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Introduction

Historical and Cultural Contexts

During the first century BCE, the peoples living in much of Britain and Gaul spoke a common language, and partook of a shared culture and religion. We do not know whether these peoples had a common name for themselves, or for their language. The Romans referred to those in Gaul as "Celtae" or "Galli", while the Greeks called them "Κελτοί". Those living in Britain were known as "Brittanni" to the Romans, as "Πρεττανοι" to the Greeks.

"Gallo-Brittonic" vs. "Insular Celtic"

Before treating this "reconstitution" of Common Gallo-Brittonic, we must first dip a toe into the muddy waters of academic controversy. As the title of this work suggests, it is written with the basic assumption that the speech used in most parts of Gaul and Britain was in fact "the same" language: that is to say that the speech varieties of the various communities were to a degree at least mutually intelligible. While it would perhaps be going too far to suggest that a man of the Tectosages tribe, at the foothills of the Pyrenees, would have had no difficulty in understanding the speech of a man of Votadini, in the Scottish borders, the idea that the two spoke the same language at two separate ends of a dialect continuum is not so outlandish.

However, this basic assumption is far from being uncontroversial. The traditional theory, as espoused by Schmidt (1988), Jackson (1953) et al. is that Gaulish and Brythonic form a common sub-branch of the Celtic family (usually referred to as "P-Celtic"), as opposed to the Goidelic and Celtiberian languages, which are normally referred to as "Q-Celtic" (although this implies that the two formed a common "node" on the Celtic family tree, which is unlikely, all stories of Milesians migrating from Hispania to Ireland aside). Supporting the argument in favour of Gaulish and Brythonic forming a phylogenetic unit, we can demonstrate a number of lexical correspondences, common pho-

nological innovations, as well as testimony from contemporary accounts (Caesar, Strabo and so on) implying that the languages spoken on either side of the British Sea were mutually intelligible.

On the other side of the debate, there is the theory that Brythonic and Goidelic form a common sub-branch ("Insular Celtic"), in opposition to Gaulish and Celtiberian ("Continental Celtic"). This theory is held by some respected specialists in the field, such as Warren Cowgill (1975) and Kim McCone (1996). In my experience they also tend to be specialists particularly in the Goidelic languages: the Insular/Continental divide does not seem to have found much support in French academia. In his 1996 work *Towards a Relative Chronology of Ancient and Medieval Celtic Sound-Change*, Kim McCone vigorously advances the case for Insular Celtic with, in my view, only moderate success[1]. However, many of the arguments which are commonly cited for Insular Celtic are convincingly shown by Matasović (2007) to be the result of areal contact between different varieties.

Conclusively resolving this dispute is, of course, not only beyond my own meagre abilities, but also outside the scope of this work. It is only mentioned here for the purposes of full disclosure: the assumption which underlies this grammar is far from being the academic consensus (in as far as there is any: Celtic linguistics seems prone to avoid consensus at all costs at times.) The reader, should he be so inclined, is encouraged to seek out the relevant works on the subject and make up his own mind.

[1] [1] McCone's attempts to provide isoglosses which divide his "Insular Celtic" from Gaulish are generally weak, frequently misinterpreting the Gaulish evidence, or even completely ignoring it in cases. A comprehensive rebuttal is, however, far outside the scope and intention of the present work.

Getting from Proto-Celtic to Gallo-Brittonic

k^w > p

Obviously.

g^w > w /#_V,

g^w > g /#_r

g^w > w (or g? or b?))/V_

The inlaut outcomes of CC *g^w are contentious. The W. reflexes *tend* to show a reflex *f* in some words, as in *deifio* < *deg^w-ye* and (possibly) *nyf* < *$snig^w$o-*, which would imply a proto-form in *b*, thus PIE *g^{wh} falls in with *g^w*. There are, however, complications. The regular reflex appears to have been *g* before *u*, which is unremarkable. However, the Gaulish evidence of *louo-* < *lag^wo* argues for a *w* reflex. For the sake of consistency, then, with the Gaulish evidence, we've gone with *w*.

φ > w /[+back]_[+nasal]

VφC > V:C

sφ > f /#_

Maybe. So few words with this sound: just avoid them.

φ > Ø

ng^w > m(w)

Perhaps: *$tang^wāt$- > ?*tamwāt- > W. *tafod*. Sims-Williams suggests that W. *f* in *tafod* can be explained by *ng^w > *w*, which seems dubious, however see above. A change to *mb* can be ruled out, as this would give W. ✗*tamod*. Should our rule be correct, it must postdate the CC change of *-*mw*- > *-*ww*-, as seen in **kom-wīro* > **kowwīro*.)

es > is /[-stress]_i#

d > Ø /_#

Possibly only in pausa, not in proclitics.

e, i > ɪ /_#

Unwritten.

ɪ > Ø /{t,s}_#

Possibly the conditioning environment here is only t_#: the W. forms *sydd*, *wy* and the 3sg verbal ending *-ydd* are difficult to account for if not from **essi-yo*, **esi* and *-*isi*. On the other hand, we could posit **es* > **eh* > **ē* > *wy*, and *-*iyī* (with thematic *-*ī*, as reconstructed by Watkins) > *-ydd*.

sr > fr /#_

> The actual phonetic form of this might have been [θr] q.v. Schrijver. Schrijver also posits **sr* > **ðr* medially (and **str* > **θr*, but that's pretty clearly wrong). Perhaps it is best to write *sr* for both cases?

ns > ss

st > ss /V_

sN > NN /V_

> Also applies to inlaut *-*sl*-

m > w /_n, n_

sk^{w} > sw /#_

> In order to account for W. *chwedl* < **sk^{w}etlon*. Matasović prefers a sporadic metathesis to **k^{w}s* > **χs*, but this seems somewhat too *ad hoc*. Obviously, this must have taken place prior to the change of **k^{w}* to *p*.

m > b /_{l,r}

Pronunciation

As this work is primarily intended as a handbook of morphology, syntax and poetics, a detailed phonological survey has been omitted. That the phonetic systems of Proto-Brythonic and Gaulish are well-studied and largely well-understood gives us an excellent basis to work from, and numerous excellent works on the topic can be found.

Instead, a brief guide to pronunciation will be given:

a	normally [a], [æ] before nasals.	*n*	[n], [ŋ] before velars
ā	[aː]	*o*	[o]
ai	[a͡i]	*oi*	[o͡i]
au	[a͡u]	*ou*	[o͡u]
b	[b]	*p*	[p]
c	[k]	*r*	[r]
d	[d]	*s*	[s], [θ] before [r]
e	[e], [ɪ] in auslaut and before nasals	*ss*	[ts] or [sː]
		st	[st]
ē	[eː]	*t*	[t]
g	[g]	*u*	[u]
i	[i], [ɪ] in auslaut and before nasals	*ū*	[uː]
		w	[w]
ī	[iː]	*χ*	[x]
l	[l]	*y*	[j]
m	[m]		

Primary stress occurs on the first syllable of a word, excluding any proclitics. In compound words, a secondary stress occurs on the first syllable of the second element of the compound.

Noun-phrase constituents

Nouns

Like other early Indo-European languages, Gallo-Brittonic was a fusional language rich in morphological oppositions. Morphology, rather than syntax, identified the primary syntactic elements of a phrase, which gave the individual words themselves remarkable autonomy. The majority of Gallo-Brittonic words were inflected in some way, the only exceptions being sentential particles, clitics, conjunctions, postpositions and numerals over four.

The primary domains of morphology in Gallo-Brittonic were inflection, derivation and composition. To paraphrase Watkins (1993), inflection deals with the "paradigm", the varying forms under which a given inflectible stem or lexical entry ("word") may appear in a phrase, as a result of its syntactic function. Derivation deals with the formation of inflectible stems, the formation of "words" minus their inflection. Finally, composition deals with the formation of inflectible stems from the combination of an inflectible stem with one or more other meaningful elements.

The noun distinguishes three grammatical genders, masculine, feminine, and neuter. We can readily distinguish at least two numbers: the singular and the plural, with some indications of a dual number as well. It appears that eight cases were also preserved: the nominative, vocative, accusative, dative, genitive, ablative, instrumental and locative.

Case inflection is dependent on the stem-class to which a noun belongs, of which we can identify eleven or so. These are discussed below.

o- and yo-stems

Nouns of this stem class are either masculine or neuter, the inflection of the latter differing from the former only in the nominative and accusative cases.

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-os	-e	-on	-i	-ūi	-ū	-ū	-ē
dual	-ou	-ou	-ou	-ūs	-obon	-obin	-obin	-ou
plural	-oi	-ūs	-ūs	-on	-obo	-obi	-ūs	-obi

Neuter nouns have nom/voc/acc singulars in *-on*, and nom/voc/acc plurals in *-ā*.

The desinences given here represent a relatively early stage. In later Gaulish we find dat sing *-ū* and nom pl *-ī*.

ā-stems

Nouns of this stem classe are predominantly feminine, although incidences of masculine nouns in these classes are not unknown. Masculine nouns are limited to personal names (such as the Gaulish names *Sullā* and *Galbā*, both borrowed by the Romans) and nouns referring to actions used metonymically for males performing such an action, e.g. *tiχtā* "message, messenger".

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-ā	-ā	-an	-ās	-āi	-ī	-ī	-āi
dual	-ai	-ai	-ai	-ayous	-ābon	-ābin	-ābin	-ābin
plural	-ās	-ās	-ās	-ānon	-ābo	-ābi	-ābi	-ābi

Later developments: acc sing *-in*, gen sing *-yās*, dat sing *-ai*. It is possible that the gen pl was actually *-an*, as *-anon* is only attested in G. *eianon* and *bnanon*.

Note also the existence of ă-stems. These should be rigorously distinguished from the much larger class of ā-stems. A frequently encountered member of this class is *bena* "woman" (gen sing *bnās*), declined below:

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	bena	bena	benan	bnas	bnai	bnī	bnī	bnī
dual	bnai	bnai	bnai	banou	bnabon	bnabin	bnabin	bnabin
plural	bnās	bnās	bnās	banon	bnabo	bnabi	bnabi	bnabi

ī-stems

Like ā-stems, nouns of this class were predominantly feminine.

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-ī	-ī	-in	-yās	-yāi	-ī	-ī	-yāi
dual	-ī	-ī	-ī	-you	-yābon	-yābin	-yābin	-yābin
plural	-iyas	-iyas	-īs	-yānon	-yābo	-yābi	-yābi	-yābi

Gen pl on the basis of ā-stems. Possibly originally *-yon*. In later Gaulish, the gen sing was borrowed into the paradigm of the ā-stems.

u-stems

Nouns of this stem class can be of any gender, although masculine and feminine nouns inflect identically.

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-us	-us	-un	-ous	-ou	-ū	-ū	-ū
dual	-ū	-ū	-ū	-owou	-ubon	-ubin	-ubin	-ubin
plural	-owes	-owes	-ūs	-uwon	-ubo	-ubi	-ubi	-ubi

Gen pl unsure. Possibly actually *-uyon*. Neuters have nom/voc/acc sing in *-u* and pl in *-owā*, poss *-wā*.

For Proto-Celtic, Lewis and Pedersen (1961) also reconstruct a stem in *-ū*, which appears to be from late PIE wā-stems, thus also reconstructing the neuter nominative and accusative plural in **-ū*, not *-uā* as here.

i-stems

Nouns of this stem class can be of any gender, although masculine and feminine nouns inflect identically, as in the case of the u-stems.

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-is	-is	-in	-ēs	-ē	-ī	-ī	-ī
dual	-ī	-ī	-ī	-iyou	-ibon	-ibin	-ibin	-ibin

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
plural	-īs	-īs	-īs	-iyon	-ibo	-ibi	-ibi	-ibi

Neuters have nom/voc/acc sing in *-i* and pl in *-iyā*, poss *-yā*.

Velar and dental stems

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-s	-s	-an	-os	-ē	-ī	-e	-i
dual	-e	-e	-e	-ou	-bon	-bin	-bin	-bin
plural	-es	-es	-as	-on	-bo	-bi	-bi	-bi

Neuters have nom/voc/acc sing in *-Ø* and pl in *-ā*. The only common neuter noun of this class is *dant* "tooth".

Nasal stems

Nouns of this class can be of any gender, although feminine nouns are perhaps more common. Masculines and feminines inflect identically:

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-ū	-ū	-onan	-onos	-onē	-onī	-one	-oni
dual	-one	-one	-one	-onou	-onbon	-onbin	-onbin	-onbin
plural	-ones	-ones	-onās	-onon	-onbo	-onbi	-onbi	-onbi

Neuter inflection is as the following:

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-an	-an	-an	-ēs	-anē	-anī	-ane	-ani
dual	-ane	-ane	-ane	-ēs	-anbon	-anbin	-anbin	-anbin
plural	-anā	-anā	-anā	-anon	-anbo	-anbi	-anbi	-anbi

s-stems

Nouns of this stem class are always neuter.

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-os	-os	-os	-esos	-esē	-esī	-ese	-esi
dual	-ese	-ese	-ese	-esou	-esbon	-esbin	-esbin	-esbin
plural	-esā	-esā	-esā	-eson	-esbo	-esbi	-esbi	-esbi

r-stems

Nouns of this class are restricted to words for family members and their derivatives (such as *gutuatīr* "invoker" from *atīr* "father").

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
sing	-īr	-īr	-eran	-ros	-rē	-rī	-re	-ri
dual	-re	-re	-re	-rou	-ribon	-ribin	-ribin	-ribin
plural	-res	-res	-rās	-ron	-ribo	-ribi	-ribi	-ribi

In later G texts we have acc sing in *-eren*. Note also the divergent *swesūr*:

	nom	*voc*	*acc*	*gen*	*dat*	*abl*	*inst*	*loc*
s	swesūr	swesūr	swesoran	swesros	swesre	swesrī	swesre	swesri
d	swesre	swesre	swesre	swesrou	swesribon	swesribin	swesribin	swesribin
p	swesores	swesores	swesrās	swesron	swesribo	swesribi	swesribi	swesribi

Miscellaneous irregular nouns:

atar "bird": g.s. *atanos*

sāwol "sun": g.s. *sūlos*

daru "oak": g.s. *darwos*

dwār "door": a.s. *dwaran*, g.s. *duros*

āts "foot": g.s. *edos*

cū "dog": a.s. *cunan*, g.s. *cunos.*

bāus "cow": a.s. *bowan*, g.s. *bowos.*

mīs "month": g.s. *mīssos.*

Adjectives

Inflection

Adjectives exhibit concord in number, case and gender with nouns when in apposition and as predicates. O-stem adjectives inflect like o-stem nouns in masculine and neuter, ā-stems in feminine. U-stem and i-stem adjectives conflate masculine and feminine, distinguishing only neuter - epicene: *mori dubu* "black sea" but *bena dubus* "black woman".

Comparison

Equative

There are no examples in Gaulish, and the Goidelic and Brythonic equative inflections are not cognate, it seems. Matasović ascribes the formation of the equative degree to Dark Ages. However, there is a construction common to Goidelic and Brythonic which could serve[2]:

The equative degree is formed by means of the prefix *com-* (which would become *cob-* before *r* and *con-* before a dental consonant). The suffix can also be applied to a noun in the genitive singular, giving the meaning of "the same X as". In both cases the comparand, the second member of the comparison, is introduced by the dative.

Comparative

Possibly only found in predicative constructions, rather than attributively (as in OI- no evidence from OW). Masculine/feminine comparative suffix *-yūs*, pl. *-yoses*?. Neuter *-yos*, pl. *-yesā*? Comparand in the ablative.

Irregular comparatives:

sīros "long" > *sēyūs* "longer"

letanos "broad" > *letyūs* "broader"

elus "many" > *leyūs* "more"

māros "big" > *māyūs* "bigger"

sādos "easy" > *sāssos* "easier"

---

[2] This makes no claims about its historicity in Gallo-Brittonic, as no Gaulish examples are attested. It could be an anachronism.

drucos “bad” > *waχtos* “worse” (according to Morris-Jones and Schrijver, this should be reconstructed “*wo-φedyūs*”, which would be cognate to Latin *peior*. It all seems a little dubious, however.)

dagos “good” > *wellos* “better”

uχselos “high” > *uχsiyūs* “higher”

Superlative

Superlative suffix *-isamos*, with the comparand in the genitive plural. Irregular superlatives:

māros “big” > *māisamos* “biggest”

uχselos “high” > *uχsamos* “highest”

drucos “worst” > *waχtamos* “best” (*woedisamos* according to Morris-Jones)

Personal Pronouns

1st and 2nd person

The case-inflection of plural pronouns is highly speculative.

1sg nom *mī* is only attested as a nota augens in G., therefore it would perhaps be better avoid absolute use. Note later forms of *moi* and *toi* as *mī* and *tī*.

	1st singular	*1st plural*	*2nd singular*	*2nd plural*
nom	mī	snīs	tū	swīs
acc	me	snīs	te	swīs
gen	mon	asron?	tou	swesron?
dat	moi	snūs?	toi	swūs?
abl	me	snūs?	te	swūs?
inst	moi?	snūs?	toi?	swūs?
loc	moi?	snūs?	toi?	swūs?

Note also the reflexive pronoun *swe*, which can possibly be used with 1st and 2nd person referents. Conjunctive pronouns can be formed with *swe* (c.f. Schrijver): *mendeswe*, *tūdeswe* etc?

There is also the adjective *oinānos* "personally, oneself" (W. *hunan*).

The 1sg gen. is unclear. Insular evidence points to *men*, but attested in G. is *mon*. Also C *ow* points to *mou*, by analogy with 2sg.

Lewis & Pedersen reconstruct *tu* for 2sg acc, this seems to be simply to be a clitic form of nom *tū*.

OI *náthar* "of us two" implies a first person dual genitive pronoun ?*nātero*-. No other dual pronouns can be reconstructed, however.

3rd person

	masculine		*neuter*		*feminine*	
	sing	*plural*	*sing*	*plural*	*sing*	*plural*
nom	is	ē	i	ī	ī/eyā	eyās
acc	in	īs	i	ī	eyan	eyās
gen	esyo	eson	esyo	eson	esyās	esyān
dat	yūi	yobi	yūi	yobi	yāi	yābi
abl	yū	yobo	yū	yobo	yā	yābo
inst	yū	yobo	yū	yobo	yī	yābo
loc	yē?	yobo	yē?	yobo	yāi?	yābo

The inflection of 3rd person pronouns heavily contaminated by that of the demonstrative *so-* in B. the feminine singular *ī/eyā* has been replaced by *sī*, from the demonstrative. Neuter nom/acc sing possibly ?*idā*.

Demonstratives

Demonstratives formed on the basis of the pronoun/adj *so*:

	masculine		*neuter*		*feminine*	
	sing	*plural*	*sing*	*plural*	*sing*	*plural*
nom	so	sī	sin	siyā	sī	sās
acc	son	sūs	sin	siyā	siyān	sās
gen	sosio	soson	sosio	soson	siyāi	siyān
dat	sūi?	soibi	sūi?	soibi	siyāi	siyābi
abl	sū?	soibo	sū?	soibo	siyā	siyābo
inst	sū?	soibo	sū?	soibo	siyī	siyābo
loc	sē?	soibo	sē?	soibo	siyāi	siyābo

Inflection of masc/neuter oblique cases uncertain. Possibly dat etc. *sosūi*? The simple demonstrative pronouns frequently used as 3rd person pronouns with deictic/introductory reference.

Also three derived pronominal forms, *soso* “that”, *sondos* “this”, and *sodeso* “the aforementioned”. The first, *sondos* inflected like a regular ā/o-stem adjective, save in the neuter nom/acc, where the forms were *sindon* in the singular and *sindā* in the plural. The latter two inflected like *so*, but with prefixed *so-* and *sode-* respectively (q.v. Schrijver 2007).

Interrogatives, relatives and indefinites

Interrogative pronoun conflated masculine and feminine:

	masculine/feminine		*neuter*	
	singular	*plural*	*singular*	*plural*
nom	pēs	pē	pi	pā
acc	pin	pīs	pi	pā
gen	pī	pēson?	pī	pēson?
dat	pesūi?	pēbi?	pesūi?	pēbi?
abl	pī	pēbo?	pī	pēbo?
inst	pī	pēbo?	pī	pēbo?
loc	pē	pēbo?	pē	pēbo?

Neuter also possibly *pidā*, c.f. OI *cid*. Oblique forms very uncertain.

Other interrogative forms:

panā "where from?"

peti "how many?" (G. has *peti*, preserving final *-i*?)

pi are "why?" (speculative, based on OI *cair*)

pi ambi "why?" (based on MW. *paham*)

panī "when?"

cu "how? where?"

pāne "question particle expecting affirmative answer": *pāne rinat camulās? rinat.* "Doesn't he sell slaves? He does."

poteros "which of two?"

Indefinite:

pāpos "every, each" n.b. neuter nom/acc sing *pāpi*, not ✗*pāpon*.

nepos "someone"

ollos "all, every"

Relatives:

yon "when, as", e.g. *po yon rinat* "until he sells"

yo "that, who" clitic only, e.g. *donyos duget-yo* "the man who serves"

Prepositions

ad + acc: to, towards, up to.

ambi + acc: around, about, surrounding.

are + acc: in front of, on behalf of.

au + abl: away from, off of.

canti + acc: according to, using, for.

cenā + acc: otherwise.

con + inst: with.

dī + abl: from.

dū + dat: to.

eni + loc: in, inside. + acc: into.

entrā + acc: between.

eri + gen: about, concerning. + acc: near.

eχs + abl: out of, from.

eχtrā + acc: without, outside.

īssu + acc: under.

po + acc: to, towards, until.

oncon + dat: near to, at.

ouχsos + acc: above, over.

racon + acc: before.

samalī + acc: like, as, similar to.

sepū + acc: without.

tande + acc: under, beneath.

trās + acc: accross.

trē + acc: through.

wo + acc: under.

wer/wor acc: over, on (W. ar)

writ + acc: against

wēdū + loc: in the presence of

Numerals

Cardinal Numerals

Cardinal numerals 1-4 exhibit concord in number, case and gender. The numeral *oinos* "one" declines like a normal o-stem adjective. The numerals *dwāu* "two", *trīs* "three" and *petwares* "four" had their own forms, shown in the table below:

	dwāu		*trīs*		*petwares*	
	masculine	*feminine*	*masculine*	*feminine*	*masculine*	*feminine*
nom	dwāu	dwī	trīs	tisres	petwares	petesres
acc	dwāu	dwī	trīs	tisrās	peturās	petesrās?
gen	dwūs?	dwiyou?	triyon	tisron	peturon	petesron?
dat	dwobon?	dwiyābon?	tribo	tisrobo?	peturobo	petesrobo?
abl	dwobin?	dwiyābin?	tribi	tisrobi?	peturobi	petesrobi?
inst	dwobin?	dwiyābin?	tribi	tisrobi?	peturobi	petesrobi?
loc	dwou?	dwiyābin?	tribi	tisrobi?	peturobi	petesrobi?

Note that the neuter nom/acc forms were *dwāu*, *trī* and *peturā*, respectively. Stifter reconstructs ?*dowo* for the masculine nominative *dwāu*, and ?*triyā* for the neuter nom/acc *trī*. The inflections of "two" are, of course, the dual inflections of o- and ī-stem nouns, so perhaps Stifter is correct in his reconstructions.

Dwāu is always followed by the dual number: *dwāu donyou*, not ✗*dwāu donyoi*.

The remaining cardinal numerals up to ten are: *pempe*, *sweχs*, *seχtan*, *oχtū*, *nawan*, *decan*. All these numerals have "combinatory forms" used in compounds: *oino-*, *dwē-*, *trī-*, *petru-*, *pempe-*, *sweχ-*, *seχta-*, *oχtā-*, *nawa-*.

We do not know for certain how the higher numerals from 11-19 were formed. In counting out and simple enumeration, Cornish and Breton point to simple compounding: *oinodecan*, *dwāudecan* (or *dwidecan*?), *trīdecan*, *petwardecan*, *pempedecan*, *sweχsdecan*, *seχtandecan*, *oχtūdecan*, *nawadecan*.

When qualifying a noun, the pattern in the Brythonic languages appears to be inherited from a construction such as *trīs donyoi war decan* "three men on ten".

Of the decades, we can confidently reconstruct *wicantī* "twenty" and *trīconts* "thirty": it seems that the evidence indicates that in early times at least the Gallo-Brittonic speak-

ers *did not* use an exclusively vigesimal system. For the other multiples of ten we need to rely on the OI evidence, which gives:

petrūconts	forty	*seχtamāconts*	seventy
pempīconts	fifty	*oxtāconts*	eighty
sweχsconts	sixty	*nawanconts*	ninety

The decades are nouns, not adjectives. Qualified nouns stand in the genitive plural: *petrūconts wiron* "a fifty of men", not ✗*petrūconts wiroi*. Aside from *wicantī*, which declines like a dual ī-stem, the decades decline like singular dental stems: *canū trīcontan loidānon* "I sing thirty poems".

The all the Celtic languages furnish us with evidence for constructions such as *tisres wicantiyas* "three twenties" for "sixty". Use at your discretion.

For numerals like "twenty-six" and so on, OI has the construction of *digit - (qualified noun) - genitive of decade*, so "thirty-three gods" would be *trīs dēwoi trīcontos*.

Above *nawan nawancontos* "ninety-nine", we have *canton* "one hundred" (note also *santerocanton* "half a hundred, fifty"), which declines like a neuter singular o-stem noun. Multiples of a hundred are possibly formed using compounds, so *petrucanton*, or simply *peturā cantā*. Hundreds are linked to lower numbers with the preposition *wor* "on": *sweχs dusyoi sweχscontos wor sweχs cantā* "six hundred and sixty-six demons".

We cannot reliably reconstruct anything above *nawan nawancontos war nawan cantā* "nine hundred and ninety-nine". The Proto-Indo-European form *(*sm̥*-)*ǵʰéslo*-, which underlies Latin *mīlle*, Greek *χίλιοι* and Sanskrit *sahásra*, would have given something like ?*sagellon* or ?*gellon* in Gallo-Brittonic. Avoid except in direst need- after all, "2010" can be represented *decan war wicantī canton*.

Ordinal Numerals

The ordinal numerals were as follows:

1st	*centus*	6th	*sweχsos*
2nd	*alyos*	7th	*seχtametos*
3rd	*tritiyos*	8th	*oχtumetos*
4th	*petwaryos*	9th	*nawametos* or *nāmetos*
5th	*pempetos*	10th	*decametos*

The other ordinal numerals are most likely formed by means of -(*o*)*metos* applied to the cardinal numeral's oblique form.

The Verb

This section on verbal morphology is, by neccessity, far more speculative than the rest of this grammar. While it can be stated that the foregoing has represented more or less the current scholarly consensus, the same cannot be said for the current chapter: primarily because there is very little current scholarly consensus on the prehistory of the Celtic verb. A few of the major points of contention have been outlined both in the body of the chapter and in a dedicated section towards the end.

"Regular" Verbs

The title of this section is, of course, simply a cruel joke upon the reader. As Calvert Watkins remarked, "the historical morphology of the Celtic languages remains strikingly obscure [...] Nowhere is this more apparent than in the verb." In my opinion it goes beyond "strikingly obscure" into the realms of the perversely obfusticated. Take five minutes to go and weep at the confusion and difficulty.

Categories

We can reconstruct with some security the present tense, the preterite and the subjunctive. Shakier are the imperfect and future tenses. Three persons in singular and plural, we cannot reconstruct dual inflections. Mediopassive desinences are somewhat iffy, as are some of the exact forms of the personal endings.

Conjugations

Eight or so stem classes can be identified. Listed below with corresponding categories in the OI verb:

I. *ā-stem verbs*: corresponds to McCone's W1 class and Thurneysen's AI.

II. *ī-stem verbs*: corresponds to McCone's W2 class and Thurneysen's AII

III. *e/o-stem verbs*: corresponds to most of McCone's S1 class, Thurneysen's BI.

IV. *n-stem verbs*: corresponds to McCone's S1d. Thurneysen's BIII.

V. *ye/o-stem verbs:* corresponds to McCone's S2. Thurneysen's BII.

VI. *na-verbs*: corresponds to McCone's S3 and Thurneysen's BIV

VII. *nu-verbs*: corresponds to McCone's S3 and Thurneysen's BV

VIII. laryngeal verbs: corresponds to some of McCone's H-classes. Very rare, derives from PIE verbs ending in a laryngeal (and thus in a vowel in Celtic).

For the purposes of inflection, classes I and II we will term "weak verbs", classes III, IV and V are "thematic strong verbs" and the remaining classes VI, VII and VIII are "athematic strong verbs".

Present

Active

Following is a précis of active present tense endings for each class, derived in the main from Stifter's reconstructions:

	I	*II*	*III*	*IV*	*V*	*VI*	*VII*	*VIII*
	ā	*ī*	*e/o*	*n*	*ye/o*	*na*	*nu*	*H*
1	-āmi	-iyū	-ū	nCū	-yū	-nami	-numi	-mi
2	-āsi	-īsi	-isi	nCisi	-yisi	-nasi	-nusi	-si
3	-āt	-īt	-et	nCet	-yet	-nat	-nut	-t
1	-āmos	-īmos	-omos	nComos	-yomos	-namos	-numos	-mos
2	-ātes	-ītes	-etes	nCetes	-yetes	-nates	-nutes	-tes
3	-ānt	-īnt	-ont	nCont	-yont	-nant	-nunt	-nt

Remarks:

- If the conditioning factor for apocope of final *-*i* was after both **s* and **t*, then the 2sg desinences would be *-s*, not *-si*.
- Class IV verbs are distinguished by having in the present tense a "nasal infix": a homorganic nasal before the final consonant of the stem. Note that this infix does not occur in any other form of the verb.

- Class VI verbs derive from those verbs in PIE which had *-*néh₂*- in the singular and *-*nh₂*- in the plural. As such, it is probable that in early CC. the form of the singular desinences was -*nāmi* etc., and -*namos* in the plural. It is apparent that the plural form of the affix was generalised in Brythonic at least.

- Stifter reconstructs the conjunct 1sg endings of OI as coming from apocopated forms without the final -*i*, thus 1sg -*ām* etc. Exactly how plausible this is for Gallo-Brittonic is undecided, although I will concede that it looks prettier in composition. Note that if he is correct, such apocope must be rather late, occurring after the change of auslaut CC *m > n.

- Watkins (1969) assumes that the thematic 2sg desinence was -*ī*, not -*is*(*i*). It is possible to derive W. -*ydd* from both, arguably. In fact, Watkins' reconstructions cloud the picture entirely. He reconstructs the thematic plural desinences without the final -*s*, and the athematic 1pl as -*omes*(*i*). All of this is bound up in how Watkins sees the development of the absolute/conjunct distinction in OI, which predates Cowgill's discovery of his particle. The Academy these days prefers Cowgill's analysis.

- It is possible that the 1sg of ā-stem verbs was -*ayū*, which would be the regular reflex of PIE *-*eh₂-yoH*.

- Kortlandt reconstructs a rather different set of paradigms, which reconstruct Cowgill's particle to the Italo-Celtic stage. Needless to say, like all right-thinking people the author considers this to be a species of utter lunacy and gives no space to Kortlandt's reconstructions.

As an act of charity to the reader, following are eight verbs fully conjugated in the present tense: *berw-ā-* "to boil", *rād-ī-* "to talk", *ber-e-* "to carry", *bug-* "to break", *wed-ye-* "to pray", *pri-na-* "to buy", *mi-nu-* "to bind" and *ana-* "to breathe"

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
I	berwāmi	berwāsi	berwāt	berwāmos	berwātes	berwānt
II	rādiyū	rādīsi	rādīt	rādīmos	rādītes	rādīnt
III	berū	berisi	beret	beromos	beretes	beront
IV	bungū	bungisi	bunget	bungomos	bungetes	bungont
V	wedyū	wedyisi	wedyet	wedyomos	wedyetes	wedyont
VI	prinami	prinasi	prinat	prinamos	prinates	prinant

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
VII	minumi	minusi	minut	minumos	minutes	minunt
VIII	anami	anasi	anat	anamos	anates	anant

Deponent

For the deponent, we can reconstruct two series of desinences, one thematic, used with the thematic strong verbs and one athematic, used with the weak verbs and athematic strong verbs (of the latter there are mercifully few). The desinences are applied to the same stems as used for the active endings.

It should be noted that while continuing in the main the mediopassive inflections of PIE, it appears from the OI evidence that the distinction between deponent verbs and active ones was of no semantic import: these should not be treated like the cognate passive inflections of Latin.

In the following table, the forms are primarily influenced by Jasanoff's reconstructions, not McCone's.

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
thematic	-ūr	??-etar	-etro	?-omor	-ete	-ontro
athematic	-r	??-tar	-tro	?-mor	-te	-ntro

Remarks:

- If the 1pl forms are dodgy, the 2sg forms are seriously dubious- by various scholars both *-*ter* and *-*tor* have been reconstructed for this form. I have preferred *-tar* on the basis of PIE *-th_2-.
- Note that in OI, the 2pl forms appear to have been identical with the active endings.
- If Jasanoff's conclusions about the origins of deponent *-tro* from *-tor* by analogy with forms from PIE *-*ro*, it is possible that the analogy might have extended to the 1pl forms, giving *-omro*, *-mro*.

As an exercise in folly, following are three verbs inflected: the weak verb *sepī-* "to follow" and the strong verbs *cli-nu-* "to hear" and *man-ye-* "to think":

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
II	sepiyūr	sepītar	sepītro	sepīmor	sepīte	sepīntro
V	manyūr	manyetar	manyetro	manyomor	manyete	manyontro
VII	clinur	clinutar	clinutro	clinumor	clinute	clinuntro

Passive

We can only reconstruct third person passives. Simply put, they're the same as the deponent inflections but with the final two phonemes switched: -(*e*)*tor* and -(*o*)*ntor*. As well as the OI passives, the 3sg inflection underlies the Brythonic "impersonal" forms, and it is not unlikely that in G-B they carried the same meaning, e.g. *beretor* "one carries" as well as "it is carried".

Preterite

The formation of the preterite can be divided up into two broad categories: the weak preterite, which unsurprisingly was the form used with weak verbs, and the various strong preterite formations.

Weak preterites

The desinences of the weak preterite are shown in the table below:

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
I	-assū	-asses	-asset	-assomos	-assetes	-assont
II	-essū	-esses	-esset	-essomos	-essetes	-essont

Remarks:

- The personal endings, as can be seen, bear a striking resemblence to those of the thematic present tense. Note, however, the lack of raising in the 2sg: the inflections derive from the PIE "secondary" endings, which lacked final **-i.*
- We actually have an attested 3sg weak preterite in the Gaulish form *legasit*.

- Verbs of class II, which in the present tense are characterised by the stem vowel *-ī*, derive in the main from two PIE forms: original thematic causatives in **-e-ye*, such as *togīt* "he covers" (PIE **tog-e-ye*) and verbs ending in **-eh₁*, either root verbs such as *creddīt* "he believes" (PIE **ḱred-deh₁-*), or stative derivations such as *tumīt* "he grows, swells" (PIE **tum-eh₁-*). In the case of the former, the vowel of the preterite desinence is *-e-*, while in the latter two, the vowel is *-ī-*. Thus *tumīsset* "he swelled up", but *togesset* "he covered".

Strong preterites

The strong preterites are themselves divided into two groups, based on their inflection: suffixed preterites, which denoted the preterite by means of a suffix before the personal desinences, and the suffixless preterites, which did not. We shall deal with the suffixed preterites first.

Suffixed preterites

The suffix of the suffixed preterite could either be *-s-* or *-t-*, depending on the phonetic shape of the root. These derive diachronically, like the weak preterites, from the Proto-Indo-European sigmatic aorist forms.

- Those preterites using the suffix -s- were rare, consisting of those verbs whoses stems ended in a semivowel, such as *tawet* "he is silent".
- Those using the suffix *-t-*Verbs whose stems ended in rhotic or lateral, and a few verbs ending in a velar.

The personal desinences were the same in both stem formations:

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
s-preterite	tausū	tauses	tause	tausome	tausete	tausont
t-preterite	bertū	bertes	berte	bertome	bertete	bertont

Suffixless preterites

Suffixless preterites were, in the main, rather simpler than their suffixed fellows. Again, the formation of the preterite root could fall into three different classes:

- The first class of reduplicating preterites were formed by doubling the anlaut consonant or consonant cluster, with the vowel *-e-* between the two segments. If the vowel of the stem was *-e-*, it would change in the preterite to *-o-*: e.g. *cenget* "he walks" has the preterite stem *cecong-*. A few verbs used different vowels for reduplication, such as *clewet* "he heard", the preterite stem of which was *cuclow-*.
- The second class of reduplicating preterites consisted of those verbs whose present stems had *-na-* and *-nu-*. In these verbs, the reduplicating vowel was *-i-*, as in *rinat* "he sells", the preterite stem of which was *riri-*.
- The final class consisted of those verbs whose present stems began in a single consonant, whose medial vowel was *-e-* and had a final velar or dental consonant. In these verbs, the stem vowel changed to *-ā-* to form the preterite, as in *wedyet* "he prays", the preterite stem of which was *wād-*.

The personal desinences of the suffixless preterite were uniform regardless of the stem formation:

singular			*plural*		
1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
-a	-as	-e	-ame	-ate	-ar

Remarks:

- Some Gaulish texts exhibit a 3sg desinence in *-u*, such as *ieuru*[3] "he dedicated".
- Similarly, Gaulish offers interesting evidence that the 1sg might have been *-ai* (e.g. *ειωραι*), formed like the Latin 1sg perfect ending *-ī* from the perfect ending and the *hic et nunc* ending **-i* seen in the present tense endings[4].
- The 3pl ending is shaky[5]. OI indicates a borrowing from the deponent paradigm, as *-ontro* or *-ontar*.

[3] This is the preterite of the verb *ernat* "he bestows", a reduplicating verb. The CC. form was something like **φεφορ-*, giving a hiatus *ëor-*, in which the second vowel underwent dissimilatory raising to *u*.

[4] Eska sees this as a 3sg desinence, which takes the total number of third person endings attested for the one verb (i.e *ieuru*) up to six. Lambert sees it as a 1sg desinence, which to me seems to be *a priori* more likely.

[5] This is neither the time nor the place to discuss the proposed Gaulish 3pl preterite desinences in *-us*. The evidence is too flimsy, the debates too rancorous.

Deponent

The endings of the deponent are difficult, to a degree. The suffixed preterites (including those of the weak verbs) simply applied the desinences of the present tense to the preterite stem. However, the desinences of the suffixless preterite are more difficult. The author's best guess, informed by Aaron Griffith's paper on the topic is below:

singular			*plural*		
1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
-ra	-ras	-re	-amro	-ate	-ontro

Remarks

- The vocalism of reduplicated root in the suffixless preterite deponent appears to have been zero-grade, thus *gen-* > 1sg ?*gegnar*.
- The 3sg ending could well have been -*ro*.

Passive

Happily, the preterite does not appear to have had a synthetic passive. Rather, like Latin, it is apparent that a periphrasis of some sort was used, involving the passive participle in -*tos,* for which the reader is advised to consult the appropriate section below.

Imperfect

The imperfect is, to put it bluntly, a bugger. The forms of the Welsh and the Old Irish do not appear at first glance to be cognate for a start, which is always a stumbling block to reconstruction. Matasović even goes so far as to state that the imperfect tense was absent from CC and only arose later in Goidelic and Brythonic due to language contact[6].

Any reconstruction of a complete paradigm would be absurd and based on a level of speculation far greater than that evinced by the rest of this document. As such, we shall offer only two possible inflections, and advise against using either:

- Schrijver, in his *Studies in British Celtic historical phonology*, suggests that the OI 1sg ending -*inn* and the W -*n* both derive from a CC *-*măm*, from the PIE mediopassive *-mh_2 plus the secondary present ending *-*m*. The G-B form of this would be -*man*.

[6] While normally the author agrees with Matasović, he finds the actual mechanics of this puzzling: the endings of the OI are not transparently derivable from other parts of the language's morphology. As such, they must be an inheritance rather than a new formation, like the Romance future.

- A similar provenance has been claimed for the OI 3sg in *-ed*: the PIE 3sg medio-passive *-*to*. We see similar formations in Gaulish verbs, such as *logito*, *karnitu*, etc, and it is possible that the MW. *t*-preterites in verbs ending in *-n*, such as *gwant* and *cant* are of the same background. It is notable that the Gaulish and Welsh examples are straight preterites, not imperfects.

Honesty compels the author to admit that given the derivation of two imperfect endings from the PIE middle endings, it is highly tempting to seek etymologies for the other OI forms here. For example, the 2sg *-tha* of OI is so tantalisingly close to PIE *-th_2, and are we seeing a reflex of PIE *-$mesd^hh_2$ in the OI 1pl ending *-mis*?

Subjunctive

The formation of the subjunctive is of comparable difficulty. It appears that CC had two methods of forming the subjunctive, one more certain than the other: the s-subjunctive and the ā-subjunctive. The first was formally equivalent to the suffixed s-preterite and found with verbs whose roots ended in a dental stop or nasal, and those which ended in a labial (or labiovelar) stop. Additionally, it seems to have been the form used with those verbs deriving from PIE *seṭ* verbs (those ending in a laryngeal).

The formation of the ā-subjunctive is more problematic, hampered by what appears to be terminological confusion. David Stifter, among others, uses the term "a-subjunctive" to refer to a subjunctive derived from the s-subjunctive of *seṭ* roots: a position which seems to be the more recent and widely held. Others, such as Kortlandt and Watkins (at least in his 1962 monograph) see the ā-subjunctive as simply being directly cognate to the ā-subjunctive of Italic, whereby a termination *-*ā*- was added to the bare verbal stem (as in, for example *ag*ā- from *ag- and *b(w)*ā- from *bu-).

The Brythonic formations complicate the matter yet further. Watkins is of the opinion that the Brythonic formations derive from a combination of both the s-subjunctive and the ā-subjunctive: the C6 proto-form *-*hǭ*- deriving from something like *-*sā*-. Assuming that Watkins is correct, the antiquity of this form is unknown. However, the Gaulish *axat*, subjunctive of *ag-* "drive" found in Marcellus of Bordeaux, might suggest a common Gallo-Brittonic formation.

Tentatively, in this document I reconstruct two subjunctive formations: an s-subjunctive, which continues the CC s-subjunctive (which has reflexes in MW. *duch*, *gwares* etc.), and a sā-subjunctive, continuing the earlier ā-subjunctive.

s-subjunctive

The s-subjunctive was applied to strong verbs whose stems ended in a velar consonant (with the exclusion of *ag-*), a dental stop or nasal, or a *-p*. The desinences of this formation are shown in the table below:

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
active	-sū	-ses	-set	-somos	-sete	-sont
deponent	-sūr	??-setar	-setro	-somro	-sete	-sontro

sā-subjunctive

The sā-subjunctive was used with all other verbs.

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
active	-sām	-sās	-sāt	-sāmos	-sāte	-sānt
deponent	-sār	??-sātar	-sātro	-sāmro	-sāte	-sāntro

Example paradigms

In the following table, three verbs are given fully conjugated: *berwāt* “he boils”, *sepetro* “he follows” and *rinat* “he sells” :

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
I	berwasām	berwasās	berwasāt	berwasāmos	berwasāte	berwasānt
III	seχsūr	seχsetar	seχsetro	seχsomro	seχsete	seχsontro
VI	risām	risās	risāt	risāmos	risāte	risānt

Past subjunctive

The past subjunctive of OI applied the imperfect endings to the subjunctive stem, as did that of MW. We might then envision ?*berwasāto* as a 3sg past subjunctive of *berwāt*.

Future

The Brythonic languages lack a separate future tense. Gaulish gives us good evidence of a future tense formed with a reflex of the PIE desiderative suffix in *-*sye*/o-. Neither of the future tenses of OI are cognate to the Gaulish construction.

It is my belief that CC lacked a future tense. Similarly, basing a Gallo-Brittonic future simply on the basis of the Gaulish seems to me to be imprudent, particularly when there is no record of the form in the Brythonic languages.

However, it is not impossible that Proto-Brittonic did indeed have a formation parallel to that of Gaulish, which was subsequently lost due in the general confusion of personal endings during the Common Brythonic period.

Against my better judgement then, I suggest that a future tense might have been formed by applying the present desinences of class V verbs to the subjunctive stem.

Imperative forms

The imperative of active verbs is, happily, easily formed:

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
I	-	berwā	berwātū	-	berwāte	berwāntū
II	-	rādī	rādītū	-	rādīte	rādīntū
III	-	bere	beretū	-	berete	berontū
IV	-	bunge	bungetū	-	bungete	bungontū
V	-	wedi	wedyetū	-	wedyete	wedyontū
VI	-	prina	prinatū	-	prinate	prinantū
VII	-	minu	minutū	-	minute	minuntū
VIII	-	ana	anatū	-	anate	anantū

We also have evidence from Gaulish for reduplicated 3rd person imperatives in *-(n)tūtū*.

The OI evidence indicates that the imperative of deponent verbs was identical to the active inflection, with the addition of the relativising clitic -yo. Thus *molātro-yo* “praise!”.

Non-finite forms

We can confidently reconstruct a number of non-finite verbal forms, including a handful of verbal adjectives and the verbal noun.

Verbal adjectives

The past passive particple in earliest CC was formed with the suffix *-tos*, which was applied directly to the zero-grade stem of strong verbs. As a consequence, the form was not always predictable synchronically: the past passive participle of *beret* "he carries" was *britos*. Weak verbs added it after the zero-grade of the stem vowel: compare the formation of the preterite.

In Brythonic and Goidelic, this was pressed into service as the preterite passive inflection, with the past participle being formed with the suffix *-tyos*.

The gerundive, or the participle of neccessity, was formed like the the past passive participles, but using the inflection *-towyos*. In OI, this form is only used predicatively, but the Brythonic languages have no such restriction.

While we have attestations of reflexes of the PIE present participles, it is unclear to what degree these were productive. Neither has survived into Goidelic or Brythonic as a productive formation, but we do see a present participle in *-nt-* in a single Gaulish inscription. It seems to me that it is more likely that these were non-productive in G-B.

The verbal noun

Rather than infinitives, G-B made use of verbal nouns. As their formation was rarely synchronically predictable, there is little one can say about them from a morphological point of view. See instead the section on the verbal noun's syntax.

Difficulties

Aside from those mentioned above in the main body of the text, the reconstruction presented here is positively *replete* with possible problems.

For a start, the whole system is based far too closely on Old Irish. The verbal systems of the Brythonic languages have been extensively remodelled through the loss of final syllables, and as a result the processes of analogical levelling have run rampant throughout the paradigms. Unfortunately, our attestations of the Gaulish verbal system are far

from complete, and it has long been a difficulty that scholars involved in Gaulish have a tendency to examine verbal forms in isolation: attempting to derive individual forms from their PIE predecessors rather than attempting to contextualise them within the framework of a complete system inclusive of the other Celtic languages. Those scholars who do not specialise in Gaulish have a tendency to use the Continental material only to bolster their own theories about the prehistory of the Irish system, disregarding those forms which do not offer such support.

Primary among the difficulties is the OI conjunct/absolute distinction, and its antiquity. It cannot be realistically projected back to the CC period, as it is clearly a result of the Goidelic shift to verb-initial word order, the antiquity of which is unclear. Celtiberian is resolutely verb-final, and the Brythonic and Gaulish evidence suggest an underlying SVO word-order. Unfortunately, the reconstruction of the personal endings is so dependent on OI's conjunct/absolute distinction.

Furthermore, OI is exceptional among PIE languages in maintaining a distinction between the passive and deponent. Scholars have generally projected this distinction back to CC, but this is far from secure. We have absolutely no evidence for it from the other Celtic languages. As such, including it in the current reconstruction is highly speculative, one might even go so far as to say implausible. The reader is free to disregard it if he so wishes: the author generally avoids the use of passive constructions.

A couple of overarching concerns are based on soundchange. While not systematic problems like those detailed above, they do present problems of consistency. For example, final *-i* may or may not be subject to apocope after a dental. I confess that my choices have been inconsistent throughout: personally I write with apocopated forms.

In the same vein, it is apparent that Gaulish at least changed auslaut *-m* to *-n*, probably during the first century BCE- our earliest records using the Greek alphabet show *-m*, the later inscriptions using the Latin alphabet show *-n*. Given that, final *-m* in verbs should also become -n, thus the first person subjunctive of *rinat* should be something like *risān*. It is not impossible that analogy caused these changes to be resisted- thus I write *risām*.

Irregular verbs

It should come as something of a relief to the reader to be told that irregular verbs are mercifully few. Aside from the verb "to be", most irregular verbs are actually cases of suppletion: once the alternative roots are provided they are inflected according to the schemata above.

In this section, some of the more securely identified irregular verbs are discussed: the verbs "to be", "to go", "to come", "to give" and the two verbs meaning "to know".

To be

The verb "to be" is formed on two separate stems: *es-* and *b-*. The stem *es-* is used as a simple copula:

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
present	emmi	esi	est	emmos	?estes	sent
imperfect	esām	esās	esāt	esāmos	esātes	esānt

- The forms of the present tense are, of course, subject or not to apocope of final -i. The forms above are shown without apocope, but *es*, *est* and *sent* are all possible.
- The present 2pl is dubious. Stifter reconstructs **etesi* for pre-OI.

The remaining tenses were supplied by stems beginning in *b-*:

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
present	biyū	biyisi	biyet	biyomos	biyetes	biyont
preterite	bowa	bowas	bowe	bowame	bowate	bowont
subj 1	buwū	buwes	buwet	buwomos	buwetes	buwont
subj 2	bām	bās	bāt	bāmos	bātes	bānt
future	bisyū	bisyisi	bisyet	bisyomos	bisyetes	bisyont
imperative	-	biye	biyetū	-	biyete	biyontū

Remarks:

- The present tense of this verb becomes the "consuetudinal present" of the Brythonic languages, indicating habitual or continuous states.
- The two subjunctive forms are difficult. The first, *subj 1*, is attested for Gaulish and finds a cognate in the OI present subjunctive. However, *subj 2* underlies the modern Brythonic forms (according to Watkins). Tentatively, I would suggest that *subj 1* be used for the present subjunctive and *subj 2* as an imperfect subjunctive.

To go

The verbal stems used in the Celtic language with the meaning "to go" present a bewildering variety:

- Brythonic uses *ag-* "to drive" as the basic stem.
- And the root *el-na-* "to approach, drive" provides the subjunctive stem.
- The verb-noun *myned* might come from the root *mi-na-* "to go past, to pass"
- Or from *monī-* "to go"
- We have *yā-* "to go" in Gaulish *exiat* "he goes out", although this could be an ā-subjunctive of **eχs-ei-*
- The stem *tēg-* "to journey" is found both in OI and Gaulish (in *moritex* "sea-goer"). And in MW *ardwyo* "to protect, defend".
- The old IE root **h1ey-* survives in the OI past participle *etha* < **ityos*
- And *lud-* provides the preterite in OI.
- While the future is formed on the stem *rig-*.

What seems to have happened here is that the original verb has been degraded so badly by sound-change that the descendant languages have replaced it: we see the same in the modern Romance languages, which have replaced Latin *eo*, *ire* with other verbs, such as *vado* "wade" or *ambulo* "walk around".

I would suggest that the original verb was *ei-*, possibly using *lud-* or *tēg-* as its preterite stem:

	singular			*plural*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
present	ēmi	ēs	ēt	ēmos	ētes	eyont
subjunctive	isām	isās	isāt	isāmos	isātes	isānt
preterite	luda	ludas	lude	ludame	ludate	ludont, ludar
imperative	-	ē!	ētū	-	ēte	eyontū

I have shown the present tense with the full grade of the root generalised to all persons, as seems to be the case in other verbs. However, it is possible that the zero-grade was used in the plural: *imos, ites, yont*.

Those wishing to avoid this verb entirely would not go wrong to simply use the verbs *tēg-* or *el-na-*.

To come

Similarly, a wealth of stems are used for "to come", frequently derivable from those used for "to go", as in OI *to-thég-* (< *to-tēg-*) or the Brythonic *to-aget*. I would suggest one of these two.

To give

The verb *dā-* "to give" is actually relatively regular, conjugating in most forms like a normal class I verb. However, the preterite is formed as a reduplicated suffixless preterite: PIE **de-dh₃-* > *dede* "he gave".

To know

Unsurprisingly, there were two verbs for "to know": *windūr* "to know a fact" (Welsh *gwybod*, French *savoir* and German *wissen*) and *gninum* "to know, be familiar with" (*adnabod*, *connaître*, *kennen*). The second is generally regular, with a redulplicated suffixles preterite stem *gign-* and a past participle *gnātos*. The first is more problematic.

It appears that the verb is a class IV deponent verb. In the present tense, it has the meaning "to find out, discover", while the preterite *widra* means "I know". The

inflection of the verb, however, is largely straightforward, being difficult only in the semantics. The present stem is *wind-*, the preterite *wid-* and the verb-noun *wissus.*

Syntax

Use of the substantive

Case usage

Nominative

The prototypical usage of the nominative case is to indicate the subject of finite verb; the agent of a transitive verb and the sole argument of an intransitive verb:

> *Donyos* ibet medu.
> *The man* drinks mead.

> *Bena* cuscet.
> *The woman* sleeps.

The nominative is also used for predicate substantives, be they adjectives or nouns:

> Togodubnos est *rīχs*.
> Cogidumnus is *king*.

> Mapos esāt *salācos*.
> The boy was *dirty*.

Vocative

The vocative is used as the case of direct address. It is frequently preceded by the vocative particle *ā*:

> Cuscis, ā *tigerne*?
> Are you sleeping, *lord*?

Accusative

The accusative is primarily used to indicate the direct object of a transitive verb:

Towissācos dawyet *treban*.
The leader burns the *settlement*.

It is also used to indicate the time during which something occurs:

Coryos ceconge *trī latyā*.
The army marched for *three days*.

Genitive

The prototypical function of the genitive is to mark the possessor of another noun:

Mapos *Tasgowanī*.
Tasgowanos' son / the son *of Tasgowanos*.

However, the uses of the genitive are more wide-ranging than that. It can also mark composition, or simple attribution:

Abonā *bliχtī*.
A river *of milk*.

Contrebā *Windoclādyās*
The village *of Windoclādyā*.

A somewhat specialised function of the genitive is to mark the patient of a verbnoun. With intransitive verbs, the genitive marks the subject:

Sounon *genetyās*.
The girl's sleeping.

While with transitive verbs, it denotes the object:

Sercā *bnas dagās*.
Loving *a good woman*.

Dative

The dative case typically indicates the indirect object of a ditransitive verb:

Altrawū ernāt wogaison *altiyūi*.
The foster-father gives a spear *to the foster-son*.

The dative of a verbnoun can indicate intention or purpose:

Bardos cecane *molātou* rīgos.
The bard sang *to praise* the king.

Ablative

The ablative's basic function is to indicate origin or source:

> Cengetes retont *magesī.*
> The soldiers run *from the field*.

The ablative is also used to mark the comparand of a comparative adjective:

> Catyūs *suwidī.*
> Wiser *than a sage.*

Instrumental

The instrumental, as indicated by the name, has the prototypical function of marking the instrument with which an action is performed:

> Cenges combinat bergāton *lorgī.*
> The warrior struck down the wizard *with a club.*

It can also have a comitative sense:

> Tigernos ceconge *cantū wiron.*
> The lord marched *with a hundred men.*

Note that in both of these cases, the bare instrumental can be substituted by a prepositional phrase:

> Cenges combinat bergāton *canta lorgan*.
> The warrior struck down the wizard *with a club.*

> Tigernos ceconge *con cantū wiron.*
> The lord marched *with a hundred men.*

Additionally, it marks the agent of a passive verb:

> Contrebā dībungetor *coryū*.
> The village is attacked *by the army*.

Locative

The locative is another adverbial case, expressing the place in which an action happens:

> Marwoi legont *bedorātī.*
> The dead lie *in the cemetery*.

Of course, a prepositional phrase can be substituted:

> Marwoi legont *en bedorātī*.
> The dead lie *in the cemetery*.

It is also the case used in the "locative absolute", a construction parallel to the Latin ablative absolute or the Attic genitive absolute, whereby a substantive in the locative qualified by a participle or adjective indicates the time, condition or attending circumstances of the main clause:

> *Dubrē berwītē*, bena nenoige rouccan.
> *After the water boiled*, the woman washed the tunic.

Use of the adjective

The attributive adjective as a rule stands after its head noun:

> Cancā *brusā* bebuge.
> The *brittle* branch broke.

However, it may precede the noun for stylistic reasons, generally indicating a greater emphasis on the adjective. In these cases, it does not seem to have been uncommon for the adjective to actually form a compound with the head noun:

> Gotīssū *tecan* gotīnan/tecogotīnan
> I fucked the *PRETTY* whore (and not the ugly one).

There is also a group of adjectives, mainly with quantifying function, which typically precede the head noun. As well as both cardinal and ordinal numerals, this group includes *pāpos* "each", *nepos* "any" and *ollos* "all, whole":

> Merta-mī *pāpan* toutan.
> I betrayed *each* tribe.

As mentioned above, the adjective normally agrees in gender, number and case with the noun it qualifies, whether as a predicate or in apposition. However, Old Irish exhibits some interesting exceptions to these rules which seem to me to be archaic. A predicate adjective describing a feminine abstract noun could be cast in the neuter singular:

Ba *erchoitech* n-doib toimtiu (Old Irish)

Anxtācon dū yobo esāt mentiū

Thinking was *hurtful* to them.

It is left to the reader whether he wishes to use these constructions or not.

Use of the verb

The augment

Use of the subjunctive

Consecutio temporum

The verb-noun

Phrase-level syntax

Conjunctions etc.

Adverbs and adverbial clauses

Constituent order

Prosody and poetics

That the prechristian Celts composed poetry goes without saying: not only is it a near-universal characteristic of human societies, but we also have a considerable body of evidence indicating a very ancient poetic tradition. The surviving corpus of early Welsh and Irish poetry is as complex, nuanced and technically brilliant as any other major tradition in Europe, bespeaking a lengthy period of development. Classical authors mention the high regard in which the Celts held their poets, and even give us some clues as to their functions.

Perhaps surprisingly, however, the earliest attested examples of Celtic poetry are not to be found in early mediaeval Ireland or Britain, but on the prechristian European mainland. There is a Cisalpine epitaph dating to the fifth century BCE which exhibits metrical features, and the Chamalières *defixio*, dating from the first or second centuries CE, is clearly metrical in nature. Additionally, we can reconstruct a substantial body of technical vocabulary relating to poetry: metrical details, types of metre, names for practitioners of the art and so on.

So we have examples of genuine pre-Insular Celtic metres, even a vocabulary with which to discuss them. Of course, we do not possess the complete picture: as ever, we must turn to comparison, reconstruction and informed speculation.

General characteristics

We can state with relative confidence that Gallo-Brittonic poetry had the following characteristics:

- It was **strophic**: poems were made up of strophes or stanzas consisting of between three and five lines, with definite features of composition marking these off from the rest of the poem. This is in contrast to (say) Greek and Latin epics, and their later imitators (such as that turgid *opus* of Milton's) wherein lines

could simply be piled up on top of one another until the poet runs out of breath or the audience runs out of patience.

- It was **syllabic**: lines were made up of fixed numbers of syllables, which varied only according to strict rules.
- It was **quantitative**: the actual *structure* of the line was determined by the quantity of the syllable; that is, whether the syllable was "short" or "long". Again, this is in contrast to post-Norman English poetry, where the chief structural elements are stress and rhyme.

Prosody

In what follows, we shall have to make use of the traditional marks and notations used in describing prosody- the neumes and staves, if you will.

A short syllable (for which see below) is marked with a breve ◡, while a long syllable is marked with a macron ¯. A syllable of unimportant quantity (i.e. neither the metre nor the poet care if it's short or long) is marked with an X. A caesura is marked with a single vertical line |, while two mark the end of a line || (I shall not subscribe to the somewhat precious habit of referring to a line as a "verse" in this document). Three of them mark the end of a stanza |||.

From the foregoing, it should be plainly obvious then that the notation

– ◡◡ – ◡◡ – | – – – – ◡◡ – ||

indicates a line of fourteen syllables in the sequence long-short-short-long-short-short-long - long-long-long-long-short-short-long, with a caesura after the seventh syllable. It's also a perfect dactylic hexameter, but that's neither here nor there. (Classicists! Guess that line!)

"Short" and "Long" syllables

Syllabic quantity refers to an opposition between short and long syllables. Essentially, a long syllable is one which contains a diphthong or long vowel, or ends in a consonant. Between vowels, a single consonant is treated as being the inital consonant of the following syllables, while clusters of two or more consonants are divided between syllables. Thus, *medu* "mead" is composed of two short syllables: *me-du*, while *oχtū* "eight" has two long syllables: *oχ-tū*. It is important to remember that syllabification takes

place across word boundaries: the line is treated as a single phonological unit. Thus, while the word *donyos* "man" in isolation is composed of two long syllables (*don-yos*), when followed by a word beginning in a vowel, as in the phrase *donyos auberos* "idle man" we have a short syllable following a long: *don-yo-sau-be-ros*.

Bearing this in mind, then, for the purposes of scansion the second element of a diphthong is treated as a consonant and so when a word ending in a diphthong is followed by one beginning with a vowel, the second element of the diphthong is treated as the initial consonant of the following syllable. Thus, a phrase like *au Eborācū* "from York" is divided into syllables like so: *a-we-bo-rā-cū*. In addition, the long vowel *ē* originates in a diphthong *ei*, which in scansion acts as a diphthong. Thus, the phrase *en nemetē eburon* "in the grove of yew-trees" is syllabified like so: *en-ne-me-te-ye-bu-ron*.

Finally, a normally short syllable can be scanned as long *metri gratia* (because of the metre itself). The most common instance of this is that any syllable which occurs at the end of a line is considered to be long, whether it is "by nature" or not.

Metre

One *briχtu*, two *briχtū*, three *briχtowā*

The fundamental unit common to English poetry, Latin poetry and Greek poetry is the foot, an arrangement of a few syllables which together combine to form a line. However, in Gallo-Brittonic verse, the fundamental unit is the line taken as a whole. So breathe a sigh of relief: no longer will one have to rack one's brains for the differences between a choriamb, amphibrach or trochee. Even better, for most of the line the quantity of the syllables isn't actually important! The two significant things about the line are the *number of syllables* and the *cadence*. The first of these should be self-explanatory: a line is expected to have a fixed number of syllables. The second is slightly less obvious: it refers to the quantity of the final three or four syllables.

The most basic line, the bread and butter of Gallo-Brittonic verse, is the *briχtu* or octosyllable. This is the form attested in the Chamalières *defixio* and, according to ML West and Calvert Watkins, the ancestral metre lying behind the syllabic lines of Early Irish and Welsh poetry. Even the name itself is attested: on the lead curse-tablet found Larzac we have the Gaulish phrase *bnanom brictom* "of the spells of women". It is apparent that spells were metrical in nature, and the Old Irish cognate *bricht* means both "spell,

charm" as well as "group of eight metrical syllables". Further afield, *briχtu* is cognate to the Old Norse *bragr* "poetry", and to Sanskrit *bráhman-* "ritual formula".

Etymologising aside, the actual form of the *briχtu* is a line of eight syllables with a cadence short-long-short-long. Or, schematically:

X X X X ⏑ – ⏑ – ||

How about an illustrative example? Following we have two entirely standard *briχtowā*. Note that the final syllable of the second line, while short "by nature", has been lengthened due to its position at the end of the word:

Sīnāi deltā sidobremī,
ougros ēron samī brutu.

In the damp weather of autumn,
cool after summer's heat.

As you can see, there's not a lot you can fit into eight syllables: writing a poem entirely using *briχtowā* necessitates a rather terse, epigrammatic style. Additionally, due to a quirk in the language's placement of word-stress, the rhythm is somewhat unfamiliar to ears accustomed to English verse. Perhaps counter-intuitively, it is the short syllables in the cadence which are more likely to be stressed: *SIdobremī/SAmī bRUtu*. This gives an impression rather more like English trochaic metres than iambic: think *Hiawatha*'s "By the shores of Gitchee-Gumee" or the Kalevala rather than Hardy's "How great my grief, my joys how few".

Obviously, Gallo-Brittonic poets did not just have recourse to the standard octosyllabic *briχtu*. An entire poem written in staid, straightforward octosyllables like that would rapidly become tedious. There were in fact two basic variations on the *briχtu*, which have the technical designations *acephalic* and *catalectic*. The first of these two terms is from a Greek word meaning "without a head": it refers to a line which has had the first syllable removed. An acephalic *briχtu* would therefore be a line made up of seven syllables, with a cadence short-long-short-long:

X X X ⏑ – ⏑ – ||

Catalexis, on the other hand, refers to the removal of a syllable from the *end* of a line. A catalectic *briχtu* then is a seven-syllable line with the cadence short-long-long (recall that any line-final syllable automatically becomes long):

x x x x ⏑ – – ||

Acephalic and catalectic are somewhat difficult terms to keep straight. I generally mentally refer to them as "headless" and "tailless" (or *briχtu sepū pennon* and *briχtu sepū lostan*, should you prefer), and I propose to do the same here.

Of course, the question arises of what one can do with these shortened *briχtowā*. While rather reluctant to press English verse forms into Celtic clothing, I will say that a stanza of four lines, alternating full and tailless *briχtowā* has something of a ballad-y air to it. For example:

Swetlon swerwon ro·cuclowa,
swelī etic enātron.
Yon druwidos comaltiyos
wewone esyo sepānyon.

I have heard a bitter tale,
of guts and destiny.
How the druid's foster-brother
slew his disciple.

Finally, and exceptionally, we also encounter a *briχtu* which is both headless *and* tailless. This is therefore a six-syllable line with the cadence short-long-long:

x x x ⏑ – – ||

The long lines

The *briχtu*, in its various permutations, also serves as the foundation upon which various other lines are built. These I refer to as the "long lines", valuing bald descriptiveness over recondite terminology. These long lines are formed by prefixing a *briχtu* with four or five syllables, marked off from the *briχtu* by an obligatory word-break or pause. The additional syllables are known as a *protasis*, while the pause is called a *caesura*. The two primary species of long lines were the hendecasyllable and the dodecasyllable (lines made up of eleven syllables and twelve syllables, respectively).

There were two species of hendecasyllabic line, which differed in the length of the protasis. The first type had a protasis of four syllables, followed by either a headless or

tailless *briχtu*. The second type had a protasis of *five* syllables, of which the third was always short, followed by a six-syllable *briχtu* lacking both tail and head.

The dodecasyllablic line similarly had two subtypes: one with a five-syllable protasis (again, with a short third syllable), followed by a seven-syllable *briχtu*. The second type, which I refer to as the *mārobriχtu*, the "great line", had a four-syllable protasis followed by a full eight-syllable *briχtu*.

Stanzas

Stanzas were generally comprised of three or four lines. In general, the final line will be of a different length to the preceding, either shorter or longer.