Germanic Etymological Dictionary

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AB- (with fricative [ƀ], alternating though Verner's Law with /f/ in derivations): Goth. *aba* "man, husband"; ON *afl* "man," besides "force, power," OE *afol*, OS *aƀal* "power"; cf. also the names of *matrones Aflims, Afliabus,* as well as anthroponyms: OE *Ab(b)a, Afa;* OHG *Abo.* Also ON *efna,* OE *efnan* "carry out," ON *afla* "perform work." OHG *avalôn* "bring about," etc. from an IE root **op-* "be able to, bring about" found in OInd. *apas,* Lat. *opus* "work." It has been described as a term of the patriarchal family, whose head, as "possesor of power," had to perform the ritual acts [cf. OInd. *āpas* "sacrificial act"]. Various other less convincing or less plausible explanations have been proposed: one has to describe it as a nursery term for "father," or to link it under a IE **apelo-* with the Greek divine name *Apóllōn* [Pokorny 1959:72; but cf. Chantraine 1968: 98, 1974: 791] or with Goth. *abrs* "great" [see below].

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 780; de Vries 1977: 2, 94; Ernout-Meillet; Lehmann 1986: 1.

ABR (with fricative /ƀ/, corresponding with Verner's Law to the ON augmentative prefix *afar-* "very"): Goth. (hapax) *abrs* "great" which is often compared with a Slavic term designating a giant, allegedly also found in the elusive "Illyrian", but this etymology is only plausible, as Lehmann (1986: 1) points out, if tribal names sometimes use such a term to denote strength [cf. ON *Þurs* "giant" = Etruscan *turs* in Grk. *Tursanoí*? Cf. Chantraine 1977: 1147]. Quite a number of earlier hypotheses, as far-fetched as Sumer. *áb₂* "procreate; cattle, ox, cow," were proposed in vain: the term has no certain etymology.

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 2; Lehmann 1986: 1-2.

AF- [preposition]: Goth. /ON/OS *af,* OE *æf, of,* OFri. *of,* OHG *ab(a)* "from (… away) < IE **apo-* [OInd. *ápa* "away," Avest. *apo,*

Grk. *apó* [proclitic] "from, away," etc. With the IE suffix *-ero-* in
OInd. *aparám* "later," Avest. *aparam* "following" [cf. Hitt.
appasiwatt- "day(s) after"; Goth. *afar-dags* "following day"];
closer to OInd. *ápara-*, Avest. *aparō* "later" is Goth. *afara* < Gmc.
aƀara "descendant" [also in OE *eafora*, OS *aƀaro*]. Possibly
related is Gmc. **aft* "behind" in Run. *æft*, *aft*, OE *æft*. OFri. *eft*
"after" and Goth. *afta* "behind, past," from which Goth. *aftana*
"from behind" [= ON *aptan*, E *æftan*, OS (*at*)*aftan* "behind,
later"] is derived. However, some relate *afta* to Grk. *opi-* in
ópi(s) then "after," Hitt. *appan* "behind," *appa* "later, back" (the
same goes similarly for Goth. *aftaro*, ON *eptir*, OE *æfter*, OHG *af-
tar* "behind, after," but Goth. *aftra*, ON *aptr* "back, again" are
definitely coming from IE **apo* in its temporal meaning [cf.
Grk. *áps* "anew"] versus its local sense in OInd. *apata-ram*
"farther away," as probably also, with an intensifying suffix,
Goth. (hapax) *aftuma* "last."

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 53-54: Onions 1966: 18; de Vries 1971: 7; 1977:
     11, 103; Lehmann 1986: 2-3, 7-9; Magnússon 1989: 6.

AGIZ "fear": Goth. *agis* "fear, terror," OE *ege* "sorrow," OHG
egislîh "terrible"; expanded OE *eg(e)sa*, OS *egiso*, OHG
agiso/egiso "terror" from an IE root **agʰ-* "suffer in spirit" in
Grk. *ákhomai* "am troubled, mourn," *ákhos* "pain, sorrow," OIr.
ad-ágor "fear," etc.

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 6-7; Vendryes 1959: A23; Onions 1966: 65-66;
     Chantraine 1968: 151; Lehmann 1986: 10.

AHA "mind, understanding," AHMA "spirit" (only occurring in
Gothic): Goth. *aha, ahma*. The same root is assumed to be
preserved with a dental suffix in OE *eaht*, OFri. *achte*, OHG *ahta*,
etc. "consideration," OE *eahtean*, OS/OHG *ahtôn* "consider,"
ON *ætla* "think." The usually proposed connection with Grk.
óknos "hesitation" is not free of doubt [cf. Chantraine: 1974:
790]; a link with the Celtic divine names Gaul. *Ogmios* [=
Hercules], OIr. *Ogma* [the alleged inventor of the *ogam*
alphabet] is not more plausible (cf. Vendryes 1960: O-13-14);
speculations on 'sharpness of mind' do not lead anywhere, and
Goth. *ahaks* "white (sacrificial) dove" cannot be proven to be
the "bird of the spirit," even it sometimes is a symbol for the
Holy Ghost. Oriental worship of the dove as symbol of the

Mother Goddess has no implication for Germanic. No sure cognates outside East Germanic can be adduced.

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 774; de Vries 1971: 7; 1977: 682; Lehmann 1986: 11-12; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 8-9; Magnússon 1989: 1217.

AHANŌ-/AGANŌ- <IE *akona-/akəna- [also borrowed in Baltic Finno-Ugric languages]: Goth. *ahana*, ON *ögn*, OE *egenu*, plur. *ægnan*, OHG *agana* "chaff," assumed to derive from IE *ak'-* "sharp; stone" [OInd. *asáni-* "thunderbolt; tip of a missile," Grk. *ákōn* "throwing spear," *akónē* "whetstone," *ákonos* "thistle," Lat. *agna* [< *acna] "ear of grain," Lith. dial. *ašnìs* "blade," OPruss. *ackons* "ear of grain"; from the same root is supposed to derive Goth. *ahs*, ON *ax*, OE *éar* [< *ahur < *ahuz], OHG *ahir, ehir*, OFri. *eher* "ear (of grain)" from an IE *-es-stem [e.g. in Grk. Cypriot *akostē* "barley," Lat. *acus*, gen. *aceris* (< *akezes) "chaff"]. The samne IE *ak'-* is also posited for *ásri-* "sharp edge," Grk. *ákros*, Lat. *acer*, with *-t-:* OCS *ostrs*, Lith. *aštrùs* "sharp"; OIr. *ér* "high," etc.; with a different suffix: OHG *ahil* "tip of the grain ear" (G *Achel*, earlier *agel* [with Verner's Law, like OE *egle* "beard of corn"]). More doubtful is the assumed kinship of the Gothic hapax *aqizi* "ax" [= ON *øx, ax*, OE *æx, æsc*, OS *acus*, OHG *acchus, akis* "ax," etc.], which was explained as *akusjō-/akwisjō* and compared with Grk. *axínē* "double-headed ax," Lat. *ascia* [< *acsia] "ax of carpenters and masons," etc. Different is Gmc. *ahsō [OHG/OS *ahsa*, OE *eax;* ON (with a *-l*-expansion) *öxull*] "axle," related with synonymous Lat. *axis*, Lit. *ašis*, etc.; it has nothing to do with Goth. *aqizi* which is unclear, anyhow, on account of the labio-velar. Gmc. *ahsō "axle" is rather connected with IE *ag'-* "drive, guide," in the presumable original meaning of "turn (around)," implying a root *aks-* meaning "where the turning takes place" (cf. E *axle*, G *Achsel* and cognates).

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 18-22; Onions 1966: 66; de Vries 1971: 4-5, 21; 1977: 689; Lehmann 1986: 11-12; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 7, 15; Magnússon 1989" 1230-31.

AKAN- "drive, travel" [only attested in Scandinavia]: ON *aka*, *ekja* [< Gmc. *akjôn], OSwed. *asik(k)ia* "thunder" (actually "the ride of the Æsir, esp. Thor"), etc.; connected with Lat. *ago*, Grk. *ágō* "guide, lead," OInd. *ájati*, Avest. *azaiti* "drive, urge on," Arm. *acem* "bring, direct," etc. The term Gmc. *akra-* "(cultivated)

field" [Gosh. *akrs,* ON *akr,* OE *æcer,* OFri. *ekker,* OS *akkar,* OHG *ackar,* etc. is often derived from the same root, though it is semantically improbable (cf., however, OInd. *ájra-* "plain, flat area," Lat. *ager,* Grk. *agrós* "field," if originally a pasture into which cattle is driven!). Other etymologies have been proposed for this word that de Vries [1971: 11; 1977: 4] links with Grk. *ageírō* "assemble" [cf., however, Chantraine 1968: 9). With the root *ag'-* in the meaning of "egg on, incite," a number of terms referring to hunting are also compared: Avest. *azrō-daiðim* "pursuing a hunt," Grk. *ágrē* "catch, hunt" [with a wide array of technical words about "capture, hunting" [Chantraine 1968: 14], etc.

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 4-6; Chantraine 1968: 15 [allegedly, initially fallow land used for cattle breeding]; Ernout-Meillet 1979: 14-15 [insisting on the concept of wilderness in IE *agro-* (cf. Grk. *ágrios* "wild, non domesticated [animal]") versus inhabited place]; Lehmann 1986: 24; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 9.

AKARN- "(wild) fruit": Goth. *akran* "fruit," ON *akran* "fruit of trees in wild," OE *æcern,* MLG *aker,* MHG *acheran* "acorn" (surviving in the dialects, e.g., Bavarian *aktam*; cf. also G *Buchecker* "beech-nut"). The Gmc. terms represent an underlying prototype *agrono-* versus *agranjo-/agrinjo-* in MIr. *áirne* "sloe," W *aeron* "fruit, berry"; one posits an IE root *ōg-* "grow > fruit, berry," to which Lith. *úova* "berry, cherry," OCS *(j)agoda* "fruit" are also linked (Pokorny 1959: 773). Some prefer to connect it as "wild fruit" with Grk. *á-grios,* etc. [and further on to *agros*].

Bibliography: de Vries 1977: 4; Lehmann 1986: 24; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 165; Magnússon 1989: 8.

AIK- "oak": ON *eik,* OE *ác* [E *oak*], with North-Sea Germanic monophthongization like OFri. and OS *ēk*[cf, MDu. *ēke/eike* [depending on the dialects], OHG *eih* [G *Eiche*]. The root appears as a feminine *-ō-*stem or as a consonantal stem. It can also designate a "ship made of oak." The diminutive OHG *eihhila* [G *Eichel*], MDu. *eikel,* MLG *êkel,* etc. is used as the name of the acorn. The term also appears frequently in toponyms like Dutch *Eeklo.* The name of the squirrel [OHG *eihhorno* (G *Eichhorn*), MLG *êkhorn,* MDu. *ee(n)coren* [Du. *eekhoorn*] has often been associated with the tree-name, but forms like OE *ácweorna,* ON *íkorni* make difficulty and one wonders whether folk-

etymology is nor responsible for the association. Etymologically, Gmc. *aik-* is compared with Lat. *aesculus* "mountain-oak" [if from *aig-sklos;* cf. Ernout-Meillet 1979: 13], Grk. *aigílōps* "kind of oak," *aígeiros* "black poplar" [cf. however Chantraine 1968: 29-30]. In spite of Pokorny [1959: 13], the term does not appear to be of Indo-European origin. In the mythology, the oak is frequently associated with the thunder-god, in the Germanic world essentially with Donar/Thor.

Bibliography: Onions 1966: 9, 619; de Vries 1971: 153; 1977: 96; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 167: Magnússon 1989: 147; *Reallex.* VI (1986), 530-34.

AID- "burn": OE *ád*, OHG *eit* "heat, stake," usually compared with Grk. *aíthō* "burn," *aíthos* "fire," OInd. *édha-* "firewood," Lat. *aedes* "hearth, home of a deity [e.g., *aedes Vestae;* originally a hut with a fire in the middle], etc.

Bibliography: Chantraine 1968: 32-33 [not mentioning the Gmc. terms]; Ernout-Meillet 1979: 10.

AIÞA- "oath" (long erroneously credited to Celtic cultural hegemony, but rather one of the typical juridical isoglosses between Celtic and Germanic: cf. OIr. *óeth* "oath"): Goth. *aiþs,* ON *eiðr,* OE *áð,* OFri. *êth,* OS *êð,* OHG *eid.* In ancient times, among the various procedures of taking an oath, one involved walking between sacrificial remains of slaughtered animals: this "Eidgang" [cf. Swed. *edgång* "way of oath"] led to the derivation of the term from an IE root meaning "to go": *oytos* [cf. Grk. *oîtos* "course, fate"].

Bibliography: De Vries 1971: 148; 1977: 95 [skeptical about the genuineness of the assumed practice in Celto-Germanic]; Lehmann 1986: 20-21; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 168; Magnússon 1989: 146.

AIGAN (preterito-presens with Verner's Law: 1st sing. Goth. *aih,* plur. *aigun,* pret. *aihta,* past part. *aihts*): ON *eiga,* OE *ágan,* OFri. *āga.* OS *ēgan,* OHG *eigan* "have, possess," with derivatives indicating "possession" such as Goth. *aigin,* ON *eigin* (<*aigni-*) "property," ON *eiginn,* OE *ágan,* OFri. *ē(g)in,* OS *ēgan,* OHG *eigan* "own"; Goth. *aihts,* OE *æht,* OHG *êht* "property," etc. Note also ON *eigna* "acquire," OE *ágnian* "possess, acquire," OHG *eiginên* "take possession of," etc. From an IE root *eyk'- "possess" [areally also "have the ability to"]: OInd. *īśé* "owns, possesses," *isvará-* "rich," Avest. *ise* "have power over," *išti-* "property," OCS

ists "true, genuine" and Toch. *aiśaumye* "learned person" (< *aik-/aiś-* "know" have also been connected, but this assumed relation remains contestible). The link with ON *ætt* "family, race" has led to the hypothesis that it originally indicated what belonged to the head of the family and was a concept developed in the context of ancient Germanic law.

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 298-9; Onions 1966: 638; de Vries 1971: 152; 1977: 95-96; Lehmann 1986: 14; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 168; Magnússon 1989: 146.

AJ(A)Z- "metal": Goth. *aiz* "money, metal coin," ON *eir* "copper," OE *ár*, OHG/OS *êr* "ore'' reflects the IE term for metal **ayos*, e.g. in OInd. *áyas-*, Lat. *aes*, etc. A *-no*-derivation appears in Lat. *aenus*, Umbr. *ahesnes* [dat. plur.] "of bronze" [=OE *æren*, OS/OHG *êrîn*, OFri. *êren*]. The word has nothing to do with Celto-Germanic *îsarno-* "iron" which is apparently taken over from an unknown third language. Further derivation of IE **ayas-* from a root **ay-* "burn" is purely speculative.

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 15-16; de Vries 1977: 97; Lehmann 1986: 22; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 166; Magnússon 1989: 149.

AISKAN- "ask, demand" [only in the southern Germanic dialects]: OE *áscian*, OFri. *āskia*, OHG *eiscôn* [G *heischen*, with initial *h-* under the influence of OHG *heizan* "command"], OS *êskon*, MDu. *eiscen*, etc., usually linked with a root **ays-* "look for, request" found in OInd. *ésati* "seek, look for," in the zero grade *icchâti*, OCS *iskati*, Lith. *ieškóti*, etc. Cf. also Lat. *aerusco* "request" [< **aisos-k-*], Arm. *aic* [< **ais-sk'-*], etc.

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 16; Onions 1966: 54; de Vries 1971: 154; Ernout-Meillet 1979: 12; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 302.

AITR- "matter, pus": ON *eitr*, OE *át(t)or*, OS *ēttar*, OHG *ei-tar* [G *Eiter*] designates the fluid running out of an abscess, boil, ulcer. The meaning "fluid" seems primary, with a secondary development to "poison." Anyhow, the term belongs together with OHG *eiz* [G. *Eiβ(e)* "swelling, tumor," ON *Eitill* [anthroponym], Icel. *eitill* "gland" < Gmc. **ait(a)-*, which is usually connected with Grk. *oîdos* "swelling," *oidéō*, Arm. *aytnum* "I swell," OCS *jadro* "swell, testicle" [cf. ON *eista* "testicle" [< IE **oid-sto-*], *jadŭ* [< **oidos*] "poison"; cf. also MDu. *etteren* "suppurate."

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 774; de Vries 1971: 163; 1977: 98; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 172; Magnússon 1989: 149.

AIZ(I)Ō "honor": OHG/OS *ēra* "respect," ON *eir* "favor, kindness, help," OE *ár* "charity, forbearance, honor," OFri. *ēre* "honor, veneration," etc. The term has been explained as **aidsā* to connect it with Grk. *aidós* "respect," *aídomai* "fear, respect" and OInd. *ī́ṭṭe* "praises, venerates"; others prefer to posit IE **ayzd-*, which would make the connection with Goth. *aistan* "fear, respect" self-evident, the simple root being **ays-*! The whole situation remains rather unclear.

Bibliography: Pokorny 1959: 16; Chantraine 1968: 31-32; de Vries 1971: 150; 1977: 97; Lehmann 1986: 20; Kluge-Seebold 1989: 166; Magnússon 1989: 149 [on the doubtful connection of Lat, *aestumō* "estimate, judge," cf. Ernout-Meillet 1979: 13].

ĀLA "eel": ON *áll*, OE *ǣl*, OFri. *ēl*, OS/OHG *âl* [not attested in Gothic], etc. All efforts to connect the name of this fish of the northern seas with IE are unconvincing; a link with ON *áll* "dark line on the back of mammals, esp. for horses [cf. G *Aalstrich*)]" has been attempted on account of its narrow long shape, but terms like *Aalstrich* may have been formed secondarily on G *Aal* (cf. Kluge-Seebold 1989: 1); not better is a derivation from IE **ēdlo-* "eater"; equally implausible is a comparison with OInd. *alam* "spawn," involving Norw. dial. *ulka* "sticky slime" as the "slimy fish" or a connection with Lat. *anguilla* [lit. "little serpent"]. Judging by the remainders of the Mesolithic Maglemøse culture in Denmark, eels were a staple food in northern Europe before the arrival of the Indo-Europeans; therefore, a huge quantity of eel-bones are found in the "kitchen-middens," e.g. in *Ertebølle*. This makes it probable that we deal with an areally circumscribed substrate term.

Bibliography: Onions 1966: 303; de Vries 1971: 1; 1977: 6; Ernout-Meillet 1979: 33; Polomé *JIES* 18 (1990), 336; Magnússon 1989: 12 (also comparing some Finnish and Baltic terms?).