Breton Law

Saad Asiri

Legal System Different From Ours

Breton Law

 A significant number of people across the world, including well-known celebrities such as Celine Dion, Sylvester Stallone, and the late Augusto Pinochet trace their roots to the Breton ethnicity. Yet, to many, the name Breton easily passes as a misspelling of Briton. In other words, Bretons are an unknown group of people. Until recently, the Breton ethnicity was in the process of a gradual, but certain death by being swallowed by other ethnicities in France as well as in other parts of the world they migrated to. However, the landmark ruling by the European Court of Justice, acknowledging the existence of a Breton nationality in Europe has given new impetus to the reclamation and revival of what this group had lost through years of assimilation into the French population. In fact, the group is currently seeking the status of a globally recognized Breton nation. As these developments take shape, some fundamental issues emerge. European nations are predominantly composed of single ethnic groups with a uniform cultural heritage and rules of thumb that guide how they live with one another as well as with those who live among them. Similarly, Bretons must be having or must have had principles and guidelines that dictate various aspects of their lives including marriage, religion, and how the deal with lawlessness among others. These principles and guidelines are more important to the group now than they have ever been, but are not out there for everyone to see. As such, this research paper lends itself to researching and putting together the principles and guidelines that govern Breton life, including their legal system.

**An Overview of the Breton Ethnicity**

 The Breton ethnicity is comprised of a people who are said to have descended from Brittonic speakers who inhabited Great Britain in ancient times. Their ancestry tree also at some point includes Gauls and Vikings. They reportedly fled from their original homes to the region of Brittany, France, which they occupy almost exclusively to this day (Sumption, 1999). They fled in a frantic search for safety from Germanic speakers who had the habit of violently taking over other people’s homelands. The migration took place between the third and ninth centuries, and as is typical of any migration, occurred in the form of waves as was dictated by circumstances.

 Today, it is estimated that Bretons are between six and eight million in total all over the world. Out of the total, the majority, over four million live in Brittany. Some smaller numbers live elsewhere in France, bringing the total of Bretons who live in France to between six and seven million. These figures are just estimates because France does not document data on ethnicity during its census. Thus, the actual figures could be slightly more or less than the estimates that exist. Since these people live mostly in Brittany, they have strived to maintain their cultural heritage. To this day, traces of their cultural practices can be observed in Brittany, through *Pardons* and Tro *Breizh* among other festivals and events (Hardwick, 2010).

 Language wise, Bretons use two major languages besides standard French that has widely taken root among the younger generations. Traditionally, Bretons inhabiting the southern parts of Brittany spoke Breton while those inhabiting the northern parts of the region spoke Gallo. These two are the languages recognized as Breton languages. However, as already pointed out, the French language has successfully swallowed up most of the Bretons, leaving only the elderly, that is, those aged above 65 years, to speak the traditional Breton languages. By today’s standards, only about 200,000 Bretons use their traditional languages as an everyday means of communication. The rest use standard French. However, with the recent developments, this is likely to change in the future.

 Religion wise, Bretons are predominantly Catholics. In fact, no other region in France compares to Brittany in Catholicism. The only other options to Catholicism are the Reformed Church of France and irreligion, but it is important to note that only a minority of the Bretons have opted for these alternatives. Nevertheless, the entire Breton population has special esteem for Christian tradition regardless of whether one is a believer or not. Christianity is to some extent considered part of the Breton culture. Up to the 1980s, Sunday masses attracted almost the entire Breton population (Davis, & Harrison, 2007). Today, the numbers that attend Sunday mass are smaller, but the accompanying activities such as pilgrimages are experiencing an upsurge.

 Culturally, Bretons have strived to maintain key aspects of their traditions to this day and with the recent acknowledgment of the Breton nationality by the European Court of Justice, lost traditions are likely to be revived. This culture mostly manifests in music, dance, cuisine, and symbols (Davis, & Harrison, 2007). Folklore and traditional belief are also still part of the modern Breton culture, especially among the irreligious. Clearly, despite the onslaught of the French language and culture, Bretons have been able to cling to their cultural heritage, details of which shall be explored at a later stage of the paper. At this stage, with the background provided by this overview, the paper proceeds to explore Breton law.

**Breton Law**

**Background**

In order to understand Breton law in the right context, it is necessary to start with a brief historical overview of the Bretons in relation to other ethnic groups in Europe, more so Western Europe. Bretons are classified as one of the groups that constitute the six Celtic nations. The other five are Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Isle of Man, and Cornwall (Davis, & Harrison, 2007). Celtic nations are territories in which traits of the original Celtic cultures still exist for instance in the language used and some cultural practices. In antiquity, these peoples were very closely related and shared at least some aspects of their culture as well as the day-to-day issues of life. In other words, their social needs were more or less the same.

As a result, some authors have made reference to the Celtic law, which would mean that all the six Celtic nations shared a common law at some point. The evidence that supports this line of thought is scanty, as are the texts that make reference to Celtic common law. This state of affairs points to the fact that when mention is made of Breton law, the law in question is Breton customary law because Bretons, like their five Celtic counterparts, had customary laws that were unique to their ethnicity. Similarities may have existed among the various customary laws because they were used to address similar social issues, the differences in culture meant that each group had its own laws. Therefore, what is explored next is basically Breton customary law.

**The Legal System**

 It is important to point out that during the years when Bretons were very much active and were fully recognized as an ethnicity, the law did not exist to punish crime (Davis, & Harrison, 2007). Rather, they existed to solve disputes among individuals. This means that the body of laws that existed among Bretons was meant to make sure that those who were wronged received compensation from the wrongdoer. Additionally, the system of laws that existed among Bretons sought to regulate common social phenomena such as the acquisition, development, and disposal of property, making sure that inheritance took place as was customary, as well as seeing to it that parties honored contracts, which they entered into (Davis, & Harrison, 2007). Other issues that the Breton law sought to govern include the definition of social hierarchy and the accompanying obligations as well as the issues surrounding women and marriage and succession in kingship. How lords were expected to relate to their clients and other people they had dealings with was also part of the system of laws that existed. Thus, the system of laws that existed at the time was complex and detailed by the standards of the time, as they sought to address every aspect of social life.

 However, it is critical to note as elaborate as the system of laws was; it only aimed at handling social issues. In other words, they were civil in nature. They solved disputes between or among individuals and not between the state and its citizens. Thus, there was no criminal code. This means that the state could not accuse an individual of wrongdoing if there was no one raising complaints against the same individual for the said wrongdoing. A wrongdoing was only considered a wrongdoing if it caused conflict between or among individuals and was dealt with as a civil dispute between or among citizens.

 The literature on Breton customary law is scanty. The little that survives to this day is languages other than English. This implies that accessing the customary law first hand is a challenge. Nonetheless, for purposes of this paper, it can be reconstructed from brief accounts that feature in texts that make reference to Breton customary law, as well as the customary laws of other Celts such as the Irish as well as general Celtic law.

**Women and Marriage**

 Like the men in society, women had specific principles and guidelines that governed how they were to relate to one another, and with other members of the society. Expert opinion has it that Breton women were treated rather well by the existing laws since women in other places were undergoing very harsh treatment. In other words, Breton customary law was friendly to the women folk. By today’s standards and terminology, it can be argued that Breton customary law sought to create some sort of balance (equality) between men and women in society. This does not, however, mean that women were permitted to engage in every activity as the men did. The society was as patriarchal as was the case with other societies around it. This trend was best manifested in matters of property inheritance as well as in the succession of kings. While women were granted some rights to property inheritance, they could only find space for consideration on matters of leadership when there was no man close enough in the lineage to take over (Hardwick, 2010).

With regard to property, women were permitted to own property separately from men even if they were married. This means that marriage laws were quite elaborate and permitted a number of options for women even while in marriage. It is important to note, though, that although the property was held separately while a couple was together, during separation for instance in divorce, all the property held by both partners would be lumped together and divided more or less equally between them (Hardwick, 2010). A good example that depicts the complexity of marriage laws among Bretons is the case of Anne of Brittany. Even after marrying King Charles VIII of France, she was still able to insert in their marriage agreement that if the king died before her, Brittany, which had become part of France due to the marriage would revert to her control (Sanborn, 1917). The king died before Anne and she separated Brittany from France, retaining it under her control even after marrying the new king of France.

In fact, the case of Anne of Brittany provides much insight into the customary law of Bretons than the above example. Before she married King Charles VIII, she had performed a ceremonial marriage, called a proxy marriage to Maximilian I to ward off the numerous attempts to match her with various suitors ("Anne of Brittany (c. 1477–1514)", 2002). After the marriage ceremony, all she needed to do to make the marriage official was to lie in bed with the supposed husband, with their clothes on. The legal requirement was that the two share a bed after the wedding ceremony. Apart from this case, Anne was also able to reject several suitors proposed to her by her people after the death of her father, the king. It is not clear whether she would have been able to reject suitors proposed by her own father, though. Nevertheless, these examples are evidence to show that the laws surrounding marriage were quite complex and permitted a number of options for women. An important point to note, however, is that Anne of Brittany was a princess and perhaps the law allowed her more room for self-determination than would be the case with the daughter of a non-noble man.

The laws surrounding marriage also permitted divorce among married couples. As is the case today, there had to be a reason that warranted the divorce. At the time, the most serious issues that were recognized by law as adequate to permit divorce included impotence, violence, and homosexuality (Hardwick, 2010). If a woman determined that her husband was impotent, she was allowed to divorce him. Similarly, if she determined that he was a homosexual after they got married, she had the permission to divorce him. On the issue of violence, the law actually allowed men to beat their wives in a bid to correct them (Hardwick, 2010). However, if the beating left visible marks on the woman’s body, she was supposed to be compensated something equal to what was paid as her bride price. In addition, she was given the freedom to choose whether or not to stay the husband. In other words, if it were provable that a husband severely beat his wife, she would be granted the permission to divorce him.

This meant that women had quite a significant amount of freedom in the Breton society. This notion is further supported by the fact that once a man and woman were married, it was not permissible for any of them to sell property without seeking the approval of the other spouse (Hardwick, 2010). For instance, if a husband wanted to sell property, he had to seek the consent of his wife. Similarly, if a wife wanted to sell property, she had to seek the consent of her husband. Otherwise, any sale made without the consent of one spouse was subject to legal dispute if the uninformed party so wished.

Interestingly, even with this freedom, the church considered women to be under the control of their fathers or husbands, for married women. The men would decide what women were permitted to do and what they were not permitted to do. Along with this restriction, women not allowed to serve as witnesses in hearings, as they were deemed partisan and could not be trusted. Clearly, Breton laws were not that different from modern laws across the world. Only slight variations exist when both sets of laws are subjected to rigorous scrutiny.

**Familial Relations**

 Family relations took a prominent position among Bretons. Being a patriarchal society, males were the heads of their families and members of those families had to do their bidding. Even fully-grown sons remained under the oversight of their fathers until the father died. Everything they sought to do had to be permitted by the father. However, of interest at this point is not how family units related within the nuclear family unit. In fact, Bretons had little regard for what has come to be known as the nuclear family. Much weight was given to the extended family such that every decision, including decisions about marriage, had to be made with the extended family in mind.

 According to Hardwick (2010), family units were viewed more as building blocks within the larger extended family and less as autonomous entities. This meant that during critical points in family history such as during the transition from the care of one patriarch to the next, kin oversight was inevitable. This was necessary because such transitions often included activities such as the division of estates among others.

 However, even though extended families were closely tied together and had to have a say in the activities of families within the larger unit, there was room for negotiations and deliberations aimed at ensuring that best interests of those involved were served. For example, not all the laid down rules had to be followed as they were; those charged with the responsibility of chatting the way forward for the family were expected to come to a consensus on issues of importance. This was permitted because, within the larger family, different family units had different interests and did not have to agree on a common course of action. Like today’s laws, some loopholes existed, which could be exploited by negotiators to arrive at amicable compromises.

 The importance of kin oversight manifested clearly on matters of marriage. Regardless of what the bride or bridegroom felt about a prospective marriage partner, their kin’s opinions had to be considered while making the final decision (Hardwick, 2010). This means that there were times when personal interests or ambitions had to be sacrificed in favor of the family depending on how they were going to affect the rest of the family. Marriages, for instance, were supposed to strengthen the larger family unit by bringing together strategically placed families. If a kin though that a particular marriage proposition was against the laid down rules within the family, they had the freedom to reject the proposal. This was rare, but in cases where it came up, the marriage rarely pushed through.

 It is important to note that not just any family member would come up and impose their will on young members of the extended family. There was order in how these things were done. The extended family had a form of leadership, which followed agnatic seniority. A senior male in the family who met certain criteria was officially given the mandate to lead the family and was thus responsible for the entire family. This individual could be termed as the family’s overall patriarch and was responsible for overseeing the family’s engagements with other families and the larger society (Hardwick, 2010). For example, this individual was the one responsible for ensuring that if the family owed anyone a debt, it was paid on time. Any negotiations involving a family were also the responsibility of this individual. It is also important to note that this individual became the father figure for girls and boys whose parent died while they were still young.

**Inheritance**

The laws surrounding inheritance were quite strict. In early times, inheritance was mainly about land. All sons were to be given equal portions of their father's land (Davies & Astill, 2013). Some rules existed about how the land was divided and who was the first to receive their portion, but all pieces had to be equal. No distinctions were made between legitimate and illegitimate children. Everyone had to get a piece of the land. The only time a son could miss getting a piece of the father’s land as inheritance was when the son had been rebellious to the father.

Girls were not expressly entitled to land inheritance except under special circumstances. For girls, their right to inheritance was limited to movable property. With regard to land, they could only inherit a portion if there was no boy. However, since their husbands also had portions of land from their parents, when the girl died, her inherited land would go back to her father’s kin. The land would only remain as part of her children’s heritage if her husband was a foreigner with no land of his own. Common practice was that girls with land inheritance should marry within the family tree so as to retain land within the family. Close family members shared property belonging to childless individuals at their death.

**Kingship**

Information about the details of how the Breton law handled kings and kinship is somewhat scanty. Nonetheless, the little that is available indicates that although kingship was hereditary, a body existed, which would look into the conduct of kings and depose them where necessary. Kingship either moved within a royal family from father to son or from brother to brother based on the circumstances (Lokin, Brandsma, & Jansen, 2003). Available evidence points to the idea that kingship among Bretons was followed agnatic seniority. When a king died, it was not automatic that the son would take over. Instead, if a younger brother was alive, he would take over and serve as the king until such a time that he was no longer able to serve. In most cases, this happened with the death of the ruling king.

In cases where there was no male heir in the vicinity, the ruling king would seek out a strong man from a reputable family to marry their daughter if there was any (Gemie, 2007). Once this was done, the husband of the princess would take over after the death of the king. Such cases were quite challenging to handle but were covered by the law. Once again, the case of Anne of Brittany can serve as a perfect example here. When the king, her father, died, she was too young to have been married off to a suitable suitor. However, at the age of 15 years, she was compelled to make this choice (Sanborn, 1917). She chose to get married to the king of France, who was also a young man at the time. Their marriage brought Brittany and France together as a single kingdom. Thus, the king of France ruled over Brittany because he was the husband of Princess Anne of Brittany. This was somewhat easier to deal with compared to other cases that arose over succession in Brittany.

When John III died, the succession story was a little complicated for he had no child. The two possible heirs were Jeanne de Pentheivre, a niece to the late king and John de Montfort, a half-brother to the late king (Sumption, 1999). The law did not directly define who would take over the throne and both individuals claimed a right to the throne. It would have been easier if both potential successors were male. Unfortunately, Jeanne was a woman. The argument then was that Jeanne was a daughter of a full brother to the late king. Had Jeanne’s father been alive at the time of the king’s death, he would have ascended to kingship without dispute. Thus, the same was supposed to be the case with his daughter Jeanne. John de Montfort, on the other hand, held that being the only surviving male candidate and close blood relation to the late king, he deserved to take over. The late king had foreseen this stalemate and had sought a reputable suitor for Jeanne prior to his death so that Jeanne’s husband would take over as the new ruler after his death. But after the arranged marriage, the king again showed a lack of interest in Jeanne’s husband as a possible successor.

The reason for going into such details is to show that Brittany’s customary law was obscure when it came to matters of succession. This is why Anne of Brittany was able to retain her control over Brittany as an independent entity from France, yet she was the wife to a French king at the time. The customary law did not clearly define the procedure that was to be followed in the process of succession. Everyone knew what to do in the obvious cases, but with a slight twist to the succession story, no one knew what to do. Fate often had its way in such cases.

The king was perceived as the leader of the overall leader of the Bretons but had limited authority insofar as the formulation of new laws was concerned. Rather, there was a body, akin to today’s parliaments, which served this purpose. It was referred to as the “parlement” of Brittany and remained in operation long after Brittany had officially become part of modern France (Lokin, Brandsma, & Jansen, 2003). Its authority was formally changed when it directly conflicted by the French government many years later and although it held that it was not subject to the control of the French government, that row marked the end of its existence. This body, although similar to modern parliaments, seems to have only participated in the documentation of customary law, which had previously been memorized by those tasked with the responsibility of administering justice. This assertion stems from the fact that even after France and Brittany joined to form a single country; Breton customary law remained in force in Brittany many years afterward (Gemie, 2007).

Thus with this separation of powers, kings could only serve as agents of the law in a limited capacity. In other words, although they could make judgments on a few issues under the advice of close allies, much of the responsibility of administering justice was bestowed on other individuals. Perhaps this was so to ensure that king was also subject to the law of the land. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to depose a rogue king. However, this does not mean that there was any other individual more powerful than the king was. Just as it is difficult to institute legal proceedings against a sitting president today, so it seems was the case with kings in Brittany.

 A king was therefore expected to live up to the laid down expectations or lose his honor among his people. For example, he was not permitted to engage in activities associated with people of lower class or be seen traveling either within the kingdom or out of it without his entourage. More importantly, kings were expected to be brave warriors who were capable of leading their people in war against adversaries. Any signs of a behavior other than that expected in war would be interpreted as cowardice and was adequate to rob the king of his honor (Jaski, 2000). It is important to note at this point that losing one’s honor, as a king was equivalent to being deposed. A king was not supposed to continue serving in their capacity after it was determined, that he was no longer fit to continue serving as a king.

The law also vaguely outlined what would pass as a diary in modern times for Breton kings back in their day. One would assume that as the most powerful man in the land, the king had the freedom to determine what they wanted to do on which day. This might not have been the case. Accounts exist of records, which guided how the king discharged his responsibilities with particular activities having designated days on which they would be performed. For instance, each day of the week had a particular activity for the king to perform. This is a clear show of order in how the king operated. They were not expected to be impulsive individuals who performed their duties haphazardly.

**Status**

Like all other ancient societies, Bretons had a caste system or social class system of classification in which everyone fitted (Koch, 2006). This classification was considered important back then because it defined what society expected of each individual based on social class. In addition, this classification gave guidelines about how one was to be treated when they visited another person’s house, for instance, the kind of food they would be served and so on. Moreover, the ranking of people helped to set a value on individuals so that when one was wronged, it would be clearly known what was supposed to be given to them as compensation for the wrong done against them. This value also served as a determinant for things such as bride price when a woman was being married. This means that those from higher social ranks would have a higher value attached to them, while those from lower social classes had a lower value attached to them. This value was referred to as the honor price. Those with a higher honor price were the most respected members of the society. It is not clear whether the king had the highest honor price in the land, but it can be argued that as the most powerful man in the land, his honor price must have been quite high.

The classification was of great importance to the Bretons because it guided virtually every aspect of life. It can be said that the rules surrounding this system of social classification were the manual that defined how everything was to be done in the Breton society. For example, when one was wronged, it would be said that their honor has been violated. The violation of one’s honor was a serious crime and required compensation. The compensation was determined in relation to one’s honor price. Thus, those with higher honor prices would receive higher compensation than those with lower honor prices.

Another thing worth mentioning with regard to social status is that individuals with lower social status and consequently lower honor price enjoyed much fewer privileges compared to those with higher honor price. Apart from receiving less during compensation for the violation of their honor, they also had limited ability to serve as witnesses. Even if they had witnessed an event first hand, there were limitations as to how much they could serve as witnesses. Similarly, their lower honor price limited their ability to serve as sureties. Worst of all, even if they took an oath, an individual with a higher honor price could overrun their oath by swearing an oath of their own, which was given much more weight.

This classification must have had far-reaching implications for the lower class individuals. Although not expressly noted in most literature, it is arguable that people from lower classes could not cross over to higher classes when seeking marriage partners. Of the few accounts that have been mentioned about marriage, although mostly about kings and their children, it is clear that one was expected to marry a person from their own social class. For instance, princesses were only permitted to marry men of high standing from other kingdoms such as princes or dukes or individuals from highly respected families. A good example can be found in Jeanne de Pentheivre’s case. Being a favorite female contender for the throne, John III had taken his time to seek a suitable suitor for her so that her husband would take over after the ruler’s death. The individual who was sought by the king to marry Jeanne was a man of high standing and was highly respected across the land. He was not necessarily of royal descent but was deemed suitable for Jeanne due to his family’s status. This means that the status of parents directly passed to their children. If a parent was of higher status, their children would automatically be of high status. Similarly, children of low-status parents would be of low status.

The classification ranged from slaves who were free, semi-free, or free, all the way to the king. Each of the categories of the classification had a name and people were aware of what those names meant in all aspects of life. Slaves could not act on their own volition unless permitted by their masters. Interestingly, children although they were of equal status with their parents, could not act outside the will of their parents. Children, especially sons, as long as their parents were alive, had limited autonomy regardless of their age. It is, however, important to note that as they grew older, their rights and ability to act independently of their parents also increased, but they remained under the control of their parents until the parents died. Status did not entirely depend on wealth, the extent of family connections also played a significant part in determining status. One’s diligence at their trade also served as an avenue through which one could earn a higher social status.

 Therefore, families had the freedom to move from a lower social status to a higher one provided they met the laid down criteria. The same way, descendants of highly ranked individuals who did not satisfy the necessary requirements for that status were moved downwards. Thus, although children had the opportunity of enjoying the privileges of the rank into which they were born, they also had to work hard to live to the expectations of that rank. Otherwise, they would be demoted to lower social ranks. These possibilities show that not all members of a given class were either rich or poor. Variations existed because there were lower status individuals who were rich and were awaiting promotion same as there were higher status individuals awaiting demotion.

**Compensation for Causing Injury**

As noted earlier in the paper, Breton laws were largely civil because their purpose was to arbitrate between two individuals who were involved in a quarrel of some sort. In other words, perpetrators of wrongdoing were answerable directly to the victim or to those who represented the victim such as family members. In case one was seriously injured by another, the payment would then be pegged on factors such as honor price and the extent of the injury. Once the amount to be given in compensation had been determined, the perpetrator was expected to pay it and be freed from any further responsibilities to the injured. Clearly, this contrasts with modern legal systems were inflicting serious injury on an individual is considered a crime against the state.

Compensation was expected to be paid regardless of whether the act that resulted in the injuring of another was premeditated or not. Reprieve was only given if the victim placed himself or herself in harm’s way knowingly. Once an injury had been inflicted, one was allowed nine days for being cared for by close kin and a physician. After this period, the physician would then evaluate the extent of damage caused by the injury and depending on where the injury was, determine how much compensation was due. The time allowance was most likely aimed at providing adequate time for assessing the effect of the injury on the victim.

 If the victim died within the nine days, the perpetrator would be charged with killing. However, if the victim recovered but was left with a physical wound, the practice was to use a chosen grain and see how many would fit into the wound. Bigger grains were used for low-class individuals and smaller grains for high-class individuals. This means that injuring an individual from a higher social class would cost the perpetrator a fortune. The expenses incurred in caring for the injured individual were also the responsibility of the one who caused the injury.

**Dealing with Murder**

Murder was a serious offense back then as it is today. However, killing a murderer was not common. Instead, the murderer was given the chance to pay fines accordingly. The murderer was supposed to pay the honor price of the dead individual to a kinsman as well as another fine known as body price. If the murderer could not afford these fines, their family was supposed to assist. If the family refused or could not afford the fines, the kin of the deceased was granted the freedom of doing what they wished with the murderer. They could kill, sell into slavery, or lock him or her away as the murderer’s family looked for compensation.

**Religion**

 Bretons, as indicated earlier, have always been largely Catholics. Today, the numbers of church goers in relation to the entire population has declined notably. However, those who have remained religious are either Catholics or members of the Reformed Church of France. The rest are considered irreligious. Across modern France, Brittany is the most dominantly Catholic region. This shows how religious these are and how loyal they have been to the Catholic Church. The dominance of Catholic among Bretons is largely attributable to seven Welsh missionaries who came to be known Bretons as the founder saints. They found their way into Brittany very early in the stay of Bretons in the region and set up dioceses that gave Catholic a deep rooting in the region from very early on. In fact, the early introduction of religion among these people brought about the merging of canon law with customary to arrive at a compromise that would serve both church goers and non-church goers well. Traces of church law have thus been part of the Breton law for years. And even to this day, Bretons are considered backward because a significant number of them has maintained the traditions and laws of their ancestors.

**Conclusion**

 In conclusion, it is apparent that Bretons, like any other ethnicities, were a well-organized people with clear definitions of how to relate to each other, as indicated by customary law. Since they are currently seeking separation from France, it can only be assumed that they will revive their old laws and make adjustments where necessary. Most likely, they have already done so to ensure that their laws can serve adequately in the current context of life. However, it has been seen clearly that their old customary laws were quite elaborate and attempted to capture every aspect of life that needed the guidance of the law. Going forward, their laws are expected to change dramatically, but even with the need for change, it will be the old laws evolving to meet the needs of the Breton society as it is today. So much more can be discussed about Breton law, but for purposes of this research paper, what has been discussed suffices.

References

"Anne of Brittany (c. 1477–1514)." Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia. . Retrieved from Encyclopedia.com: http://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/anne-brittany-c-1477-1514

Davies, W., & Astill, D. G. (2013). *A Breton landscape: From the Romans to the second empire in eastern Brittany.* Florence: Taylor and Francis.

Davis, W., & Harrison, K. D. (2007). *Book of Peoples of the World.* Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.

Gemie, S. (2007). *Brittany, 1750-1950: The Invisible Nation*. Cardiff: University Of Wales Press.

Hardwick, J. (2010). *The practice of patriarchy : gender and the politics of household authority in early modern France*. University Park (PA: Pennsylvania University Press.

Jaski, B. (2000). *Early Irish Kingship and Succession*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

Koch, J. T. (2006). *Celtic culture: A historical encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO.

Lokin, J. H. A., Brandsma, F., & Jansen, C. (2003). *Roman-Frisian law of the 17th and 18th century.* Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.

Sanborn, H. J. (1917). *Anne of Brittany: The story of a duchess and twice-crowned queen.* Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.

Sumption, J. (1999). *The hundred years war 1*: *Trial by battle.* London: Faber and Faber.