

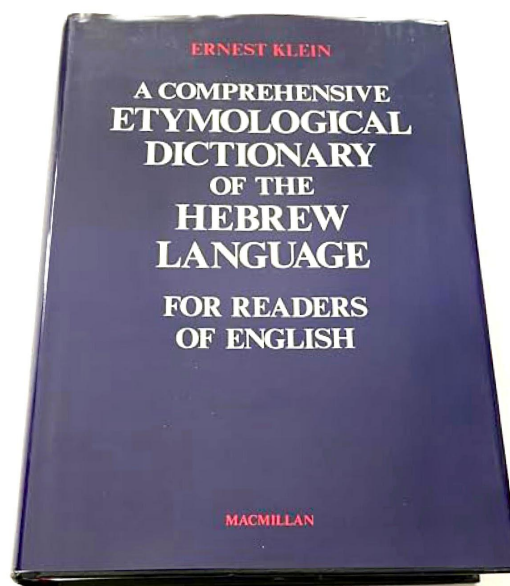
IMA אִמָּה

([video](#) / [lyrics](#))

The word 'IMA' [eemah] in the above is the Hungarian word for prayer. The second word, אִמָּה is the Hebrew **phonetic transcription** of the Hungarian word. This Hebrew word happens to be a now nearly forgotten technical neology for MATRIX, a tiny piece of metal used in historic printing techniques denoting the heated copper part that is punched by a cold three dimensional typeface-designed 'strike' (or 'punch') to create a mould for subsequently casting a led letter, named 'sort'. The matrix was called the "*matrica*" - or mother - in old Hungarian professional letter-casting ("*betűöntés*" in Hungarian) jargon, the other half used for the punch being the "*patrica*" - father. (A brief note to Hungarian speaking readers: ez hasonló ahhoz, mint az "*anya*" az anyacsavar rövidülésekor, vagyis anya a betűöntéskor.) The song is symbolically casting letters, associating the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet with the names of victims, never to be forgotten.

Furthermore, the pronounced Hungarian word IMA sounds very similar to the Hebrew word for mother, spelled אִמָּה. In the title of my work, I chose to spell the phonetic transcription as אִמָּה, in accordance with the relevant Modern Hebrew practice. In addition yet to the above, please note that אִמָּה, undotted, can be understood as the word for the Biblical unit of measurement, "*sing*" [shing] or "*könyök*" [koen-yoek] in Hungarian.

The analysis below includes the definition, relevant etymology, neology development history and a helpful guide to all the entry terms in the scholarly etymological dictionary of rabbinic Hebrew (https://www.sefaria.org/Klein_Dictionary) composed by Szatmár (Satu Mare) born author, Rabbi Dr. Ernest Klein זצ"ל, Toronto, Canada, c.1973 – c.1983 CE, known briefly as the Klein Dictionary.



Klein Dictionary:

אִמָּה f.n. NH matrix (printing).

- אִמָּה ('immāh): The word in question.
- f.n.: Abbreviation for "feminine noun."
- NH: Abbreviation for "New Hebrew"
- matrix (printing): the definition refers to one half of the mould used in the delicate process of letter-casting, dating back to Johannes Gutenberg and further back in history, all the way to the 13th Century, CE.

[Formed from אִם (= mother), with first suff. הָה...]

This explains how the Hebrew word was constructed.

- It was intentionally created from the biblical word אִם ('ēm), meaning "mother."
- The standard feminine noun suffix -āh (represented by the vowel הָ) was added to the root concept of "mother."

[...properly loan translation of L. matrix...]

This is the key to understanding the word's origin.

- L.: Abbreviation for Latin.
- Loan Translation: This is the crucial term. A loan translation (or calque) is a special kind of word creation. Instead of just borrowing the foreign word's sound (which would give you the Hebrew word מַטְרִיצָה, *matritsah*), the creators of Modern Hebrew (see Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and Va'ad haLashon / Academy of the Hebrew Language) translated the logic behind the foreign word.

[...L. matrix (= womb, matrix, source, origin), which derives from mater (= mother).]

This part explains the Latin logic that was copied.

- In Latin, the word matrix (meaning "womb" as *matrix corporis* - *womb of the body*, and by extension, "source" or "mould" as in *matrix fontium* - *source of spring*) was derived from the word *mater*, meaning mother..

Putting it all together:

When the founders of Modern Hebrew needed a pure Hebrew term for a "printing matrix," they saw that the European word was based on the concept of a "mother" (something that gives birth to copies). So, they did the exact same thing in Hebrew:

Latin: mater (mother) → matrix (womb, mold)

Hebrew: אִם ('ēm', mother) → אִמָּה ('immāh', mold/matrix)



The Klein Dictionary entry describes a Modern Hebrew neologism (a newly coined word) that was logically built from a biblical root to mirror the etymology of its Latin equivalent.

This is a perfect example of the linguistic genius involved in the revival of the Hebrew language.

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Further points on words with the same origin as the one in the appended (not just phonetic transcript but meaningful) title of IMA: the Klein entry actually describes two different, though etymologically related Hebrew words that are spelled the same way in unvocalized text.

Part 1: אַמָּה ('immāh) - The Biblical Word

This is the first definition in the entry.

אָמָה f.n. maid, handmaid, female slave ("szolgáány" / "rabszolgaány")

- f.n.: This is an abbreviation for "feminine noun."
- Definition: The primary meaning in Biblical Hebrew is "handmaid" or "female slave."

Etymology and Related Words (Cognates)

The dictionary lists cognates—words in other Semitic languages that share a common origin with the Hebrew word. This shows the word's ancient roots across the region.

- Aram. אַמְחָתָא ('amhātā): Aramaic
- Syr. אַמְתָּא ('amtā): Syriac
- Ugar. amt: Ugaritic
- Arab. 'amah: Arabic

- OSArab. ʾmāt : Old South Arabian
- Ethiop. 'amat : Ethiopian (Ge'ez)
- Akk. amtu : Akkadian (the language of ancient Assyria and Babylonia)

All these words mean "female slave" or "handmaid," confirming the word's ancient and widespread usage with this meaning.

Proposed Origin and Connections

Prob. of the same origin as אִמָּה . See אִמָּה and cp. the second element in הַנְּזֻזִּים .

Prob. of the same origin as אִמָּה ('ēm): Klein suggests that the word for "handmaid" likely derives from the same root as the word אִמָּה ('ēm), which means "mother." The idea is that a handmaid was a core female member of the extended household or family unit, a sort of foundational figure, similar to a mother.

• cp. ... הַנְּזֻזִּים (shifchāh / "*rabszolgalány*"): The abbreviation cp. means "compare." Klein invites the reader to compare אִמָּה with הַנְּזֻזִּים , which is another common Biblical Hebrew word for a female servant. This is to analyze them in the same semantic category.

Related Verb Form

cp. also the related (denominated) form אָמַח (q.v.).

- denominated: This means a verb that is created from a noun.
- q.v. (quod vide): A Latin abbreviation meaning "which see." It directs you to look up that entry.
- Explanation: Klein is pointing out that there is a verb, אָמַח ('āmah), which means "to become a handmaid" or "to enslave a girl." This verb was derived directly from the noun אִמָּה ('immāh).

Part 2: אָמַח ('ammāh) - The New Hebrew Word

This is the second definition, marked with NH for New Hebrew (Mishnaic/Rabbinic Hebrew).

NH 2 אָמַח f.n. cubit, ell.

• Definition: In the language of the Mishnah and Talmud, this same-spelled word means "cubit," a unit of measurement roughly the length of a forearm (from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger).

Etymology and Literal Meaning

[Ugar. amt , Akka. ammatu , Aram.–Syr. אָמַח , Arab. 'amat , Ethiop. 'emmat . Lit. 'forearm'.]

The dictionary lists many of the same cognates, but this time it gives the literal, physical origin of the word: "forearm."

- The Akkadian word ammatu is particularly important here, as it clearly means both "forearm" and "cubit."
- This shows the semantic shift: a word that originally meant a body part ("forearm") came to be used as a standard unit of measure based on that body part.

The Connection Between Words of the same origin as אָמָה

This is the most fascinating part. The dictionary states that אָמָה ("cubit/forearm") and אָמָה ("handmaid") ultimately come from the same ancient Proto-Semitic root.

The original meaning of that root might have been related to the concept of being strong, foundational, or essential.

- The forearm ('ammāh) is a source of strength and the basis for measurement.
- The handmaid ('immāh) was a foundational member of the household workforce.

Derivative

Deriv.: אָמָהּתָּהּ.

- Deriv.: This stands for "Derivative," meaning a word that grew out of אָמָהּ.
- אָמָהּתָּהּ ('amtáhat): This is the Hebrew word for a "sack," "bag," or "wallet" (famous from the story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis). The connection is likely that a sack is something that is carried on or supported by the arm/hand.

In summary, the dictionary entry meticulously details the history of distinct Hebrew words, showing how they evolved from a single ancient root into completely different meanings: for a person (a handmaid), for a unit of Biblical measurement (a cubit, '*sing*' or '*könyök*' in Hungarian) and for matrix, explaining the neologism of the latter (mater plus the suffix *-ix*: having the nature of a mother, i.e. that which can multiply,, cp. Biblical וְרָבוּ - "*sokasodjatok*") formed exactly like the Latin 'matrix', i.e. based on **MOTHER**.

Grego

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