

This research deals with a manuscript of collections made by Joseph Mahé, canon of his state, who lived between 1760 and 1831. Man of the church and priest resistant to the French Revolution, he was born, lived and ended his life in Brittany-speaking Morbihan.

In 1825, he published an essay entitled “Essay on the Antiquities of the Morbihan Department”. This book made him known as a collector. In fact, we find in this document, eighty melodies taken from his personal collections, as well as various questions on “Morbihan antiquities”.

The original manuscript, consisting of more than two hundred and eighty melodies, consists of short melodies called “Bretonnes”. The collector gives a very limited number to the reader on the context, period and place of his musical subject. Thus, one cannot define if these melodies were instrumental, vocal, if they were intended to serve dance or otherwise.

It is, therefore, appropriate to approach this manuscript first by a systematic examination. In order to be able to sort, classify, and define each tune individually, recording is, to my mind, a good option.

This analytical approach would lead to a cataloging of the different melodies in Joseph Mahé's manuscript, relating to certain musical notions: stature, rhythmic structure, motif and melodic structure, allowing an in-depth analysis of the document, and using these elements in order to achieve to an artistic material.

