people, nation" can be reconstructed only for subgroups, that is, at best for late Proto-Indo-European. In the northwest, Old Irish *tuath* [sic], Umbrian *tutas*, Gothic *þiuda*, Lithuanian *tautà* "people" has been fashioned from the root **teu-* "to be strong". [...] The words for "people, leader of the people" represent elevation of a grouping or rank as society expands. This raising of status is clear in the term for "leader, chieftain, king" that has been formed in Germanic, as in Gothic *þiudans*. Made with the suffix *-no-*, as in Latin *dominus* "lord", cf. *domus*, *tribūnus* "chieftain", cf. *tribus* "tribe", it is clearly a late formation».

⁷¹ For BERTINETTO and SQUARTINI's classification (1995), see footnote 32.

⁷² "[They] are characterized by formal and semantic specialization of elements that are attested elsewhere, especially in Sanskrit and Iranian".

Therefore, the notion of ‘growth’ underlies words meaning “people”⁷³ in this case as well, but with one substantial difference: according to Devoto (1962: 319), **h₁leudʰ-* would denote «una nozione marginale del popolo come di “ciò che cresce”, e cioè di ciò che discende da un’origine comune»⁷⁴. Still according to Devoto (1962: 319), by means of **teutā-* «il popolo viene definito, non più come “Abstammung” (discendenza) ma come “Versammlung” (assemblea). TEUTĀ sorge là dove, più che alla nobiltà e purezza della tradizione, si guarda alla completezza e totalità attuali. A una visione verticale se ne sostituisce una orizzontale»⁷⁵.

But this is a topic for further research.

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⁷³ «The semantic development envisaged here begins with the notion of growth, of increase in size, which seem to have been a fertile source of words for “people” in PIE» (EIEC: *s.v. people*).

⁷⁴ “A marginal notion of people as ‘something that grows’, that is something that derives from a common origin”.

⁷⁵ “People is defined no longer as “Abstammung” (descent), but as “Versammlung” (assembly). TEUTĀ rises where not nobility and tradition’s purity, but rather current completeness and wholeness are valued. A vertical view is substituted by a horizontal one”.

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