

Annotated list of Celtic loanwords, and possible Celtic loanwords, in Proto-Germanic.

1. Words shown to be Celtic loanwords by the Celtic sound change *ē > *ī.

*rīk- ‘king’ (cf. Goth. *reiks* ‘ruler’), *rīkija ‘kingdom’ (cf. Goth. *reiki*, ON *riki*, OE *rīce*, OHG *rīhhi*) ← PCelt. *rīg- ‘king’ (cf. Gaulish *-rīx*, *-rīg-* in names recorded by Caesar; OIr. *rí*, *ríg-*), *rīgiom ‘kingdom’ (cf. OIr. *ríge*) < PIE *(H)rēg- ‘king’ (cf. Lat. *rēx*, *rēg-*, Skt. *rājā*, Rigvedic also *rāj*)

*īsarṇa ‘iron’ (cf. Goth. *eisarn*, ON *járn*, OE *īsern*, *īren*, OHG *īsarn*) ← PCelt. *īsarṇom (cf. OIr. *īarn*); apparently < pre-PCelt. *ēsarṇom, vṛddhi-derivative of *esar ‘blood’ < PIE *ésh₂ǵ

2. Words shown to be Celtic loanwords by other formal peculiarities.

*brunjō ‘mailshirt’ (cf. Goth. *brunjo*, ON *brynja*, OE *byrne*, OHG *brunna*), apparently borrowed from a derivative of the PCelt. word that survives in OIr. *bruinne*, Welsh *bronn* ‘breast’ < PCelt. *brusn-; though the (post-)PIE root *b^hrews- ~ *b^hrus- ‘breast’ is attested all over northern Europe, only Celtic exhibits an extension with *-n-; in Germanic we normally find *-t- (Goth. *brusts*, OE *brēost*, etc.), while Russ. *brjúxo* ‘belly’ has neither

*lēkijaz ‘physician’ (cf. Goth. *lēkeis*, OE *lāce*, OHG *lāhhi*) ← PCelt. *leagis (cf. OIr. *liaig*, *leg-*); the latter has no convincing etymology, but the contraction of vowels and replacement of stem-vowel *-i- by *-ija- make better sense if the PGmc. word was a loan

*Rīnaz ‘Rhine’ (cf. OE, MHG *Rīn*) ← PCelt. *reinos ‘stream’ (cf. OIr. *rían* ‘course, path’, poetic ‘sea’); the fact that this was an ordinary Celtic word for ‘stream’, whereas no such noun existed in Germanic, shows that the Germanic name was a loan

3. Words known to be Celtic loanwords for historical reasons.

*ambahtaz ‘servant’ (cf. OE *ambiht*, OHG *ambaht*; also Goth. *andbahts* with prefix remodelled by folk etymology) ← Gaulish *ambaktos, Latinized as *ambactus* (cf.

Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* VI.15.2)

*walhaz ‘foreigner’ (cf. OE *wealh*, OHG *walh*; ON *Valir* ‘the French’) ← *Wolkā-,
name of a Celtic tribe, Latinized as (pl.) *Volcae*

4. Words which might be Celtic loans or shared inheritances.

a) Legal and social relations:

*aiþaz ‘oath’ (cf. Goth. *aips*, ON *eiðr*, OE *āþ*, OHG *eid*) < *óytos; PCelt. *oitos > OIr.

óeth

*arbija ‘inheritance’ (cf. Goth. *arbi*, OE *ierfe*, OHG *erbi*) < *orb^hiom; PCelt. *orbiom >

OIr. *orbae*; this is clearly a derivative of PIE *orb^ho- ‘orphan’ (cf. Lat. *orbus*,
Arm. *orb*, Gk. ὀρφανός), but both the suffix and the meaning are peculiar to
Germanic and Celtic

*frijaz ‘free’ (cf. Goth. *freis*, OE *frīo*, OHG *frī*) < *prijos; PCelt. *rios > Welsh *rhydd*;

both words are reflexes of PIE *priHós ‘dear, beloved’ (cf. Skt. *priyás*), but the
unexpected semantic development to ‘free’ is peculiar to Germanic and Celtic

*gīslaz ‘hostage’ (cf. ON *gisl*, OE *gīsl*, OHG *gīsal*) < *g^héyslos; PCelt. *geis(t)los > OIr.

gíall, Welsh *gwystl*

*leugō ‘vow’ (?; cf. Goth. pl. *liugos* ‘wedding, marriage’) < *lewghā; PCelt. *lugiom

‘oath’ > OIr. *lugae*, Welsh *llw*; in this case the difference in ablaut in the root
syllable suggests shared inheritance

*rūnō ‘secret’ (cf. Goth. *rūna*, OE *rūn*, OHG *rūna*; ON pl. *rúnar* ‘runes’) < *rūnā; PCelt.

*rūnā > OIr. *rín*, Welsh *rhin*

b) Terms of military relevance:

*burg- ‘hill-fort’ (cf. Goth. *baúrgs*, ON *borg*, OE, OHG *burg*, all ‘town, city’); PCelt.

*brig- ‘hill’ (cf. OIr. *brí*, *brig-*); both words reflect PIE *b^hrǵh-, the zero grade of
the root *b^herǵh- ‘high’, and the semantic specialization to topography also occurs
in other derivatives, but the root-noun is found only in Germanic and Celtic

*marhaz ‘horse’ (cf. ON *marr*, OE *mearh*, OHG *marh*) < *márkos; PCelt. *markos (cf.

Welsh *march*)

*rīdanā ‘to ride’ (cf. ON *ríða*, OE *rīdan*, OHG *rītan*) < *réyd^h-e/o-; PCelt. *reideti ‘(s)he

- rides' (cf. OIr. *rédiid*); Lith. *riedėti* 'to roll (intr.)' might also be related, but even if it is, the semantic specialization 'ride' is peculiar to Germanic and Celtic
- **rōanaŋ* 'to row' (cf. ON *róa*, OE *rōwan*); PCelt. **rāeti* '(s)he rows' (cf. OIr. *ráiid*), with characteristic Celtic **ā* < **ō* in a nonfinal syllable; there are related words in other IE languages (such as Lat. *rēmus* 'oar'), but only Germanic and Celtic exhibit a basic verb with **ō* in the root
- **tūnaŋ* 'enclosure' (cf. ON, OE *tūn*, OHG *zūn*) < **dūnom*; PCelt. **dūnom* (cf. Latinized Gaulish *-dūnum* 'walled town' in place names, OIr. *dún* 'fort')
- **wiganaŋ* 'to fight' (cf. Goth. *du wigana* 'in order to fight', ON *vega*, OE *ġewegan* [*Beowulf* 2400]) < **wik-é/ó-*; PCelt. **wiketi* '(s)he fights' (cf. OIr. *fíchid*); the verb is attested in other IE languages (e.g. in Lat. *vincere* 'to win', with a nasal infix), but only Germanic and Celtic exhibit a simple thematic present with a zero-grade root (a rare type of formation, seldom attested for the same verb in more than one subgroup)

c) Technology:

- **laudaŋ* 'lead' (cf. OE *lēad*) < **laud^hom* or **loud^hom*; PCelt. **laudiā* or **loudiā* (cf. OIr. *lúaide*)
- **lepraŋ* 'leather' (cf. ON *leðr*, OE *leþer*, OHG *ledar*) < **létrom*; PCelt. **letrom* (cf. OIr. *lethar*)

5. Basic vocabulary, likely (but not certain) to reflect shared inheritance:

- **allaz* 'all' (cf. Goth. *alls*, ON *allr*, OE *eall*, OHG *all*) < **olnos* (?); PCelt. **olyos* (?; cf. OIr. *uile*), though Welsh *oll* 'entirely' reflects a form with yet another suffix
- **fergunjaŋ* 'mountain' (cf. Goth. *faírguni*, OE *firġen-* in compounds) < **perkunyóm*; early Celtic adj. **Herkunios* preserved as *Ἐρκύνιος* in place-names recorded by Greek geographers; similar forms were used as names of deities in Balto-Slavic (as well as Norse), but the formation in *-yo- and the connection with mountains seem to be peculiar to Germanic and Celtic; deriv. of **pérku-* ~ **pr̥k^wéw-*, name of a species of tree
- **gablō* 'fork' (cf. OE *ġeafel*, OHG *gabala*) < **ġ^habh^hlā*; PCelt. **gablā* 'fork, forked

- branch' (cf. OIr. *gabul*, Welsh *gafll*); the word probably referred to branches originally
- *haiþī 'uncultivated land' (cf. ON *heiðr*, OE *hāþ*, OHG *heida*; Goth. *haiþi* 'fields') < *káyþī; PCelt. *kaito- 'forest' (cf. Welsh *coed*)
- *k^wistiz 'digit' (cf. ON *il-kvistir* 'toes') < *g^wistis; PCelt. *bistis 'finger' (cf. Welsh *bys*; OIr. *bisi ega* 'icicles'); this is almost certainly inherited, since the PCelt. form exhibits the characteristic regular sound change *g^w > *b
- *lahanaǵ 'to reproach' (cf. OE *lēan*, OHG *lahan*) < *lók-e/o-; PCelt. *lok-? (cf. OIr. *locht* 'guilt, error' < *loktus)
- *landaǵ 'land' (cf. Goth., ON, OE *land*, OHG *lant*) < *land^hom; PCelt. *landā 'open area' (cf. OIr. *land* 'plot of land; building, church', Welsh *llan* 'courtyard, church'); the pre-Celtic form looks like a collective of the pre-Germanic form
- *maguz 'boy' (cf. Goth. *magus*, ON *mogr*, OE *magu*, the latter two also 'son') < *mag^hus; PCelt. *magus (cf. OIr. *mug* 'slave' and *Magu-* in Gaulish and Ogham Irish names)
- *ōganaǵ 'to fear' (cf. Goth. *ogan*); PCelt. *āg- (cf. OIr. *ad-ágathar* '(s)he fears'); this is an inherited perfect *h₂e-h₂óg^h- ~ *h₂e-h₂g^h-, but the original meaning must have been 'to be upset' (cf. Homeric Greek present ἀχνύμεναι 'to grieve', ἄχος 'distress'); the semantic development is peculiar to Germanic and Celtic
- *rīmaǵ 'number' (cf. ON *rīm*, OE, OHG *rīm*) < *rīmom; PCelt. *rīmā 'counting' (cf. OIr. *rīm*, Welsh *rhif*); again the Celtic form looks like a collective of the Germanic
- *þekuz 'thick' (remodelled, on the basis of fem. *þik^wī, as *þikkwijaz in NWGmc., whence ON *þjukkr*, *þykk*, OE *þicce*, OHG *dicki*) < *teguš; PCelt. *teguš (cf. OIr. *tiug*, Welsh *tew*)
- *widuz 'wood, woods' (cf. ON *viðr*, OE *wudu*, OHG *witu*, the last only 'wood') < *wid^hus; PCelt. *widus (cf. OIr. *fid*; Welsh *gwŷdd* 'trees')
6. Late loan from Celtic to Germanic or (more likely?) vice versa.
- *brōk- 'legging, stocking' (cf. ON *brók*, OE *brōc*, OHG *bruoh*); PCelt. *brāk- (*brākā?; cf. Latinized Gaulish *brācae* 'trousers')

7. Finally, there are a handful of isolated words attested in particular Germanic and Celtic languages that might support PGmc. and PCelt. reconstructions and some kind of connection (by inheritance or borrowing) between the two; some of the better examples are the following.

OE gen. pl. *brognena* ‘of (leafy) branches’, Northumbrian *gibrogne* ‘bush’ < PGmc.

*brugnVn-?; Welsh *brwyn* ‘rushes’ < PCelt. *brugno-?; a preform *b^hrughno-, referring to some sort of low-growing plant, is possible

ME *crodde*, *crudde*, *curde* ‘curd’ < PGmc. *krud-?; OIr. *gruth* ‘curds, cheese’ < PCelt.

*grutus?; a preform *grutús is possible

OE *grēada* ‘bosom’ < PGmc. *graudan-?; OIr. *gruad* ‘cheek’ < PCelt. *graudos or

*groudos?; a preform *g^hrawd^h- or *g^hrowd^h-, referring to some curved part of the body, is possible