

Breton Celts and the Barzaz Breiz

AN INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF SEVERAL EDITIONS AND ENGLISH
TRANSLATIONS OF THE BARZAZ BREIZ, AND SCHOLARLY OPINIONS ON
AUTHENTICITY AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF THE COLLECTOR'S NOTEBOOKS

Taught by Lady Dorothea de Beckham

(CW, APF, OT, Licentiate & Graduate of the Royal University of the MidRealm Emphasizing Literary and Performing Arts 2020)







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“Celts”

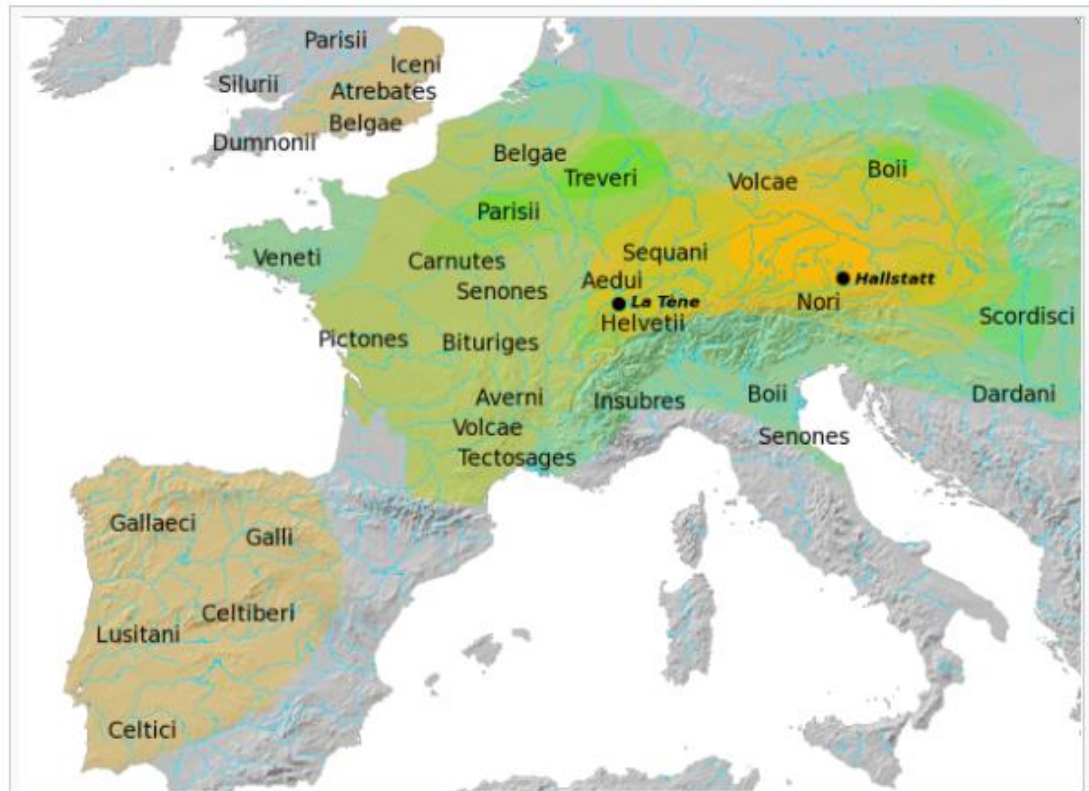


The six Celtic nations





-  Scotland
-  Ireland
-  Isle of Man
-  Wales
-  Cornwall
-  Brittany

Some also list Galicia and Asturias. Image:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celtic_nations Attribution: [QuartierLatin1968](#) based on [OsgoodeLawyer](#)



Overview of the Hallstatt and La Tène cultures.

-  The core Hallstatt territory (HaC, 800 BC) is shown in solid yellow.
-  The eventual area of Hallstatt influence (by 500 BC, HaD) in light yellow.
-  The core territory of the La Tène culture (450 BC) in solid green.
-  The eventual area of La Tène influence (by 250 BC) in light green.

The territories of some major Celtic tribes of the late La Tène period are labelled.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hallstatt_LaTene.png Attribution: [Dbachmann](#)



Celtic tribes of southern Britain at the start of the Roman period by Yorkshirian, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3102544>

Two waves of migrations took place to Armorica (Brittany) from Dumnonia. For more see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumnonia>



MAP: Paimpont Forest, Brittany, France

Who are the Breton Celts?

- Pre-Roman: Gallic tribes occupied the Armorican peninsula
- Roman administration formed around the Gallic regions; the Gallic tribes had close ties to the Brittonic tribes in Roman Britain
- 4th-7th Centuries CE: migration from Britain to the Armorican peninsula, blending of peoples
- 8th Century: Frankish Carolingian Empire conquests
- 9th Century: Nominoe, Count of Vannes, appointed by Louis the Pious to be ruler of the Bretons and imperial missus. After Louis' death, Nominoe challenged Charles the Bald. Independent Brittany under Nominoe's son Erispoe.
- 9th-10th Century: Waves of Viking raids, some exiles go to England returning later to establish the Duchy of Brittany under Alan II

Origins

King Gradlon the Great

Semi-legendary 5th century king of Cornouaille,
Saved from the sunken city of Ys (Ker-Is, Ville
d'Ys) by Saint Guénolé,

Father of Dahut (sometimes Ahez), who also appears in
the Arthurian legend of King Mark/Marc'h of
Cornwall/Kernow (early 6th century), and king of Cornouille
(uncle of Tristan, husband of Iseult) and she causes him to
have the ears and mane of the horse Morvac'h

Son of Conan Meriadoc



*Barzaz Breiz song:
Submersion of the City
of Ys*

Modern music by
[Tri Yann](#)
[Alan Stivell](#)

Semi-historical Brittany

Statue of King Gradlon at [Quimper Cathedral](#), by sculptors
Amédée Ménard and Alphonse Le Brun (1858)



Gwenole / Guéanolé / Winwaloe / Winwallus (and other variations) (c. 460- 532 CE), son of St. Fragan/Fracan, prince of Dumnonia, and St. Gwen the Three-Breasted who fled Justinian's plague to settle in Brittany. Brother of St. Wethenoc, St. Jacut, St. Creirwy, and half-brother of St. Cadfan.

- Founded Landévennec Abbey after being visited in a dream by St. Patrick
- Additional commentary:
<http://chrsouchon.free.fr/kerizf.htm>

Sometime conflated with St. Coretin:
Bishop of Quimper, who died in 460
<http://chrsouchon.free.fr/saintsbe.htm>

*Barzaz Breiz song:
Submersion of the City
of Ys*

Notable Saints of Brittany

Portrait of a silver bust of Saint Guéanolé, 1901, Abgrall Jean-Marie (1846-1926) - Bibliothèque nationale de France. Public Domain:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winwaloe#/media/File:Saint_Gu%C3%A9anol%C3%A9_\(d'apr%C3%A8s_le_buste_en_argent_du_reliquaire_de_Locqu%C3%A9no%C3%A9\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winwaloe#/media/File:Saint_Gu%C3%A9anol%C3%A9_(d'apr%C3%A8s_le_buste_en_argent_du_reliquaire_de_Locqu%C3%A9no%C3%A9).jpg)

St. Anne, mother of Mary the mother of Jesus, by tradition Armorican from the Roman Province of Gallia Lugdunensis

*Barzaz Breiz song:
Our Lady of Folgoat*

St. Ratian / Rasian

Barzaz Breiz song: [The Plague of Elliant](#)

St. Efflam and St. Enora -
<http://chrsouchon.free.fr/efflamf.htm>

*Barzaz Breiz song:
[La Légende de Saint-Efflam](#)
Saint Efflam and King Arthur*

St. Cado / Kado

*Barzaz Breiz song: The
Combat of the Thirty*

A Few Notable Saints of Brittany

Unified Kingdoms

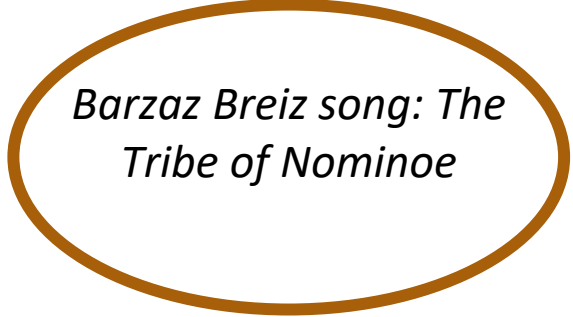
**Nominoë (Duke 826 CE, king ~845 CE),
Brittany**

Kenneth MacAlpin (810-858 CE), Scotland

**Alfred the Great (king of Wessex, the
Saxons r.~871-899 CE), England**

Hywel Dda “the Good” (~880-948 CE) Wales

Brian Boru (~941-1014), Ireland



*Barzaz Breiz song: The
Tribe of Nominoe*

Sources:

The Celts - BBC Series, Episode 5 - Legend and Reality - Full Episode

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_I5yFIEYds

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nomenoe>

Duchy of Brittany

STATUS AS DUCHY

- Tributary state under the Kingdom of the Franks (942–952)
- Warring Duchies, Series of ruling houses: Nantes, Rennes, Cornouaille, Penthièvre
- Dynastic union with the Kingdom of the English (1181–1202) – House of Plantagenet
- Vassal state under the Kingdom of France (1202–1491)
- Dynastic union with the Kingdom of France (1491–1547)

Arthur I – House Plantagenet

House of Dreux - John I, John II, Arthur II, and **John (Yann, Jean) III, de Bretagne, the Good, 5th Earl of Richmond, m1) Mary of Limoges, m2) Yolande of Dreux, Queen of Scotland**

John Montfort, the Swan of Montfort,
and Jeanne-the-Flame

Charles de Blois and Jeanne Penthièvre

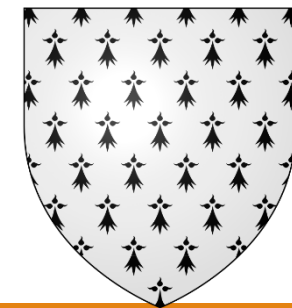
John IV, son of John of Montfort



Funeral Procession of
Jean III de Bretagne By Jean Froissart



Jean III de Bretagne
Coat of arms as duke
until 1316 (above) and
after 1316 (below)



Notable Dukes of Brittany

Images: http://www.histoire-fr.com/images/mort_jean_III_froissart.gif, Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6556851>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_III,_Duke_of_Brittany

Barzaz-Breiz (*Breton*)

Barzhaz-Breizh (*Breton*)

Bardit de Bretagne (*French*)

Popular Chants of Brittany (*French*)

Florilège de Bretagne (*French*)

Bardic Poetry of Brittany (*French*)

Poetry of Brittany (*French*)

Poetry of Brittany (*English*)

1839 edition: <https://data.bnf.fr/fr/13322750/barzaz-breiz/>

[openlibrary.org › works › Barzaz-Breiz](https://openlibrary.org/works/Barzaz-Breiz)

Sep 13, 2020 — *Barzaz-Breiz* = · *PDF* · Plain text · ePub · MOBI · DAISY.

[Barzaz Breiz = Chants populaires de la Bretagne : La ...](#)

[archive.org › details › barzazbreizchant01lavi](https://archive.org/details/barzazbreizchant01lavi)

Oct 14, 2008 — *BARZAZ BREIZ* CHANTS POPULAIRES DE LA BRETAGNE

Contes de Bretagne (2006)

Numbers: ISBN 2-84776-699-5 (br.): 15.90 EUR

EAN 9782847766998

Notice n °: FRBNF40195668

External links

- [Barzaz Breiz, Google Books](#)
- [The Barzaz Breiz, 1000questions.net](#)
- [Introduction to Breton music](#)

Barzaz Breiz

Vil.'s editions

Taylor, Tom. Ballads and Songs of Brittany: Translated from the “Barsaz-Breiz” of Vicompte Hersart de la Villemarque with some original melodies harmonized by Mrs. Tom Taylor. London and Cambridge, Macmillan and Co. 1865.

https://books.google.com/books?id=SAVjM_80kuEC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0

Promenade au fil du Barzhaz Breizh. <http://chrsouchon.free.fr/barzhazf.htm> (Accessed July 2020) [Contains parallel text in Breton, French and English with midi recordings]

Microfilm via Worldcat:

- [Breton ballads](#) by Théodore Hersart La Villemarqué, Vicomte de; Henry Carrington (1886)
- [Ballads and songs of Brittany](#) by Hersart La Villemarqué, Vicomte de; Laura Wilson Barker Taylor; Tom Taylor (1865)
- [Ballads and songs of Brittany](#) by Théodore Hersart La Villemarqué, Vicomte de; Tom Taylor; Laura Wilson Barker Taylor (1865)

Barzaz Breiz

English versions

Forgeries – [Ossian, MacPhearson](#)

Authenticity

Debates and Opinions

Matters, the Welsh "Mabinogion" - Tracing oral histories

Discovery of the notebooks

New scholarship

Scholarly Bickering

Scientific promotion of the Théodore Hersart de La Villemarqué collection – The three investigation notebooks

The presentation, transcription and translation of these three notebooks produced by Donatien Laurent have been available on the CRBC website since 2018 (see the scientific presentation of notebook n° 1 , notebook n° 2 and notebook n° 3).

Donatien Laurent, Obituary March 2020. <https://www.univ-brest.fr/crbc/zoom-sur/Donatien-Laurent--1935-2020->

BIBLIOGRAPHY ESSAY BY DONATIEN LAURENT (prepared by Armel Morgant) [https://www.univ-brest.fr/digitalAssets/88/88113 Bibliographie compl--te-de-Donatien-Laurent.pdf](https://www.univ-brest.fr/digitalAssets/88/88113_Bibliographie_compl--te-de-Donatien-Laurent.pdf)

Villemarqué's Notebooks

A sampling of recent scholarly articles. There are a lot out there:

Ellen Badone. "Folk Literature and the Invention of Tradition: The Case of the *Barzaz Breiz*." *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 130, no. 516, 2017, pp. 204–218. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jamerfolk.130.516.0204 Accessed 6 Jan. 2021.

This paper summarizes the history of scholarship about the Barzaz Breiz and argues that it is best understood as a key element in the ongoing construction of Breton identity.

Betty Anne Noir. Thesis: Female Archetypes in the Barzaz Breiz and the influence of Theodore Hersart de la Villemarque's editing on the portrayal of women. M.Phil dissertation. Aberystwyth University. Department of Welsh, 2017.

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewjO8r65qIjuAhUvEFkFHVqKB_IQfjAlegQIDBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcore.ac.uk%2Fdownload%2Fpdf%2F185315141.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1iBPI7Xp1iFP4s0XtugA8M

This paper summarizes the characteristics of all the women portrayed in the Barzaz Breiz.

Modern Scholarship