

***anhtō** Runic: ᚱᚩᚱᚩᚱᚩᚱᚩᚱᚩ Pronunciation: /'ã:x.tõ/

noun · feminine · ō-stem

Meanings

outlawry, proscription; persecution, hostile pursuit

Etymology

Probably from pre-Germanic **h₂ank-t-*, ultimately connected with the root **h₂enċ-* reflected in Hittite  (*hi-in-ka- /hink-/*); Ringe explicitly derives **h₂ank-t-* > Proto-Germanic **anhtō* (Ringe 2017: 117; Rix et al. 2001: 268, s.v. **h₂enċ-*).

Dardano (2020: 41–49) lends further support to this interpretation by analyzing Hittite  (*hi-in-kan /he/inkán/*) as a deverbal abstract noun derived from, with the semantic development ‘that which is allotted’ → ‘allotted portion, lot’ → ‘fate’ → ‘ill fate, death’ → ‘plague’. Following García Ramón, she favors treating PIE **h₂enċ-* as a *Schwebeablaut* variant of **h₂neċ-*, while distinguishing this root from PIE **h₂enk-*. Old Irish *écht* < Proto-Celtic **anxtu* is probably related, although its deeper analysis remains disputed: Matasović (2009: 37, s.v. *anku-*) derives it from PIE *ṇċ-tu-* beside **neku-*, whereas Irslinger (2002: 96–98) observes that zero grade is unexpected in this type of *-tu-* noun and instead favors derivation from **h₂enċ-*, supported semantically by Hittite  (*hi-in-ka- /hink-/*) and its derivative  (*hi-in-kan /he/inkán/*), which demonstrates the development ‘allotted portion, lot’ → ‘fate’ → ‘death’.

If Irslinger’s analysis is correct, Germanic and Celtic preserve parallel inherited dental formations, and no borrowing need be assumed. The alternative derivation from **h₂enk-* is much less likely, since LIV explicitly distinguishes that root from **h₂enċ-* and the former offers no convincing semantic route to ‘outlawry, persecution’ (Rix et al. 2001: 268, s.v. **h₂enk-*). Orel’s (2003: 20, s.v. **anxtō*) association with the Germanic ‘narrow, constricted’ family and thus ultimately with **h₂enġ^h-* remains phonologically possible, but the direct convergence of Germanic **anhtō*, Celtic **anxtu*, and Hittite  (*hi-in-kan /he/inkán/*) around ‘fate, death, slaughter, outlawry’ makes the **h₂enċ-* analysis appreciably stronger.

Declension

Case	Singular	Plural
Nom.	anhtō	anhtōz
Acc.	anhtō	anhtōz
Gen.	anhtōz	anhtō
Dat.	anhtōi	anhtōmaz
Inst.	anhtō	anhtōmiz
Voc.	anhtō	anhtōz

Descendants

***āhtu** (Proto-West Germanic)

***āhta** (Old Dutch)

achte (Middle Dutch)

acht (Dutch)

***āhtu** (Proto-West Germanic)

ōht (Old English)

achte, acht (Old Frisian)

***āhtu** (Proto-West Germanic)

āhta (Old High German)

āhte, æhte (Middle High German)

Acht (German)

***āhtu** (Proto-West Germanic)

***āhta, ōht** (Old Saxon)

achte (Middle Low German)

Acht (Low German)

akt (Norwegian Bokmål)

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