Confusion of *s*/*th* in Medial and Final Positions

4.1. The Affricate /ç/ in Middle Cornish

It appears that an occasional tendency to confuse *s* and *th* in medial and final positions had already developed in certain words by the beginning of the Middle Cornish period.[1] This may or may not have been the case in Old Cornish as well, but unfortunately no evidence of such a variation survives in the extant material from that period.[2] However, instances in which the variant *th* occurs instead of *s* are not widespread. In the bulk of the extant Middle Cornish material, this phenomenon occurs only in a very narrow range of words, a feature that was noted by Nance and later analysed by George.[3]

Nearly all of the instances occur in final position in just three loanwords, namely *fath* < *fas* "face" (OFr. *face* < L. *faciēs*), *gra(y)th* < *gras* "grace" (OFr. *grace* < L. *gratiā*) and *plath* < *plas* "place" (OFr. *place* < L. *platea*), which are found frequently as final rhymes.[4] To these should be added *spath* < *spas* "space" (OFr. *space* < L. *spatium*), the compound *hardygrath* < *hardygras "vengeance, ill-will" (MlE. *hardegrace*), *rychyth* "riches" (cf. (cf. *rychys*, cf. MlE. *riches(se)* < OFr. *richece*), *oyeth* (MlE. *oyes* < Fr. *oyez*).[5] In contrast, no example of **cath occurs for *cas* "case, instance" (OFr. *cas* < L. *cāsus*).[6] While this different treatment of *cas* might be attributed simply to the avoidance of potential

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[1] First noticed by Stokes, BM (ed. 1872), Further Corrigenda and Addenda, p. 6, line 443.
[2] See below for a discussion of the corresponding phoneme in Old and Middle Breton.
[3] NCED, pp. 35 [Headword: dasserghy], 56 [fas, fath], 69 [gras, grath], 79 [hardygras], 130 [plas, plath], 154 [spas]; PHC, § 14.5.6, pp. 343-4. See also Toorians, *The Middle Cornish Charter Endorsement*, pp. 33-5. See further below for *datherghy* < *dasserghy*, *lathys/lasys*, *na thesons*.
[4] *fath* OM 1412; *fas* PA 59b; *grath* RD 252; *grayth* PA 222d; *gras* PC 118; *plath* BM 946, *plas* 2286.
[5] *spas* PC 1088; *spath* BM 942 (noted by Toorians), *hardygrath* 948; *rychyth* BM 429 (3 exx.), *rychys* 443; *oyeth* OM2297. Nance rejected Stokes' reading *croyth* BM 4183 *croych* BM 4183, NCED, p. 30.
[6] *cas* BK 38i.

confusion with the common noun *cath* "cat",[7] it is striking that the final segment of OFr. *cas* was /s/ while that of OFr. *face*, *grace*, *place* and *space* was the affricate /ç/, a fact that has been apparent from the spelling in French until the present day.[8] A place-name *Das* (OFr. *Dace* < L. *Dacia*) occurs in the newly discovered BK (rhyming with *plas*), which would have contained the same phoneme /ç/ in Medieval Latin.[9]

It is likely that these words were borrowed at a time when both Cornish and English were both borrowing heavily from French. The OFr. phoneme /ç/ did not have an equivalent phoneme in MlE., and may have been lost in MlFr. during the 13th century, so these words appear to have been early loans.[10] This was not a problem for Cornish, since the phoneme arose in *dassorghy* (see below). However, it is perfectly possible that English realised the sound as /ts/, which would probably have been sound substituted as /ç/ in French and Cornish alike.

Setting aside these loanwords for the moment, the fact that there are no instances of final *s* > *th* in words with etymological /s/ in that position would appear to be highly significant. This might potentially be explained by a lack of attested examples, since the total number of instances in which this feature occurs in final position is small.[11] However, even considering that the variation represents only a sporadic sound change, it is common enough within the limited range of affected

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[7] *cath* "cat" BM 3413.

[8] H. Bonnard, *Synopsis de Phonétique Historique*, p. 36. This /ç/ arose from various sources in OFr., including palatalised /c´/ (e.g. L. *faciēs*) and palatalised /t´/ (e.g. L. *gratiā*, *platea*, *spatium*).

[9] *Das* BK 207b. The character is named in Latin immediately above the stanza as *Rex Dacie*. The example *duk Boecy* BK 348h (= dux Boeti[e]) rhymes with *enmy* 348i, which shows an additional final syllable on the model of the Latin. (The disyllabic name *Lucy* Bk 248c (12 exx.) < L. Lucius is must be likewise rejected.) Moreover, one would expect **Bo(y)s* with /oe/ > /ʊ/ if the form were genuine, as <oe> is very rare. Lastly, <c> for /ç/ is so rare in MlC. that it occurs otherwise only in *lacie* PC2575, never in final position. Overall, *Boecy* does not seem to be a C. form.

[10] Fisak, J., *A Short Grammar of Middle English*, § 2.68 (18) & n. 1.

[11] A total of 39 instances out of 358 based upon George's figures (adding *spas*/*spath* and *hardygrath*), giving a frequency of 9.8%. These figures are derived from PHC, § 14.5.6, p. 343, see table.

words.[12] If so, it would be surprising if coincidence alone could account for the fact that no examples of final /s/ were written as *th*, if that phoneme could indeed be affected. It seems reasonable then to assume, as George did following Jackson's analysis of similar words in Breton (some exactly cognate with the Cornish examples), that words with final /s/ were indeed unaffected and a separate affricate phoneme /ç/ existed in a small range of words.[13] Since OFr. *face*, *grace*, *place* and *space* had /ç/, it would appear that the phoneme was borrowed into Old Cornish and Old Breton in these words without sound substitution of /s/ for /ç/.

The variation has also been observed in Middle Cornish in medial position in parts of the verb *dasser(g)hy* "to rise again, be resurrected" < Brit. **do–ate–surg–* (< L. *surgere*), once again paralleled by an exact cognate MlB. *daczorch*, *dascorch* ModB. *dasorc'hiñ*.[14] It is not surprising that the vast majority of instances occur in RD, since the verb is used in the religious literature with reference to the Resurrection of Christ. The apparent sound change occurs in six of these instances, two of the verb-noun *datherghy* and four of the past participle *dather(gh)ys*, *dathserghys*.[15] The single instance of *dathserghys* is particularly interesting, since it is a unique attempt to render the phoneme that suggests that the scribe was aware that the sound in question was neither [s], [ss] nor [θ]. One instance of the derived noun *dasserghyens* "resurrection" also appears as *dethyrryans* in TH.[16]

Since George had not seen the newly discovered BK at the time of his analysis of the phoneme, he could not include the two examples of the

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[12] In the three common words discussed, the frequency of *s > th* is respectively 14.8%, 8.2% and 10.1% according to George's figures. The words *spath* and *hardygrath* (this latter being a compound of *gras/grath*) occur only once at BM 942-8, also rhyming with *fath* and *plath*. The word *spas* occurs four times: PC 1088; RD 840; BM 1012, 3979. In all but the last instance it rhymes with one or more of the words above (and no other). Thus *spath* represents 20% of the total occurrences of the word.

[13] PHC, § 14.5.6, pp. 343-4; HPB, § 1090-7, pp. 768-73.

[14] *dasserghy* RD 61; *dasserhy* PC 3085. See HPB, § 1092, pp.769-70.

[15] *datherghy* RD 5, 7, *datherghys* 475, 481, *datherys* 567, *dathserghys* 1462.

[16] *thasserghyens* [with lenition] RD 2632; *thethyrryans* [with lenition] TH 49.12.

preterite *dathorhas* in that text.[17] Although no other inherited word is attested that contains the phoneme /ç/, the significance of this verb is twofold. Firstly, the phoneme almost certainly originated in this verb before the separation of Breton and Cornish (and probably in other words that are not attested in Cornish), since both languages possessed the phoneme. This is corroborated by the fact that the spellings *cz*, *sc*, *zc* and others used for the phoneme in Breton occur in other inherited words such as MlB. *daczon* ModB. *dasson* "echo" < Brit. **do–ate–son–* (< L. *sonare*), MlB. *dizsul* ModB. *disul* "Sunday" < Brit. **dɪð+sul* (< L. *dies sulis*) and MlB. *euicze* ModB. *evit-se* "for that, like that" < Brit. **wößid se*.[18] Secondly, it must have come about by sandhi where final /d/ (and /ð/ in MlB. *dizsul* < **dið sul*) came into contact with initial /s/. That it did not fall together with /ss/ is made clear by the fact that words such as MlC. *nessa* < *nes+ha* never occur with *th*. In the same way that Jackson concluded that the resulting /ç/ was the basis upon which words with this sound were borrowed in Breton from Old French, the same borrowing apparently occurred in Cornish.[19] Consequently it is easy to understand why substitution of /s/ or /ss/ did not take place, since an exactly equivalent phoneme already existed in the language.

Nance noted the opposite change in medial position in the verb *lacie* < *lathye* "to fasten, fix (together)".[20] Some further useful examples have been pointed out by Toorians, including a plural *lasys* < *lathys* "laths" containing the same root, which he took to be a loanword from English.[21] The form of the plural ending would indeed tend to suggest this, although it seems more likely that the root of these words was

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[17] *e tathorhas* "he rose again" [with provection] BK 41f, *am dathorhas* [scribal error for **an dathorhas*] "resurrected him". Interestingly, one instance is intransitive and the other transitive.
[18] HPB, § 1092, pp. 769-70. Presumably ModB. *evit-se* has been restored on the basis of its elements, since both retain independent meanings. Nance's reconstruction **dasseny* is a quite convincing form.
[19] HPB, § 1090, pp. 768-9.
[20] *lacie* PC 2575; *lathye* OM 2473. NCED, pp. 94 [Headword: lacye], 96 [lasya, lathya].
[21] *lasys* OM 2474, *lathys* 2446. Toorians, *The Middle Cornish Charter Endorsement*, p. 35 (note 21).

originally borrowed from OFr. *laz* "snare" (< L. *laqueus*) with /ç/ as in Breton.[22] The inevitable conclusion would seem to be that MlC. **las* < PrimCB. **laç* < OFr. *laz* already existed and that MlC. **lath*, pl. *lathys* < MlE. *lath*, pl. *lathys* was confused with it as a result of their similar meanings. In fact, it may be more reasonable to propose that MlC. *lacie* represents an older form and that MlC. *lathye* was initially the result of the same vacillation of spelling and apparent change *s > th* seen above. If this confusion was compounded by confusion with the later loanword *lathys* from English (and quite possibly another derived verb *lathye*), the potential for realising the rare phoneme /ç/ as [θ], or at the very least writing *th*, must have become considerable. It is by no means impossible that an initially orthographical variation could have become embroiled in a subsequent phonemic confusion in such cases.

Toorians' interpretation of an instance of *mes* "out" as a variant of *meth* "shame" is certainly in error, as has been pointed out by Padel.[23] It can consequently be disregarded. It may also be doubtful whether the example *na thesons* really does stand for **na the(u)thons*, **na th(u)ethons* "they have not come", although it is by no means impossible that it does show a change *th > s*.[24] Even so, the insertion of *–s–* in the perfect tense that occurs in the plurals of regular verbs could equally account for this example. The same feature occurs colloquially in some dialects of Welsh, where *daeson nhw* may replace *daethon nhw* "they came".

A further possibility is that the verbal particle *yth* has been inserted between vowels in the combination **na+esons*, giving **na+th+esons* instead of regular *nag esons* "they are not". An exact parallel occurs commonly in dialects of Breton in forms such as *ne'z it ket* "ye will not

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[22] J.R.F. Piette, *French Loanwords in Middle Breton*, p. 136 [Headword: lacc].
[23] L. Toorians, *The Middle Cornish Charter Endorsement*, pp. 33-4, reviewed by O.J. Padel, CMCS 30 (Winter 1995), pp. 123-7, see comments on line 23, p. 126.
[24] *na thesons* PC 1247.

go" for the standard construction *ned it ket*, *n'it ket*. Since there are no other examples in Cornish and both possible meanings of *na thesons* fit the context, it is difficult to decide which of the three explanations is correct. However, if Toorians is correct in ascribing a change *th > s* to this word, it would be the only case for which no reasonable explanation can be given for the direction or phonetic motivation of the confusion. Since all other words with /θ/ are demonstrably unaffected (discounting *lathys* for the reasons given), it seems perverse to admit a single, dubious example of the opposite confusion *th > s*.

Returning to the orthographical change *s > th*, the two remaining examples cited by Toorians are more interesting in their implications. Although the word *denseth* "humanity" was noted by Nance, his reconstruction *denseth < *denuseth* formed from ***denus* "human" (< MlC. *den+–us*) plus *–eth* is almost certainly a convenient fiction, albeit one possibly containing a grain of truth.[25] Although his explanation would require irregular and unexplained syncope and is probably best discarded, it is entirely possible that *denseth < densys* (W. *dyndod*, *dyndid*) was in part influenced by the suffix *–eth* used to form abstract nouns. The A-rhymes in the stanza are *seth*, *pytet[h]* (twice) and *bythqueth*, but any possible internal rhyme between *natureth* and *denseth* within the line could be no more than visual, since the B-rhymes are *welse*, *denseth*, *kerense*, *ow pewe*. As final [θ] in *denseth* was silent, it would seem to have been lost here, on the model of *kerensa* (B. *karentez* W. *carennydd*). Similarly, Toorians notes *anfueth < anfu(e)s*, *anfevs* (W. *anffawd*) with the same change, which rhymes with *y ȝeth* "it went" (W.

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[25] *denseth* PA 223b. NCED, pp. 38 [Headwords: denseth, denus]. There is apparently no connection with *densa < *den da* "good man": although it could have been re-analysed as *densa < *denseth* with loss of /θ/, the semantic leap between "good man" and "humanity, human feeling" seems unconvincing.

yr aeth MlB. *ez aez*), *hueth* "at ease, joyful" (W. *hawdd*) and *cueth* "sorrow" (W. *cawdd* [obs.] B. *keuz*).[26]

It is remarkable that these all appear to have final [θ], even though the last two have etymological /ð/, which implies that /ð/ was normally de-voiced in pausa.[27] The word *anfueth* cannot be explained by contamination with *–eth*, as it would surely have been clear to a speaker that it consisted of a negative prefix *an–* plus *fues* "fortune, prosperity" (W. *ffawd*).[28] The important point about *denseth* (W. *dyndod*, *dyndid*) and *anfueth* (W. *anffawd*) is that they had final etymological /z/ < /d/ rather than the phoneme /ç/ found in *dasserghy*, *lacie*, *fas*, *gras*, *plas* and *spas* discussed above. Yet the spellings and rhymes found in PA suggest that it was instead realised as [θ] in just these few rare instances.

In the light of the change seen in these words, it is inherently likely that /z/ was occasionally liable to be de-voiced to [ç] in final position rather than [s], which was confused with [θ] in words like *anfueth* and sporadically lost in cases like *denseth* (like **kerenseth* with [θ] /ð/). It is important to note two points: (1) that the percentage of words so affected with final [ç] /z/ < /d/ is vanishingly small compared to those unaffected, and (2) that no attested instances of etymological /s/ in final position show the change. On the second point, it has been argued above that this is unlikely to be merely through a lack of evidence. Supposing that final /z/ was more normally de-voiced as [s], one would expect that the phoneme could not then be confused with /ç/ and therefore that it would have been written as *s* rather than *th*. This is indeed what occurs in the overwhelming majority of examples. For example, *tas* "father" with final

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[26] *anfueth* PA 225d (cf. *anfus* PC 1501, *anfues* 1940; *anfevs* RD 2137), *y ȝeth* 225a, *hueth* 225b, *cueth* 225c. The stanzas rhyme in paired couplets, although the majority of pairs also rhyme like this one. It cannot therefore be argued that *y ȝeth*/*hueth* /θ/–/ð/ and *cueth*/*anfueth* /ð/–/z/ rhyme in opposition.

[27] This de-voicing was first noted by W. Stokes, *Cornish Glossary*, 1870, reprinted from Transactions of the Philological Society, 1868-9, p. 2. See NCED, "Pronunciation" [preface, no page].

[28] *fues* BK 219c. No example of the word without the negative prefix was known to previous scholars.

/z/ < /d/ cannot be **tath* and likewise *yn mes* "out" with final /s/ never occurs as **yn meth*.[29] The phoneme /z/ < /d/ is so common in final position that two isolated instances must be regarded as highly exceptional realisations of de-voiced final /z/.

Finally, it should be added that *anfueth* and *denseth* would have been impossible forms if de-voicing of final /z/ was not a regular rule in pausa.[30] This in itself is an important question in Middle Cornish phonology, since the graph *s* can mean both [z] and [s]. The potential confusion inherent in this orthographical tradition has allowed for dispute as to whether such a rule in fact existed.[31] Likewise, the rhymes *hueth* and *cueth* would not have been chosen for *y ʒeth* and *anfueth* if /ð/ had not been de-voiced to [θ] in final position. Again, since both sounds were represented by *th* in the orthography of Middle Cornish, the de-voicing rules in Cornish have hitherto been the subject of debate.[32]

4.2. The Evidence of BK: Late Middle Cornish /ç/ > /s/?

Two examples of the preterite *dathorhas* "rose again, (was) resurrected" have already been cited in the foregoing section, but in fact the evidence of BK introduces some apparent irregularities that deserve to be examined here. Some of the rules that have been extrapolated from the above discussion seem to be broken in a handful of irregular instances, especially in the matter of the apparent reverse confusion *th > s*. It is important to ascertain whether any substantial phonemic confusions had arisen and, if possible, reconcile this new material with the other texts.

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[29] *tas* OM 1, *yn mes* 83. This ignores the possible change /s/ > /z/, whose occurrence and date is not under discussion here. See the chapter "Assibilation and Palatalisation", § 7.4 (iii).
[30] As observed by Stokes, see note above.
[31] See N.J.A. Williams, *Cornish Today*, § 8.8, 8.17-19, pp. 61, 67-8.
[32] *ibid.*, § 8.8, 8.15-16, 8.19, pp. 61, 65-6, 67-8. Nance's revivalist Cornish correctly recognised final de-voicing, following the observations made by Stokes. Later orthographies have ignored it, however.

It may be instructive to note that the words *fas*, *gras* and *plas* never appear with final *th* for *s* in BK, CW or TH as they do in the three plays of the Ordinalia (OM, PC and RD) and in BM. This in itself might perhaps be discounted as mere coincidence, since instances of these words with *th* only account for around ten percent of the total in the earlier texts. Nonetheless, they are no less common in the later texts and continue to be employed in end rhymes. Consequently, there is a high probability that the lack of forms like *fath*, *grath* and *plath* in BK, CW and TH is too significant to be explained by coincidence alone.

It is unfortunate that no other words with etymological /ç/ occur in the later Middle Cornish texts, except the place-name *Das* "Dacia" as mentioned above.[33] It is impossible to establish whether the phoneme still existed merely on the basis of the near absence of forms with spellings in <th>.[34] Although the two instances of *dathorhas* discussed above are entirely predictable reflexes of /ç/, no instances of the verb occur with <ss> spellings. This occurrence of *th* for /ç/ ostensibly seems to contradict the evidence of the lack of forms such as *fath*, *grath* and *plath* in BK. the spellings with <th> might represent a permanent change /ç/ > /θ/ in this verb, in which case **dassorhas* would not be expected. That /θ/ might be the result internally while /s/ might occur in final position in *fas*, *gras* and *plas* is not necessarily improbable.

The evidence of BK is useful in two ways in seeking to establish whether or not the phoneme /ç/ persisted in later Middle Cornish. Firstly,

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[33] I am grateful to O.J. Padel for pointing out that *duk [C]reth* "the Duke of Crete" BK 347h is the proper reading, not *duk [G]reth* "the duke of Greece", which could otherwise have been derived from Fr. Grèce < OFr. Grecc < L. Graeca. The reason that the latter is impossible is that the characters correspond exactly with those of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, the ultimate source of the Arthurian material (see preface to BK). The derivation is therefore Fr. Crète < L. *Crēta*, which was presumably borrowed with a short vowel for it to have /tt/ > /θ/. It is irrelevant here. In fact, *myghtern Grece* BK 316f (= rex Grecorum) is a separate character, but cf. *myghtern Grek* BK 309b with /k/. If the former did have a sibilant nonetheless, it would be doubtful Cornish for the same reason as *duk Boecy* BK 348h above, that <c> for MlC. /ç/ is almost unknown, and never final.

it provides evidence of further, irregular confusions of *s* and *th* whose relevance needs to be assessed, or else eliminated from the present enquiry. No such examples are forthcoming from TH and CW. Secondly, since the text probably dates from shortly after BM and yet, unlike BM, does not contain any <th> spellings for this phoneme in final position, the evidence of rhymes needs to be assessed. In this respect, a prose text such as TH is evidently of no use; similarly in this regard, it is difficult to tell to what extent CW has been re-shaped by Late Cornish revisions. As a result, BK stands in a curious, and useful, transitional position between the two halves of the Middle Cornish period.

It seems best to assume that the phoneme /ç/ was still normally written as *s* in BK but could occasionally be written *th* instead, as had been the case in the three plays of the Ordinalia and in BM. Consequently, the affricate /ç/ still apparently existed at this time.

4.2.1. An Irregular confusion of *s* and *th*

The apparent reverse confusion *th > s* appears to occur in the example *wrusyl < wruthyl* "to do, make" (W. *gwneuthur*), which is made to rhyme with *cvsyl* "counsel" (W. *cusul* [obs.] ModB. *kuzul*).[35] Presumably this means that either that /s/ in *cvsyl* had not been voiced by this time, or else that it was deliberately unvoiced in order to force a complete rhyme.[36] The realisation of /θ/ as [s] must also have been part of this attempt at a better rhyme and may therefore be an isolated change that is not directly relevant to the discussion in hand. It is significant that there is no other example, but in any case /ç/ is not at issue here.

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[34] No words with etymological /ç/ occur in LC. either, except in the vocabularies of Tonkin, Lhuyd, Borlase and Gwavas. These are the items already discussed, since occasional exx. show that they have been derived from the MlC. texts. In any case none of the items show spellings with *th*.
[35] *wrusyl* BK 140h (cf. *wruthyl* OM 194), *cvsyl* 140g. On W. *gwneuthur*, see CCCG § 491, p. 336, n. 1.
[36] On "New Lenition" in Cornish, see § 3.3 above.

4.2.2. "*How Faryth our lord Modereth?*"

The name Modred is best known from the works of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who popularised the character as the archetypal traitor.[37] It seems that the author of *Bewnans Ke* based his play upon the lost Latin life of St. Ke, which was summarised by Albert Le Grand in 1637.[38] In turn, the saint's life drew upon Geoffrey (whatever his supposed ancient source may have been), which explains why the story and characters are almost identical. It appears that the form of the name is of SW Brythonic origin, cognate with W. *Medrawd* < Brit. **Modrod.*[39]

The expected MlC. *Modres* with final /z/ occurs once in the text, rhyming with *han viternas* "and the Queen" with final /s/.[40] An alternative spelling *Moddras* also occurs once, rhyming with *arlothas* "lady", again with /s/ in final position.[41] It is theoretically possible that final /s/ in **miternas* and *arlothas* could have been voiced by "New Lenition", although this would have been reversed in any case by the process of final de-voicing required to make /z/ in *Modres* rhyme with /s/ in the first place. In the light of the remarks made about final de-voicing at 1.1 above, it seems that both were realised as [s] in final position.

That the form *Modres* is indeed the expected form of the name in Cornish is clear from the rules for assibilation set out at § 5.2 below, the first /–d–/ being protected by the following liquid but the final /–d/ having

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[37] O.J. Padel, "Geoffrey of Monmouth and Cornwall", CMCS 8 (1984), pp. 15-16. The OC. form was *Modred*, see W. Stokes, "The Manumissions in the Bodmin Gospels", RC 1 (1970-2), pp. 335, 343.
[38] See Padel's introduction to BK, p.3.
[39] The first vowel in *Medrawd* seems anomalous, as Padel notes, CMCS 8 (1984), p. 16. It has been suggested, however, that CB. *modred* OB. *modrot* is derived from L. *moderatus*, M. Cane, *Personal Names of Men in Wales, Cornwall and Brittany 400-1400 AD*, pp. 273-4. With syncope, /-dVr-/ gives /-dr-/ rather than lenited **/ðr/, through subsequent provection, see LHEB § 143 (& n. 1). Cane's idea seems to be correct, since Brit. **modrod* would give W. **medraut* /mədrawd/ with pretonic reduction, LHEB §§ 201-5, pp. 664-81. Thus W. *Medrawd* should be **Mydrawd*, and is based on a misreading.
[40] *Modres* BK 420d, *han viternas* 420e.
[41] *Moddras* 436b, *arlothas* BK436a.

no such protection and becoming /–z/. This was the form of the name in use in medieval Cornwall, also occurring in the place-names *Carvedras* in Kenwyn parish and *Rosemodress* in St. Buryan, while the form without final assibilation occurs in *Tremoddrett* in Roche.[42] It is curious that a variety of alternative spellings, some of which are apparently archaic, occur in BK far more frequently than the contemporary vernacular form.

The unassibilated form *Modred* occurs once (unrhymed) and a form *Modret* occurs three times, one of which is rhymed with the loanwords *let* "hindrance" and *set* "put, set".[43] A further instance of *Modreth* seems to be in error for *Modret*, since it rhymes with *let* and *omset* "set thyself".[44] This may also have been true in the occurrence in a line of English *How faryth our lord Modereth* (with an epenthetic vowel) that again rhymes with *let*, probably mitigating against the possibility of internal rhyme between *faryth* and *Modereth*.[45] Although final /d/ does not occur in native words in Middle Cornish, the de-voicing rule seems to have applied even to consonants in unusual word position, allowing final /d/ [t] in *Modred* to rhyme with final /t/. Final /t/ would in any case have been familiar in the above loanwords from English by this period.

In the Latin directions, the character is called *Modredus*, presumably the form used in the lost Latin life of St. Ke.[46] One instance of the Latin vocative is found in the text in the salutation *Salve pater Modrede* "Greeting, sire Modred!"[47] It is far more likely that the apparently unassibilated spellings were truncated from L. *Modredus* than that they were genuinely archaic forms, which speakers would have had every reason to modernise – except perhaps in the occasional archaic

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[42] CPNE, pp. 53 & 253, 202 & 303, 232 & 312; also O.J. Padel, CMCS 8 (1984), p. 15, nn. 63-64.
[43] *Modred* BK 410a, *Modret* 403a, 407a [rhymes with *let* 407c, *set* 407d], 418a.
[44] *Modreth* [error for *Modret] BK 360a [rhymes with *let* 360b, *omset* 360d].
[45] *How faryth our lord Modereth* BK 394b, *let* 394c.
[46] BK 213 (*passim*).
[47] *Salve pater Modrede*

place-name in areas where Cornish was no longer spoken. It seems that the scribe was aware that *Modred* was the archaic form of a current name since he substituted the modern form occasionally. The spelling *Modret* appears to be based upon its realisation by a speaker unconsciously applying the rule of final de-voicing. It is possible that the name had fallen into relative disuse by the end of the fifteenth century except as a rare place-name element, but its appearance in the Cornish form *Modres* makes it unlikely that it had been entirely forgotten. Part of the attraction for Cornish audiences may have been that *Modres* was still a known mythological, pseudo-historical character. The local Arthurian connection may be part of why the play survived.

The most interesting forms are those which with final <th>. There are some instances in which the internal rhyme suggests /θ/, although it is curious that there is never a direct rhyme with a word ending in final /θ/ or de-voiced /ð/, given the frequent occurrence of the name. This is all the more surprising in view of the instances cited above that are rhymed with final /t/. One group of lines run as follows:-

> *me Modreth a lever freth*
> *Arthur a vyth gvarthevyas*
> *hay yskerans ef a feth*[48]

> I, Modred say forthright
> Arthur will be overlord
> and his enemies he will defeat

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[48] BK 213b, c, d.

It is difficult to believe that *Modreth* did not rhyme internally here with *freth* and *feth*, but nonetheless there is no certain evidence that it had final [θ]. A similar instance happens in the following obscure couplet:-

> *Ahanowgh meth kyns ov lyfynhas*
> *Modreth o pyth an darivyas*

> Shame on me before my... (?)
> Modred was what he called him[49]

There seems once more to be internal rhyme between the word *meth* and *Modreth*, but again it could be pure coincidence. The two remaining instances of *Moddreth* do not rhyme at all, which makes it difficult to account for these spellings with certainty.[50]

To summarise, only *Modres* and *Moddras* can be considered to be regular instances of the Cornish name with final /z/ [s]. The forms *Modred* and *Modret* are probably derived from the Latin *Modredus* but nonetheless seem to show final de-voicing /d/ [t].[51] This is reflected in <t> being more frequent than <d> in this group of spellings. Ignoring two instances that the rhymes show really belong with the *Modret* group, the remaining spellings *Mod[d]reth* are somewhat inscrutable. On the one hand, the internal rhyme may indicate that these spellings have final [θ], which seems to explain the choice of spellings. However, the two instances in which a form *Mod[e]reth* rhyme with words such as *let* seem to undermine this conclusion. This impasse can only be solved by assuming that the *Modreth* forms have contaminated two of the *Modret* type in the present manuscript. Since BK is a notoriously corrupt text,

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[49] BK 432f, g.
[50] *Moddreth* BK 427a, 430a.

probably due to a poor copyist (who perhaps spoke no Cornish), this does not seem at all improbable. On balance, it seems best to take these spellings at face value and assume final [θ] or [ð].

The only obvious mechanism by which the native *Modres* could become *Modreth* would be by exceptional de-voicing of final /z/ > /ç/ and occasional realisation as [θ]. This ignores the fact that forms such as *grath* etc. (as opposed to regular *gras*) normally account for only ten percent of the total instances in any given word with /ç/. In the case of *Modres*/*Modreth*, the distribution is reversed. In addition, it is suspicious that no other words with final /z/ are so affected in the play. All in all, this explanation for the *Modreth* forms must be considered unsatisfactory.

Given that there are also forms of the name without assibilation, it appears that the *Modreth* forms did not follow a natural evolution from *Modres* but were instead adapted to the Middle Cornish phonological system. Although in reality the form *Modred* may have been harvested from Latin, it was no doubt perceived as the archaic form with which it coincided. Since final /d/ had been eliminated by assibilation during the Old Cornish period, speakers would probably have found it a foreign, possibly difficult sound in final position. Two solutions might offer themselves: (1) that it could be de-voiced where possible so that it fell together with final /t/ in established loanwords from English; or (2) that it could be replaced with the nearest possible phoneme by sound substitution. Since assibilation had been completed centuries ago, it was no longer a functional process (unless by analogy), so an alternative was required. The first process would produce the *Modret* forms seen above, for which it appears there was only a limited pool of rhymes like *let*, *set* available, if we believe the evidence of rhymes in BK. In the second process, once /d/ was disqualified, the nearest voiced dental phoneme

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[51] It is not implausible that a latinised spelling **Modretus* (*–t–* = /d/) might have been inherited.

would probably be /ð/. Such a substitution could only have produced spellings such as *Modreth*, in which the final segment would have been realised as [ð] or [θ] according to sentence position. This would explain why the word is so exceptional and also why it does not conform to the distribution of words like *fas/fath*. If this is correct, it may be disregarded for the purposes of this chapter, since it would not contain /ç/.

4.2.3. The Evidence of Rhymes in BK

It has already been shown above that end rhymes can be a useful source of evidence in determining both the phonemic and phonetic character of final sounds. Supposing that the theory of a separate phoneme /ç/ in a limited range of words is correct, as seems likely on the basis of this and earlier studies, it should be possible to trace the extent to which such final sounds fell together with similar phonemes such as /s/, /θ/ and /z/. The principal problem with this methodology is that rhymes are often forced in Middle Cornish, as seen in *cvsyl/wrusyl* above, sometimes to the extent of grotesquely distorting the word affected. Such words may not constitute a fair representation of phonetic realities in the language and should accordingly be treated with care.

With this proviso in mind, however, any general changes in the treatment of final rhymes of /ç/ should be traceable. The crucial question is whether the absence of spellings with final *th* of words like *fas*, *gras* and *plas* demonstrates that BK represents a transitional period when /ç/ was falling together with other phonemes. Dr. Ken George has suggested that rhymes are most instructive in Middle Cornish when they show opposition between pairs of phonemes.[52] Any analysis of this hypothesis

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[52] A view expressed to me in 2003. This example and others have been used by Dr. George in lectures, and the credit for identifying this principle belongs to him.

where two similar phonemes were concerned would depend heavily upon the regularity of the rhyme scheme, especially if such phonemes were represented with identical graphs, as in the case of /ç/ and /s/.

An example from BK demonstrates this hypothesis (where the regular rhyme scheme is easily deduced from the surrounding stanzas):-

Kepar del vyn renothas		/z/	A
me a ganso myghtern Das		/ç/	B
hag in batal hag in cas		/z/	A
me an socker in pub plas		/ç/	B
gans ol ow mebel			C
hay yskerans me a vras		/z/	D
maras mettya by my las	/s/?	/ç/?	D
in bysma ny [MS. *my*] *vewa[n]s pel*[53]			C

As he wishes, by my father,
I, King of Dacia, will go to him
in both battle and war.
I'll succour him everywhere
with all my goods/property
and his enemies I'll plot against
if I meet them, by my las (?)
in this world they won't live long.[54]

If the English oath *by my las* does in fact end in /s/, as seems likely (requiring final /z/ to be de-voiced regularly to [s]), the stanza as a whole perfectly demonstrates the hypothesis that final /ç/ is rhymed in

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[53] BK 207a-h. For clarity, phonemes irrelevant to this discussion are not marked.
[54] The translations in this sections are my own, although I have compared them with Polkinhorn's.

opposition to /s/. It is not an insuperable difficulty if this represents C. *las with /ç/ as described at § 4.1 above, since /z/ in *vras* could have been de-voiced to [ç] and the couplet D is not in opposition to any other, as is the case in the first four lines.[55] Nonetheless it might leave the supposed opposition open to doubt. It might even be argued that all of the lines A and B simply rhyme together. Overall, however, it seems best to argue that *by my las* has /s/, since MlE. had no /ç/.[56]

      Even if the above stanza does show such opposition, this does not detract from the fact that elsewhere final /z/ and /ç/ are made to rhyme:-

Welcum ough arlythy mas	/z/	A
ha Dv ren vanna ras	/z/	A
warnough in katap hvny		B
why an soccker in pub cas	/s/? /z/?	C
hag am confort the thow gras	/ç/	C
kepar del vynnaf vny[57]		B

Ye are welcome, good lords

and God, by the blessed grace

(enjoin) upon all of you:-

Ye will succour him in every case [in every war(?)]

and will assist me, to his gratitude

just as I will ordain.

It might be added *in pub cas* could mean either "in every matter, case" with /s/ or "in every war" with /z/.[58] The former may seem most likely,

[55] Though the A-lines and D-lines rhyme in this stanza and that preceding it, this is clearly not compulsory, as is shown by the surrounding stanzas.
[56] According to J. Fisak, *A Short Grammar of Middle English*, Part I, § 2.68 (18), p. 68, Middle English had no phoneme corresponding to Old French /ç/ and therefore substituted /s/.
[57] BK 338a-f.

though admittedly the stanza is addressed to a group of warriors. The instance of *ras* is a word cognate with W. *rhad* and thus has final /z/, which is demonstrated by the required meaning and by the opposition to the word *gras*. When the latter is mutated, it becomes difficult to distinguish the two in Middle Cornish, a factor that could potentially contribute to the confusion of final /z/ and /ç/.

This stanza has a slightly different rhyme scheme (again deduced from surrounding stanzas), but tends to mitigate against the idea that the two phonemes were kept separate. The A-lines and B-lines rhyme fully in the following stanza BK 339 and again at 341-2, although not in stanzas 340 or 343. If *cas* means "matter" and has /s/, it would surely rhyme with *mas* "good" and *ras* "grace" with /z/ [s], as well as with *gras* "gratitude" with /ç/. Worse, even if it is *cas* "war" with /z/, it inevitably rhymes with all of the above, whether those with /z/ are de-voiced as /s/ or /ç/.

The couplet A may not be considered in strict opposition to C because the primary opposition is BC rather than AC (which would explain why in the surrounding stanzas it does not appear to matter whether A and C rhyme or not, as both types occur). However, it seems difficult to accept on the basis of a technicality that A and C could not have been deliberately opposed if the playwright had felt it necessary, perhaps by composing a line with *plas* or *fas* instead of *cas*. That he did not leaves two options. Either the couplet C represents a forced rhyme, irrespective of couplet A, or else both /ç/ and /s/ (or perhaps /z/, if *cas* means "war") usually fell together in final position. The suspicion must be that *cas* in fact means "matter, case" and that final /ç/ had simply fallen together with /s/, although the potential uncertainty over the word leaves a measure of doubt. It is possible, after all, that both A and C were

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[58] cf. *in neb cas* "in any case" CW 1368.

realised here as /ç/, if *cas* means "war", so the stanza provides no definitive answer. In any case, it does not show any AC opposition.

More crucially from the point of view of methodology, this stanza tends to undermine the hypothesis that instances where /ç/ is rhymed in opposition to similar phonemes are more revealing from a phonemic point of view than unopposed rhymes that may have been forced. Such an assumption is in fact dangerous because it inevitably discounts a considerable portion of the evidence from rhymes, running the risk that the resulting analysis may be distorted. To argue that only the stanzas that show the opposition of phonemes are to be counted is clearly selective and misleading. The above stanza clearly undermines the opposition.

A further stanza occurs, however, in which there appears to be opposition between /ç/ and /θ/, potentially demonstrating that the phonemes could be kept separate:-

A evgh thywhy in le gras	/ç/	A
ha mollath dv ham molath	/θ/	B
ny won praga efeugh [leg. *eseugh*] *vas*	/ç/	A
mars vnsell rag bugolath[59]	/θ/	B

Oh, go on with you, instead of thanks
and God's curse and my curse
I don't know what you are good for
except just for herdsman...

On the other hand, the proviso appears to be that there is another opposition between unstressed and stressed syllables in these lines, which might well be more significant. It is therefore uncertain whether the

phonemes /ç/ and /θ/ could fall together in final position. If /ç/ and /s/ fell together in final position, one would expect final /ç/ > /s/ to oppose /θ/.

Overall, these stanzas account for a small proportion of the rhymes involving words with final /ç/ in BK. Elsewhere the small number of words with final /ç/ means that these are frequently chosen as unopposed couplets, for instance *plas/fas* at BK 292b-d. In a few cases it is not beyond debate whether *ras* means /z/ (W. *rhad*) or whether it stands for mutated *gras* with /ç/, for example *fas/(g)ras* at BK 243g-i. The sense of the full phrase *mer ew the ras* "much is thy grace" indicates /z/, hence that /ç/ and /z/ are indeed confused in final position.[60] The rhyme is *ema yth fas*, which has /ç/.[61] Again, a forced rhyme is the only way to avoid the charge that the phonemes had fallen together in final position.

It may also be instructive to examine a stanza in which the plurals of these words with /ç/ oppose plurals with /z/:-

Welcum arlythy gwlasaw	/z/	A
gormolys theugh ha grasaw	/ç/	A
rag why am car me a wel		B
Arthor a gel e rasow	/z/	C
in spyt in e lagasow	/z/	C
me am byth an lorgh han bell[62]		B

Again, it must be added in all fairness that any opposition here is secondary, but nonetheless the rhymes are deliberately chosen. The equivalent lines are in full rhyme in the preceding stanza 351, though not in 350. For the couplet AA to rhyme, either "New Lenition" must have

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[59] BK 102a-d.

[60] *mer ew the ras* BK 243g. Of course, "great is thy thanks" is formally possible, but the context is a eulogistic address from envoys sent to an emperor, so there is little doubt about the meaning.

[61] *ema yth fas* BK 243e.

[62] BK 352a-f.

voiced /ç/ > /z/ or else it must be considered a forced rhyme. The latter option is not difficult to believe, since far more awkward forced rhymes are common, for example *wrusyl* and *cvsyl* given above. However, since evidence of "New Lenition" has been found affecting various unvoiced consonants including /s/, it is inherently likely that this argument provides the simplest and most convincing explanation for the rhyme in internal position here.[63] One way or another, the lines are in full rhyme, even though the surrounding stanzas show that this was optional. Simply put, the opposition between /z/ and /ç/ is illusory.

Conversely, final de-voicing has been shown to occur in several phonemes including /ð/ and /z/.[64] As a result, forced rhyme does not need to be invoked to explain the first, second and fourth stanzas cited in this section or the other cases referred to in which final /ç/ and /z/ rhyme. On the one hand the phoneme /z/ could be realised as either [ç] or [s] when de-voiced in final position, as is clear from the evidence above in the case of /ç/ and from the evidence of the rhymes *Moddras/arlothas* and *Modres/viternas* in the case of /s/.[65] On the other, /ç/ could almost certainly rhyme with /s/, in *cas/gras*. The simplest solution is to posit that final /ç/ no longer existed as a separate phoneme, since it had been voiced to /z/ by New Lenition in medial position, as in for example *gwlasaw/grasow* (as no doubt had /s/) but conversely had fallen together with de-voiced /z/ and /s/ in final position.

It seems that the third stanza provides only ambiguous evidence that final /ç/ and /θ/ were kept separate, owing perhaps to the opposition of word stress between the two couplets. On the basis of the other stanzas cited, it seems best to believe that these spellings mean precisely what they appear to mean. Since no <th> spellings occur for final /ç/, the

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[63] See § 3.3, § 3.5, § 5.8.3 (iii).
[64] See § 4.1 above.

failure of /ç/ and /θ/ to rhyme is natural enough if, as seems overwhelmingly likely, /ç/ was indistinguishable from /s/ in final position. The hypothesis that only rhymes in opposition can be relied upon seems flawed, since it rejects perfectly good evidence for phonemic distinctions, yet it is clearly a useful analytical tool.

4.2.4. Summary of the Evidence of BK

In conclusion, the evidence of BK for the representation of the phoneme /ç/ by *s* and *th* is far less anomalous that it may at first appear, since most such variations are better explained as entirely separate phenomena. The verb-noun *wrusyl* "to do" (< *wruthyl*) constitutes a forced rhyme with *cvsyl* "counsel" and neither contain /ç/. The aberrant forms of the name *Modres*/*Modreth* were apparently non-vernacular and consequently behaved abnormally, but again did not contain /ç/.

As a result, the phoneme /ç/ is represented by *s* in all cases except the two instances of *dathorhas* "rose again, (was) resurrected". While BK consequently shows both *s* and *th* for /ç/ like the Ordinalia and BM, there is a significant difference. Not only is the number of instances of *th* for etymological /ç/ far lower, but moreover the spelling no longer occurs in final position. The evidence of rhymes, e.g. *fas/ras* suggests that this was because it had fallen together entirely with final /z/ and /s/, rather than a matter of mere coincidence. The evidence is considerably weaker for medial /ç/. However, that *grasaw* and *gwlasaw* rhyme indicates that, here at least, /ç/ had been voiced to /z/. Only *dathorhas* tends to marr the conclusion that /ç/ had ceased to exist by the time of BK.

Even if the phoneme remained, improbably, in the word *dathorhas* when it had apparently dissappeared in *grasaw*, perhaps under the

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[65] See § 4.2.2 above.

influence of the phoneme in final position in the singular *gras*, it seems unavoidable that the number of words in which it could remain would then be tiny. In fact, the verbs *dasserghy/datherghy* and *lacie/lathye* would be the only words attested in MlC., perhaps supplemented by Nance's plausible reconstruction **dasseny* "to echoe" and the related noun **dasson* "echo", as in Breton. This situation would only be expected to worsen over time, as the remaining examples became regularised.

It has been noted that the English loan *lathys* with /θ/ is likely to have been confused with *lacie*, but to this may be contrasted the likelihood that MlE. *las* with /s/ would contaminate the related noun, even if New Lenition and final de-voicing seen in the above discussion of rhymes did not achieve this alone.[66] If two separate forms, perhaps meaning "to tie" and "to fix with laths" respectively did not result from these pressures, it is highly likely that one realisation would eventually prevail over the other. If /ç/ became /θ/ before medial voicing of /s/ > /z/, then presumably it would avoid it. Alternatively, if it did not, it seems likely that /ç/ too would tend to be voiced to /z/.

I suggest that a situation where a phoneme is represented only in one word, or possibly two if the unattested **dasseny* is adduced, is inherently unstable. In all probability, the form *dathorhas* is probably a fossil, in which /ç/ was realised as [θ] and eventually became the dominant form. Admittedly, there are only two examples in BK and one in TH, which is too small a number to disprove the continued existence of *ss* /ç/ forms of the verb. It seems difficult to prove the matter.

The absence of *th* spellings in TH (except *dethyrryans*) and CW strongly supports the view that the comparison between medial /s/ > /z/ and /ç/ > /z/ with final /z/ > /s/ or /ç/ would identify both [z], [s] and [ç] as realisations of the same phoneme in different positions, leading to the

disappearance of an already marginal phoneme /ç/ and the reduction of a threefold opposition to a twofold one. So few words contained the phoneme /ç/ in the first place that such pressure to fall together with other sounds is not altogether surprising. It may be likely that a threefold opposition in which one sound is far less frequent than the others may be less balanced than a twofold opposition of frequent sounds, especially where two voiceless sounds had previously opposed the same voiced sound. With the advent of medial voicing and final de-voicing, it seems natural that this situation should be levelled. It seems unlikely that the negative evidence of TH and CW is a mere coincidence.[67] The variation *s/th* was never a systematic sound change and was even more infrequent than the *b*/*m* variation discussed in the previous chapter.

Presumably it is reasonable to extrapolate from the opposition of *gras* and *vas* with *molath* and *bugolath* in the previous section, coupled with the evidence that /ç/ was apparently no longer distinguished from /s/ or /z/ in final position, that final *th* /z/ [ç] > and *th* /θ/ could no longer rhyme by the time of BK. However, this can only be a deduction.

It is not necessary to argue that "New Lenition" was entirely uniform and that /z/ [z] and [s] were consequently determined entirely by position. After all, it is not uniform in Modern Breton, either in standard Breton (which refuses it except in *zo* "is" and in the spirant mutation, e.g. *ma zad* "my father), or in the dialects.[68] The case of *wrusyl* "to do" and *cvsyl* "counsel" tend to support this for Cornish too. Yet reducing the opposition to /s/–/z/ reduced asymmetry in the system, so the process of reducing these phonemes still further to allophones based on word position may have been self-reinforcing and cumulative.

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[66] See §§ 4.1 & 4.2.3 above.

[67] It must be borne in mind that the LC. vocabularies of Lhuyd, Tonkin (Pryce), Borlase and Gwavas were compiled freely from OC. and MlC. as well as LC., which they believed was sound methodology.

[68] HPB § 497-520, pp. 360-75.

The loss of /ç/ must date from after the time of BM, in which the frequency of the variation was still significant. This text may have been written a little earlier than the date upon the colophon, 1504, but probably not more than thirty years. On general phonological grounds, BK may date from ca. 1500.[69] Although a statistical analysis may be misleading with respect to a variation that only affects a handful of words, the complete lack of *th* spellings for the frequent words *fas*, *gras* and *plas* in BK tends to suggest that /ç/ was beginning to fall together with /s/ and, where voiced in "New Lenition", with /z/ < /d/. This is supported in general by the analysis of rhymes. However, *dathorhas* tends to indicate that this was not yet complete. By the time of TH, which is narrowly dated to 1555-8, the phoneme /ç/ had probably fallen together with /s/ and /z/.[70] One final observation is that no variations between *s* and *th* occur in these words in CW. If these observations are correct, it may be possible that the surviving Middle Cornish element in the play that was not modernised in 1611 may date from ca. 1500-30.

4.3. Confusions of *s*/*th* at the Death of Cornish

There are only a few known confusions of *s* and *th* in Late Cornish, which it is important to address here in the light of what has been asserted in the preceding section about the reduction of /ç/. Of course, if these could be linked to the survival of /ç/, this would completely undermine the analysis and dating of the change that was discussed above.

One well-known example occurs in the letter written by a poor fisherman of Mousehole to a dilettante antiquarian from London who was

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[69] My reasons for this are principally that BK shows a great deal of palatalisation of /z/ and /s/, but not pre-occlusion; furthermore, vowels are often lax and overall the spelling is most reminiscent of BM. In both plays, the influence of (rather more modern) English is marked rather than French.
[70] The later date of SA is not especially relevant here, but see § 1.2.2 above.

interested in the fate of Cornish.[71] William Bodinar, who stated that he had never seen a Cornish book (to excuse himself for being unable to spell in the language), wrote a section of this letter bilingually to the Honourable Daines Barrington, which may have been composed at least partly in English.[72] He writes *biscath* "never", which is also given by Nicholas Boson eighty years later as *beska*.[73]

The MlC. form was *bythqueth* < *byth* "(n)ever, always" + *gwythe* "occasion" (B. *biskoazh* W. *byth*, *gwaith*).[74] The phoneme in question was /θ/, which must have been assimilated in the group /θkw/ > /skw/, together with the loss of the labial to give /sk/. This happens to coincide somewhat with the Breton form, but there is no reason to suppose that a perfectly natural assimilation was due to language contact, even in fishing circles like Bodinar's. The sounds [θ] and [k] are respectively interdental and velar, which makes them an especially awkward sequence, made all the worse in this case by the following labial /w/. Consequently, the phenomenon seen in *biscath* is unrelated to the discussion at § 4.1-2.

Another strange coincidence with Breton occurs in some toponyms of uncertain etymology that may contain OC. *cherhit* /kerxɪð/ "heron". As has been discussed at § 4.1, the phoneme /ð/ would have been realised as [θ] in absolute final position through regular final de-voicing. Had the word occurred in Middle Cornish, it might have been **kerhyth*, **kergheth* spelled with final *th*, so it is within the remit of this chapter. There are three place-names *Polkirt*, *Polkerris* and *Polkerth* that seem to contain the element, all with *pol* "pool", and one more instance of *Polkerth* that may

[71] O.J. Padel & P.A.S. Pool, "William Bodinar's Letter, 1776", JRIC 7/3 (1975-6) [n.s.], pp. 231-36; also R.M. Nance, "William Bodener's [sic] Letter", OC 3/7 (1940), pp. 306-8. Mousehole is in Paul Parish, Penwith Hundred, see O.J. Padel, *A Popular Dictionary of Cornish Place-Names*, p. 125.

[72] Padel & Pool, *ibid.*, p. 235, who also remark that his Cornish was authentic. He did not claim to be a native speaker and it could simply be that his idiom was strongly affected by his first language.

[73] *ibid.*, p. 234, line 15, p. 235; CWBF, p. 27, 3.8.

[74] *bythqueth* RD 1659, *byth* OM 97, *gwythe* CW 1537.

contain it by folk etymology.[75] The third of these shows *s* for expected *th* in final position. Since the phoneme was /ð/, this is unrelated to the sound change discussed at § 4.1-2. The change /ð/ [θ] > /s/ is probably a corruption dating to after the death of the language, so it would be unwise to compare it with *Modreth* at § 4.2.2 above, which is concerned with the phonemes /d/ > /z/ [s] and /d/ [t] rather than /ð/ [θ].

The same confusion may occur in *Vounder Gogglas*, the second element of which may be cognate with W. *gogledd* "north" < prefix *go–* "somewhat, decreasing" + *cledd* "left" [largely obs.].[76] This, however, is an unknown word in Cornish, "north" being expressed by *North* borrowed from English or metaphorically by *an barth cleth* "the left side".[77] This is a standard medieval reference to demons, Hell and anything infernal, which the diagram of the theatre in the round in BM places opposite the saints and heroes.[78] The toponym may therefore mean "North Lane, North Road". The same comments apply about the change /ð/ [θ] > /s/ in this word as were made about *Polkerris* in the previous paragraph. These two place-names have nothing whatever to do with the phoneme /ç/.

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[75] CPNE, pp. 54-5, 187-9, 296 (Mevagissey, Tywardreath, Gerrans, St. Keverne).
[76] CPNE, pp. 27-8, 106, 320 (St. Just-in-Penwith 1613). On *bounder* "lane", see § 3.6 above.
[77] *North* BM 664, *an barth cleth* 3420; these are mixed as *an barth north* BM 3427.
[78] M. Combellack-Harris, *A Critical Edition of Beunans Meriasek*, vol. ii, p. 180.