Is *broder* the proper way to spell the Cornish word for 'brother'?

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Cornish Language Board

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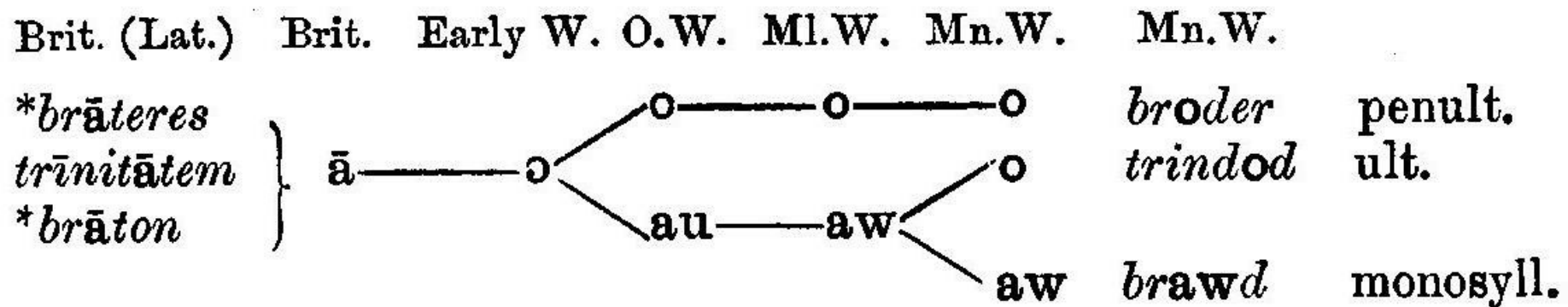
BRODER AND *BREDER*
'brother'   'brothers'

Schrijver (1995: 204) wrote:

"the historical interpretation of the pair

broder / *breder* – if it exists –

leads to insurmountable difficulties"

I hope to show that they are not insurmountable
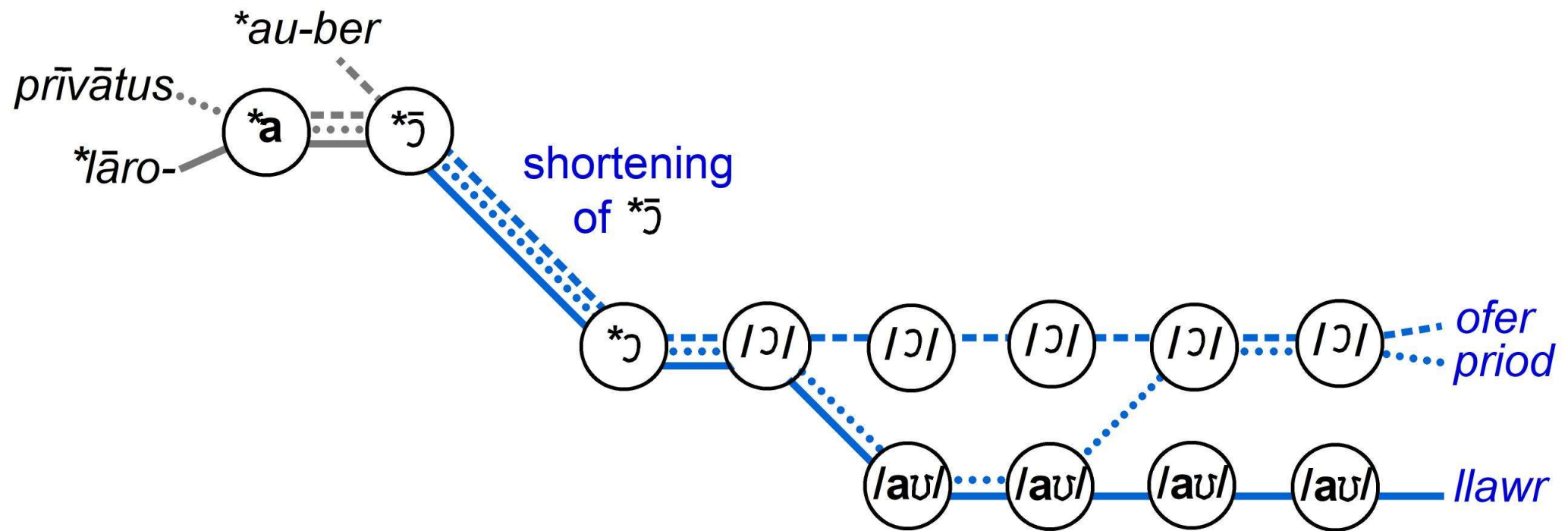
# Development of Proto-Celtic *ā in Welsh (1)

according to Morris-Jones (1913)

Brit. (Lat.)	Brit.	Early W.	O.W.	Ml.W.	Mn.W.	Mn.W.	
*brāteres			o	o	o	broder	penult.
trīnitātem	ā	o			o	trindod	ult.
*brāton			au	aw			
					aw	brawd	monosyll.

Development of Proto-Celtic *ā

Proto-Brythonic	Etymology	English meaning		Brythonic		
					Welsh	Breton	Cornish
stressed *['brɔ˙dɛr]	Proto-Celt. *lāro-	floor		Stressed in monosyllable	*llawr*	*leur*	***leur***
stressed *ɔ̄	Lat. *prīvātus*	spouse		Unstressed in final syllable	*priod*	*pried*	***pries***
pretonic *ɔ̄	Proto-Celt. *au-beros*	futile		Stressed in polysyllable	*ofer*	*euver*	***euver***

Development of Proto-Celtic *ā in Welsh (2)

Development of Proto-Celtic *ā in **Breton**
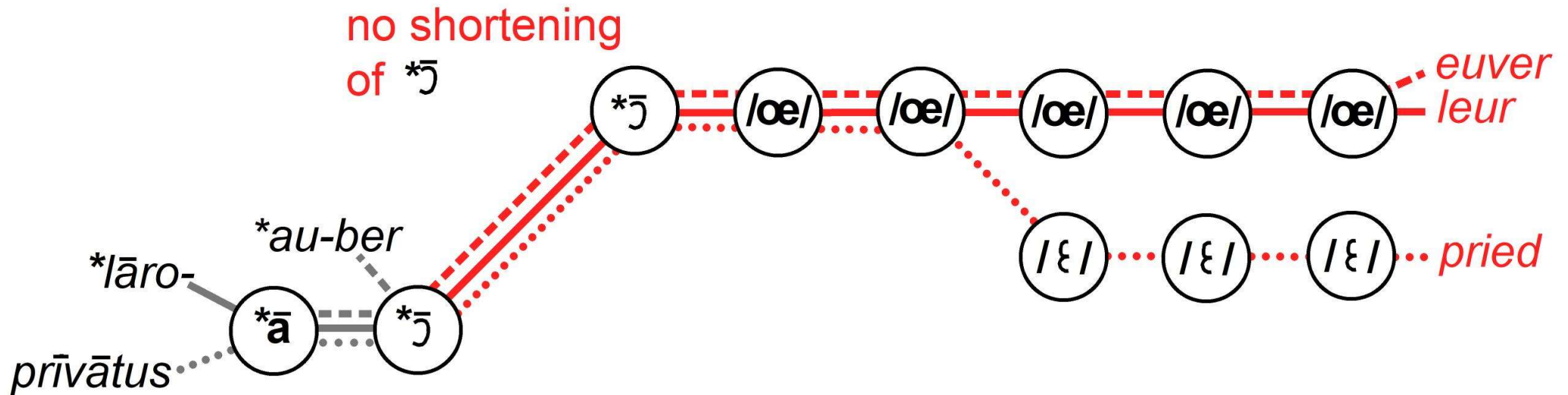
STRESSED MONOSYLLABLES

English	Welsh	Breton	Cornish
	\<aw\> /au/	\<eu\> /œ/	\<eu\> /œ/
judgment	*brawd*	*breud*	*breus*
son-in-law	*dawf*	*deuñv*	*deuv*
hour	*awr*	*eur*	*eur*
grief	*cawdd*	*keuz*	*keudh*
full	*llawn*	*leun*	*leun*
floor	*llawr*	*leur*	*leur*
great	*mawr*	*meur*	*meur*
coarse hair	*rhawn*	*reun*	*reun*
whoever	*sawl*	*seul*	*seul*
across	*traws*	*treuz*	*treus*

Stressed monosyllables in Cornish

English meaning	Old Cornish	Middle Cornish						Late Cornish
	/œ/ ['œː]				/ɛ/ ['ɛ̣ː]			
	<o>	{eu}	<ue>	{u}	<e>	<ê>	<ea>	<e>
judgment			brues	brus	bres	brêz		brez
son-in-law	dof			duf	def			
hour				vr	er		ear	
full		leun	luen	lvn	len	lên	lean	
floor	lor	leur	luer	lur	ler	lêr	lear	
hand	lof	leuf	luef	luf	lef	lêv		
great		mevr	muer	mur	mer	mêr	mear	mer
shadow	scod			schus	skesse	skêz		skez
across		treus	drues	trus				

Path for stressed monosyllables
in Cornish
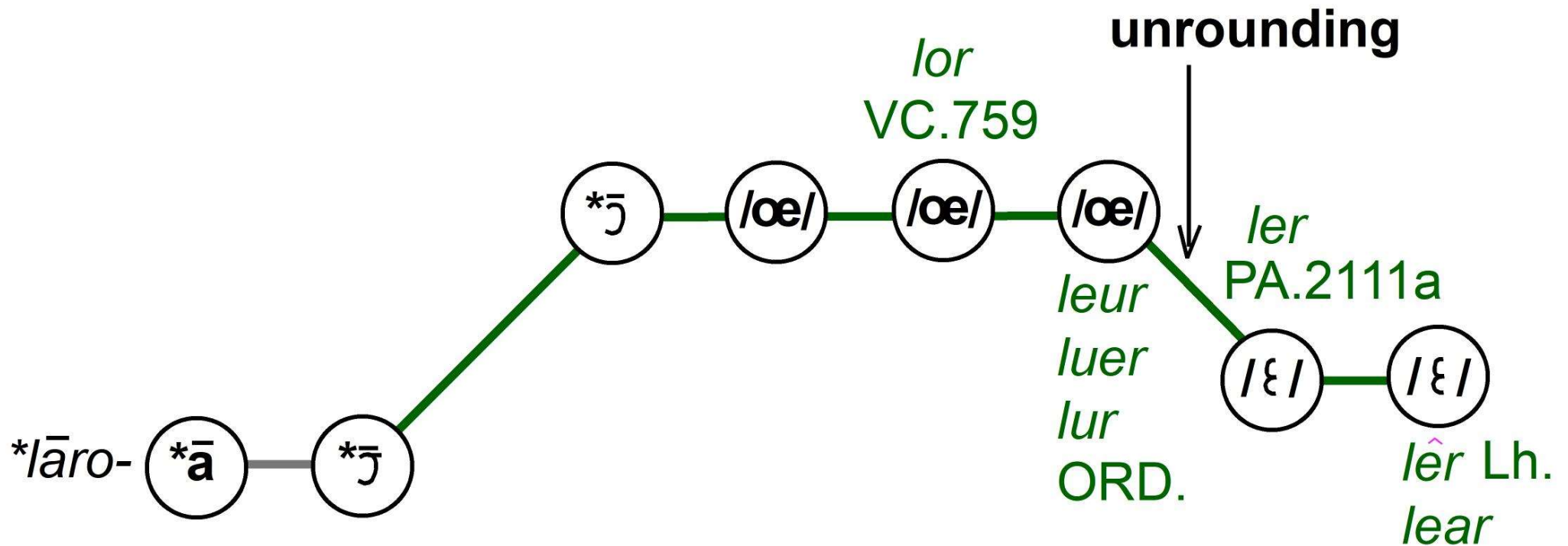
Note: Old Cornish <o> meant both /œ/ and /ɔ/;

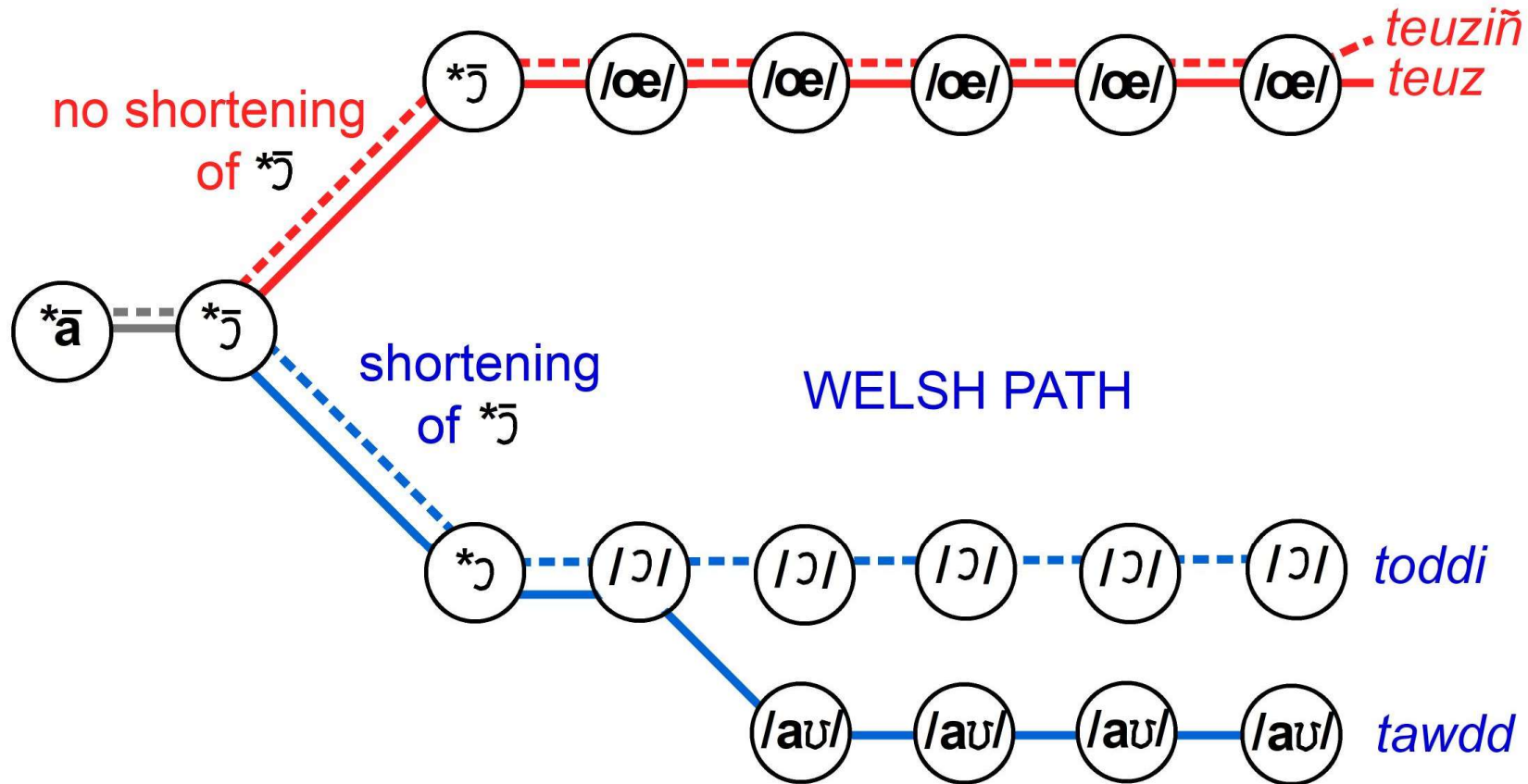Middle Cornish <u> meant both /œ/ and /y/.

WORDS WITH OLD CORNISH /œ/ IN THE FINAL SYLLABLE
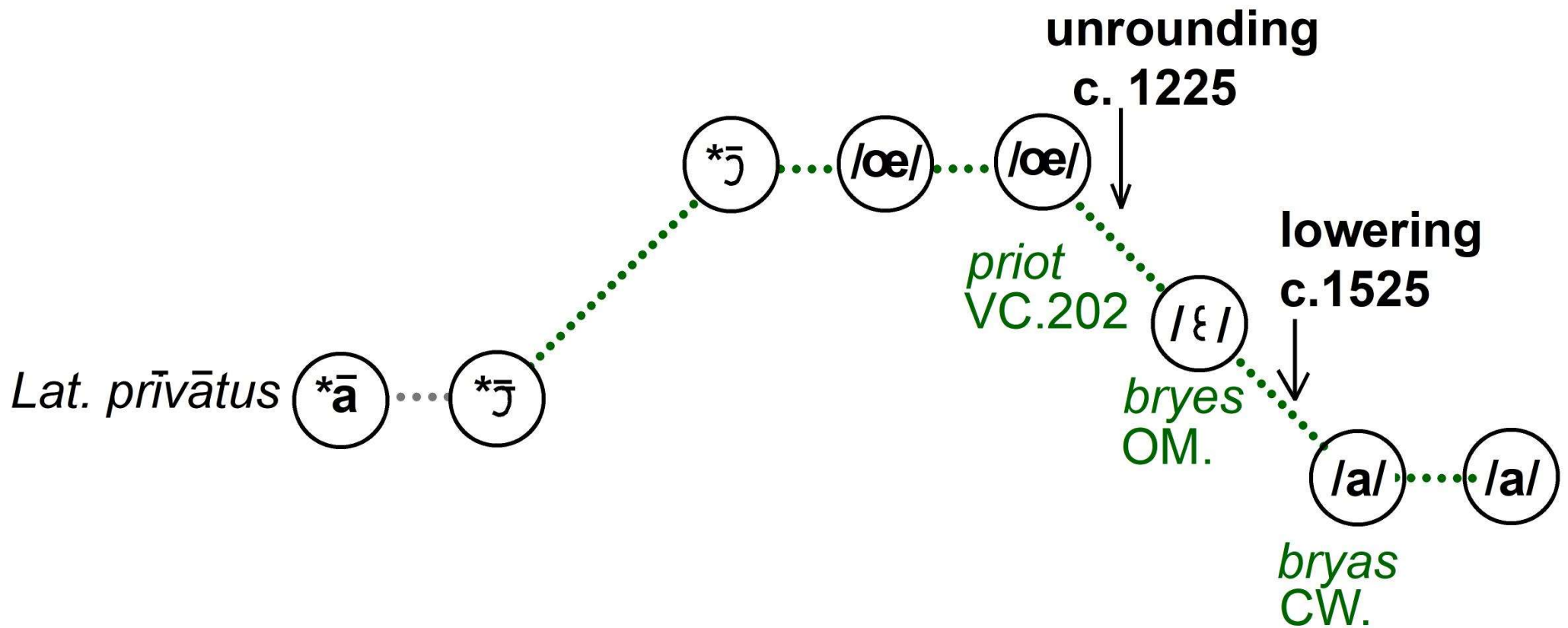
STRESSED POLYSYLLABLES

in Breton and Welsh

Verbs in Brythonic

English	Breton	Welsh	traditional Cornish	
	3 sg. pres. ind. / Verbal noun		3 sg. pres. ind.	Verbal noun
drown	*beuz / beuziñ*	*bawd / boddi*	*buth* ['bœːð]	*buthy > bethy*
judge	*breuz / breuziñ*		**brus*	*brusy*
grieve	*keuz / keuziñ*	*cawdd / coddi*	**cuth*	*cuthy*
shadow	*skeud /skeudin*		**scus*	*skvsy > skesy*
melt	*teuz / teuziñ*	*tawdd / toddi*	**tuth*	**tuthy> tetha*
follow	*heul / heuliañ*	*hawl / holi*	*hoyl*	*holya*
praise	*meul / meuliñ*	*mawl / moli*	*(*gormel > gornvall)*	*(gormel)*

Most Cornish verbs follow the Breton pattern, but *holya* behaves like Welsh.

Cases following the Welsh path

*-āk-i̯on- > -ogyon   (pl. of **-ākos > –ek)*

e.g. *boghosogyon* 'paupers'   pl. of *boghosek*
  (but bohosugyon in PC)

*-ār-i̯on- > -oryon   (pl. of Latin *-ārius*)

e.g. *progothorryan* 'preachers'   pl. of *pregowther*
cf. *karpentoryon*   *stennerion* 'tinners' is analogical

*-āt-o̯es > -osow   (Plurals in *-ow*)
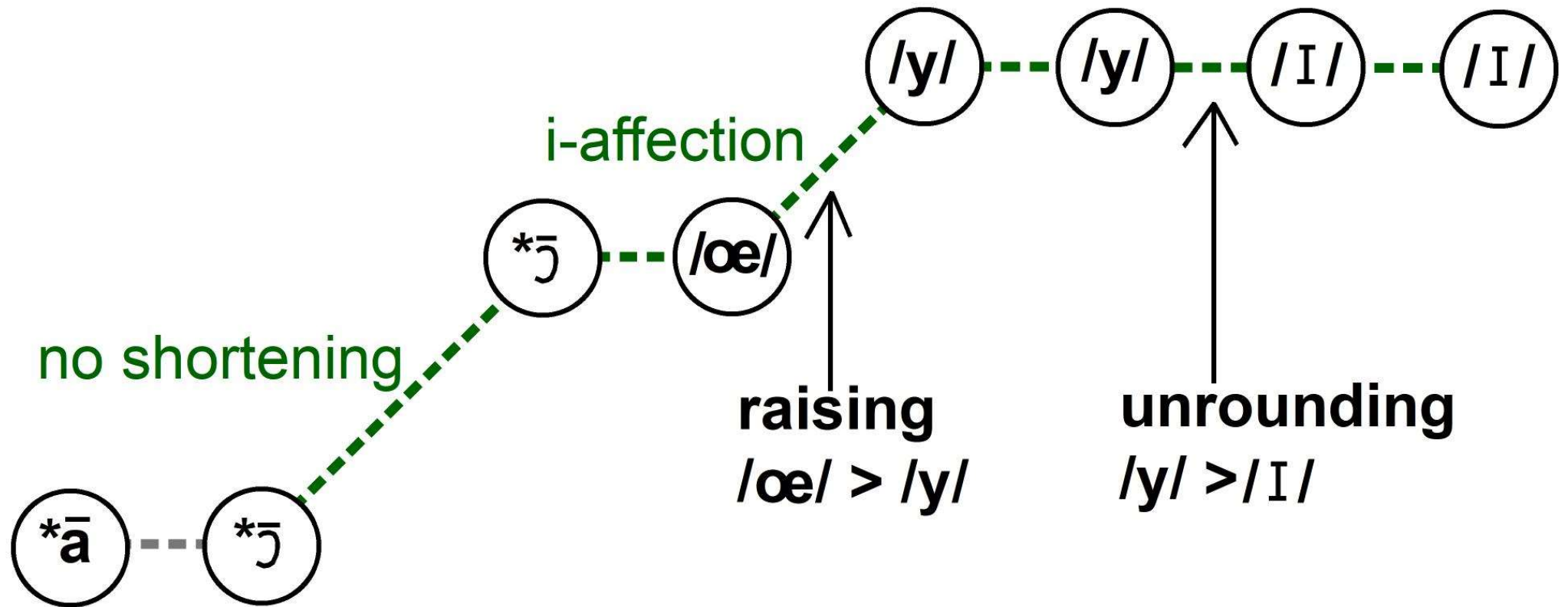
e.g. *peghes* 'sin', pl. *pehosow*   (but peghusow in PC)

All these and the word *avorow* 'tomorrow' have
*-āVo- or **-āVi̯o-* in Proto-Brythonic.

A third path in Cornish (1)

A third path in Cornish (2)

In texts: Middle Cornish *buthys* 'drowned' has ambiguous <u>
['bœ·ðɪs] or ['by·ðɪs];
Late Cornish *bidhis* shows [ɪ] unrounded from [y]

In place-names: *Tewyn Plustri* 1308 (= Newquay) 'dunes for exercise'
Towenplystre 1530 > Fistral

In double rhymes: *skvsy* 'to escape' rhymes with *barfusy* 'codfish'
skeusi and ***barfusi*** in the dictionaries.

Here <u> represents etymological /œ/, but
everything fits better if the sound is [y].

3 paths for pretonic *ɔ̄ in **Cornish**
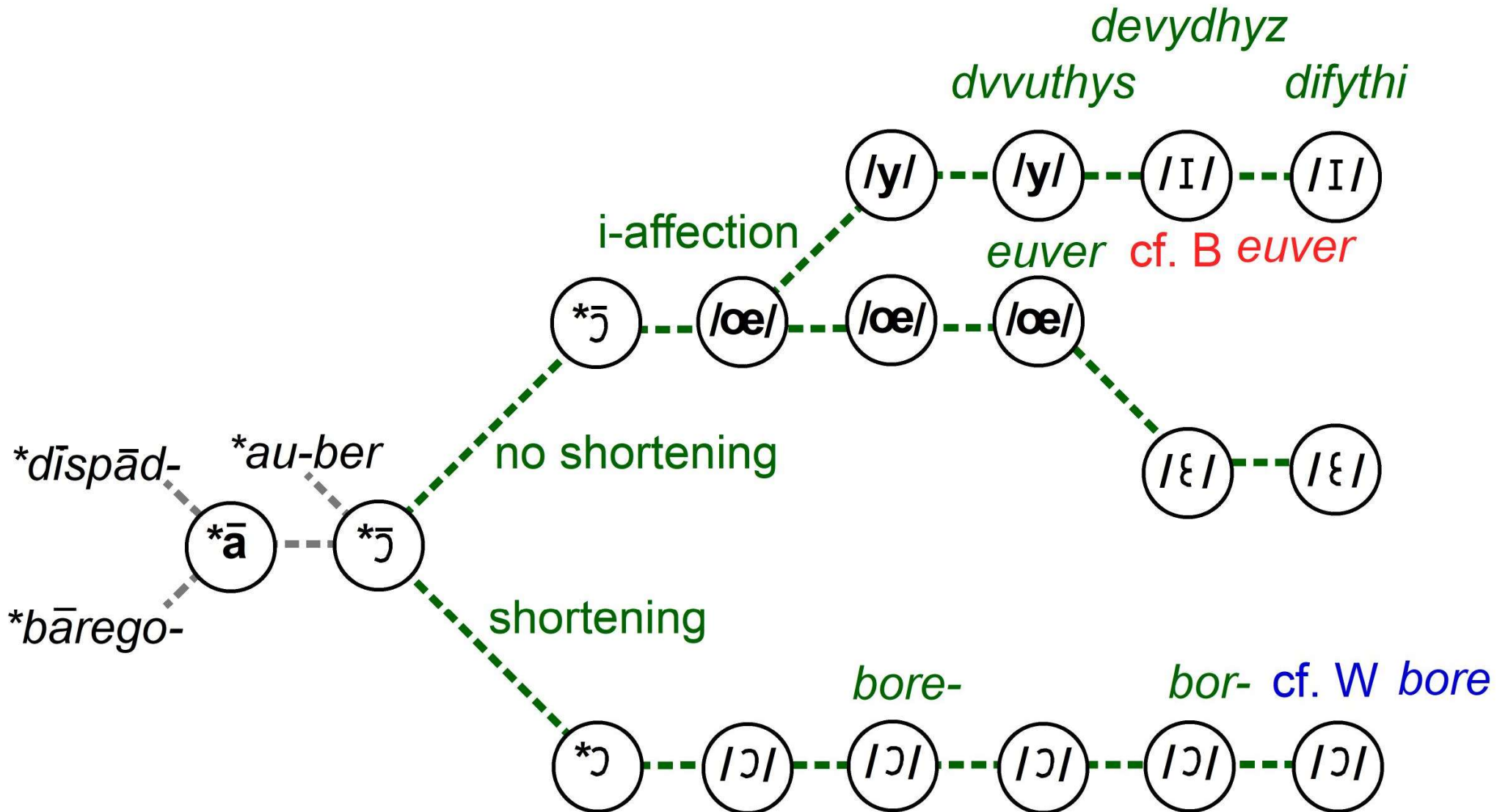
Development of Proto-Brythonic *ā in Cornish
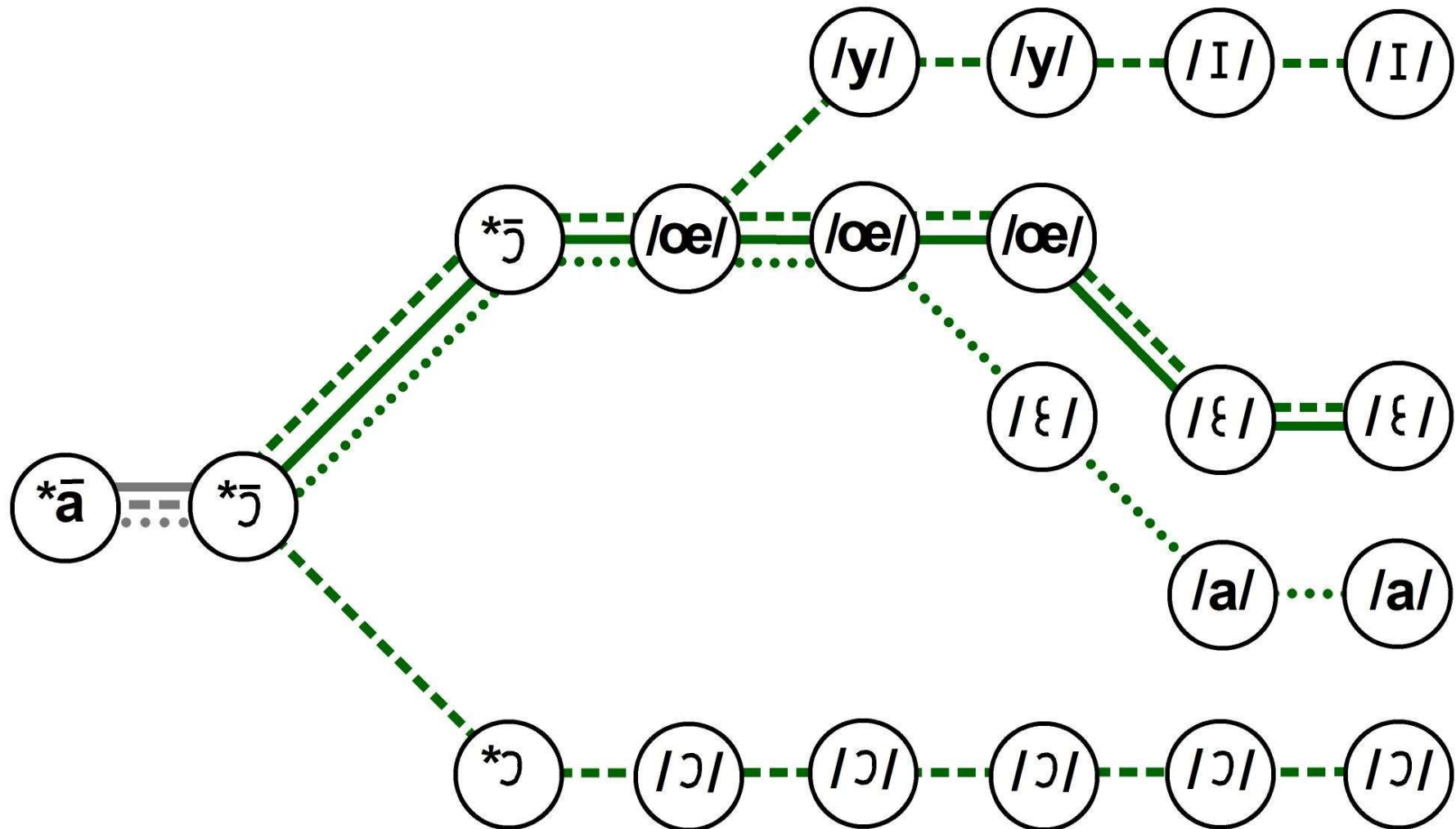
BRODER AND *BREDER*

Do these words follow the "Breton" path?

Or the Welsh path?

Or is the development more complicated?

"Breton" development: no shortening of *ɔ̄

Phase	Singular			Plural	
	Spelling	**Sound**		**Spelling**	**Sound**
Proto-Brythonic	*brātēr	[ˈbraːtę̄ːr]		*brāteres	[braːˈtę̄rɛs]
	raising of both vowels			raising of long vowel	
	*brɔ̄tīr	[ˈbrɔːtiːr]		*brɔ̄teres	[brɔːˈtę̄rɛs]
	lenition; loss of final syllables; new quantity system				
Primitive Cornish	*brodr	[ˈbrɷdr]		*broder	[brɷˈdɛr]
	fronting of [ɷ] to [œ]				
	*brodr	[ˈbrœdr]		*broder	[brœˈdɛːr]
	svarabhakti				
	*broder	[ˈbrœdər]		*broder	[brœˈdɛːr]
Old Cornish	stress-shift				
	*broder	[ˈbröˑdɛr]	CLASH!	*broder	[ˈbröˑdɛr]
Middle Cornish				unrounding	
				breder	[ˈbrę̄ˑdɛr]

Possible further developments of ['brö·dɛr]
(2 cases only)

['brö·dɛr] > ['brɛ̨·dɛr] > ['brɛ̨·dar]

broder (VC.138)
bruder (PC.0188)

*breder
attested only
as a plural

Bredar (Lh.MS)
attested only once
in Lhuyd's notebook

Toorians argued
that the 4 examples
of *breder* were
singular

but copied 7 times
in *Archaeologia
Britannica*

Attestations of *breder / vreder*

Reference	Textual spelling and conventional translation	Author's translation
PC.0692	*may fo dyghtys a[n] vreder* so that the brethren may be served	
RD.1163	*ha fasta sy the vreder* go, confirm thou thy brethren	
RD.2368	*faste the gy the vreder* confirm thou thy brethren	
BM.2848	*ov breder duen ny the dre* my brothers, let us go home	
AB243a	*Breder*	'brothers' is implied
PV102	*faste the gy the vreder* (< RD.2368)	strengthen to thee thy brethren

"Mutable Plurals" by Lhuyd
(*Archaeologia Britannica,* page 243)

The following appear correct:

"Marh, *A horse,* merh; Yâr, *A hen,* Yêr; Mên, *A stone,* Mein;"

"Davaz, *A sheep,* Devez; Gavar, *A goat,* Gever."

… but these are doubtful: MidC forms

"Bredar, *A Brother,* Breder;"		broder / breder
"Sanz, *A Saint,* Plur. Seinz"	influence from Welsh ?	sans / syns
"Danz, *A tooth,* deinz;"	influence from Welsh ?	dans /dyns
"Mab, *A Son,* †Meib"	plural otherwise unknown	mab /mebyon
"Manek, *A glove,* Menik"	influence from Welsh ?	manek / manegow

"Welsh" development: shortening of *ɔ̄

Phase	Singular			Plural	
	Spelling	**Sound**		**Spelling**	**Sound**
Proto-Brythonic	*brātēr	['braːtę̄r]		*brāteres	[braː'tę̄rɛs]
	raising of both vowels			raising of long vowel	
	*brɔ̄tīr	['brɔːtiːr]		*brɔ̄teres	[brɔː'tę̄rɛs]
	shortening of ɔ̄				
	*brɔtīr	['brɔtiːr]		*brɔteres	[brɔ'tę̄rɛs]
	lenition; loss of final syllables; new quantity system				
Primitive Cornish	*brɔdr	['brɔdr]		*broder	['brɔˑdɛr]
	svarabhakti				
	*broder	['brɔdər]		*broder	['brɔˑdɛr]
Old Cornish	stress-shift				
	broder	['brɔˑdɛr]	CLASH!	*broder	['brɔˑdɛr]
Middle Cornish	broder	['brɔˑdɛr]		NEW PLURAL	

Further developments
of the singular (33 cases)

['brɔˑdɛr]   >   ['brɔˑdɑr]

broder   *vroder*   *brodar*   *vrodar*

VC × 1   OM × 6   CW × 6   CW × 7

OM × 3   Rowe × 1

BM × 1

BK × 1

Rowe × 1

Also note *brother* (TH × 3) and *brothar* (TH × 3), obviously influenced by English.

Singular and plural
in the same text

Text	Singular	Disyllabic plural	Trisyllabic plural
PC	*bruder*	*vreder*	*brudereth* *bredereth*
BM	*broder*	*breder*	*bredereth*
TH	*brother* *brothar*		*bredereth* *brederath*
Lh	*Bredar*	*Breder*	*brederedh*
Rowe	*broder* *brodar*		*broderath*

CONCLUSIONS (1)

- Cornish follows Breton in having numerous verbs with /œ/ as their stressed vowel.
- Breton has only one case of shortened *ɔ in Proto-Brythonic (*moereb* 'aunt', W *modryb*, C *modryp*), but Cornish has several.
- These include the regular plural suffixes *-ogyon, -oryon* and *-osow.*
- Cornish also has cases of /œ/ being raised to /y/, which are not found in Breton nor in Welsh.

CONCLUSIONS (2)

- This problem is like a system with more unknowns than equations. It contains inconsistencies, which need to be weighed; Lhuyd's "Bredar, *A Brother,* Breder" is likely to be erroneous, rather than the idea that *breder* really meant 'brother', not 'brothers'.

- The pair *broder / breder* cannot be explained fully by a Neogrammarian approach to their development; sound-changes may occur by lexical diffusion, and developments may be confused by dialectal variation.

- It is explicable by supposing that *broder* had shortening of *ɔ̄ and *breder* did not.

Meur ras dhywgh !

Hartelijk dank

● *teudhi* or *tedha*?

●

- The word for 'to melt' is found as *tedha* (AB054a).
- This was used in translating *Good King Wenceslas* into Cornish:

●

English	**1978 translation in Unified Cornish**
Mark my footsteps, good my page; tread thou in them boldly; thou shall find the winter's rage freeze thy blood less coldly.	Merk ow olow, da ow gwas **hol** an ergh ow **tedha**; ty a gyf an yeynder bras na vyth orth dha **fetha**.
	Translation c.2000 in Kemmyn
But after further research	Merk ow olow, da ow gwas,
it was changed ➔	**_hol_** an ergh ow **teudhi**;
	ty a gyv an yeynder bras
	na vydh orth dha **veudhi**.