

This is a couple of quick replies to James D and Etienne's comments.

I think it's true that *Epo-* only occurs in three-member Gaulish names, though I haven't had a chance to check. But they're unproblematically interpretable: *Epo-so-gnātus* is 'horse-well-knowledgeable', i.e. 'Well-versed-in-horsemanship', while *Epo-rēdo-rīx* is 'Horse-rider-king'. Unless I'm mistaken, Welsh *ap* is a reduced form of *map*, cognate with OIr. *mac* 'son' and reflecting a preform *mak^{wk}wos. It's also true that the *caballus*-words seem to have been borrowed from Latin into the Insular Celtic languages; the Welsh and Irish words don't match the way they should if they were cognates. There is a further Celtic word for 'horse', which also shows up in Germanic but has no other unarguable external cognates: OIr. *marc*, Welsh *march* < *markos; ON *marr*, OE *meaerh*, OHG *marah* < PGmc. *marhaz < *márkos. (The pre-Germanic accent can be reconstructed in this case because the *h did not become voiced. A derived feminine survives in Modern English 'mare'.) As is often the case, we can't tell whether this is a shared inheritance or an early loanword, but in any case it seems restricted to northwestern Europe. (The interaction between Germanic and Celtic will come up again in a later post; I need to check a bunch of things in it before sending it to Mark.)

I write Latin *equos* for a specific reason. The standard form certainly is *equus*, but I think that actually first appears in inscriptions in the 1st century CE. What happened was approximately this. (Some of the dates may be a bit off; again, I don't have all the relevant references to hand right now.) Short *o* in most final syllables became *u* sometime late in the 3rd century BCE, I think—the spellings with *o* in the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*, datable to 186, are deliberate archaisms—but the change was inhibited by a preceding *u* or *v* (spelled the same, of course; but I mean a preceding high back round vocalic, whether syllabic or not). Cicero still pronounced *equos*, *servos*, *mortuos*, etc., and wrote those forms with an *o*. During the Augustan period, I think, a further change of *vo* to *u* occurred, and we start seeing *ecus* in inscriptions. Finally the following generation (more or less) regularized the paradigms—this was an “analogical” change, not a regular sound change—and produced *equus*. Of course isolated words, and paradigms that didn't have a relevant alternation in them, weren't “restored”; thus *secundus* wasn't changed because it was no longer felt to be part of the paradigm of *sequor*. This is all spelled out in Ferdinand Sommer's *Handbuch der lateinischen Laut- und Formenlehre* (I don't have the page refs. to hand). Which form you prefer to use is

basically a matter of taste; I use the older one in an attempt to be chronologically consistent, since most of our Classical Latin grammar is Ciceronian.

Obviously a detail like this makes no difference in this context; so why bother to write *equos* when everyone who can read Latin expects *equus*? Basically as part of an attempt to get into the habit of paying attention to every detail every time—and because I've spent about a third of my career wrestling with the chronology of language changes, I notice this particular detail. It doesn't seem possible to avoid errors completely (at least I can't do it!), but cultivating this kind of habit minimizes them. Of course it also shows that you have to be obsessed with language change to pursue this kind of work professionally; but maybe that was obvious already.