

***bainą** Runic:  Pronunciation: /'baj.nã/

noun · neuter · a-stem

Meanings

1. bone
2. leg

Etymology

Of uncertain origin. Securely reconstructible for Northwest Germanic, and conventionally projected back to Proto-Germanic, probably originally meaning ‘bone’; ‘leg’ is a secondary metonymic development, paralleled cross-linguistically by expressions such as ‘bone of foot’ > ‘leg’ ([Urban 2015: 374–375, 385](#); [Witkowski & Brown 1985: 204–205](#)). No secure extra-Germanic cognates are known. Derivation from Proto-Indo-European **b^heiH-*, through a **-no-* formation interpreted as ‘cut-off bone’, has been proposed but is semantically and morphologically uncertain ([Boutkan & Siebinga 2005: 37, s.v. ben](#)); Kroonen ([2013: 48](#)) rejects this connection. Alternatively, de Vries ([1977: 30, s.v. bein](#)) connects the noun with North Germanic **bainaz*, interpreting it as originally ‘the straight leg-bones’. Kroonen ([2013: 48](#)) accepts this connection and further speculates that the formation may ultimately belong to Proto-Indo-European **b^heh₂-*, if an intermediate sense ‘beam (ray; post)’ is assumed. Pentangelo ([2021: 247–252](#)) proposes phonesthetic blending of a Germanic *b-* body-related phonestheme with **stainaz*, but this lacks independent comparative support.

Declension

Case	Singular	Plural
Nom.	bainą	bainō
Acc.	bainą	bainō
Gen.	bainas, bainis	bainô
Dat.	bainai	bainamaz
Inst.	bainō	bainamiz
Voc.	bainą	bainō

Descendants

***bain** (Proto-West Germanic)

bēn (Old Dutch)

bêen (Middle Dutch)

bein (Limburgish)

***bain** (Proto-West Germanic)

bēn (Old Dutch)

bêen (Middle Dutch)

been (Dutch)

been (Afrikaans)

***bain** (Proto-West Germanic)

bān (Old English)

bon, ban, bane, bone, boon (Middle English)

bone (English)

byen (Geordie)

bane, bain, bean, been (Scots)

***bain** (Proto-West Germanic)

bēn (Old Frisian)

Been (Saterland Frisian)

bien (West Frisian)

***bain** (Proto-West Germanic)

bein (Old High German)

bein (Middle High German)

Boan (Bavarian)

Bein (German)

בײַן (beyn) (Yiddish)

***bain** (Proto-West Germanic)

bein (Old High German)

bein (Middle High German)

Been (Central Franconian)

Been (Luxembourgish)

***bain** (Proto-West Germanic)

bēn (Old Saxon)

bēn (Middle Low German)

Been, Bein (Low German)

Been (Plautdietsch)

bein (Old Norse)

bein (Faroese)

bein (Icelandic)

bein (Old Norse)

bein (Norwegian Nynorsk)

bein (Norwegian Bokmål)

bein (Old Norse)

ben (Old Danish)

ben (Danish)

ben (Norwegian Bokmål)

bein (Old Norse)

bēn (Old Swedish)

ben (Swedish)

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