

spoken in their home, or spoken by just one parent? How do you create opportunities for children learning a “school” language to learn the subtleties, pronunciations, and expressive richness from native speakers in their community? How do you foster an openness on the part of Breton speakers that will support Breton learners to hone their language skills instead of slamming the door on them because the Breton they speak is “non-traditional” or less “pure”? How do you expand immersion in a language beyond the school room? How do you support a needed standardization for written Breton with a more flexible oral Breton that respects variations and dialects?

Chauffin presents some of the internal debate within Diwan, the financial challenges, as well as outright attacks by those who consider Diwan to be anti-French. Through the years, parents and supporters have had to be imaginative in fundraising and teachers have needed to fill considerable gaps in curricula and reading materials. This has resulted in a great deal of positive creativity. This has included the creation of magazines for children like *Cholori*, then *Talabao* and now *Rouzig*. And schools and their supporters have created annual festivals like Taol Kurun or running events like Tro Mennez Arre and the Redadeg. From eco-fairs to Christmas markets and flea markets, parents and fund-raisers have created events where a larger community can learn about Diwan and where the Breton language takes on a role outside the classroom. Diwan has also had a regular presence at book fairs, festivals and festoù noz.

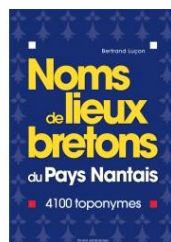
Fanny Chauffin eloquently presents – often in the words of Diwan students, parents, and teachers/administrators – the impact of Diwan in stimulating the production of traditional and non-traditional song and music. Students have often participated in competitions like the Kan ar Bobl or inter-lycée music gathering. Diwan students have also been active in theater workshops and production, audiovisual and internet projects, and literature (poetry, theater pieces, news for radio and internet, novels, and short stories). The needs of Diwan and the bilingual school programs have generated an artistic production that might otherwise have remained dormant. Chauffin argues convincingly that opportunities to use the Breton language in the arts and for fun activities outside of school encourage all ages of Diwan children to embrace Breton as a spontaneous part of their lives outside the classroom.

This book is focused not just on Diwan but touches on the experience of immersion schools for Basque, Welsh, Catalan and other languages of Europe. From the start, those creating Diwan studied the situation of other immersion schools, learning from them and borrowing ideas and resources. And this continues today. While the challenges Diwan faces are different from those of Welsh, Irish, Basque or other immersion

schools, the success of these schools in supporting language acquisition and in encouraging children to creatively use the language outside the classroom is shared.

This book is a revision of Fanny Chauffin’s doctoral thesis and she has clearly done a vast amount of research on language acquisition, often citing other studies of bilingual and immersion education. It has an “academic” style at times, but is highly readable, presenting a wealth of documentation.

While painting a realistic picture of the challenges for the future of the Breton language, this book also celebrates the wider impact Diwan schools have had on preparing students to engage not only in the creation of traditional and less traditional language arts, but also to be open to the voices of their local community and the far reaches of the world.



Bertrand Luçon. *Noms de lieux Bretons du Pays Nantais* – 4100 toponymes. Yoran Embanner 2017. 510 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-95-5.

This is not a book you read cover-to-cover like a novel, but this book is full of interesting information about the Breton language and its presence in place names in the Pays Nantais. The author begins by defining the area of study – the Pays Nantais and not the department of Loire-Atlantique which does not correspond to the historically recognized area of Pays Nantais. He carefully describes the sources for place names presented in the book which include maps, surveys, ancient manuscripts as well as oral accounts about names. Luçon also notes previous studies of place names of the late 19th century to the present that have focused on all or part of the Nantes country. In each case he notes the strengths and weaknesses which impact the quality of information to be drawn from all these resources.

Breton toponyms are place names created by a population that spoke Breton and that bear characteristics of the Breton language. With changes made to names through time, certifying that a name is definitely Breton is extremely challenging. Luçon makes a conservative estimate of 6,000 names that can be considered Breton. And 4,100 of these are presented in 300 of the 510 pages of the book by general categories:

A – names with Breton elements designating habitation such as *ker*, *trev*, *lez*, *kastell*, etc.

B – names with Breton elements related to communication and travel routes – *hent*, *ri*, *leur*, etc.

C – names with Breton elements for names of people, religion, or occupations
 D – names related to landscape and agriculture - *koad, ran, dour, kloz*, etc.
 E – names related to water / wetlands – *palud, loc'h, stêr*, etc.
 F – names related to the seaside – *arvor, traezh, porzh*, etc.
 G – names related to land relief such as mountains and valleys – *menez, roz, traoñ*, etc.
 H – names related to flora and fauna
 I – names related to salt marshes – which have been an important economy in the area around Guerande where Breton was spoken until recent times.
 J – names of communities

Maps showing the location of names are very useful. Indexes of both place names and people's names are very helpful in tracking down a particular name one might want to find.

For those who really want to delve into the details which are important in an accurate study of place names, the author presents specific traits of Breton found in the Pays Nantais – morphography, mutations, lexicology, and presents the bilingual history where Roman, French and Gallo influences impacted the place of the Breton language as well as its pronunciation and vocabulary. One can well understand the author's caution in verifying Breton origins for place names with the complex history of the Nantes Pays where different languages co-existed for centuries. And one understands his desire to see more study be done.

The study of Breton place names shows that the Breton language has been spoken in the Nantes Pays for 1,500 years. Contrary to those who would like to claim that the Loire-Atlantique Department is not "Breton," and that the Breton language was never spoken in Nantes, this study shows that indeed Nantes has always had a population of Breton speakers – and they were not imported from western Brittany.

While the Breton language has been pushed to the west of the Nantes Pays over time, it persisted longer in this southern part of Brittany than it did in the north. In the western area of Pays Nantais – the area of Guérande and the coastal communities – Breton was the pre-dominant language spoken up to the early 20th century. The villages of Batz-sur-Mer held out the longest and Breton was an everyday language in some communities until the 1960s. The last of the native speakers died in the early 1970s with some elderly residents maintaining bits of Breton for several decades longer.

For those interested in the history of Brittany and the Breton language this is a valuable and interesting

resource. And this book leaves no doubt that Nantes and the Pays Nantais are Breton.



Yves Mathelier. *Le Breton parlé dans le pays guérandais – Ar gwenranneg, mémoire d'une amnésie*. Yoran Embanner 20167. 506 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-91-7.

This is a book that will be of great interest to those who want to dig into the history and linguistic diversity within the Breton language. Yves Mathelier succeeds in offering the most complete work to date on the Breton of the Guérande area of the Pays Nantais where Breton was spoken until the 1960s. The important presence of Breton in the Nantes Pays until recent times is certainly one more strong argument for the re-integration of the Loire-Atlantique Department into the Region of Brittany.

Through both archival research and the study of works by 19th and 20th century scholars such as Emile Ernault, François Cadic, Pierre Le Roux and Gildas Buron, the author summarizes what has been written about the linguistic specificity of the Breton spoken in the Guérande area. The book starts off with texts collected in the late 19th century and phrases collection up until the mid 20th century. These form an important basis for the analysis of the structure and unique aspects of this Breton.

The bulk of the book – some 300 pages – is a dictionary of words found in the documentation collected and studied. Each word is translated into French and identified as a noun (masculine or feminine gender) or verb, adverb, etc. Versions of the word in other dialects of Breton are also provided, and for many words a Cornish or Welsh equivalent is given and sometimes Scottish Gaelic or Irish is also included. The author adds a short note and draws on observations of other scholars to describe important characteristics.

Here's a sample with my translation of notes and [added explanation of abbreviations].

Blè (n. m.), *loup* [wolf]
bleiz (KLT) [Cornouaille-Léon-Trégor]
blei (GW) [Gwenedeg – Vannetais]
beydh (KER) [Kerneveureg – Cornish]
blaidd (CYM) [Kenbraeg – Welsh]
Plural blèi, bleizi (KLT)
bleidi (GW)
bleydhes (KER)
bleiddiaid (CYM)

Once more we note the disappearance of the z, which is characteristic of South-Armorican Breton. As