

MIDDLE AND LATE BASES FOR REVIVED CORNISH

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Skians 2018
Tremough

A matter of principle

The first principle of SWF as set out by Bock and Bruch (2008) is that of **inclusivity**:

“Users of all varieties of Revived Cornish should be able to write as they speak”.

The word for 'road'

| | Middle Cornish | Late Cornish |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Traditional Spelling | <i>forth</i> (occasionally <i>for</i>) | <i>vor</i> (Rowe, J.Boson) <i>vorr</i> (N.Boson) |
| Pronunciation | ['fɔrð] | ['vɔr] ≠ ['vɔ:r] (lenited <i>mor</i>) |
| Modern spelling | <i>fordh</i> | (1) <i>vorr</i> ; (2) <i>for</i> ' (3) <i>fordh</i> |

Loss of [-ð] and voicing of [f-] are both **predictable**.

The word for ‘bishop’

Middle Cornish

Late Cornish

Traditional
Spelling

epscop
(occasionally *epscob*)

espak, ispak (Lhuyd)

Pronunciation

[ˈɛpskɔp]

[ˈɛspak]

Modern

epskop

espak

The metathesis is **unpredictable**.

Medieval spelling

The bishop said: “The girls from Probus wish to take flowers from the garden”,
but they replied: “We do not know if we have permission to cut the tops from them”.

**An epscop a leverys an mowysy mon a Lamprobus a vyn
kemerer blegyow dyworth an lowarth
mes i a worthebys ny wothyn mar sus cummyas thynny
treghy an pennow a thyworta**

Modern spellings of the MidC form

Kernewek Kemmyn

An epskop a leveris: “An mowysi moen a Lannbroboes a vynn kemmeres bleujyow diworth an lowarth”,
mes i a worthybis: “Ny wodhon mars eus kummyas dhyn ni treghi an pennow a-dhiworta.”

SWF-M

An epskop a leveris: “An mowysi moon a Lannbrobus a vynn kemeres bleujyow dhyworth an lowarth”,
mes i a worthybis: “Ny wodhon mars eus kummyas dhyn ni treghi an pennow a-dhyworta.”

Trad. spellings of the LateC form

Lhuyd's orthography

An **espak** a **laveraz** an **muzi** mûn a Probus a **vedn kÿmeraz**
bledzhyow **dhort** an **lûar**,
bez an **dzhÿi** a worrebas na woren mars ez kibmiaz **dho** nei
terhi an **pedno** dhortans.

Signpost spelling

An **ispak** a **lavaras** an **muzzi** moon a Lamprobus a **vedn**
komeraz blegyow **durt** an **loar**,
buz an **dzhÿi** a worebaz na woryn mars ez kibmias **they**
trehe an **pednaw** thortans.

Differences between Middle and Late

There are up to 26 differences between the Middle form and the Late form.

Of these, up to 16 are **predictable**, and 10 are **not**.

Modern spelling of the Late form

SWF-L

An epskop a **lavarras** “An **mosi moon** a Lannbrobus a **vedn**
kemeres **bleujyow** **dort** an lowar’

bes anjei a worthybis “**Na woryn** mars eus **kubmyas** **dhe** **nei**
treghi an **pednow** **dhortans.**”

Of the 10 **unpredictable** changes, SWF-L **writes 8,**
and fails to write 2.

Of the up to 16 **predictable** changes, it **writes 8,**
and fails to write 8.

ORTHOGRAPHIC OPTIONS

- 1) Reduce the number of variants to a minimum
- 2) Increase the no. of variants to a maximum
- 3) Do nothing at all
(the present policy of some SWF supporters)

1) Reduce variants to a minimum

SWF-L with minimum variants

An **espak** a leveris “An **mosi moon** a Lannbrobus a vynn
kemeres bleujyow **dort** an lowarth”,

bes anjei a worthybis “**Na woryn** mars eus kummyas **dhe** ni
terhi an pennow a-dhywort**ans**.”

This solution requires anyone using a LateC base to internalize all of the predictable sound-changes between MidC and LateC.

Principal **predictable** sound-changes

| | Date | KK | SWF Middle | SWF Late |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| [ɛ] > [a] in final open syllables | c. 1475 | a | a | a |
| [ɛʊ] > [ɔʊ] in polysyllables | c. 1475 | ew | ew | ow |
| Stressed [-ɪʊ] > [-ɛʊ] | various | yw | yw | ew |
| Unrounding of [œ:] > [ɛ:] | c. 1525 | eu | eu | <u>eu</u> |
| [ɛ] > [a] in final closed syllables | c. 1525 | e | e | <u>e</u> |
| [ɔ] > [a] in final syllables | c. 1525 | o | o | <u>o</u> |
| [o:] > [u:] | 16 th cent. | oe | oo | oo |
| Pre-occlusion [nn, mm] > [dn, bm] | c. 1575 | nn, mm | nn, mm | dn, bm |
| Unrounding of [y:] > [i:] | c. 1575 | u | u | <u>u</u> |
| [rð] > [rr] medially and finally | c. 1600 | rdh | rdh | <u>rdh</u> |
| Lowering of [ɪ] to [ɛ] | c. 1600 | y | y | e |

2) Maximize the no. of variants

Kernewek Kemmyn with max. allowance for Late forms

An **espak** a **lavaras**: “An **mozi** **moun** a Lannbroboes a **vedn**
kameras blejyow dort an **louar**”,

bes anjey a **worrebas**: “**Na woryn** mars **es kibmyas dhe-nei**
terhi an **pednow dhortans**.”

This solution is the most faithful linguistically for users of a Late Cornish base, but effectively creates two separate orthographies for Middle and Late.

Would this satisfy *Cussel an Tavas Kernuak*?

Existing differences between SWF-M and SWF-L

SWF-M

An epskop a leveris: “An mowysi moon a Lannbrobus a vynn kemeres bleujyow dhyworth an lowarth”,
mes i a worthybis: “Ny wodhon mars eus kummyas dhyn ni treghi an pennow a-dhyworta.”

SWF-L

An epskop a lavarras “An mosi moon a Lannbrobus a vedn kemeres bleujyow dort an lowar’
bes anjei a worthybis “Na woryn mars eus kubmyas dhe nei treghi an pednow dhortans.”

Some final comments

- For decades, the number of speakers using a Middle base has greatly exceeded those using a Late base.
- SWF-L was created partly to accommodate this latter group, but the *Cussell* will not use it.
- *A Learner's Cornish Dictionary* uses only SWF-M.
- Yet SWF-M has been adulterated by the inclusion of the Late form <oo> from signpost spelling; this is contrary to principle 3 (accuracy) and principle 5 (authenticity) of SWF.
- Repeated requests to rectify this problem have been subjected to stonewalling.