

AUVERGNAT PRONUNCIATION SOUND-SPELLING SUMMARY

The dissertation research of Dr. Lori McCann (see Introductory Page) is gratefully acknowledged in the compilation of this summary.

Auvergnat Vowel Pronunciation

- Many of the points of Auvergnat pronunciation can be linked to Spanish.
- Auvergnat vowels are the same seven vowels of Italian and Spanish: [i e ε a o ɔ u] with the addition of the French mixed vowel [y].
- [y] is written u (NOT ou). It may be heard pronounced slightly farther back on the hard palate, as with the short German [ʏ] of *Glück*. (CD Véronique Gens)
- Ô/ô circumflex is pronounced as closed [o].
- Open [ɔ] is most commonly used for written o, with *flexibility* as to the degree of open or closed delivery. As with other languages, as McCann points out, an open [ɔ] may be articulated as a *variant* approaching [o], [a], or [ɑ].

As a result, written o may appear or be heard as [a]. This variant of pronunciation is reflected in McCann's transcriptions, as advised by the Auvergnat speaker with whom she worked. For example, from *Ound' onerèn gorda?* (Series 1, 3b, 38-39), *gorda* is transcribed as [garda].

Note that in the same song, *ogatso* is transcribed as [ɑgat.sa], suggesting that [ɑ] or something between [ɔ] and [ɑ] may serve as a useful variant compromise.

The variant debate underlines the flexibility and imagination required to work with nuances of non-standardized pronunciation. Unless advised by an expert speaker, it may be difficult for a singer to make decisions about [ɔ] variant pronunciation.

In the final analysis, the manuscript remains the fixed point of reference, and the singer may deliver written o as [ɔ] and written a as [a].

- Open or closed e *may* be indicated by grave or acute accents as in French. However, contradictions abound: for example, *dé* and *dè*, as well as *de*, may occur in the same text (see *Chut, chut* Series 4, 4, Heugel Edition).
- The [ɛ] vowel tongue position is higher and the vowel is more closed than in English.
- In her transcriptions, McCann uses [ɛ/e] to indicate a pronunciation in between [ɛ] and [e] when written e occurs near other closed vowels or is followed by palatal consonants [k], [g], [ŋ], or [ʃ].

Therefore, as with open [ɔ], the singer is encouraged to remain flexible and practical with the [ɛ/e] delivery.

- There are no nasal vowels. The *m* or *n* following the vowel may have several pronunciations (see Consonants).
- Unlike French, Auvergnat has diphthongs and triphthongs. One of the vowels will be stressed and longer than the others.
- Written “ou” is complex. The accent mark, if present, is a guide.

ou = [u]
 òu = [ɔu]
 ɔou = [ɔu]
 ouɔ = [wɔ]
 iɔ = [jɔ]
 iou = [i u]
 îou = [i u]
 iòu = [jɔu]

- The remaining vowel combinations with the stressed vowel underlined are:

i <u>e</u> i = [jɛi]	<u>a</u> ô = [aɔ]
i <u>e</u> u = [jɛu]	<u>a</u> ĩ = [ai]
	èĩ = [ɛi]
	oĩ = [ɔi]
Exception	oî = [ɔi]

Auvergnat Consonant Pronunciation

- Auvergnat consonant pronunciation also has much in common with Spanish.
- **The most variable aspects are:**
 - hard and soft c and g combinations
 - j pronunciation
 - m, n pronunciation
 - final consonant pronunciations
- Written b is pronounced as [b].
- Written v is pronounced as [b] at the beginning of a word and as [β] in the middle of a word. The pronunciation of [β] is a combination of [b] and [v].

Because of the b/v interchange, *Auvergne* will also appear as *Aubergne*. *Bous/vuous (you)* is another example.

- Written c followed by a, o, or u is [k].
- Written ch is [tʃ] as in Spanish.
- Written c followed by e or i is [s] as in French. Written ç is [s]. A variant of ç pronunciation may be a lightly squeezed [ʃ] (Gens).
- Written absolute initial g followed by a, o, u, is pronounced hard [g].
- As in Spanish, written g in the middle of a word can be softened to [ɣ]. This is the sound of a voiced *achlaut*: that is, as in *Bach*, but with voicing added.
- Written gu and qu when followed by a vowel are pronounced [g] and [k].
- Written g followed by e or i is pronounced *in general* as soft [dʒ], but may be heard on recordings as [dz] as well (Dav Rath).
- Written j or dj or dz is generally pronounced as [dʒ]. But [dz] may be heard on recordings (Dav Rath/Gens).
- As in Spanish, lh is [ʎ]; that is [l j] articulated very smoothly.
- Written nh is pronounced as [ɲ] as in Spanish *mañana*.
- As in Spanish and Italian, written n when followed by [g] or [k] becomes [ŋ]. Otherwise written n is generally pronounced as dental [n], except in final position (see below for Final Consonant Pronunciation).

- Written r is generally flipped. For emphasis, the r may be rolled.
- Written s is [s]. Between vowels and in liaison, s may be [s] or a lightly voiced [z]. Written z is generally [z].
- Written ts may be [ts] or “slushed” to [tʃ]. In other words, the hiss of the [s] is softened to [ʃ].

Auvergnat Final Consonant Pronunciation

- Final m, n, p, r, s, and t articulations as recommended by McCann can be soft, minimal, or non-existent. Sources cited by McCann – as well as the speaker with whom I work – confirm that a light pronunciation of a final consonant is acceptable and in line with Occitan pronunciation in general.
- Written m in final clusters may be pronounced very lightly or may be assimilated (absorbed) into an [n] pronunciation. For example, *camp*s could be delivered as [kams] or [kans].
- Final n in a phrase may be silent or nasalized to a soft [ŋ] (as in *song*) at the end of a phrase or sentence. The high velar delivery of the nasal consonant [ŋ] may add slight nasality to the preceding vowel.
- Final n can also be absorbed into an [m] pronunciation if followed by lip-pronounced consonants b, m, or p: for example: *un pastoure*l [ym pasturɛl].
- Written p in final clusters is generally silent: *camp*s [kams] or [kans].
- Final r may be silent at the end of infinitives: *mourir* [muri] (Gens, Grey)
- Final s may be pronounced to indicate plural or to add emphasis. But delivery on recordings is really unpredictable. Véronique Gens in her recordings quite frequently delivers the final s (plural or not), yet in some of the tracks far less frequently.
- For pronouns such as *ès* (*is*), *bous/vu*ous (*you*), *nous* (*we*), and also for *dous* (*two*), and *olprès* (*near*), the s appears to be commonly pronounced (Davrath, Gens, Grey)
- For very well-known French words such as *pas*, the s may be silent. For emphasis, the final s of *pas* may be pronounced.