

Endlicher's Glossary

Endlicher's Glossary (= the Vienna Glossary) is a short Gaulish-Latin vocabulary, found in a manuscript of the 800s in Vienna (Öst. Nationalbibliothek, MS 89 fol. 189v) and described by [Stephan Endlicher](#) in 1836. For a photograph see [here](#) and for its text see [here](#). It was discussed by Irish scholar [Whitley Stokes \(1868\)](#), Latin specialist [Adams](#) (2007:299-302), and Austrian Celticist [David Stifter](#), but the fullest analysis is by [Toorians](#) (2008).

It is likely that the Glossary was written in the late 700s in the monastery of Elnon¹ at modern [St Amand les Eaux](#), close to the border of France and Belgium. The Vienna manuscript contains the only full version of the Glossary, prefixed with *De nominib Gallicis*. Several other manuscripts have been found containing just the first four entries and a different prefix.

Discussion of the Glossary has been blighted by a prejudiced assumption that the "Gaulish" involved was a single language closely related to early Welsh. In reality the Glossary author probably just wanted to explain some regional place-name elements that were no longer words in mainstream use. At that time, across Charlemagne's empire, Franks were turning into French, Germanic dialects were losing ground to forms of late Latin, and Celtic dialects had already largely died out.

Here is the text, laid out to fit into a table, with some notes at the bottom.

Gaulish	Latin gloss	English translation
Lugduno ²	<i>desiderato monte</i>	hill of yearning
dunum	<i>enim montem</i>	of course hill
Aremorici	<i>antemarini</i>	by the sea
are more morici	<i>qui ante mare marini</i>	where before sea marine
Arevernus ³	<i>ante obsta</i>	before the ?obstacle
roth ⁴	<i>violentum</i>	violent
dan	<i>et in Gallico et in Hebraeo indicem</i>	in Gaulish and Hebrew 'I judge'
	<i>indeo Hrodanus iudex violentus</i>	⁵ <i>Hrodanus</i> = violent judge
brio ⁶	<i>ponte</i>	bridge
ambe ⁷	<i>rivo</i>	stream
inter ambes	<i>inter rivos</i>	between two streams
lautro ⁸	<i>balneo</i>	bath
nanto	<i>valle</i>	valley
trinanto ⁹	<i>tres valles</i>	three valleys
anam	<i>paludem</i>	marsh
caio ¹⁰	<i>breialo¹¹ sive bigardio¹²</i>	= attached bit of land
onno ¹³	<i>flumen</i>	river
nate ¹⁴	<i>fili</i>	son
cambiare	<i>rem pro re dare</i>	to give something for another
avallo	<i>poma</i>	apple
doro	<i>osteo</i>	entrance-way
prenne	<i>arborem grandem</i>	great tree
treide ¹⁵	<i>pede</i>	feet

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¹ There is no evidence of continuity between the Roman hot-spring spa on the little river Elnon (which sounds like a survival from [Alauna](#)) and the monastery founded by St Amand.

² Toorians (2008:160-8) discussed *Lugduno* at length, ending up attributing it to a deity name *Lugus*, but fretting over where *desideratus* ‘longed for, greatly desired, missing’ came into the picture. He explained that *lug* might have been pronounced like *lub* ‘love’ in northern Gaul, in a linguistic environment not necessarily Germanic, possibly Celtic. For the necessary phonetic change, from G to B/V/F, he cited many examples (e.g. English enough), but could have gone even wider, for example to Russian *ero*. However, he failed to mention how close in meaning Latin *lugeo* ‘to mourn’ comes to *desidero* ‘to miss’, plus the whole concept of hilltop memorials to lost loved ones.

³ **Verna* has long been considered Gaulish for ‘marsh’ because of words for ‘alder tree’ in Celtic and southern-French languages (Delamarre 2003:314-5). One could speculate on why and when that meaning arose, but Celticists have applied it over-enthusiastically to ancient names without looking carefully at alternatives. At least a dozen PIE roots had a form like **wer-* but **wer^s-* ‘to cover’ (from which comes the English word warn) seems most relevant here. For the gloss *obsta* one might place English *ovest* ‘acorns, oak mast’ (cognate with German *Obst* ‘fruit’) in the same semantic area as alder trees, but it seems better to notice Latin verb *obsto*, whose imperative ‘stand in the way’ would match the observed spelling *obsta*, with final A. The Glossary’s *Arevernus* is spelled *Ar(e)verni* in most manuscripts, like the *Arverni* tribe, whose obstinate military power and Auvergne homeland were certainly an obstacle to Roman expansion.

⁴ *wroth* ‘wrathful, cruel’??

⁵ *Hroth* (**hrōþ*) was [Proto-Germanic](#) for ‘fame, glory’ seen in many names:

[Hrothgar](#) **Hrōþi-gaiz-* ‘famous [spear](#)’; [Rutz](#) **Hrōþ-z-* ‘fame-son of’

[Roderick](#) **Hrōþi-rīk-* ‘famous ruler’; [Rudolph](#) **Hrōþ-wulf-* ‘fame-wolf’

[Robert](#) **Hrōþ-berht* ‘fame-bright’; [Roland](#) ‘fame-land’

⁶ Ancient **briva-*, discussed under [Durobrivae](#), might be fundamentally a word for the water’s edge (like brow, brim, brink, etc), without there necessarily being a bridge. We have an unfinished working document about ancient place names that may contain this element.

⁷ PIE **ambho-* ‘both’ manifestly fits the two [ripae](#) banks of a [rivus](#) ‘small stream’, but the Glossary here seems to be sharing the etymological puzzlement of modern commentators, who generally follow Ekwall (1928) in declaring the common British river name Humber “pre-Celtic”, the river Amber related to Latin [imber](#) ‘rain’ from PIE **ombh-ro-* ‘wet’, and the river Hamble as related to Germanic words for ‘crooked’.

⁸ Latin *lavatio* ‘bath’ might undergo the same simplification of AVA to AU as in [Naurum](#).

⁹ Compare the [Trinobantes](#).

¹⁰ [Quay](#) or Welsh [cae](#) ‘hedge’ are thought to come from PIE **kagh-* ‘plait, wickerwork’, which also led to *hague*, *hedge*, *haw*, and *cay*. The implication here is that a retaining fence came to mean the area enclosed inside.

¹¹ Compare OE [broel](#) ‘deer park’, French [breuil](#) ‘copse’, Dutch [breugel](#), old German *Brühl* ‘good pasture’, Russian *берег* ‘shore’, plus place names, such as the *broglio* outside the ducal palace in Venice, or Brolo in Sicily from Latin [brolium](#) ‘garden’ or **brogilo*. The standard Celtic interpretation (Evans, 1967:158-160) is that *brog-* was a Gaulish cognate (with M/B exchange) of a word that led to English *margin*, *Mercia*, etc, and which meant ‘borderland’. Most authors consider that the issue is settled by a phrase, in a marginal note to Juvenal 8,234, that *ideo autem dicti Allobrogae, quoniam brogae Galli agrum dicunt* ‘they are called *Allobrogae* because the Gauls say *broga* for district’. The *Allobrogae* lived just south of modern Geneva (Gaesatae territory) and allied with a king called *Tutomotulus*, so it is far from certain that they spoke Celtic.

¹² Compare Gothic *bigairdan* ‘to begird’, i.e. to attach.

¹³ Delamarre (2003, 241) doubted that *onno* ‘river’ existed as a separate word, rather than just ending names of water-source deities. Sanskrit *unatti* ‘to spring, wet, flow’ may be the best parallel, ahead of Latin *unda* ‘wave, water’, in a complex set of descendants from PIE **wed-* ‘to flow, water’.

¹⁴ [Inscription](#) NATA VIMPI CVRMI DA is usually translated as containing a word *nata* ‘girl’.

¹⁵ *Treide* was probably taken from *Briotreide* in Gregory of Tours (10,3) History of the Franks of about AD 590, at modern [Bléré](#), where the river Cher approaches the Loire. Celticists trace Welsh *troed*, Irish *traig*, etc ‘foot’ back to a proto-Celtic **treget-* (Matasovic 2009:389) from PIE **tragh-* ‘to draw’, but seem curiously reluctant to mention Latin *trajectus* ‘crossing’, based partly on PIE **terā-* ‘to cross over’ and well known as a place name elsewhere. The English word tread (and its Germanic cognates) offer a closer, and earlier attested, parallel to the observed *treide*, but they are generally traced to PIE **der-* ‘to walk’. So was *Briotreide* a footbridge or a bankside path?