

***aiþaz** Runic: ᚱ | ᚱ | ᚱ | ᚱ Pronunciation: /'ɑj.θaz/

noun · masculine · a-stem

Meanings

oath

Etymology

From earlier Celto-Germanic **oito-s* (‘oath’), also reflected by Proto-Celtic **oito-s*, whence Old Irish *óeth* and Old Welsh *an-udon* (Kroonen 2013: s.v. **aiþa-*; Matasović 2009a: 305; van Sluis et al. 2023: 219). The formation is traditionally derived as Proto-Indo-European **h₁óy-to-s*, an o-grade **-to-* noun from root **h₁ey-*, perhaps originally ‘a going, course’; compare the morphologically parallel Ancient Greek *οἶτος* (*oîtos*), possibly from an earlier meaning of ‘course’ (Mallory & Adams 1997: 408–409; van Sluis et al. 2023: 219). Under this interpretation, ‘course, going’ developed specifically into ‘oath’ in Celtic and Germanic, perhaps through an oath-taking rite involving ceremonial movement, although that cultural explanation is speculative. Mallory and Adams (1997: 408–409) suggest that oath-takers would walk or “go” between parts of slaughtered animals to give force to an oath.

The ultimate history remains uncertain. The identical Celtic and Germanic forms may represent a shared post-Proto-Indo-European innovation, but early borrowing from Celtic into Germanic is also possible; the preservation of a more concrete meaning in the parallel Germanic formation **aidijq* may favor an originally Celtic semantic development ‘course, going’ > ‘oath’ followed by borrowing into Germanic (Ringe 2017: 328; van Sluis et al. 2023: 219).

Declension

Case	Singular	Plural
Nom.	aiþaz	aiþōz, aiþōs
Acc.	aiþa	aiþanz
Gen.	aiþas, aiþis	aiþô
Dat.	aiþai	aiþamaz
Inst.	aiþō	aiþamiz
Voc.	aiþ	aiþōz, aiþōs

Descendants

*aiþ (Proto-West Germanic)

 *ēth (Old Dutch)

 êet (Middle Dutch)

 eed (Dutch)

 eed (Afrikaans)

*aiþ (Proto-West Germanic)

 āþ (Old English)

 oth, ooth, ath (Middle English)

 oath (English)

 aith (Scots)

*aiþ (Proto-West Germanic)

 ēth, āth (Old Frisian)

 ith, iss (North Frisian)

 Eed (Saterland Frisian)

 eed (West Frisian)

*aiþ (Proto-West Germanic)

 eid, aid (Old High German)

 eit (Middle High German)

 Eid (German)

 Eed (Luxembourgish)

*aiþ (Proto-West Germanic)

ēth (Old Saxon)

êt (Middle Low German)

Eed (Low German)

Eit (Plautdietsch)

*𐌱𐌰𐌶𐌰𐌹 (***aiþar**) (Proto-Norse)

eiðr (Old Norse)

eiður (Faroese)

eiður (Icelandic)

eid (Norwegian Nynorsk)

*𐌱𐌰𐌶𐌰𐌹 (***aiþar**) (Proto-Norse)

eiðr (Old Norse)

ēþ, eth (Old Danish)

ed (Danish)

ed (Norwegian Bokmål)

*𐌱𐌰𐌶𐌰𐌹 (***aiþar**) (Proto-Norse)

eiðr (Old Norse)

ēþer (Old Swedish)

ed (Swedish)

𐌰𐌿𐍆𐍊 (**aiþs**) (Gothic)

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Related Words

Words mentioned in this entry

*aidiją noun

Entries that mention this word

*aidiją noun *aiþastabaz noun *aiþī noun