

***ajja** Runic: 𐌱 𐌶 𐌵 Pronunciation: /'aj.jǎ/

noun · neuter · ja-stem

Meanings

egg

Etymology

From Proto-Indo-European **h₂ōwyóm*, generally analyzed as a *vrddhi* derivative of the word for ‘bird’. Zair (2011) derives it specifically from the strong stem of an acrostatic *i*-stem **h₂ówi-* ~ **h₂éwi-*, whereas other reconstructions treat the base as a proterokinetic *i*-stem **h₂éwi-* ~ **h₂w-éy-*. The derivative may originally have meant ‘belonging to a bird; a bird’s’, perhaps modifying an otherwise lost noun for ‘egg’, before becoming substantivized; the derivation has nevertheless been questioned because *vrddhi* formations more commonly appear to be based on weak stems (Schindler 1969; Zair 2011).

The Germanic form developed approximately as follows: loss of initial laryngeal, monophthongization of *ōw* > *ō* (Mahlow’s law), shortening of the pretonic long vowel (Dybo’s law), and the development of a geminate glide sequence, **-jj-* (Holtzmann’s law): **h₂ōwyóm* > pre-Germanic **ōwyóm* > Early Germanic **oijon* > Proto-Germanic **ajja*. The precise relative chronology of these changes remains debated, but the geminate is inherited from this specifically Germanic development (Bichlmeier & Opfermann 2011: 203; Kroonen 2013: 17; Zair 2011).

Cognate with Albanian *ve*, *vo*, Classical Armenian *ձու (ju)*, Ancient Greek *ῥόν (ōiōn)*, Welsh *wy*, Younger Avestan *𐬀𐬎𐬎 (aēm)*, and Latin *ōvum* (Zair 2011).

Declension

Case	Singular	Plural
Nom.	ajja	ajjō
Acc.	ajja	ajjō
Gen.	ajjas, ajis	ajjô
Dat.	ajjai	ajjamaz
Inst.	ajjō	ajjamiz
Voc.	ajja	ajjō

Descendants

***aij** (Proto-West Germanic)

ei (Old Dutch)

ei, ey (Middle Dutch)

ei (Limburgish)

***aij** (Proto-West Germanic)

ei (Old Dutch)

ei, ey (Middle Dutch)

ei (Dutch)

eier (Afrikaans)

***aij** (Proto-West Germanic)

ǣġ, ǣġer (Old English)

ey, ay, aye, ei, eye, ey3, æ3 (Middle English)

ey (English)

***aij** (Proto-West Germanic)

*ei, *ai (Old Frisian)

Oai (Saterland Frisian)

aei, aai (West Frisian)

***aij** (Proto-West Germanic)

ei (Old High German)

ei (Middle High German)

Ei (German)

ײַ (ey) (Yiddish)

***aij** (Proto-West Germanic)

ei (Old High German)

ei (Middle High German)

Oa (Bavarian)

***aij** (Proto-West Germanic)

ei (Old High German)

ei (Middle High German)

Ei, Ää, Aai (Central Franconian)

Ee (Luxembourgish)

***aij** (Proto-West Germanic)

ei, eig, egg (Old Saxon)

ei, egg, eig (Middle Low German)

Ei (Low German)

Ei (Plautdietsch)

egg (Old Norse)

egg (Faroese)

egg (Icelandic)

egg (Norwegian Nynorsk)

egg (Old Norse)

æg (Danish)

egg (Norwegian Bokmål)

egg (Old Norse)

eg, eeg, egg, egge, egghe (Middle English)

egg, egge (English)

egg (Scots)

egg (Old Norse)

æg (Old Swedish)

ägg (Swedish)

ada (Crimean Gothic)

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