

# Gaulish Roots

**GALLO-ROMANCE** — (5th-8th centuries) After the Conquest of Gaul by Julius Cæsar in the year 52 BC, the Vulgar Latin of Gaul developed particular characteristics which distinguished it from the Latin spoken in other regions of the Roman Empire. ‘Gallo-Romance’ and later ‘French’, after the arrival of the Franks, both derive from the Latin implanted in Gaul by the Roman administration. It is estimated that two-thirds of modern French vocabulary derives from Latin. On the other hand, French pronunciation is partly explained by the Celtic Gaulish language that predates Gallo-Romance, for example, the pronunciation of the vowel ‘**u**’ as [y]. Furthermore, with the Germanic invasions, especially with the Franks in Gaul, there were their influences of vocabulary and pronunciation, including the Gallo-Romance language being renamed ‘French’.

**VESTIGES OF GALLO-ROMANCE** — Despite the disappearance of the Gaulish language, vestiges are still evident: (1) the roots given in this glossary; and (2) the vicesimal way of counting (by twenties). In fact, in the Middle Ages, vicesimal numeration predominated: *vint et dis* (30); *deus vints* (40); *treis vints* (60); *treis vints et dis* (70); *catre vints* (80); *catre vints et dis* (90); *sis vints* (120); *set vints* (140); *uit vints* (160); *neuf vints* (180); *onze vints* (220); *douze vints* (240); *treize vints* (260); up to *dis neuf vints* (380).

<b>aller</b> (to go)	<b>allu</b> ; etymology discussed; cf. Provençal <i>allar</i> <Celtic root, see Welsh <i>el</i> ‘that he may go’, <i>eled</i> ‘go!’; Cornish <i>ellev</i> ‘that he may go’; or <Romance root, see Latin <i>ambulare</i> > Italian <i>ambiare</i> >Spanish and Portuguese <i>andar</i> ; or from the form <i>adnare</i> > Occitan and Catalan <i>anar</i> ; Italian <i>andare</i>
<b>alose</b> [shad (fish)]	<b>alausea</b>
<b>alouette</b> (lark)	<b>alauda</b>
<b>ambassade</b> (embassy)	<b>ambactio</b> ‘serf; client’ <b>amb</b> ‘around’ + <b>act-</b> past participle of the Gaulish verb <b>agi</b> ‘to move, to act’
<b>amélanche</b> (Saskatoon berry)	<b>aballinca</b> literally ‘little apple’ < <b>aballo</b> , <b>avallo</b> ‘apple’ + suffix <b>-inca</b> , - <b>enca</b> ; cf. Germanic diminutive <i>-ing,- enc</i> ; the form with <i>am-</i> is due to a crossing with the Latin <i>mālum</i> ‘apple’
<b>andain</b> (windrow)	Gallo-Romance <i>andagnis</i> < <b>ande</b> ‘big’ and <b>agnis</b> ‘step’ < <b>agi</b> ‘to move’
<b>ardoise</b> (slate)	<b>artuas</b> plural of <b>artuā</b> ‘stone’ or perhaps < <b>ard(u)</b> ‘high’
<b>arpent</b> (pre-metric)	Gaulish agrarian measurement >Latin <i>arapennis</i> or <i>arepennis</i>
<b>auvent</b> (awning)	<b>andebanno</b> , <b>ande</b> ‘big’ + <b>banno</b> ‘antler’
<b>aven</b> (natural well)	<b>ab-</b> cf. <b>abono-</b> , <b>abona</b> ‘water, river’ + suffix <b>-inco</b>
<b>bac</b> (tray)	<b>bacca</b> ‘container for various purposes’; see <i>bâche</i> ; <i>basin</i>