

**\*ahwō** Runic: ᚱ ᚨ ᚹ ᚰ Pronunciation: /'a.xʷɔ:/

noun · feminine · ō-stem

## Meanings

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1. stream, river, running water
2. a body or course of water, especially one flowing

## Etymology

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Traditionally derived from pre-Germanic *\*ákʷā*, from Proto-Indo-European *\*h<sub>2</sub>ékʷ-eh<sub>2</sub>* (Kroonen 2013: 7; Ringe 2017: 116). Cognate with Latin *aqua* < Proto-Italic *\*akʷā*; (de Vaan 2008: 48–49). The deeper status of the etymon is debated: it is a strong Germanic–Italic isogloss, but its limited distribution has led Beekes (1998: 459–61) to treat it as an Old European hydronymic substrate word rather than as an inherited Proto-Indo-European word; Kroonen (2013: 7) instead keeps the inherited analysis and connects it more broadly with the *\*h<sub>2</sub>ep-* river/water complex.

Prósper (2002: 396–97) provides interesting evidence for an alternative etymon in citing several deity names and epithets associated with water, attributed to Lusitanian (e.g., *AGVAECO*, *AQVILIANICO*, and *AQVITIBVS*). She notes that PIE *\*kʷ* and *\*kw* did not merge in Lusitanian: PIE *\*kʷ* became Lusitanian *\*p* (similar to P-Celtic and some Italic dialects) but PIE *\*kw* remained as Lusitanian *\*kw* (or possibly *\*gw*) (see also (Witczak 2005: 274–76)). As a result, she posits the etymon without a labiovelar consonant, and instead with a consonant cluster, *\*kw*, thus *\*h<sub>2</sub>ékʷ-eh<sub>2</sub>*. This derivation coincides with Garnier’s (2012) theory, based on *\*h<sub>2</sub>ékʷ-u-*, comparing Latin *aqua* and the “swift” word-family reflected by Ancient Greek *ὠκύς* (*ōkús*), Sanskrit *आशु* (*āśú*), and Latin *ōcior*. This analysis is semantically attractive for Germanic, where *\*ahwō* primarily denotes a river or stream, but the wider Indo-European connection remains uncertain, especially since the laryngeals of the “swift” adjective are disputed.

# Declension

| Case  | Singular | Plural  |
|-------|----------|---------|
| Nom.  | ahwō     | ahwōz   |
| Acc.  | ahwō     | ahwōz   |
| Gen.  | ahwōz    | ahwō    |
| Dat.  | ahwōi    | ahwōmaz |
| Inst. | ahwō     | ahwōmiz |
| Voc.  | ahwō     | ahwōz   |

# Descendants

\***ahu** (Proto-West Germanic)

ā (Old Dutch)

â (Middle Dutch)

a, Aa (Dutch)

\***ahu** (Proto-West Germanic)

ēa, æ, \*ēo (Old English)

ee, æ, ea, eaa, \*eo (Middle English)

ea, Eau, eau, yeo (English)

\***ahu** (Proto-West Germanic)

ēa, æ, \*ēo (Old English)

edēa (Old English)

eddy (Middle English)

eddy (English)

\***ahu** (Proto-West Germanic)

ā, ē (Old Frisian)

ia (North Frisian)

Äi (Saterland Frisian)

ie (West Frisian)

\***ahu** (Proto-West Germanic)

aha (Old High German)

ahe (Middle High German)

**Ach, Ache** (German)

**\*ahu** (Proto-West Germanic)

**aha, ā** (Old Saxon)

**ahe, â** (Middle Low German)

**Ehe** (Low German)

**\*𐌶𐌵𐌿𐌴 (\*ahwu), \*𐌶𐌵𐌿𐌶- (\*ahwa-)** (Proto-Norse)

**á, ó** (Old Norse)

**á** (Faroese)

**á** (Icelandic)

**aa** (Middle English)

**å** (Norwegian Nynorsk)

**\*𐌶𐌵𐌿𐌴 (\*ahwu), \*𐌶𐌵𐌿𐌶- (\*ahwa-)** (Proto-Norse)

**á, ó** (Old Norse)

**ā** (Old Danish)

**å** (Danish)

**å** (Norwegian Bokmål)

**𐌶𐌵𐌿 (ahva)** (Gothic)

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## Related Words

### Entries that mention this word

**\*agraz** noun   **\*āhwijaz** noun   **\*awjō** noun