

***ambahtaz** Runic: 𐌱𐌰𐌲𐌰𐌹𐌳𐌰 Pronunciation: /'am.bax.taz/

noun · masculine · a-stem

Meanings

1. servant, retainer
2. representative, agent

Etymology

Borrowed from Celtic **ambaxto-*, reflected in Gaulish *AMBACTOS*, Old Breton *ambaith*, and Middle Welsh *amaeth* (Koch 2020: 114; Matasović 2009a: 32; van Sluis et al. 2023: 201). The Celtic word is a **-tó-* participial formation, ultimately from Proto-Indo-European **h₂mbʰí* + **h₂eǵ-*, with the original sense ‘one sent around’, hence ‘one acting on behalf of a superior’ (Koch 2020: 114; Matasović 2009a: 32). Hispano-Celtic *Ambatus* probably belongs to the same formation despite uncertainty over the Celtiberian treatment of earlier *-kt-*/*-xt-* (Ngomo Fernández 2025: 126–27). The borrowing may predate or postdate the major Proto-Germanic consonant shifts, since its consonants are not chronologically diagnostic; a later borrowing is considered more likely, while its pan-Germanic distribution requires borrowing before the breakup of Proto-Germanic (Koch 2020: 38, 47, 80; van Sluis et al. 2023: 204). Note that Gothic 𐌰𐌹𐌳𐌰𐌹𐌸𐌰 (*andbahts*) exhibits folk-etymological remodeling based on native 𐌰𐌹𐌳𐌰- (*and-*), accounting for the *-nd-* instead of the expected *-mb-* (Kieckers 1960: 229; Lehmann 1986a: 36).

Declension

Case	Singular	Plural
Nom.	ambahtaz	ambahtōz, ambahtōs
Acc.	ambahtaꝥ	ambahtanz
Gen.	ambahtas, ambahtis	ambahtō
Dat.	ambahtai	ambahtamaz
Inst.	ambahtō	ambahtamiz
Voc.	ambaht	ambahtōz, ambahtōs

Descendants

***ambaht** (Proto-West Germanic)
 ambiht, ambeht, ambeaht (Old English)
 ambaht (Old Saxon)

***ambaht** (Proto-West Germanic)
 ***ambaht** (Old Dutch)
 ambacht (Middle Dutch)
 ambacht (Dutch)

***ambaht** (Proto-West Germanic)
 ***ambaht** (Old Frisian)
 ambacht (West Frisian)

***ambaht** (Proto-West Germanic)
 ambaht (Old High German)
 ambatāri (Old High German)
 ambahtære (Middle High German)

ambátt, ambótt, ambótt (Old Norse)
 ambátt (Icelandic)
 ammbohht (Middle English)
 ambatn (Old Gutnish)
 ambot, ambut, ambat (Old Swedish)

𐌰𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌰𐌿𐌸𐌰𐌹𐌳𐌰 (**andbahts**) (Gothic)

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