Cultural connections between Brittany and Aquitaine in the Middle Ages (10th-13th centuries): 'The Matter of Britain' and the 'Chansons de Geste.'

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Introduction

This paper is a summary, an overview of my thesis in progress which deals particularly with the spreading of the Matter of Britain to Aquitaine in the Middle Ages, and with the Breton characters, historical or not, mentioned in the 'chansons de geste' written in Occitan or linked with the Occitan area.

The Occitan troubadours were very familiar with the Matter of Britain, most probably before the poets of northern France[2]. This leads us to suspect that this Matter spread directly from the Celtic countries to Aquitaine. Is this because in the 12th century the British Isles, Brittany and Aquitaine were in the same political area, ruled over by the Plantagenet family whose part in the promotion of the Matter of Britain is well known[3]? However, the links between the Armorican peninsula (called Brittany since the sixth century) and Aquitaine are very old. During the Metal Ages they were part of a larger contact network which archaeologists refer to as 'the Atlantic Complex'[4]. In this Complex, which extended from Ireland to the Iberian Peninsula, the Armorican peninsula sometimes played a pivotal role between the British Isles and the continent. Tin, salt, and then wine were the products of a seaborne trade along the Atlantic coasts in which the Armorican peninsula took part[5]. Did the cultural connections match the trading connections? Was Brittany a staging post between the North and the South; between the Celtic countries and the Occitan lands?

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[1] I am grateful to Gareth Westacott for reading and correcting this paper.

[2] Lejeune, Rita, 1969. " The Troubadours. ", in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 393-399 ; 1979. "La légende arthurienne et les troubadours. ", in *Littérature et société occitane au Moyen-Âge*. Liège : Marche Romane, 225-236.

[3] Lejeune, Rita, 1954. "Le rôle littéraire d'Aliénor d'Aquitaine.", *Cultura Neolatina*, 14, 5-57 ; 1958. « Le rôle littéraire de la famille d'Aliénor.», *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale (CCM)*, 1, 319-337 ; Chauou, Amaury, 2001. *L'idéologie Plantagenêt. Royauté arthurienne et monarchie politique dans l'espace Plantagenêt (12ème-13ème siècles).* Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes (PUR).

[4] Chevillot, Christian, André Coffyn (eds.), 1991. *L'Âge du Bronze atlantique : ses faciès, de l'Ecosse à l'Andalousie et leurs relations avec le Bronze continental et la Méditerranée : actes du 1er Colloque du Parc archéologique de Beynac*. Beynac-et-Cazenac : Publication de l'Association des musées du Sarladais ; Oliveira Jorge, Susana (ed.), 1998. *Existe uma idade do bronze Atlântico ? .* Lisboa : Instituto Português de Arqueologia.

[5] see Quilliec, Bénédicte, 2007. *L'épée atlantique : échanges et prestige au Bronze final.* Paris : Société préhistorique française ; Mairecolas, Mélanie, 2008. *L'étain en Gaule et en Europe occidentale pendant la Protohistoire et l'Antiquité .* Thèse de doctorat en sciences de l'Antiquité, Toulouse : Université Le Mirail ; Buron, Gildas, 1999. *Bretagne des marais salants. Tome I : 2000 ans d'histoire*. Morlaix : Skol Vreizh ; Daire, Marie-Yvane, 2003. *Le sel des Gaulois*. Paris : Errance ; Galliou, Patrick, 2005. *L'Armorique romaine*. Brest : Armeline.

I - Brittany, between the British Isles and the Frankish world

The first difficulty we encounter when we study the culture of Brittany in the Middle Ages is the fact that there is no surviving vernacular literature and so, no irrefutable piece of evidence that this literature had ever really existed in written form. The first main text written in Breton language (*'an Dialog etre Arzur roe d'an Bretounet ha Guinglaff'*) is from the middle of the 15th century. It is a prophecy made by Guinglaff, an avatar of Merlin, to King Arthur[6]. The first text in Old-French is *Le roman d'Aquin ou la conqueste de la Bretaigne par le roy Charlemaigne*, a 'chanson de geste' written at the end of the 12th century in the vicinity of Dol[7]. The Latin literature of Brittany, mainly composed of Saints' Lives, rarely mentions Arthurian heroes[8]. Nevertheless, it uses mythical themes and poetic patterns whose origin and characteristics are Celtic and shared by the other Celtic literatures[9].

Because of the absence of a surviving vernacular literature, Brittany seems really poor when compared to Wales and her Mabinogion, not to mention Ireland. Thus, scholars logically concluded that its contribution was rather insignificant in the spreading of the Matter of Britain on the continent. But that would be to disregard two essential points: first of all, the fundamentally oral character of medieval vernacular literature, Celtic or not, in its composition as well as its performance and transmission[10] ; and then the persistence, until the 13th century and beyond, of a linguistic and cultural community between Brittany, Wales and Cornwall.

I - 1 : Brittany, Wales and Cornwall, a Brythonic community

" Et ita Armorici et insulani Britones, eisdem legibus utentes et fraterna dilectione sese tractantes, tanquam populus unius regionis imperio multo tempore regebantur." This sentence, taken from the prologue to saint Goueznou's Life[11], written in the 11th or 12th century[12], shows that the days when the Bretons/Britons on opposite sides of the Channel formed only

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[6] Edition and notes by Herve ar Bihan, 1997. "An dialog etre Arzur roe d'an Bretounet ha Guinglaff. ", *Hor Yezh*, 212, Kerzu, 31-70.

[7] First published by Joüon des Longrais, 1880 : *Le roman d'Aquin ou la conqueste de la Bretaigne par le roy Charlemaigne*, chanson de geste du 12ème siècle. Nantes : Société des bibliophiles bretons et de l'histoire de Bretagne. See too : *Aiquin ou la conquête de la Bretagne par le roi Charlemagne*. Edition de Francis Jacques. Aix-en-Provence, Paris : CUERMA, Champion.

[8] King Arthur appears in saint Efflam's Life. Edited by Arthur de La Borderie, 1891-92. "Saint Efflam, texte inédit de la vie de ce saint avec notes et commentaire historique.", *Annales de Bretagne*, 7, 279-312. About saint Goueznou's Life, see below.

[9] Merdrignac, Bernard, 1985-86. *Recherches sur l'hagiographie armoricaine du 7ème au 15ème siècle.* Alet : dossiers du CeRAA, II, 148-160 ; for some examples see saint Melar's Life, edition and study by André-Yves Bourgès, 1997. *Le dossier hagiographique de saint Melar, prince et martyr en Bretagne armoricaine.* Landévennec : Britannia Monastica ; for saint Judicael's Life see Le Baud, Pierre, 1907-1922. *Cronicques et ystoires des Bretons*. Rennes : Société des Bibliophiles Bretons, 2nd edition, II, 153-156 ; Fleuriot, Léon, 1971. "La gorchan de Judicaël. La littérature bretonne dans ses rapports avec l'Histoire.", in *Documents de l'Histoire de Bretagne*, Toulouse : Privat, 156-159 ; 1981. "Sur quatre textes bretons en latin, le liber vetustissimus de Geoffroy de Monmouth et le séjour de Taliesin en Bretagne. ", *Etudes Celtiques*, 18, 197-213.

[10] see Zumthor, Paul, 1987. *La lettre et la voix*. Paris : Seuil.

[11] Edition by Arthur de La Borderie, 1882. "L'Historia Britannica avant Geoffroy de Monmouth et la vie inédite de saint Goueznou. ", *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique du Finistère (BSAF)*, 9, 225-246 and Le Duc, Gwenaël, Claude Sterckx, 1971. "Les fragments inédits de la vie de saint Goeznou. », *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest (ABPO)*, 78, 277-285.

[12] The manuscript bears the date of 1019, but crossed out. Because this text deals with Conan Meriadec and the Arthurian legend, it became a lot of attention from Breton scholars and the date has been discussed at length since about thirty years. A controversy rose up between, on one side, Professors Fleuriot and Le Duc defending the date of 1019, and, on the other side, Professors Guillotel and Bourgès defending a later date, at the end of the 12th century, thus after Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia.

one people, governed by the same laws and the same power, had not faded from memory even five or six centuries after the emigration. The same consciousness of a common past is found in the Book of Llandaff, written about 1135-1150, which tells us that the Welsh prince, Guidnerth, guilty of murdering his brother, was sent to Dol in Brittany by his archbishop to do penitence, because "ipse Guidnerth et Brittones & archiepiscopus illius terre essent unius lingue et unius nationis quamuis diuiderentur spatio terrarum" [13].

This ethnic community was maintained during all those centuries by celebrating common historical or legendary ancestors, like Conomor, Ambroise Aurelien, Macsen Wledig or Conan Meriadec. This genealogical literature, well known in Wales, existed in Brittany too, usually in connection with saints' Lives (Winnoc, Gurthiern), but some genealogies, kept in the cartularies, deal with lay aristocracy[14]. One of them gives us the lineage of Arthuiu, Lord of Bain-de-Bretagne in the ninth century. Arthur's name is well attested by several other occurrences in the cartulary of Redon, and some of Arthur's warriors, among the interminable roll of them recited in *Culhwch ac Olwen*, gave their names to Breton noblemen, like *Uualcmoel* or *Uualtmoe*, a form older than the Welsh Gwalchmai, Mabon, Hedern filius Nud, Edern mab Nudd in *Culhwch ac Olwen*[15].

On the other hand, there are in this tale several references to Breton characters such as Sberin mab Fflergant brenhin Llydaw, probably Brian Fitz-Count, Alan Fergant's natural son. Alan, duke of Brittany (1084-1113), is mentioned again in a Welsh Triad, as chief of one of the three Disloyal War-Bands of the Island of Britain[16], and also in *Bonedd y Saint*[17]. The Mabinogion's hero, Bran, gave his name to a Breton lord who was King Salomon's count during the second half of the ninth century. Other Breton names derived from that hero, such as Branoc, Branmare, Branonus. And last but not least, Merlin is attested in the cartulary of Redon in the compound names, Merthinhoairn and Merthinhael. The place-name, Merthiniac, in Augan (Morbihan) also derive from this name. Merlin's avatar, Lailoken, appears as Lalocan in the middle of the ninth century[18], and, according to saint Judicael's Life, his fellow, Taliesin sometimes stayed in Abbey of Saint-Gildas to study. People asked him to explain King Judhael's dream about his son-to-be, Judicael[19].

There are other examples but the few names mentioned above are enough to prove that the trend in Brythonic heroes-names spread widely among Breton people during the Middle Ages, together with tales and legends about their heroes. But who told these tales in Brittany ? Well, we can suppose that, as in Wales, it was a class of professional bards attached to the aristocratic courts, whose function was to praise their lords and recount the feats of legendary ancestors. Although there remains nothing in writing of their works, we can discern their

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[13] *The text of the Book of Llan Dâv reproduced from the Gwysaneg Manuscript*. Edition by Gwenogoryn Evans and John Rhys. Aberysthwyth : National Library of Wales, 1893[1979], p. 181.

[14] see Fleuriot, Léon, 1974. "Old Breton Genealogies and Early British Traditions. ", *Bwletin y Bwrdd Gwybodau Celtaidd*, 26, 1-6 ; Cassard, Jean-Christophe, 1989. " la tradition royale en Bretagne armoricaine.", *Revue Historique*, 569, janvier-mars, 15-47 ; Merdrignac, Bernard, 2004. "Généalogies et secrets de famille.", in *Corona Monastica. Mélanges offerts au père Marc Simon.* Rennes : PUR, 265-276.

[15] *Cartulaire de l'abbaye Sainte-Croix de Quimperlé.* Edition et notes par Léon Maître et Paul de Berthou, Rennes : Plihon & Hommay, 1902-1914, 2ème éd. ; *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Redon*. Edition, prolégomènes et notes par Aurélien de Courson, Paris : Imprimerie impériale, 1863.

[16] Bromwich, Rachel, 2006. *Trioedd Ynys Prydein.* Cardiff : Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, p. 66, triad 30 and p. 277.

[17] Llonyaw llawhir mab Alan fyrgan mab Emyr Llydaw. Bartrum, P.C., 1966. *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts.* Cardiff : University of Wales Press, p. 63, § 58.

[18] Cartulary of Redon.

[19] See saint Judicael's Life, references above.

activities through the Old-Breton vocabulary kept by the glosses which give us several words relating to the professions of bard, actor, musician and singer[20].

Also, the saints' Lives testify that there were bards in Brittany. Thus, Saint Herve's father, Hoarvian, was bard in King Childebert's court[21] . Gurdisten, in Saint Gwenole's Life, describes King Gradlon's court thus : "Et tibiae cytharaeque, lyrae cum murmure, plectra, tympana per vestras plaudunt stridoribus aedes."[22] , perhaps taking that of King Salomon as an example. Still better, there were a few bards among the witnesses listed in the Breton cartularies. *Norman citharedo* was bard to Count Conan II (1040-1066). As his name indicates, he was probably of Norman origin, just like *Normandus Pontellus joculator comitis*, who was in count Hoel II's service together with the Breton *Cadiou citharista*[23]. At the same time, the Red Lady from Brittany would have composed the 'Lai of the Beach' for William the Conqueror[24]. We can suppose she had female colleagues because the name 'barza' ('bard woman') is attested from the beginning of the 12th century.   In the course of this same century we can also mention *Riuallonus filius Ambard* (Rivallon son of the bard) , *Bernardus Mimus,* and *Radulfus poeta*, prior in the church of Saint-Martin-de-Josselin[25].

We do not know if the latter recited religious poems in Latin or Celtic legends in Breton but we are sure that these legends were known by the Breton monks; certainly by their relations with the bards because monks and bards alike attended the courts of the Breton dukes. Like the Irish *filid* or the Welsh monks, the Breton monks put down in writing a part of the Celtic traditions told by the bards. Alas, they included only a few of the stories in their Latin 'Lives' of the saints, while their insular colleagues saved most of their oral traditions in the vernacular.

About the linguistic situation in medieval Brittany, we know that several languages was always used here : "lingua britannica" spoken by the Breton immigrants ; Romance by the native people in the East; maybe relics of Gallic language; and Latin written by the monks. For this study we will deal only with the relations between Breton and Romance languages. For centuries, Breton and Romance coexisted together, in a "mixed area" - a territory defined, on the one hand, by the furthest boundary reached by the Breton language to the east (called Loth's line) and, on the other hand, by the more settled linguistic boundary after the Breton language retreated between the 10th and 13th centuries. To the east of the Loth's line, in the counties of Rennes and Nantes, and in the territories conquered under Kings Erispoe and Salomon, the Breton language was never spoken. In the mixed area, the Breton aristocrats spoke their language, but ordinary people carried on speaking Romance[26].

The two peoples merged quite slowly and the Bretons needed a long time before being accepted by the inhabitants of the counties of the East who were more orientated towards Anjou and Normandy. Until the 11th century, the relations between the two communities were delicate. For instance, the author of the chronicle of Nantes expressed his hatred for the Bretons calling them *diabolici viri*[27]. The situation improved under the reigns of the dukes of

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[20] Loth, Joseph, 1884[1982]. *Vocabulaire vieux-breton*. Paris : Vieweg, réed. Paris, Genève : Champion, Slatkine ; Fleuriot, Léon, 1964. *Dictionnaire des gloses en vieux-breton*. Paris : Klincksieck.

[21] Tanguy, Bernard, 1990. *Saint Hervé, vie et culte*. Tréflévenez : Minihi Levenez.

[22] Chapter xvi, p. 79. Edited by La Borderie, 1888. *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Landévennec. Vita sancti Winwaloei*. Rennes : Catel.

[23] Guillotel, Hubert, 1973. *Les actes des ducs de Bretagne (944-1148).* Thèse pour le doctorat en droit, Paris, vol. IV & V ; cartulary of Redon ; cartulary of Quimperlé.

[24] Cook, Robert, Mattias Tveitane, 1979. *Strengleikar*. Oslo : Norsk historisk Kjeldeskrifr Institut, 201-205.

[25] cartulary of Redon ; cartulary of Quimperlé.

[26] See Loth, Joseph, 1907. "Les langues romane et bretonne en Armorique. ", *Revue Celtique*, 28, 374-403 ; Le Moing, Jean-Yves, 1990. *Les noms de lieux bretons de Haute-Bretagne.* Spézet : Coop Breizh.

[27] Merlet, René, 1896. *La chronique de Nantes.* Paris : Picard, xxix-xxxvi.

the house of Cornouaille: Hoël II and Alan Fergant, although the court in Nantes was still composed of two separate parts, one speaking Breton, the other speaking Romance[28]. Moreover this fact explains why Hoel II had two bards : one Breton and the other Norman.

Brittany was unified by his son, Alan Fergant. Married at first to the Duke of Normandy's daughter, then to that of the Count of Anjou, he divided his time between Cornouaille, Redon, Rennes, and, above all, at the end of his reign, Nantes. He was the last Duke of Brittany to speak Breton, and he opened up Romance influences to his country. His vassals followed his example and chose their wives from among the Frankish nobility of Anjou, Normandy and Maine, before adopting their language and their customs. In the north-east of Brittany, between Saint-Brieuc, Fougères and the forest of Broceliande, as early as the middle of the 11th century, Breton nobility begun to gallicize, due to its very close relations with their Norman neighbours . This change of language can be seen in the place-names (*kêr* translated into *ville)* and in personal names. The Breton lords gave German and Latin names to their children, and the Breton names started to be distorted or translated into Romance in the cartularies[29].

So, we can suppose that these Breton lords were bilingual within a few generations, before abandoning the Breton language altogether. The song of Girart de Roussillon, written around 1150, speaks about Merianz, "uns romanz Bret", that is, a Breton who speaks French[30]. We can also suppose that Breton lords employed bilingual or even trilingual bards, like Renart, who plays a Breton juggler who can speak English and has learned French in Paris[31].

I - 2 : Brittany and the Frankish world

As soon as they emigrated to Armorique, the Britons/Bretons came in contact with the Frankish world, and, particularly from the Carolingian times, religious and political relationships between the two became stronger and stronger. Henceforth, the Breton kings were to extend their power towards the East, and conquered the counties of Rennes and Nantes, the country of Retz, a part of Anjou and of the future Normandy. This advance was halted by Viking attacks; the Breton monks having to flee from the invaders to find refuge in the Frankish monasteries in the North, and in the region of Paris, Orleans, Fleury-sur-Loire, and as far as Poitou and Berry. Some of them never returned to Brittany. This exodus can be compared with the spreading of the Breton neumes, as the manuscripts which bear this musical notation are found mainly in the places where the Breton monks stayed. Following these troubled times, the religious life in Brittany was restored with the help of the great Ligerian abbeys like Marmoutier, Fleury, Saint-Florent de Saumur, Angers. This strengthened even more the political ties between Brittany and its nearest neighbours[32].

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[28] Guillotel, 1973, V, p. 305, act 97 ; Cassard, Jean-Christophe, 1996. " Nantes de la découverte des Bretons à l'intégration de la Bretagne (5ème-début 13ème siècle). ", in *Nantes et la Bretagne*, Jean Guiffan (ed.), Morlaix : Skol Vreizh, 39-52.

[29] For some examples see Loth, 1907, *op. cit.*, 386ss ; Tanguy, Bernard, 1973. *Recherches autour de la limite des noms gallo-romains en –ac en Haute Bretagne.* Thèse 3ème cycle, Université de Bretagne Ouest, 2 vol. ; 1981. " Toponymie et peuplement en Bretagne. Le recul de la frontière linguistique du 5ème au 16ème siècle.", in *Archéologie-Toponymie, colloque du Mans, mai 1980*, Paris : multigraphie, 130-175 ; Fleuriot, Léon, 1999. *Les origines de la Bretagne*. Paris : Payot, 89-94.

[30] *La Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*. Traduction, présentation et notes de Micheline de Combarieu du Grès et Gérard Gouiran. Paris : Librairie générale française, 1993, v. 7101, p. 534-535.

[31] *Le Roman de Renart.* Edité par Mario Roques, Paris : Champion, C.F.M.A., 1951, branche I, v. 2407-2420.

[32] On this period see Smith, Julia, 1992. *Province and empire : Brittany and the Carolingians*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press ; Chédeville, André, Hubert Guillotel, 1984. *La Bretagne des saints et des rois. 5ème-10ème siècle*. Rennes : Edilarge, Ouest-France.

Bretons and Normans

After the Vikings' ravages, the beginning of the 11th century is marked by a double alliance between the ducal houses of Brittany and Normandy. Thus, the political relationship between the two countries turned into a family affair, with quarrels and reconciliations. The vassals of the two suzerains married together too, and soon, from Avranches to Dol, people didn't really know who was Norman and who was Breton. Such close connections certainly gave birth to literary exchanges. We have seen above that two Norman bards worked in Brittany and that the Red Lady composed a 'lai' for William the Conqueror. Another 'lais', sung by Breton bards, related to Normandy : the 'Lai of the Two Lovers'[33] and 'Richard the Old'[34]. According to Dudon de Saint-Quentin, Breton bards went to Normandy and sang the praises of Richard I[35]. Anyway, as early as the middle of the 11th century, the name of Arthur had spread to Normandy. We find it in Fougères (*'Artur de Mansionili')*, in the second half of the 11th century[36]; in Caen about 1056-1070[37]; and to the north of Avranches before 1095[38]. Thus, the Norman people knew of Arthur before they conquered England.

A lot of Bretons came to England with William the Conqueror's army. But before 1066, some of them had already settled and been warmly welcomed there since the times of King Alfred the Great and his son Athelstan. This tradition of welcome even became a law under Edward the Confessor's reign[39]. During and after the conquest, the Breton lords continued to settle in England and it would be too long to draw up the list of them in this paper. They were particularly numerous in the North-east (honour of Richmond), the South-west (Devon and Cornwall) and along the Welsh borders, like the Paderon's family of Monmouth. Most of them came from the North-east of Brittany , that is the more normanized part of this country. The political relations between Henry I Beauclerc and Alan Fergant were very strong. Alan came to Henry's aid when the latter was fighting against his brother Robert Courteheuse for the throne of England. Alan Fergant's natural son, Brian Fitz-Count, was fostered at Henry Beauclerc's court. His foster brother was Henry's son, Robert of Gloucester, to whom Geoffrey of Monmouth dedicated his *Historia Regum Britanniae*. One of Henry's mistresses was Alix Boterel, the lord of Lamballe's daughter. Alix gave a daughter to Henry, Mathilde, who married Alan Fergant's heir, Conan III[40].

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[33] " Un lai en firent li Bretun, des Dous Amanz reçut le nun ", Marie de France. *Lais*. Traduits, présentés et annotés par Laurence Harf-Lancner, texte édité par Karl Warnke, Paris : Lettres gothiques, 1990, *Les Dous Amanz*, v. 5-6.

[34] Cook, Tveitane, *op. cit.* , 252-257.

[35] Mentioned by André Chédeville, Noël-Yves Tonnerre, 1987-1994. *La Bretagne féodale. 11ème-13ème siècle.* Rennes : Edilarge, Ouest-France, 134-135.

[36] Gallais, Pierre, 1967. "Bleheri, la cour de Poitiers et la diffusion des récits arthuriens sur le continent.", *Actes du 7ème congrès national de la littérature comparée, Poitiers, 1965*, Paris : Didier, 47-79 (61, A4).

[37] In 1087, in the course of William the Conqueror's funeral at Caen, Ascelin, son of Arthur, claimed that William grave's place was owned before by his father Arthur and had been stolen from him by William to found the Trinity's church of Caen. See Orderic Vital. *Histoire de Normandie*. Traduction de Louis-François du Bois et François Guizot. Paris : Brière, 1825-27, VII, p. 218. Arthur, Ascelin's father, appeared in records between 1056 and 1070 when he sold lands to Lanfranc. See Gallais, op. cit., 61, A5.

[38] The lord Artus of Champeaux visited the hermit William Firmat in the forest of Passais. See Raison, Chanoine Louis, René Niderst, 1948. " Le mouvement érémitique dans l'Ouest, fin 11ème siècle, début 12ème siècle. ", *ABPO*, 55, 1-46 (31).

[39] " Brytones vero armorici, cum venerint in regno isto, suspici debent et in regno protegi sicut probi cives. De corpore regni hujus exierunt quondam, de sanguine Brytonum regni hujus. " Mentioned by Joseph Loth, 1883[1980]. *L'émigration bretonne du 5ème au 7ème siècle de notre ère.* Rennes : Baraise, réed. Paris, Genève : Champion, Slatkine, 174, note 2.

[40] About Breton people in England, see Jones, Michael, 1981. " Notes sur quelques familles bretonnes en Angleterre après la conquête normande.", *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*

Normans and Bretons had close connections during the remainder of the 11th and 12th centuries. They participated together in the first crusade under Robert Courteheuse's command, with Alan Fergant, Duke of Brittany. A few years before, Breton lords from Dol, Dinan and Loheac had followed Robert Guiscard and his brothers to southern Italy and Sicily[41]. Bretons and Normans took and spread Arthurian legends to Italy, as proved by the trend in Arthurian names, the sculpture on the cathedral of Modena[42], the mosaic of Otrante and the tale about King Arthur living under the volcano of Etna[43]. In Spain, Norman warriors became involved in the Reconquista, such as Roger de Tosny in the county of Barcelona or Rotrou du Perche who conquered the city of Tudele and became lord of it. It seems that Breton people were less numerous in Spain than in England or in Italy. But we know that Garsire de Retz, a great lord from the country of Nantes, went to Spain at the end of the 11th century to fight against the Saracens[44]. Furthermore, the anonymous chronicle of Sahagun mentions Breton people among the foreigners settled in this town at 1085[45]. Sahagun is a main stop on the *camino frances*, the way from France to Compostella through Spain.

Brittany and Aquitaine

Owing to the advance of the Reconquista from the middle of the 11th century, the pilgrims could safely go to Compostella. Afterwards there were more and more of them, coming from all over Europe. "Quatuor viae sunt, quae ad Sanctum Jacobum tendentes, in unum, ad Pontem Reginae, in horis Hispaniae coadunantur", said the author of the Pilgrim's Guide[46]. One of the four pilgrim routes to Compostella, the *Via Turonensis* links Tours to the Pyrenees through Poitou, Saintonge and Gascony. It was taken by the Breton pilgrims as early as the beginning of the 11th century. In 1037 a hospital was built for them in the suburbs of Nantes (Saint-James of Pirmil Hospital), a place where pilgrims from all Brittany came together. It was built by the Poitevin abbey of Saint-Jouin-de-Marne which owned several priories in Brittany and who had kept saint Judicaël's relics since the exodus of the Breton monks in the ninth century. At the end of the 11th century, the pilgrimage to Compostella was as significant for the Bretons as Rome or Jerusalem[47].

(MSHAB), 58, 73-97 ; Keats-Rohan, K.S.B., 1992. " The Bretons and Normans of England, 1066-1154 : the family, the fief and the feudal monarchy. ", *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 36, 42-78 ; 1996. " Le rôle des Bretons dans la colonisation normande de l'Angleterre (1042-1135).", *MSHAB*, 74, 181-215 ; 1999. *Domesday People : A prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents, 1066-1166. I, Domesday Book.* Woodbridge : Boydell Press, 30-66.

[41] Ménager, Léon-Robert, 1981. " Pesanteur et étiologie de la colonisation normande de l'Italie. ", in *Hommes et institutions de l'Italie Normande.* Londres : Variorum Reprints ; Martin, Jean-Marie, 1994. *Italies normandes.* Paris : Hachette ; Jones, Michael, 1994. " Les Bretons et les croisades.", *MSHAB*, 71, 367-380 ; Cassard, Jean-Christophe, 2007. *L'Orient des Bretons au Moyen-Âge.* Morlaix : Skol Vreizh, 66-108.

[42] Lejeune, Rita, Jacques Stiennon, 1963. "La légende arthurienne dans la sculpture de la cathédrale de Modène.", *CCM*, 6, 1963, 281-296.

[43] This tale was collected by Gervaise of Tilbury at the end of the 12th century. Gervais de Tilbury. *Le livre des merveilles : divertissement pour un empereur (troisième partie)* . Traduction française et introduction par Annie Duchesne. Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 1992, 151-152.

[44] Morice, Pierre-Hyacinthe, Dom, 1742-46. *Mémoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Bretagne.* Paris : Osmont, I, 477-480.

[45] *Cronicas anonimas de Sahagun.* Edition critique d' Antonio Ubieto Arteta. Saragosse : Anubar, 1987, § 15, 19-21.

[46] Aimeri Picaud. *Le Guide du pèlerin de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle.* Traduction Michel Record, éditeur scientifique : Fidel Fita. Bordeaux, Toulouse : éd. Sud-Ouest, Association de coopération interrégionale Les Chemins de Compostelle, 2006, 24-25.

[47] Fardet, Jean, 1966. "Etudes et documents sur les chemins et les pèlerins de St-Jacques : le pèlerinage de Saint-Jacques et l'Armorique. ", *Compostelle,* n° 22-23, 8-11 ; 1981. "Les Maisons-Dieu sur les chemins de Saint-

To go to Compostella, Breton people could choose many ways; by land, sea, or a mixture of both. According to the Arab geographer Al-Idrîsî[48], they could embark from the coasts of Brittany, or from Beauvoir and Talmont, which were boarding ports for Compostella. These two ports maintained a regular trade with Brittany, in particular with the abbeys of Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys and Redon[49].

The Atlantic Ocean, from the Channel to the Iberian shores, must have been traversed for a long time by the Breton sailors, whether insular or continental, according to the name given to the Gulf of Gascony from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. The Roman geographer, Iberian by birth, Pomponius Mela, in the first century after J.C., located the Isle of Sein on the 'Sea of Britain' ("in Britannico mari"), which stretched to the Pyrenees[50]. Following him, the geographer of the Lower Empire, Vibius Sequester, wrote : "Liger Galliae, dividens Aquitanos et Celtas, in Oceanum britannicum evolvitur"[51]. Other evidence from the 6th to the 12th century, also describe the 'Sea of Britain' as a part of the Atlantic Ocean from the head of Finistère to the head of Galicia[52]. The Beatus of Saint-Sever, written down in the half part of the 11th century at the abbey of Saint-Sever, Gascony, includes a map of the world which represents the Isle of Britain as like a big sausage stretched from the mouth of the Rhine to the mouth of the Garonne and separated from the continent by the *Oceanus Britannicus*[53]. In 1154, Al-Idrîsî wrote that Al-Andalus was bounded to the north by the English sea, and that the church of Saint-James of Compostella was located on a cape of the English sea[54]. A few years earlier, the author of the Pilgrim's Guide pointed out that, from the top of Cize's Pass, in the Pyrenees, "potest videri mare Brittanicum et occidentale, et hora etiam trium regionum, scilicet Castellae et Aragoni et Galliae"[55].

By whichever way they went to Compostella, by land or by sea, the Breton pilgrims had to stop off at Saintonge where two of their saints was buried: Emilion was born in the vicinity of Vannes and he lay near to the vineyard that today bears his name[56]. Malo, the patron saint of Alet, was buried at Saintes, the city of which Eutrope had been the first bishop. The worship of Eutrope was linked up with the pilgrimage to Compostella by the pope Calixte II. After he died, Malo was soon worshipped through pilgrimages between Saintes and Alet[57].

Jacques avec une étude particulière de l'Armorique. ", *Bulletin de la société archéologique et historique de Nantes (BSAN)*, 117, 7-27 ; Couffon, René, 1968. " Notes sur le culte de saint Jacques et de saint Eutrope en Bretagne. Contribution à l'étude des chemins de Compostelle au Moyen-Âge.", *MSHAB*, 43, 31-75.

[48] Al Idrîsî, Muhammad. *La première géographie de l'Occident*. Paris : Flammarion, 1999, VI, 1, 417.

[49] *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Talmond*. Edition de Louis de La Boutetière. Poitiers, Paris : Mémoires de la Société des antiquaires de l'Ouest, 36, 1872, xxxiv, 119 ; Cartulaire de Redon, ccxiv-ccxv and acts 306, 310-311, 390 ; Merdrignac, Bernard,1993. *Les vie des saints bretons durant le haut Moyen-Age*. Rennes : Edilarge, Ouest-France, 34, 68-69.

[50] Pomponius Mela. *Chorographie*. Texte établi, traduit et annoté par Alain Silberman. Paris : Les belles lettres, 1988, II, 6 ; III, 6.

[51] Vibius Sequester. *De fluminibus, fontibus, lacubus, nemoribus, paludibus, montibus, gentibus per litteras libellus*. Edition de Piergiorgio Parroni, Milan, Varèse : Istituto editoriale cisalpino, 1965, 94a, 58-59.

[52] See Cassard, Jean-Christophe, 1998. *Les bretons et la mer au Moyen-Âge. Des origines au milieu du 14ème siècle*. Rennes : PUR, 56-57.

[53] Beatus de Liebana. *Commentaires sur l'Apocalypse et le Livre de Daniel*. Edition, études et commentaires par Xavier Barral i Altet et alii. Madrid : Edilan, 1984, I, 45bis, 45ter.

[54] *Op. cit.* , IV, 1, 255.

[55] Aimeri Picaud, *op. cit.*, 46-47.

[56] Merdrignac, Bernard, 1992. *Un enfant de Vannes : St Emilion. Les relations entre la Bretagne et l'Aquitaine durant le haut Moyen-Age*. Vannes : Archives municipales.

[57] Le Duc, Gwenaël, 1979. *Vie de saint Malo, évêque d'Alet*. Alet : dossiers du CeRAA.

Maybe that kind of pilgrimage made easier the implantation and the growth of the worship of Eutrope in Brittany[58].

Malo and Emilion were not the only Breton saints honoured in Aquitaine. In the face of the Norman invasions, the exodus of the Breton monks gave rise to the spreading of the worship of Breton saints in the countries where these monks had sheltered. Thus, Gildas was worshipped at Deols, near Châteauroux, where the monks of Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys and Locminé had settled and founded an abbey in the ninth century[59]. Turiau was honoured at Clermont[60], Meen at Treignac[61] and Menulphus, an Irish saint who was maybe bishop of Quimper, was honoured near Moulins in Auvergne[62]. A litany written down at Saint-Martial de Limoges in the course of the 11th century includes many Breton saints[63]. On the other hand, Eutrope was not alone; other saints from Aquitaine were worshipped in Brittany. We note, too, Philibert, Maixent, Radégonde, Hilaire and Gilles[64]. Probably influenced by this religious relationship, the Romanesque art of Brittany includes features from Poitou and Saintonge, which were spread, some of them at least, along the various routes to Compostella[65].

II - The Matter of Britain in Aquitaine

The political relationships between Brittany and Aquitaine does not seem to have been as significant as the religious ones. No marriage between the two ducal families; but, all the same, there were strong and close connections between Brittany's lordships and the marches of Poitou - between the lords of Retz and Thouars, for example[66]. More to the East, the region of Mauges , lying between Brittany, Anjou and Poitou, was contested territory between those three principalities and a melting pot where the cultures of these three lands merged. It is in this region that the first mention of Arthurian heroes' names appear in the cartularies of the second half of the 11th century [67] : Gauvain de Chemillé, related to Pétronille, abbess of

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[58] Couffon, 1968, *op. cit.*, 31-75.

[59] Kerboul-Vilhon, Christiane M.J., 1997. *Gildas le Sage, vies et œuvres.* Traduction. Sautron : éd. du Pontig, 159-160 ; Chénon, Emile, 1885. "Un monastère breton à Châteauroux (Saint-Gildas-en-Berry). ", *Bulletin et mémoires de la société archéologique du département d'Ille-et-Vilaine (BMSAIV)*, 147-177 ; Valéry, Raphaël, 2005. " La bibliothèque de la première abbaye de Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys. ", *MSHAB*, 29-88.

[60] Duine, François, 1901-02. " Les sources de la vie de saint Turiaw et son culte. ", *ABPO*, 17, 557-561 ; Duine, François, 1912. " Vie antique et inédite de saint Turiau. ", *BMSAIV*, 41, 1-47.

[61] Gady, Maurice, 1965. " Anciennes dévotions à Treignac. ", *Bulletin de la société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze*, 87, 99-106.

[62] Debary, Michel, 2002. « La Vita Menulphi. », *Britannia Monastica*, 6, 111-130.

[63] Tanguy, Bernard, 2002. " Anciennes litanies bretonnes des 10ème et 11ème siècles. ", *BSAF*, 131, 453-479 ;
2006. " De l'origine des anciennes litanies bretonnes des 10ème et 11ème siècles. ", *Britannia Monastica*, 10, 43-61.

[64] Duhem, Gustave, 1932. *Les églises de France, Morbihan.* Paris : Letouzey ; Couffon, René, 1939-41. *Répertoire des églises et chapelles du diocèse de Saint-Brieuc et Tréguier.* Saint-Brieuc : Les Presses Bretonnes ; 1988. *Nouveau répertoire des églises et chapelles : diocèse de Quimper et de Léon.* Quimper : Association diocésaine ; *Dictionnaire des églises de France. IV : Bretagne.* Paris : Robert Laffont, 1968.

[65] Grand, Roger, 1958. *L'art roman en Bretagne.* Paris : Picard ; Deceneux, Marc, 1998. *La Bretagne romane.* Rennes : Ouest-France ; Autissier, Anne, 2005. *La sculpture romane en Bretagne, 11ème-12ème siècles.* Rennes : PUR.

[66] Tonnerre, Noël-Yves, 1994. *Naissance de la Bretagne. Géographie historique et structures sociales de la Bretagne méridionale. Nantais et Vannetais de la fin du 8ème à la fin du 12ème siècle.* Angers : Presses de l'Université, 340-342 ; Chédeville, Tonnerre, op. cit., 144-146.

[67] See particularly : Chauvin, Yves, 1997. *Premier et second livres des cartulaires de l'abbaye Saint-Serge et Saint-Bach d'Angers, 11ème et 12ème siècles.* Angers : Presses Universitaires ; Broussillon, Bertrand de, 1896-99. *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint Aubin d'Angers.* Angers : Lachère.

Fontevraud[68] ; Gauvain de Montjean, vassal of the lords of Beaupréau whose ancestor was a Breton of Rennes[69] ; Iseldis, attested before 1093 near Beaupréau, bears a name which form is very close to the Cornish name Eselt, that is Iseult, and we can suppose that Iseldis was the Latin form of the Breton name of Iseult[70].   Except the lords of Beaupréau, some other inhabitants of the Mauges had Breton origins, as indicated by their nickname Brito.   More to the South, in Bas-Poitou, we find the same phenomenon, that is, a Breton settlement seems to be the cause of the spreading of Arthurian names. This trend appears at the same time in Saintonge, near to the sea coasts[71].

At the end of the 11th century, the trend in Arthurian names - mainly Arthur and Gauvain - spread across Anjou, Poitou, Charente and Saintonge, probably coming from Brittany with Breton settlers and with Breton pilgrims to Compostella. We can divide references to Arthurian heroes into two parts : in Bas-Poitou, the Arthurian names spread from the Nantes area through Anjou, the marches of Poitou and the Mauges ; in Saintonge, it seems that they spread across the Atlantic - the 'Sea of Britain' as it was called in this time - from the southern coast as far as the Saintes area, and were popular among the local nobility. Thus, there was a man named Gauvain among the lords of Tonnay-Charente, who were in contact with troubadours such as Jaufre Rudel and Rigaut de Barbezieux[72].

Much rarer are the references to Arthurian or Breton names to the south of the linguistic boundary and they are generally later. Yet there was an Artus Chatardus in Limoges as early as the end of the 11th century[73]. Artusius and Helias Artus appear in Périgord at 1116 and 1120[74], then, in Toulouse we find Vidianus Artus at 1145 and 1148-49, and Bertrandus Artus at 1151 and 1153[75]. A few years later, Gauvain is mentioned under the forms *Galvan* in Limousin (Beyssac near Uzerche, 1186-87)[76] and *Gualvanno* (1173) at Maguelone near Montpellier[77]. At the end of the 12th century, Iseutz de Meymont is attested in Ardèche[78], and

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[68] About Gauvain de Chemillé, see Gallais, *op. cit*., 63 G4, 77-78 ; Chartrou, Josèphe, 1928. *L'anjou de 1109 à 1151 : Foulque de Jérusalem et Geoffroy Plantagenêt.* Paris : PUF, 99, 377-382.

[69] Chédeville, André, 1974. "L'immigration bretonne dans le royaume de France du 11ème au début du 14ème siècle.", *ABPO*, 81, 301-343.

[70] Padel, O.J., 1981. " The Cornish Background of the Tristan Stories ". *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 1, 53-81 ; Tanguy, Bernard, 1998. " Du Loonois du Roman de Tristan au Leones d'Idrisi : Douarnenez patrie de Tristan ?", *BSAF*, 118, 119-144 ; Bromwich, Rachel, *op. cit*., 350-352.

[71] For some examples see: Marchegay, Paul, 1877. *Les cartulaires du Bas-Poitou. Département de la Vendée.* Les Roches-Baritaud : Gaston ; Ledain, Bélisaire, 1895. " Cartulaires et chartes de l'abbaye de l'Absie. ", *Archives historiques du Poitou*, t. 25 ; Rédet, J., 1874. *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Cyprien de Poitiers.* Poitiers : Archives historiques du Poitou, 3 ; Musset, Georges, 1901-1903. *Le cartulaire de l'abbaye royale de Saint-Jean d'Angély.*   Paris, Saintes : Archives historiques de la Saintonge et de l'Aunis, 30 & 33, 2 vol. Grasilier, Théodore, 1871. *Cartulaires de la Saintonge.* Niort : Clouzot, 2 vol.

[72] Lejeune, Rita, 1957. " Le Troubadour Rigaud de Barbezieux.", in *Mélanges Istvan Frank*, Sarrebrück : Universtät des Saarlandes, 269-295 ; 1962. " Analyse textuelle et histoire littéraire : Rigaud de Barbezieux.", *Le Moyen âge*, 68, 331-377 ; Boussard, Jacques, 1956. *Le gouvernement d'Henri II Plantagenêt.* Paris : librairie d'Argences, 120-128 ; Debord, André, 1984. *La société laïque dans les pays de Charente : 10ème-12ème siècle.* Paris : Picard, 143-147, 168-176, 514-517.

[73] Leroux, Alfred, 1885. *Documents historiques bas-latins, provençaux et français concernant principalement la Marche et le Limousin.* Limoges : Société archéologique et historique du Limousin, II, p. 7, act 17.

[74] Gallais, *op. cit*., 63 A21 ; Maubourguet, J.-M., 1926. *Le cartulaire de l'abbaye de Cadouin.* Cahors : Coueslant, act 140, p. 75.

[75] Gérard, Pierre et Thérèse, 1999. *Cartulaire de Saint-Sernin de Toulouse.* Toulouse : Amis des Archives de la Haute-Garonne , II,2, act 305, p. 1056-7 ; act 316, 1074 ; act 321, 1080-1 ; act 334, 1103.

[76] Barrière, Bernadette, 1989. *Le cartulaire de l'abbaye cistercienne d'Obazine, 12ème -13ème siècle.* Clermont-Ferrand: Université de Clermont-Ferrand, act 694, p. 420-421. In the same cartulary, we find also Britone de Gimel (1169-70) at Ventadour: act 289, p. 213.

[77] Rouquette, Julien, Augustin Villemagne, 1912-13. *Cartulaire de Maguelone.* Tome I : 819-1203. Montpellier : Valat, act 164, p. 302-305.

Merlinus appears in the cartulary of Saint-Gilles-de-Provence[79]. It would seem that the spreading of Arthurian names to the Occitan part of Aquitaine was the work of the troubadours themselves, but the references to Arthur in Limoges, Périgord and also Toulouse[80] are earlier than the first allusions which appear in Occitan poetry, so we cannot draw any firm conclusions on this matter for the moment[81].

II - 1 : The troubadours and the Matter of Britain

The first troubadours who mentioned Arthurian heroes in their poems were Marcabru (Arthur in 1137)[82] and Cercamon (Tristan, about 1135-1145)[83], two Gascon troubadours who attended the court of Guillaume X, Duke of Aquitaine: Guillaume the Troubadour's son and Eleanor's father. Later, around 1150, Bernart de Ventadorn referred to Tristan and Iseult in several of his works[84]. At the same time, the troubadour from Saintonge, Rigaut de Barbezieux, was the first to speak about Perceval and the Grail[85], a few decades before Chrétien de Troyes. About 1169, Raimbaut d'Orange composed a poem woven with allusions to the Tristan legend[86], while Arnaut-Guilhem de Marsan, between 1170 and 1180, in his *Ensenhamen del Cavaier* , referred to Tristan, Yvain and Arthur[87].

But it is in Catalonia that probably the most important Occitan poem about the Matter of Britain was written, around 1150 : the Ensenhamen *Cabra Joglar* by Guerau de Cabrera. This is an inventory of all the literary works a Catalan juggler should know and which Guerau knew to perfection since he cited the main heroes of the three matters defined by Jehan Bodel, namely the Matter of Britain, the Matter of Roma and the Matter of France, that is the 'Chanson de Geste.' Concerning the Matter of Britain, Guerau knew of Arthur, King Marc (Marcon), Erec, Tristan, Iseult, Gauvain and, furthermore, he reproached his juggler Cabra for : « non sabz fenir, al mieu albir, a tempradura de breton »[88].

In view of this wide knowledge, it is no wonder that Catalan literature produced the first Arthurian novel from the South of the Loire: *Jaufre* was probably written down around 1180 for the king of Aragon Alphonse II (1162 - 1196), patron of the troubadours and poet himself. If the exchanges with Chrétien de Troyes works are obvious, in particular with *Yvain* and *Le Chevalier de la Charette*, some episodes of Jaufre - for instance, the beginning and final scenes, where the enchanter, maybe Merlin, turns into a horned animal, then into a big bird

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[78] Lemaitre, Jean-Loup, 1990. *Cartulaire de la Chartreuse de Bonnefoy*. Paris : CNRS, act 64, 1198, p. 76-77.

[79] Le Blévec, Daniel, Alain Venturini, 1997. *Cartulaire du Prieuré de Saint-Gilles de l'Hôpital de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem, 1129-1210.* Turnhout, Paris: Brepols, CNRS, act 108, 1197, p. 86-87. Two Breton names appear too as witness in this cartulary: Johannes Brito, act 298, 1173, p. 242-243; Pontius Brito, act 99, 1195 p. 80.

[80] We suppose that the witnesses had reached their majority when they signed the charts, that is fourteen years. Thus Vidianus Artus and Bertrandus Artus were born around 1131 and 1137 at the latest.

[81] Furthermore we have still to examine some cartularies of South France.

[82] "Puois lo Peitavis m'es faillitz, serai mai cum Artur perdutz. ", *Poésies complètes du troubadour Marcabru*. Edition de Jean-Marie Dejeanne et Alfred Jeanroy. Toulouse : Privat, 1909, IV, v. 59-60, p. 16.

[83] Jeanroy, Alfred, 1922. *Les poésies de Cercamon.* Paris : Champion ; Lejeune, Rita, 1962. " L'allusion à Tristan chez le troubadour Cercamon.", *Romania*, 83, 183-209.

[84] See Cluzel, Irénée, 1957. " Les plus anciens troubadours et la légende amoureuse de Tristan et d'Iseut.", in *Mélanges Istvan Frank*, Sarrebrück : Universtät des Saarlandes, 155-170.

[85] Lejeune, Rita, 1957 & 1962, *op. cit*.

[86] Pirot, François, 1972. *Recherches sur les connaissances littéraires des troubadours occitans et catalans du 12ème et 13ème siècles*. Barcelona : Real Academia de Buenas Letras, 465-466 ; Cluzel, 1957, *op. cit*., 161.

[87] Pirot, *op. cit*., 446, 477 ; Lejeune, 1979, *op. cit*., 227-228.

[88] About this poem see, among other works : Lejeune, Rita, 1966. "La forme de l'Ensenhamen au jongleur du troubadour Guiraut de Cabrera.", *Estudis Romanics*, 9, Barcelona and in *Littérature et société occitane au Moyen-Âge*, Liège : Marche Romane, 1979, 251-259 ; Pirot, *op. cit*., 440 ; Lafont, Robert, 2001. "Relecture de Cabra Joglar.", *Revue des Langues Romanes*, 105/2, 336-374.

and plays tricks on Arthur - are independent of Chrétien's novels and seem to be older. The Catalan author had clearly used other sources, maybe from Brittany or from Britain[89].

There is no doubt that Ignaure is from Brittany. He is the unfortunate hero of a 'lai' composed at the beginning of the 13th century, probably by Renaut de Beaujeu, on the theme of the "eaten heart"[90]. Since the 12th century, Ignaure and his adventures were well known by the Occitan troubadours. Arnaut-Guilhem de Marsan told a version of Ignaure's story in his *Ensenhamen del Cavaier* and Ignaure's name, under the form Linhaura, was used as senhal to refer principally to Raimbaut d'Orange[91]. Chrétien de Troyes mentioned Ignaure in *Le Chevalier de la Charette*, but he had probably borrowed him from the troubadours[92]. Much has been written, but inconclusively, about the meaning of Ignaure's name. It seems however that we can explain it by the Old-Breton root Iun-, "desire", which has given Ign-, like in Plouigneau, Old-Breton Plou-Iunau[93]. The derived noun Iunet means "desired" and it's exactly the sense of the epithet given to the hero both by Chrétien de Troyes: "Ignaures li coveitiez", and by Arnaut-Guilhem de Marsan : " de Linaura sapchatz, com el fon cobeitatz ". It would be then the translation into Old-French and Occitan from a Old-Breton name IunUuoret, which would have given Ignaure, and his tale would have been passed on directly to Occitan troubadours by Armorican Bretons.

II - 2 : Breri or not Breri ?

The troubadours had known the Arthurian heroes before the 'trouveres' of the North, even before the *Historia Regum Britanniae* had been translated into Old-French by Wace in 1155. The first references are from the years 1135-1150 and we note also that the legend of Tristan and Iseult had been very popular in Aquitaine. These facts have been evident for a long time: the Welsh storyteller Breri went to the court of Poitiers, Breri being a Welshman who went into the new Norman power's service. He was King Henry I's translator at Carmarthen[94] and, according to Giraud of Cambria, he was also a magnificent *fabulator*. Thomas of England cited him as the main source for his Tristan's novel.

His name appeared in several Arthurian novels, under varied forms and the Pseudo-Wauchier of Denain indicated in his *Continuation Perceval*, written around 1200, that Bleheris (that is Breri) would have stayed at the court of a count of Poitiers and could have told him the story. Given the dates of Breri's life (circa 1070/1080-1130/1140), the count of Poitiers in question can only to be Guillaume IX the Troubadour (1086-1127) or his son

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[89] Editions by Clovis Brunel, 1943. *Jaufré, roman arthurien du 13ème siècle en vers provençaux.* Paris : SATF ; Lavaud, René et René Nelli, 1960[2000]. *Les troubadours, l'œuvre épique.* Paris : Desclées de Brouwer, 17-618 ; On the date of *Jaufre*, see Rita Lejeune 1948. "La date du roman de Jaufre : à propos d'une édition récente.", *Le Moyen Âge*, 54, n° 3-4, 257-295 ; 1953. " A propos de la datation de Jaufre. Le roman de *Jaufre* source de Chrétien de Troyes ?.", *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 21, 717-747 ; Martin de Riquer, 1955. "Los problemas del roman provenzal de Jaufré.", in *Recueil de travaux offerts à Clovis Brunel.* Paris : Société de l'Ecole des Chartes, II, 435-461 ; Paul Rémy, 1969. "Jaufré.", in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages.* Oxford : Clarendon Press, 400-405. We agree with professor Lejeune's conclusions.

[90] *Le Lai d'Ignaure ou le Lai du Prisonnier.* Edité par Rita Lejeune. Bruxelle : Palais de Académies, 1938.

[91] Lejeune, Rita, 1939. " Le personnage d'Ignaure dans la poésie des troubadours. ", *Bulletin de l'Academie Royale de Langue et de Littérature françaises de Belgique*, 140-172 ; Summary of the question by Isabel de Riquer, 1992. "*Linhaure*. Cent ans d'études sur un *senhal*. ", *Revue des Langues Romanes,* 96/1, 41-67.

[92] " Ignaures li coveitiez, li amoureus et li pleisanz." *Le Chevalier de la Charrette.* Edition critique d'après tous les manuscrits existants, traduction, présentation et notes de Charles Méla, Paris : Lettres gothiques, 1992, v. 5788-5789.

[93] Fleuriot, Léon, 1964, *op. cit.*, 235 ; Le Moing, Jean-Yves, *op. cit.*, 85.

[94] Rowlands, I.W., 1980. " The making of the March : aspects of the Norman settlement in Dyfed. ", *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies*, 3, 142-157 (155) and 221-225.

Guillaume X (1127-1137)[95]. Pierre Gallais even regarded him as the source of the trend in Arthurian names in Poitou and Saintonge[96].

If such is the case, then it raises a big chronological problem : this trend was spread from the end of the 11th century , if not earlier, while Breri was only a young boy of about ten years old. At this time he could not already be the famous storyteller described by Giraud of Cambria (Giraldus Cambrensis) and Thomas of England. Furthermore, we would expect a Welshman to tell the stories of his national heroes, Gereint or Peredur, and yet Erec and Perceval (Persavaus in Occitan) are the ones who were known to the troubadours. Indeed, the name Erec derives clearly from Waroc, king of Vannes in the 6th century[97]. We have seen above that Armorican Bretons settled in Poitou and Saintonge as early as the middle of the 11th century or took the pilgrim routes to Compostella. It was along these ways and along the coasts of Saintonge that the trend in Arthurian names was spread by the Continental Bretons. Breri may have stayed in Poitiers but certainly not before the beginning of the 12th century.

On the other hand, Occitan troubadours may have frequented the court of England at this time too. Thus, according to the author of the *Roman de Joufrois*, contemporaneous with the Pseudo-Wauchier and whose testimony is as valid as his, Marcabru could have stayed at the court of Henry Beauclerc[98]. We know, too, that Guillaume the Troubadour's fame had crossed the Channel before 1125 since William of Malmesbury wrote a few lines about him in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*[99]. In any case, Breri or not Breri, if he ever went to Poitou, he was neither the first nor the only one to recount the Arthurian legends there.

III - Breton people and Occitan epic

To speak about the 'Occitan epic' is, in a way, to engage again in a polemic over a hundred years old about the birth of the 'Chansons de Geste'. The controversy arose after Claude Fauriel's works, in the middle of the 19th century. According to him, the Carolingian epic in Occitan was more important and, above all, older than the Old-French epic. His theory prompted harsh criticism or, at best, some constructive remarks from eminent Romanists such as Gaston Paris, Paul Meyer and Léon Gautier. Since then, it seems to have been generally accepted, and difficult to dispute, that the few epic texts in Occitan - about ten, which survive in later manuscripts for the most part - are only translations from Old-French 'Chansons de Geste'[100]. This was Joseph Bédier's position in the barely two pages he wrote about the Occitan epic, out of the four volumes of his *Légendes épiques*[101]. In spite of Rita Lejeune's work[102] and, more recently, Gérard Gouiran and that of Robert Lafont's[103], the opinion of

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[95] Gallais, *op. cit.,* 47-55, with bibliography.

[96] "Quelqu'un est venu en Poitou à la fin du 11ème siècle et il y a conté les aventures de Gauvain et de Tristan. Quatre romanciers français nous donnent son nom, Breri, Bleheri […] : pourquoi ne pas les croire ?" *op.cit.*, p. 79.

[97] And the name Enide come from Bro-Uened, "country of Vannes" in Old-Breton. On that see Rachel Bromwich, 1957. " Enit, Enide. ", *Bwletin y Bwrdd Gwybodau Celtaidd*, 17/3, 181-182 and 1959. " Celtic Dynastic themes and the Bretons lays ", *Etudes Celtiques*, 9/2, 445-470.

[98] Quoted by Audiau, Jean, 1927. *Les troubadours et l'Angleterre.* Paris : Vrin, 21-22.

[99] William of Malmesbury. *Gesta Regum Anglorum. The History of the English Kings*. Edited and translated by R.A.B. Mynors, completed by R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1998-99, I, book V, § 439, 782-787.

[100] Summary of the question by François Pirot, 1969. "Olivier de Lausanne et Olivier de Verdu(n). Sur les traces d'une épopée occitane ?", in *Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune*. Gembloux : Duculot, 1969, I, 247-265 (247-251).

[101] Bédier, Joseph, 1912[1966]. *Les légendes épiques. Recherches sur la formation des chansons de Geste.* Paris : Champion, III, 178-179. In point of fact, he merely quoted Alfred Jeanroy.

[102] Her main articles about the Occitan epic have been brought together in *Littérature et société occitane au Moyen-Âge*. Liège : Marche Romane.

most French scholars did not vary a great deal, namely, there is no evidence for an Occitan epic either independent of, or older than, the Old-French 'Chansons de Geste'[104].

Therefore, without getting involved in this dispute for the moment, we have chosen, as basis of our corpus, the epic texts written in Occitan, however old the manuscripts which contain them might be (for instance, Ronsasvals and Roland à Saragosse, known by a 14th century old manuscript), as well as the Old-French 'Chansons de Geste' in which the action is closely connected with the Occitan area (for instance the cycle of Guillaume d'Orange). We can add to this corpus the *Historia Karoli magni et Rotholandi* by the Pseudo-Turpin; a Latin text that linked the Carolingian epic with the pilgrimage to Compostella, and gave birth to adaptations in Occitan language, such as the Occitan version of the *Gesta Karoli Magni ad Carcassonam et Narbonam* or the Chronicle from Saintonge[105].

We can add too the Song of Roland; because the historical Roland commanded the March of Brittany, and the *Chanson d'Aiquin* relates how his father was Tiori of Vannes[106], and because this poem of the crusade, of the holy war against the Saracens, seems to us to be closely linked, in its composition as in its reception, with the people who fought against the Muslims in Spain, Sicily and the Holy Land at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries. That is to say, warriors from Normandy and Aquitaine[107]; because many arguments, without presenting irrefutable proofs, lead us to think that this song was composed among a Norman or Anglo-Norman circle.

On the whole, for about a century, it seems that there was a strong and continuous link between: the first poem, born in a milieu deeply engaged in the struggle against the Saracens; its older written evidence, that is the Anglo-Norman manuscript of Oxford; and its first translation in Old-German, the *Ruolandes liet*, made for Henry the Lion around 1172, from a manuscript which came from the court of his father-in-law, Henry II Plantagenet[108]. The hypothesis that a manuscript of this 'chanson' was written at the abbey of Saint-Denis seems to be superfluous, especially as this theory, defended by Hans-Erich Keller among other scholars[109], rejects the Oxford manuscript beyond 1150, in opposition to most of the palaeographers and philologists who date this manuscript on the second quarter of the 12th century (1125-1150)[110].

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[103] Gouiran, Gérard, Robert Lafont (eds.), 1991. *Le Roland occitan*. Paris : Bourgeois ; Lafont, Robert, 1991. *La Geste de Roland*. Paris : L'Harmattan, 2 tomes ; Lafont, Robert, 2002. *La source sur le chemin : aux origines occitanes de l'Europe littéraire*. Paris : L'Harmatan.

[104] For example, see Madeleine Tyssens's contribution to *L'Epopée. Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental*. Turnhout : Brepols, 1988, 238-240. See also Giovanni Palumbo, 2008. " La matière rolandienne. ", in *Cinquante ans d'études épiques : actes du Colloque anniversaire de la Société Rencesvals, Liège, 19-20 août 2005*. Genève : Droz, 229-262 (245-246).

[105] Meredith-Jones, C., 1936. *Historia Karoli magni et Rotholandi ou Chronique du Pseudo-Turpin*. Paris : Droz ; *Gesta Karoli Magni ad Carcassonam et Narbonam*. Edition par Frédéric-Edouard Schneegans. Genève : Slatkine, 1977 ; Mandach, André de, 1970. *Chronique dite Saintongeaise*. Tübingen : M. Niemeyer.

[106] *Aiquin ou la conquête de la Bretagne par le roi Charlemagne*. Edition de Francis Jacques, *op. cit.*, v. 989-990 ; about Roland and Brittany, see Lenoir, Nicolas, 2009. *Etude sur la Chanson d'Aiquin ou la Conquête de la Bretagne par le roi Charlemagne*. Paris : Champion, 135-161.

[107] Defourneaux, Marcelin, 1949. *Les Français en Espagne aux 11ème et 12ème siècles*. Paris : PUF ; Taviani-Carozzi, Huguette, 1996. *La Terreur du monde. Robert Guiscard et la conquète normande en Italie*. Paris : Fayard ; *Histoire anonyme de la première croisade. Editée et traduite par Louis Bréhier*. Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 1964.

[108] Segre, Cesare, 1989. *La Chanson de Roland, édition critique*. Genève : Droz, I, 58-60.

[109] Keller, Hans-Erich, 1989. *Autour de Roland : recherches sur la chanson de geste*. Paris : Champion.

[110] *La Chanson de Roland*. Reproduction phototypique du manuscrit Digby 23 de la Bodleian Library d'Oxford. Editée par le comte Alexandre de Laborde. Étude historique et paléographique de Charles Samaran, Paris : SATF, p. 1-50 ; Samaran, Charles, 1973. "Sur la date approximative du Roland d'Oxford.", *Romania*, 94, 523-27. In the same number of this review, Ian short wrote "that the possibility that the MS was copied as late at 1170 can certainly not be discounted ("The Oxford Manuscript of the Chanson de Roland : a Paleographical

Furthermore, the Anglo-Norman literature in the vernacular is earlier and more prolific than the Continental one. It blossomed under the reign of Henry Beauclerc, supported by an old and continuous tradition of historiography[111]. We also know the capacity of the Scandinavians to adopt a new culture[112]. After they had borrowed some features from Celtic legends[113], it would not be any surprise if they adopted the Carolingian epic as they adopted the French language in a short space of time. Later, this same Norman people, after conquering Ireland at the end of the 12th century, became "Hibernicis ipsis Hiberniores", more Irish than Irish people themselves. Thus, after they settled in Normandy we can suppose they became more French than French people themselves[114].

Our second criterion of choice is, of course, the reference to Breton people or Brittany in the 'Chansons de Geste' described above. If we refer to André Moisan's index[115], we can note that practically every song cites one or more Breton heroes, like Arastagnus, Enissanz, Gihomarz, Guinguenez, Jaguz, Merianz, Oedun, Rispeu,...etc. The most cited is Salomon, king of Brittany in the ninth century, who appears in about thirty songs at least. He is everywhere and nowhere, according to Joseph Bédier who devoted a chapter of his '*Légendes épiques*' to the Breton king[116]. Salomon and Hoël, characters of the 'Chansons de Geste,' have their place, too, in the Arthurian legends - at least in Geoffrey of Monmouth's work. Perhaps Salomon played more than a walk-on part, as Bédier said. Other characters are not presented as Breton but they are from Brittany too, like Corsolt or Mabon. Apart from the few pages Bédier wrote about Salomon, the role played by Breton people in the Chansons de geste has been reviewed in some articles[117] but there is no general study on this subject.

In the scope of this thesis we can only deal with the Breton characters mentioned in the Occitan epic, as well as with the spreading of epic heroes names in Brittany, such as Roland, Olivier or Vivien[118]. When the names Roland and Olivier have been given to two brothers, sometimes two cousins in the same family, it is a good indication that legends or poems about Roland and Olivier had been spread a few years before, as we have seen below about the trend in Arthurian names in Aquitaine[119]. The first cousins, Roland and Olivier of Dinan, are always cited as examples for Brittany. Not so well known are Roland of Liré and his brother

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Note", *Romania*, 94, 221-31), but more recently he came close to Samaran's view proposing the bracket 1140-1170 in his edition of *La chanson de Roland*. Paris : Librairie Générale Française, Lettres Gothiques, 1990, p. 9.

[111] Legge, Domenica, 1963. *Anglo-Norman Literature and his Background*. Oxford : Clarendon Press ; 1965. " La précocité de la littérature anglo-normande. ", *CCM*, 8, 327-349 ; 1969. " L'influence littéraire de la cour d'Henri Beauclerc ", in *Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune*, Gembloux, Duculot, I, 679-687 ; Short, Ian, 1991. "Patrons and Polyglots : French Literature in Twelfth-Century England. ", *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 14, 229-249.

[112] Leblond, Bernard, 1966. *L'accession des Normands de Neustrie à la culture occidentale (10ème-11ème siècles)*. Paris : Nizet.

[113] Renaud, Jean, 1992. *Les Vikings et les Celtes*. Rennes : Ouest France.

[114] In the Welsh March, Norman people as Breton people gave sometimes themselves the name Francigenes in the charts. See Flatrès, Pierre, 1956. " les bretons en Galles aux 11ème et 13ème siècle.", *MSHAB*, 36, 41-46.

[115] Moisan, André, 1986. *Répertoire des noms propres de personnes et de lieux cités dans les chansons de geste françaises et les oeuvres étrangères dérivées*. Genève : Droz.

[116] Bédier, *op. cit.*, IV, 105-117.

[117] For instance : La Borderie, Arthur de, 1892. " Etudes historiques bretonnes : Salomon, roi de Bretagne, dans les chansons de geste. ", *Revue de Bretagne et de Vendée*, 7, 395-408 ; Hemon, Roparz, 1968. " Mojennoù roueed Vreizh. ", *Ar Bed keltiek*, 115-118 ; Moisan, André, 1992. " La Bretagne, les Bretons et l'épopée française. ", *MSHAB*, 70, 389-417 ; Cassard, Jean-Christophe, 2006. " Salomon de Bretagne. ", in *Littératures de Bretagne, mélanges offerts à Yann-Ber Piriou*. Rennes : PUR, 199-211 ; Lenoir, Nicolas, *op. cit.*, 161-189.

[118] Vivien, count of Tours, who was slayed in a battle against the Bretons in 851, gave some of his features to the epic Vivien. See Moisan, André, 1973. *La légende épique de Vivien et la légende hagiographique de saint Vidian à Martres-Tolosane : deux noms, une légende*. Lille : Service de reproduction des thèses, 176-202.

[119] Lejeune, Rita, 1950. " La naissance du couple littéraire *Roland et Olivier*.", in *Mélanges Henri Grégoire*, Bruxelles : Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientale et slave, II, 371-401.

Olivier, small lords from the Nantes area, attested since the years 1125-1130. Liré is today a commune of Maine-et-Loire, close to Ancenis and the boundary of Loire-Atlantique, in North-West Mauges, but up until the French Revolution it was dependent on the see of Nantes. A priory was founded here towards 1075 by Archambaud and his son Budic, a typical Breton name. Roland and Olivier were Budic's heirs[120]. We note that Liré is near Beaupréau and Chemillé, where we have met Gauvain and Iseult. More to the West, near Nantes, the chapel of Loroux-Bottereau was formerly dedicated to saint Gilles. Its frescoes describe Charlemagne's sin, to which the song of Roland also alludes[121].

Conclusion

Our work is still in progress so we cannot draw any definitive conclusions for the moment as we have not sufficient enough sound evidence. We can nevertheless propose several points for consideration. Firstly, there had existed for a long time direct links between Brittany and Aquitaine, the strength of which ebbed and waned. Between the 10th and 13th centuries, these connections concerned religion (the worship of the saints, pilgrimage to Compostella), trade (coastal trade especially), politics (lordship of the March) and art (Romanesque architecture). They concerned literature, too, as indicated by the trend in Arthurian names in Aquitaine, prior to Geoffrey of Monmouth's work and to the first novels in Old-French, and by the spreading of the 'lai' of Ignaure, which probably came directly from Armorican Bretons to the troubadours.

These connections were also indirect, via the Mauges, a real cultural melting-pot, where, in the same period, Arthurian and epic names appeared; evidence that the dividing line between the Matter of Britain and the Matter of France was somewhat thin and porous. Then, via the Normans, " l'essentiel du dynamisme guerrier et politique de la France, de la chrétienté, au 11ème siècle, paraît le fait de ces nouveaux venus, de ces Barbares récemment francisés[122]." We could add that they can take the credit for the greater part of the literary dynamism of the 11th and 12th centuries. Their privileged relationships with their Breton neighbours had allowed the latter to disseminate their own Celtic culture throughout the continent, from Normandy to Sicily and, in return, to become integrated into the culture of the continent, by taking part alongside the Normans in the conquest of England, the South of Italy, Sicily, and, to a lesser degree, in the Spanish Reconquista.

Finally, it seems to us that the integration of the Bretons into the continental culture is linked with the accession of the family of Cornouaille to the ducal power. Before that, as early as the beginning of the 11th century, Benoit, Count of Cornouaille, chose to give to his son the glorious name of Alan, and then to marry him to Judith of Nantes, a descendant of Alan Barbetorte, who, according to the Chronicle of Nantes, was victorious against the Normans[123]. This testifies to the political will to establish the growing power of his lineage on the memory

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[120] La Borderie, Arthur de, 1867. "Inventaire des titres des prieurés de Marmoutier situés dans l'évêché de Nantes. ", *BSAN*, 7, 115-121, act 4.

[121] Bourdeaut, A., 1923. " La légende de saint Gilles et les peintures murales du Loroux-Bottereau. ", *BSAN*, 62, 201-214 ; Giraud-Mangin, M., 1923. " Les peintures murales du Loroux-Bottereau. ", *BSAN*, 62, 215-218.

[122] Dominique Barthélémy, 2007. *La chevalerie. De la Germanie antique à la France du 12ème siècle*. Paris : Fayard, p. 167.

[123] This chronicle, composed between 1050 and 1059, give us a legendary view of Alan Barbetorte. Merlet, *op. cit.*, xxix-xxxiii, 97-101.

of his ancestor's exploits and to be linked with the prestigious times of the Breton kings, Nominoé, Erispoé, Salomon and Alan the Great[124].

The princes of Cornouaille were cultured. Alan Canhiart had had a religious and lay education and his son Hoël, count of Nantes, then first Duke of Brittany from the house of Cornouaille, supported two bards in his service. Some literary works, known only by their Old-French version, such as the lais of Tydorel and Graalent, seem to have been born in this political and cultural milieu[125]. Thus, we can better understand why Salomon, Hoël, Rispeu and others became literary characters beyond their native land. As for Hoël's heir, Alan Fergant, he succeeded in unifying the duchy: last Duke of Brittany to speak Breton; cited in the Welsh literature; married to a Norman princess and then to an Anjevin one, he took part in the first crusade and was a loyal ally to King Henry Beauclerc. He represented Brittany well in his time, attached to her Celtic roots, yet outward-looking.

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[124] Quaghebeur, Joëlle, 2001. *La Cornouaille du 9ème au 12ème siècle. Mémoire, pouvoir, noblesse.* Rennes, Quimper : PUR, Société archéologique du Finistère.

[125] O'hara Tobin, Mary Prudence, 1976. *Les lais anonymes des 12ème et 13ème siècles : édition critique de quelques lais bretons.* Genève : Droz. This two lais refer to dynastic legends concerning King Gradlon and the counts Alan and Conan, probably Alan Fergant and his son Conan III.