

MW *mwyalch* “blackbird” < **mesal-kā* MW *dieu* “days” < **d̥i̯ou̯es*
MW *gaeaf* “winter” < **g̥i̯amo-* MW *miaren* “berry” < **m̥i̯areno-*
MW *raeadyr* “torrent” < **reiatro-* MW *chwiorydd* “sisters” < **s̥uesor-i̯o-*
MW *haearn* “iron” < **hi̯arno-* ← **isarno-* OW *guiannuin* < **uesantēno-*

Phonetic interpretation of the developments:

- **i* before **i* normally remains high and tense, merging with reflex of **i̯* rather than with the reflex of **i*
- accented *á* causes lowering and centering of **i* to schwa
- as in Jackson (1953: 349, 359) **ǵá* > **ǵ̥á* > **ǵ̥̥á* = *aea* (e.g. *gaeaf*); i.e. the glide became ambisyllabic

Ambisyllabic consonant: a consonant that belongs simultaneously to both the preceding and following syllable.

haearn [hai̯jarn] < **h̥ǵ̥i̯arn*
mwyalch [mu̯jalx] < **m̥ǵ̥i̯alx*

The examples suggest that the **i̯* formed a diphthong (closed the preceding syllable) while still functioning as the onset of the following syllable.³

Proposal in tonic syllables:

- **is*, **i̯i* > **ii̯* whence > **ii̯* > **ij̯* > **ið* = *-ydd*
- **és*, **éi* > **éi̯* whence > **éi̯* > **é̥i̯* (ambisyllabic *i̯*) > **é̥ij̯* > **é̥ið* > *-oedd*

Clear examples of the developments (see Appendix for a full chronological table):

**-ési* (2nd sg) > **-é̥ii̯* > **-é̥j̥i̯* > **-é̥j̥i̯* (umlaut) > **-ij̯* > **-ið* > *-ydd*
**mon̥i̯o-* “mountain” > **mon̥i̯jo-* > **mon̥ij̯* > **m̥on̥ið* > *mynydd*
**inisi̯i̯āh* “islands” > **inisi̯j̯āh* > **inisi̯é̥j̯āh* > **inisi̯é̥j̯* > **inisi̯é̥ð* > *ynysedd*

Likely further lexical items showing the development:

- **esVt* (3sg impf “to be”) > **é̥i̯Vt* > **é̥̥i̯Vt* > **é̥̥ij̯Vt* > **é̥̥ij̯* > *oedd*
- **s̥uesor* (levelled from acc sg, nom pl) > **hu̯é̥̥ior* > **hu̯é̥̥̥ior* > **hu̯é̥̥̥i̯r* > *chwaer*

³ The *metron*-rule of Indo-European can be explained with ambisyllabicity. PIE **med-tro-* (Greek *mētron* “a measure”) did not give **metstro-* (via **mettro-*) but rather **metro-*. The explanation is that in **mettro-* the two dentals were reanalyzed as ambisyllabic (i.e. a single dental realized phonetically in both syllables), yielding **metro-*. This account seems superior to that found in Mayrhofer (1986: 111-12). For an overview of the theoretical literature, see “Ambisyllabicity in the language of the Rigveda” at www.brettkessler.com.

To evaluate the proposal further, we must examine lexical categories (*s-* and *i-*stems), either or both of which have been claimed to give plural *-oedd* (see Morris Jones 1913: 99, 202; Pedersen 1913: 95-6; Jackson 1953: 350; Schrijver 1995: 394-6).

The *s-*stems:

Etymological *s-*stems and their older plural attestations

<i>tír</i> “land” pl <i>tíret</i> (12c), <i>tíryoed</i> (14c)	= OIr <i>tír</i> “id.”
<i>nef</i> “sky” pl <i>nym</i> (13c), <i>nefau</i> (14c); <i>nefoet</i> (c 1300), <i>nefoed</i> (14c)	= OIr <i>nem</i> “heaven”
<i>ma</i> “field” pl <i>mei</i> / <i>mey</i> (13c), <i>maeu</i> (14c)	= OIr <i>mag</i> “id.”
<i>glyn</i> “glen” pl <i>glennyeu</i> (13c), <i>glynnoed</i> (c 1330)	= OIr <i>glenn</i> “valley”
<i>dín</i> “fort” no old plural	= OIr <i>dún</i> “id.”
<i>ty</i> “house” pl <i>tei</i> (12c), OW <i>-te</i>	= OIr <i>tech</i> “id.”
<i>lled</i> “width” no old plural	= OIr <i>leth</i> “side”
<i>glin</i> “knee” pl <i>glinyeu</i> (13 & 14c)	= OIr <i>glín</i> “id.”
<i>llyn</i> “pool” pl <i>llynnoein</i> (10-11c), <i>llynnev</i> (12-13c), <i>llynnyeu</i> (c 1250)	= OIr <i>linn</i> “id.”
<i>[mis</i> “month” pl <i>missoed</i> (1346)	= OIr <i>mí</i> “id.”]

Observation: no clear association of *s-*stems with any particular plural formation
Interpretation: consistent with the dissolution of the neuter gender and subsequent redistribution of the items into various other classes.

Case of *ty*, pl *tei*: synchronic irregularity suggests antiquity, but antiquity is relative.
Proposal: PB **tegos* reinterpreted as masc *o-*stem in Proto-British (it is masc in all British languages) with new pl **tegi̯*, which regularly gives MW *tei* (via **tagi̯*; see Schrijver 1995: 134-42 for developments).

Unusual final accent in Gwynedd for some compounds in *-dai*, e.g. *pop-tái* “ovens” (Morris Jones 1913: 197) is, however, problematic.

Conclusion for *s-*stem plurals: no conclusion possible

Insular Celtic *i-*stems:

Etymological *i-*stem plural formations

<i>iaith</i> “language” pl <i>ieithoed</i> (13c)	no OIr etymon
<i>gre</i> “stud” pl <i>greoed</i> (1346)	= OIr <i>graig</i> “horse”
<i>mor</i> “sea” pl <i>moroet</i> , <i>myr</i> (13c)	= OIr <i>muir</i> “id.”
<i>gwlad</i> “land” pl <i>gladoet</i> (1200), <i>gwladoed</i> (13c)	= OIr <i>flaith</i> “lord”
<i>gwledi</i> (13c), <i>gwledydd</i> (14c)	
<i>bro</i> “region” pl <i>brooet</i> (12-13c), <i>broyd</i> (14c)	= OIr <i>mruig</i> “land”
<i>gwawd</i> “praise song” pl <i>gwawdeu</i> (14c)	= OIr <i>fáith</i> “prophet”
<i>budd</i> “spoils” pl <i>budyeu</i> (14c)	= OIr <i>búaid</i> “victory”
<i>[drum</i> “ridge” pl <i>drumain</i> (12c), <i>drumiau</i> (14c)	= OIr <i>drúim</i> “back”]
<i>[cnaw</i> “bone” pl <i>knouein</i> (12c)	= OIr <i>cnám</i> “id.”]

Notes: The *u-*stem ending (in *gwawdeu* and *budyeu*) is not counterevidence; MW *drum* is not an exact cognate to the Irish; and *cnaw* may rather be an *n-*stem (Stüber 1998: 72).

Observation: There is a tendency for *i*-stems to have an *-oedd* plural
 Interpretation: This tendency reflects an inherited ending.
 Conclusion: The *i*-stem plural ending is continued by *-oedd*.

Problem: The Common Celtic *i*-stem nom pl was **-īs* (cf. Gaul. *NITIO-BPOFEIC* RIG I, G-275; where *-EIC* represents **-īs*, see McCone 1996: 7)

Suggestion: **-īs* remade to **-ejes* (or **-ojes*) via four-part analogy:

- nom sg **-us* : nom pl **-oues* :: nom sg **-is* : X, where X = nom pl **-ejes*
- **-éies* > **-éiēs* (ambisyllabic) > **-éijes* > **-éij* > *-oedd*
- compare **esVt* > *oedd*, **suesor* > *chwaer*

Problematic forms: W *gwiw*, MCo *gwyw* ‘fitting’, B *gwiv* ‘gay’⁴

- Under present analysis: **uesu-* should give **gwew*
- If we assume an inflecting *u*-stem paradigm (not unlikely in recent prehistory):
**uesus*, nom pl **uesoues* > Pre-Welsh **gwew*, pl **gwiou*
 paradigm levelling would give *gwiw*, pl **gwiou*

Not directly relevant forms:

- MW *doe*, OC *doi*, MB *dech* “yesterday” < IC **des* < PC **gdesi* < IE **ghdhési*
- MW *bych*, MCo *by*, ENB *bi* “you may be” < PB **bis* (Schumacher 2004: 249)

**s* is not intervocalic and these are monosyllables, where **h* could be expected to be retained longer, inducing vowel length or becoming **x* as sandhi-phenomenon (Schrijver 1995: 390; Schrijver 2007; Schumacher 2004: 249).

⁴ Widmer (2004: 188ff.) offers a direct explanation for the long vowel by invoking internal derivation at the Indo-European level. I am not convinced that his account is correct, but it would explain the British forms in a totally straightforward manner.

An aside: The British Celtic comparative in *-och* / *-ach*

- might be derivable from IE comp. suffix *-iōs*, acc sg **X-īosam* (Schrijver 2007)

- must be explained differently given argument presented here

Early Proto-British	comparative nom sg	<i>*X-īūs</i> , acc sg <i>*X-īosam</i>
	equative nom sg	<i>*X-is-etos</i>
	superlative nom sg	<i>*X-is-amos</i>
Late Proto-British	comparative nom sg	<i>*X-īh</i> , acc sg <i>*X-īouam</i> ?
	equative nom sg	<i>*X-ih-etos</i>
	superlative nom sg	<i>*X-ih-amos</i>

- The intervocalic **h* (< **s*) in the equative and superlative has been analogically restored on the model of **treksamōs* / **nessamos* type (Jasanoff 1994: 205-6).
- We can speculate that the **h* was further extended to the comparative (cf. later analogical provection in Breton and Cornish comparatives), giving acc sg **X-oham* (for analogical loss of **i* see Schrijver 2007: 316).
- This secondary **h* in post-apocope **X-ōh* could develop to **X-och* in the manner envisioned in Schrijver (2007).

4. Conclusions.

- Intervocalic **s* lost very early (via **h*) with three outcomes:

1) like vowels contracted:

OW *timuīl* < **teμēl(i)o-* < **teμe.el(i)o-* < **temesel(i)o-*

2) before or after **u*, **ū* filled the hiatus:

gwaew < **uo-gaisu-*

3) otherwise, **i* filled the hiatus:

-ydd < **-iō* < **-ij* < **-ij̄* (umlaut) < **-éj̄* < **-éj̄i* < **-ési*

mwyalch < **m̄j̄j̄alxo-* < **m̄j̄j̄alxo-* < **m̄j̄j̄alko* < **mesal-ko-*

- In accented syllables, **es* and **ej* merged as **eĭ* but did not become **ij̄*

**eĭ* > **eĭ̄* (ambisyllabic **ĭ̄*), eventually giving *-oedd*

**esVt* (3sg impf “to be”) > **eĭVt* > **eĭ̄Vt* > **eĭ̄jVt* > **eĭ̄j* > *oedd*

- *i*-stem nom pl **-īs* remade to **-ejes*, also giving *-oedd*

gwladoedd “lands” < **ulatejes* < **ulatīs*

- W *gwiw* is exceptional, but a plausible explanation exists
- *s*-stem nom pl **-esa* should give *-oedd*, but the data do not appear to offer a discernable pattern (though pl noun *nefoedd* ??)

Appendix: Chronological Table for Tonic Syllables

Proto-British Form	*-é <i>si</i>	* <i>mon</i> ú <i>o-</i>	* <i>iniss</i> ú <i>iāh</i>	*-é <i>jeh</i>
* <i>s</i> > * <i>i</i>	*-é <i>si</i>	-----	-----	-----
Ambisyllabic * <i>i</i>	*-é <i>si</i>	-----	-----	*-é <i>si</i> eh
* <i>i</i> > * <i>j</i>	*-é <i>si</i>	* <i>mon</i> ú <i>jo-</i>	* <i>iniss</i> ú <i>jāh</i>	*-é <i>si</i> jeh
* <i>ā</i> -affection	-----	-----	* <i>iniss</i> é <i>jāh</i>	-----
Final <i>i</i> -affection	*-é <i>si</i>	-----	-----	-----
Apocope	*-é <i>si</i>	* <i>mon</i> ú <i>j</i>	* <i>iniss</i> é <i>j</i>	*-é <i>si</i> j
MW forms	-ydd	<i>mynydd</i>	<i>ynysedd</i>	-oedd

Note that the development **-si* > -ydd assumes that after final *i*-affection, the **i* was phonetically absorbed by the preceding **s*, much in the same way that a preceding **i* blocked the ambisyllabic **i* from forming in the first place (see above).

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