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 ɛ 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)

- Ō/ð circumflex is pronounced as closed [ɔ].

- 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 [ɡarda].

Note that in the same song, *ogatso* is transcribed as [ɑɡatsa], 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 [ɑ].
• 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/ɛ] 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 [γ].

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

\[
\begin{align*}
ou & = [u] \\
\dot{ou} & = [\acute{ou}] \\
oou & = [\grave{ou}] \\
oou & = [\grave{oou}] \\
\dot{i}o & = [\acute{j}o] \\
\dot{i}ou & = [\acute{i} u] \\
\dot{i}ou & = [\acute{i} u] \\
iou & = [jou]
\end{align*}
\]

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\dot{ie}i & = [\acute{je}i] & a\dot{o} & = [\acute{a}o] \\
\dot{ieu} & = [\acute{je}u] & a\dot{i} & = [\acute{ai}] \\
\dot{ei} & = [\acute{e}i] & o\dot{oi} & = [\acute{oi}] \\
\dot{oi} & = [\acute{oi}] & o\dot{i} & = [\acute{oi}]
\end{align*}
\]

Exception oî = [œi]
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 [γ]. 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 (Davrath).
- Written j or dj or dz is generally pronounced as [dʒ]. But [dz] may be heard on recordings (Davrath/Gens).

- As in Spanish, lh is [ʎ]; that is [l,j] articulated very smoothly.
- Written nh is pronounced as [n] 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 [t s] or “slushed” to [t ʃ]. 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, camps could be delivered as [kams] or [kans].

• Final n in a phrase may be silent or nasalized to a soft [n̥] (as in song) at the end of a phrase or sentence. The high velar delivery of the nasal consonant [n] 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 pastourel [ym pastu/1513/1007rel].

• Written p in final clusters is generally silent: camps [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/vuous (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.