

***dwegaz** Runic: 𐌳𐌹𐌿𐌸𐌺𐌰 Pronunciation: /'dwer.ɣaz/

noun · masculine · a-stem

Meanings

dwarf

Etymology

Uncertain. Traditionally isolated within Proto-Germanic. (Kroonen 2013) derives the noun from a strong verb **dwegana* ('to squeeze, press'), reflected by Middle High German *zwerger* ('to squeeze, pinch') but external cognates are lacking and the semantics are somewhat doubtful. A newer proposal by (Ginevra 2020) derives **dwegaz* from an earlier **pwegaz* < Proto-Indo-European **twerk-ó-* ('one who cuts/fashions'), from root **twerk-* ('to cut, fashion'), comparing Vedic Sanskrit *त्वष्टर* (*Tváṣtar-*, 'divine craftsman') and Avestan *𐬰𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬭𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬭𐬀* (*θβōrəštār*) (*θβōrəštār*, 'fashioner, maker, creator') and interpreting the Proto-Germanic dwarfs originally as 'fashioners/craftsmen'. The expected initial **pw-* vs. universally attested **dw-* remains the main difficulty in this interpretation.

An alternative derivation, originally proposed by (he proposed a possible **dwezgo-* origin in his earliest dictionary editions but soon rejected them, see Kluge 1884) and revived by (Lieberman 2016), attempts to trace the lemma back to a pre-Germanic voiceless cluster **d^hwes-k-* (extended from PIE **d^hewh₂-* 'smoke; mist, haze'), which would morphologically link "dwarf" to the same root as **dusēn* (to swoon, faint; to be dizzy; to slumber'). Under this framework, an oxytone preform, **dwesk-ó-s*, is hypothesized to have undergone exceptional cluster-voicing to produce an early Proto-Germanic variant **dwezgaz*, which would then regularly yield Northwest Proto-Germanic **dwegaz* via rhotacism. However, this hypothesis is widely rejected by contemporary Indo-Europeanists because voiceless sibilant-stop clusters (**sp*, **st*, **sk*) are phonotactically immune to Verner's Law and uniformly persist as unvoiced **sk* into Proto-Germanic (cf. PIE **pisk-ó-s* ('fish') yields Proto-Germanic **fiskaz*). Thus, this theory must be rejected on that basis.

Declension

Case	Singular	Plural
Nom.	dwergaz	dwergōz, dwergōs
Acc.	dwerga	dwerganz
Gen.	dwergas, dwirgis	dwergô
Dat.	dwergai	dwergamaz
Inst.	dwergō	dwergamiz
Voc.	dwerg	dwergōz, dwergōs

Descendants

- *dwerg (Proto-West Germanic)
 - *dwerg (Old Dutch)
 - dwerch (Middle Dutch)
 - dwerg (Dutch)
 - dwerg (Afrikaans)
- *dwerg (Proto-West Germanic)
 - dweorg, dweorh, dwerg (Old English)
 - dwerf, dwergh, dwerw (Middle English)
 - dwarf (English)
 - droich, droch, dwerch, duerch, duerche, dorche (Scots)
- *dwerg (Proto-West Germanic)
 - dwerch (Old Frisian)
 - Dwärch (Saterland Frisian)
 - dwerch (West Frisian)
- *dwerg (Proto-West Germanic)
 - twerc, twerg (Old High German)
 - twerc (Middle High German)
 - Zwerg (German)
 - Zwerg (Luxembourgish)
- *dwerg (Proto-West Germanic)
 - dwerg (Old Saxon)

dwerch, dwarch, dwark (Middle Low German)

Dwarg (Low German)

dvergr (Old Norse)

dvørgur (Faroese)

dvärg, vörg (Gutnish)

dvergur (Icelandic)

dverg, verg, tverg (Norwegian Nynorsk)

dvergr (Old Norse)

dværg (Danish)

dverg (Norwegian Bokmål)

dvergr (Old Norse)

dværgher (Old Swedish)

dvärg (Swedish)

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