

***-inī** Runic: | ƿ | Pronunciation: /i.ni:/

suffix · forms nouns · feminine · ī/jō-stem

Function

forms nouns denoting a female individual, especially the female counterpart of a masculine or common-gender noun; ‘female X’, ‘X-ess’

Etymology

From pre-Germanic **-én-ih₂* ~ **-n-yéh₂*, an ablauting compound suffix consisting of an Indo-European **n*-formant, used in individualizing, appurtenance, and participant-noun formations, plus the Proto-Indo-European feminine suffix **-ih₂* ~ **-yéh₂* (Johnsen 2005a: 143–44). The inherited ablaut gave Proto-Germanic nominative singular **-inī* beside oblique **-unjō-*, which was later leveled. This explains the mixture of forms seen in the daughter languages: Gothic has isolated *-INI* (*-inī*), Old Norse has rare *-ynja*, while West Germanic generalized *-in-/-inn-* (though Old Saxon also had *-unnia-* from the oblique form in addition to *-in-* forms) (Johnsen 2005a: 143–44). The closest Indo-European comparanda are Proto-Slavic **-yni* and Indo-Iranian and Celtic formations in *-n-ī*, especially Sanskrit राज्ञी (*rājñī*) (Monier-Williams 1899: 875) and Proto-Celtic **riganī*. These were both built from the word for ‘king’ with similar *-n-* + a feminine suffix (Krahe & Meid 1969: 119–22; Matasović 2009a: 311; McCone 1998: 1–5). Latin is a close Italic comparandum, but the exact history of the suffix is uncertain; see for instance Sihler (1995: 278).

Paradigm

Case	Singular	Plural
Nom.	-inī	-unjôz
Acc.	-unjō	-unjōz
Gen.	-unjōz	-unjô
Dat.	-unjōi	-unjōmaz
Inst.	-unjō	-unjōmiz
Voc.	-inī	-unjōz

Descendants

*-ini (Proto-West Germanic)

-inna (Old Dutch)

-inne (Middle Dutch)

-in (Limburgish)

*-ini (Proto-West Germanic)

-inna (Old Dutch)

-inne (Middle Dutch)

-in (Dutch)

-in (Afrikaans)

*-ini (Proto-West Germanic)

-en (Old English)

-en (Middle English)

-en (English)

*-ini (Proto-West Germanic)

*-in (Old Frisian)

-in (North Frisian)

-inne (West Frisian)

*-ini (Proto-West Germanic)

-in, -inna, -ni (Old High German)

-in, -inne (Middle High German)

-in (Alemannic German)

-in (German)

***-ini** (Proto-West Germanic)

-ina, -innia, -unnia (Old Saxon)

-inne, -in (Middle Low German)

-in (Low German)

***-ini** (Proto-West Germanic)

-ina, -innia, -unnia (Old Saxon)

-inne, -in (Middle Low German)

-inna (Old Norse)

-inne (Norwegian Bokmål)

-inne (Norwegian Nynorsk)

***-ini** (Proto-West Germanic)

-ina, -unnia (Old Saxon)

-inne, -in (Middle Low German)

-inna (Old Norse)

-inne (Old Danish)

-inde (Danish)

***-ini** (Proto-West Germanic)

-ina, -unnia (Old Saxon)

-inne, -in (Middle Low German)

-inna (Old Norse)

-inna (Old Swedish)

-inna (Finnish)

-inna (Swedish)

-ynja (Old Norse)

-ynja (Icelandic)

-𐌺𐌶𐌰 (-ini) (Gothic)

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