

AND SO TO ZED

Putting <z> into
the orthography of Revived Cornish

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Sources of [s] and [z]

- Old Cornish /s/
- Assibilation of Old Cornish /t/ in /nt/, /lt/
- Assibilation of Old Cornish /d/
- Loan-words with Old French /ç/
- Loan-words with Middle English /s/
- Loan-words with Middle English /z/

Phonetic environments for consonants

- Stressed final
- Stressed medial before high front vowels
- Stressed medial before other vowels
- Initial
- Unstressed final
- Unstressed pre-tonic

Sound-spelling correspondence

Spelling	Supposed sound	Sources showing this spelling
<S> <SS>	Ambiguous [s] or [z]	All
<Z>	[z]	In Late Cornish, all except Old French /ç/
<c(e)>	[s]	Old French /ç/ Middle English /s/
<g>	[dʒ]	Medially, Old Cornish /d/ (and occasionally Old Cornish /s/)
<th>	[θ]	Old French /ç/

[s] AND [z]
STRESSED
FINALLY

Type-words

Source	Type-word	Meaning
OldC /s/	GLAS	blue, green
OldC /nt/ > <ns>	NANS	valley
OldC /d/ > <s>	TAS	father
OldF /ç/	PLAS	place
MidE /s/	ELLAS	alas
MidE /z/	GES	joke

Evidence from spelling

Type-word	Early MidC	TH, SA, CW	Late Cor.
GLAS	-s	-s	-z -s
NANS	-s	-s -ce	-s -z -ce
TAS	-s	-s	-z -s
PLAS	-s -ce -th	-ce -s	-s -z
ELLAS	-s	-s -ce	-s -z
GES	-s	-s	-z

Evidence from rhymes (1)

Contrast between TAS and PLAS

BK19.25 to 19.28

<i>Kepar del vyn renothas</i>	A	TAS
<i>me a ganso myghtern Das</i>	B	PLAS
<i>hag in batal hag in cas</i>	A	TAS
<i>me an socker in pub plas</i>	B	PLAS

Evidence from rhymes (2)

Contrast between PLAS and others

PC.1399-1404

<i>my a tru sur vn clotte bras</i>	A	GLAS
<i>ware yn y theu-lagas</i>	A	(TAS)
<i>may cutho hanter y fath</i>	B	PLAS
<i>yn ta ef ren dyndylas</i>	A	(GLAS)
<i>pan cam worthybys cayfas</i>	A	(ELLAS)
<i>cafus drok ha yfle grath</i>	B	PLAS

Evidence from rhymes (3)

It is the contrast between rhymes which is important.

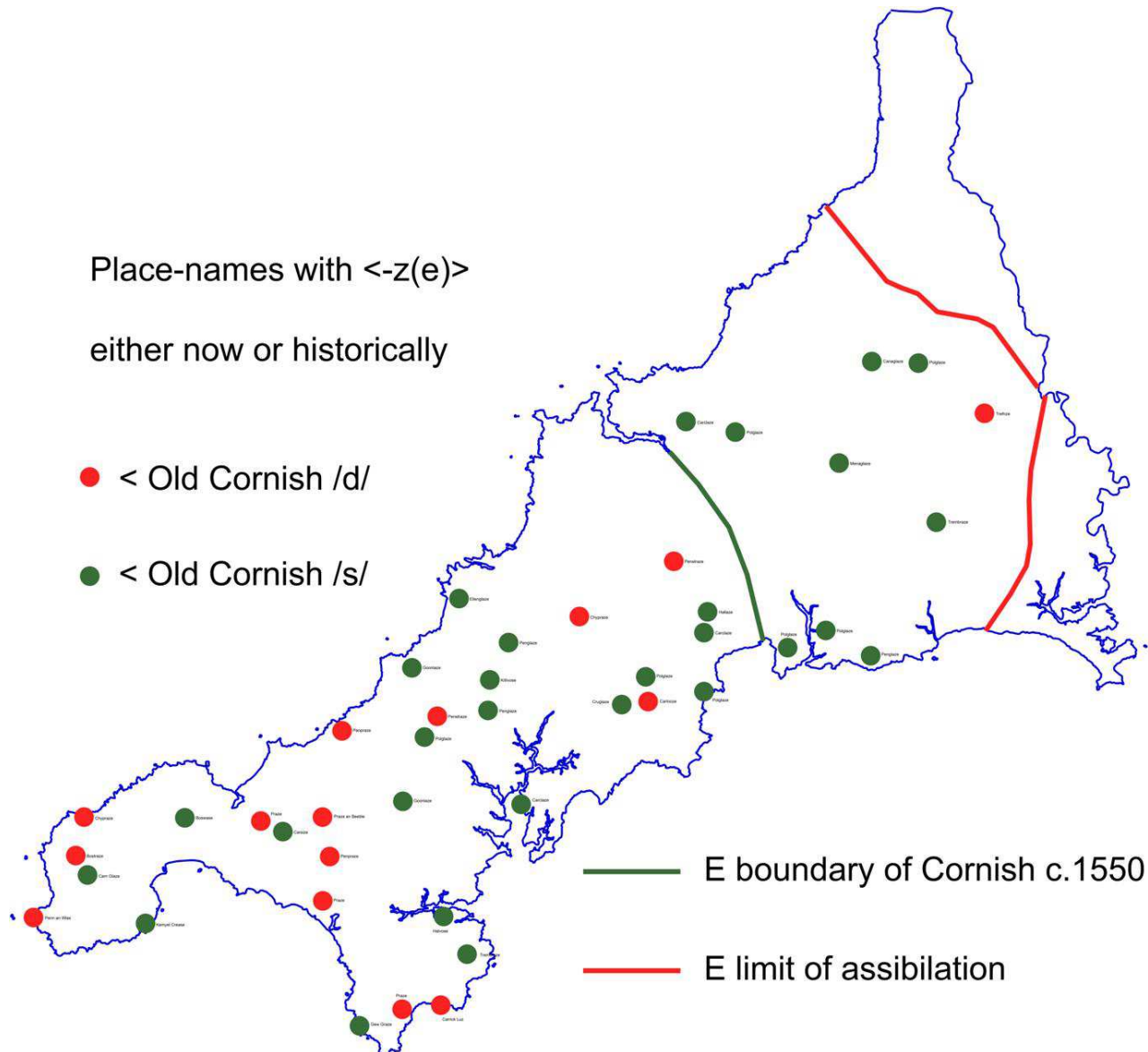
1 st type-word	TAS	GLAS / TAS
Spelling	<-s>	<-s>
Pronunciation	[-z]	[-z]
2 nd type-word	PLAS	PLAS
Spelling	<-s>	<-th>
Pronunciation	[-s]	[-θ]

Evidence from place-names (1)

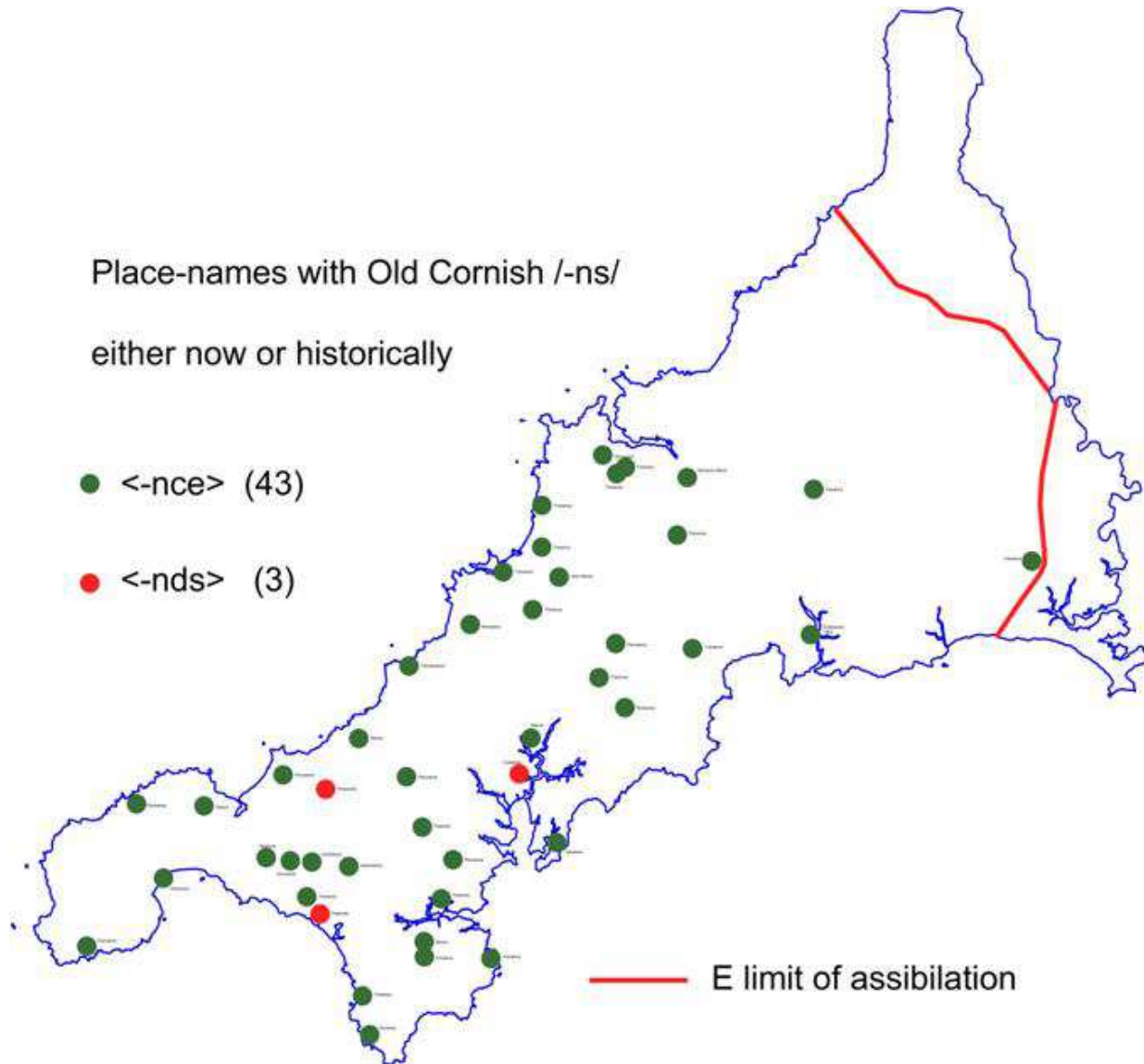
Old Cornish /-s/

- Late Cornish *glaze* for **glas** shows that [-s] was voiced to [-z]; but when?
- Although <z> was not recorded before c.1550, there are place-names with <-ze> to the east of the boundary of Cornish-speaking c.1550. This suggests that [-s] was voiced to [-z] well before that date.
- Trembraze (Liskeard) (**tre an bras**) was spelled *Trembraz* in 1339.

Evidence from place-names (2)



Evidence from place-names (3)



Old Cornish /nt/ finally

- Assibilation is already present in OCV.
e.g. *dans, nans, guins, pons*
- Of 46 place-names containing NANS-type words stressed finally, 43 are spelled with **<-nce>**, meaning [-ns].

Pronunciations for stressed final

Usual

Occasional

Type-word	Source	MidC	LateC
GLAS	OldC [-s]	[-z]	[-z]
NANS	OldC [-ns]	[-ns]	[-ns] [-nz]
TAS	OldC [-z]	[-z]	[-z]
PLAS	OldF [-θs]	[-s] [-θ]	[-s] [-z]
ELLAS	MidE [-s]	[-s]	[-s] [-z]
GES	MidE [-z]	[-z]	[-z]

[s] AND [z]
STRESSED
MEDIALLY

[s] and [z] stressed medially

Source	Example	Meaning
OldC /s/	KASEK	mare
OldC /nt/ > <ns>	NANSow	valleys
OldC /d/ > <s>	TASow	fathers
OldF /ç/	PLASow	places
MidE /s/	RESEV	receives
MidE /z/	PRISON	prison

Stressed Old Cornish /-s-/ type-word KASEK

- The following words have <s> in Middle Cornish and <z> in Late Cornish:

asen, asenn, asow, esel, isel, kasek, kasel, keser, kosel, losow, mosek

- The earliest examples of <z> are from Carew (1602): *cazock, mowzack*;
but the sound is likely to have been [z] much earlier than this date.
- The word ***kusul*** appears to have had [-s-] rather than [-z-]; note *cucell* (SA65v).

Stressed Old Cornish /-d-/ type-word TASOW (1)

- The reflex of Old Cornish /-d-/ was commonly spelled <-s-> in Middle Cornish.
- This did not apply when the /d/ was followed by (vowel + /m,n,l,r/), e.g. *ledan*.
- The fact that /-d-/ was voiced suggests that the <-s-> also stood for a voiced consonant, viz. [-z-].

Stressed Old Cornish /-d-/ type-word TASOW (2)

- In certain MidC texts, the reflex of OldC /-d-/ before high front vowels was spelled <-g->; this palatalization shows that the consonant was voiced.
- In Late Cornish, the reflex of OldC /-d-/ in **gasa** and **esa** was spelled <r>; this rhotacization shows that the MidC <-s-> meant [-z-].

Middle English /-z-/: type-word PRISON

- The following loan-words were spelled with <s> in Middle Cornish and in Late Cornish:
bysi, Moyses, musur, kosin, plesour, presens, present, prison, reson, Sesar, seson, Yesu, Yesus
- In Modern English, these words are pronounced with [z], and one supposes that to have been the case in Middle English, too.

Old Cornish /nt/ medially

- Assibilation is already present in OCV, e.g. *camhinsic, briansen*
- Later, palatalization occurs in some texts before high front vowels, e.g. *kerenge*; this indicates that <ns> must have meant [nz].

How to change [ke'rente] to [ke'renge] in 3 moves

V-A-P	A-V-P	A-P-V
[ke'rente]	[ke'rente]	[ke'rente]
[ke'rende]	[ke'rentse]	[ke'rentse]
[ke'rendze]	[ke'rendze]	[ke'rentʃe] <i>*kerenche</i>
[ke'rendʒe]	[ke'rendʒe]	[ke'rendʒe]

[s] and [z] stressed medially

Source	Supposed development
OldC /s/	Voiced to [z], 13 th c.
OldC /nt/ > <ns>	Assibilated to [nz], 12 th c.
OldC /d/ > <s>	Assibilated to [z], 13 th c.
OldF /ç/	Simplified from [θs] to [s]
MidE /s/	Remained as [s]
MidE /z/	Remained as [z]

Initial /s/ (1)

- In Late Cornish, the reflex of Old Cornish /s-/ was spelled <z-> in a number of cases

- e.g. from Lhuyd's notebook:

Zah Zêath Zillan Zowl Zeithan

sagh ***seth*** ***Syllan*** ***sowl*** ***seythun***

bag arrow Scilly thatch week

- The same applied to loan-words, e.g.

Zart (***sort***) 'hedgehog'

Initial /s/ (2)

- Although we cannot directly date the voicing of /s-/, it is likely to have been contemporary with the voicing of /f-/, which we can date.
- Forms such as *an vor* for ***an fordh*** did not appear before the late 16th century; note *Penfose alias Penvos* 1571.
- Initial voicing is therefore taken to be late, perhaps contemporary with initial voicing in some Breton dialects.

Recommendations (1)

<z> should be used in the following cases

Source	Position	Stress	KK	with <z>
OldC /d/	final	stressed	<i>tas</i>	<i>taz</i>
OldC /d/	medial	stressed	<i>pysi</i>	<i>pyzi</i>
OldC /d/	medial	unstressed	<i>boghosogyon</i>	<i>boghozogyon</i>
OldC /nt/	medial	stressed	<i>synsi</i>	<i>synzi</i>
OldC /nd/	“medial”	stressed	<i>nyns</i>	<i>nynz</i>
OldC /s/	final	stressed	<i>bras</i>	<i>braz</i>
OldC /s/	medial	stressed	<i>kasek</i>	<i>kazek</i>
MidE /z/	final	stressed	<i>ges</i>	<i>gez</i>
MidE /z/	medial	stressed	<i>prison</i>	<i>przon</i>

Recommendations (2)

<s> should be retained in the following cases

Source	Position	Stress	KK	English
OldC /d/	final	unstressed	<i>gwelys</i>	seen
OldC /nt/	final	stressed	<i>nans</i>	valley
OldC /nt/	final	unstressed	<i>gwelons</i>	they see
MidE /s/	final	stressed	<i>kas</i>	case
MidE /s/	medial	stressed	<i>resev</i>	receives
MidE /ns/	final	stressed	<i>pryns</i>	prince
MidE /ns/	medial	stressed	<i>prynsys</i>	princes
OldF /ç/	final	stressed	<i>plas</i>	place
OldF /ç/	medial	stressed	<i>plasow</i>	places

Recommendations (3)

Minor considerations

- **mes** ‘but’ (usually unstressed) may be distinguished from **mez** ‘out’ (stressed).
- **bys** ‘until’ (usually unstressed) may be distinguished from **byz** ‘world’ (stressed).
- Rules of internal sandhi will apply, e.g. /brazder/ should continue to be spelled **braster** (cf. **tekter**).

Effect of introducing <z>

Bro goth agan tazow, dha fleghes a'th kar;
gwla^z ker an Howlsedhes, pan vro yw dha bar?
War oll an norvy^z, 'th on ni skoellys a-le^z,
mes agan kere^za yw dhiz.

Kernow! Kernow! Y keryn Kernow;
an mor hedre vo yn fo^z dhis a-dro,
'th on onan hag oll rag Kernow.

A test-case: John Keigwin (1)

Ytho ni mar ughell kemerys gans an peth yw moigh vel
mear pernys theworth ny ganz agan pow Kernow;
an karenze y the gwitha saw agan honan; han gwyr
composter agan curyn; en termyn a alga ny dry mar
nebaz tha gan sawder

A test-case: John Keigwin (2)

An dyth ma yw an
Dew an Taz don
Neb yn gwelyn yn perfyth
Leeas tra war feys dyblans
Hag oll an bysma an
 gwreans
Ynweth why a welys
Oll an bys destriys
Gans an trom deal
Dean+vyth hep sparya
Mes Noy ha wreg ha flehes

Deugh why omma ware
 avorow
Brassa why a weal oberow
Der Dew an Taz gevyans
 grontys
Tha neb yw der pegh kelles
Gwrewth an menstrells ol
 tha pyba
Mollen ny warbarth daunsya
Kepar yw an for yn gwary.
Also Charles' Letter

A test-case: John Keigwin (3)

expected	actual	number	percentage
<z>	<z>	19	15
<z>	<g>	4	3
<s(s)>	<s(s)>	81	65
<z>	<s>	12	10
<s>	<z>	8	6
	Total	124	100

Summary

- People have talked for years about introducing <z> into the spelling of Revived Cornish.
- Nothing has yet been done, partly because it was not clear where it should be introduced.
- The results presented here indicate clearly where <z> should be used, and it is recommended that it should be introduced.
- The effect of introducing <z> would be noticeable, but not startling.