

***ambô** Runic: 𐌱𐌰𐌽𐌹 Pronunciation: /'am.bɔː/

noun · masculine · an-stem

Meanings

belly, abdomen

Etymology

Probably from Proto-Indo-European **h₃émbʰ-ō* ~ **h₃mbʰ-nés*, an *n*-stem formation belonging to root **h₃nebʰ-*, with the **amb-* traditionally explained as a *Schwebeablaut*/metathesized variant of **h₃nebʰ-* (de Vaan 2008: 639; Kroonen 2013: 24; Wodtko et al. 2008: s.v. *h₃nebʰ-*). The closest cognate is Latin *umbō*, which continues the same *n*-stem; compare also Ancient Greek *ὀμφαλός* (*omphalós*), Sanskrit *नाभि* (*nābhi*), and Old Prussian *nabis* from the same root. The root also underlies **nabō* (< **h₃nobʰ-eh₂*) and **nabalō*, both from o-grade versions of the same PIE root (Lubotsky 2023: 257).

The PIE-level *Schwebeablaut* analysis is not certain: Ozoliņš (2015: 79–83) argues that the association of Old Saxon *ambon* with the **h₃nebʰ-* family is itself not beyond doubt and that, if the etymology is accepted, the *amb-* shape could instead reflect Germanic analogical remodeling of an inherited ablauting *n*-stem. He nevertheless regards Latin *umbō* as the preferable direct comparison and notes that the semantic development ‘navel’ > ‘belly, abdomen’ is straightforward.

Declension

Case	Singular	Plural
Nom.	ambô	ambaniz
Acc.	ambanų	ambanunz
Gen.	ambiniz	ambanô
Dat.	ambini	ambammaz
Inst.	ambinē	ambammiz
Voc.	ambô	ambaniz

Descendants

- *ambō (Proto-West Germanic)
 - ambo, amban, ambana (Old High German)
 - Amen (German)
- *ambō (Proto-West Germanic)
 - *ambo, ambon (Old Saxon)
 - amme (Middle Low German)

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