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# Preaspiration and tonal accents as Northern Gaelic features

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# Preaspiration and tonal accents as Northern Gaelic features

Or: Reconsidering contact origins

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15mh Còmhdhail Eadar-Nàiseanta na Ceiltis Oilthigh Ghlaschu 16 an t-Iuchar 2015

# Preview of argument

- · Preaspiration and tonal accents in Scotland and Ulster show the classic pattern of innovating centre vs archaic periphery
- · This presupposes that the 'archaic' pattern was once spread throughout the entire area
- An early form of both phenomena must have been present in the entire Northern Gaelic area
  - No special status for areas of heavy Norse settlement
  - Reasonable internal reconstruction
  - · No need for recourse to contact

# 1 Reconstruction

## 1.1 Preaspiration

#### Preaspiration in the Gaelic languages

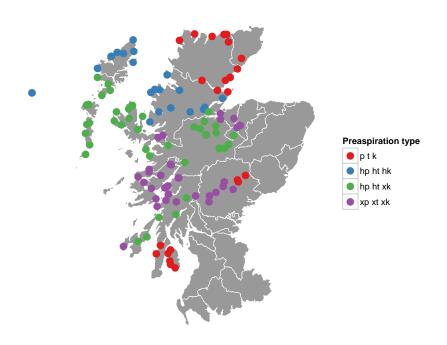
For discussion, see Ó Murchú (1985), Ní Chasaide & Ó Dochartaigh (1984), Ní Chasaide (1986), Bosch (2006), Ó Maolalaigh (2010), Clayton (2010)

- o. No preaspiration: most of Ireland, eastern and southern periphery in Scotland
- 1. /hp ht hk/: Lewis, NW Scottish mainland, (*West*) *Ulster* (Ní Chasaide & Ó Dochartaigh 1984, Ní Chasaide 1986)
- 2. /hp ht xk/: Western Isles south of Lewis, Skye, Inner Hebrides, parts of Ross-shire
- 3. /xp xt xk/: Lorn, Lochaber, central mainland as far east as Banffshire on place-name evidence (Grant 2002)

#### Reconstruction

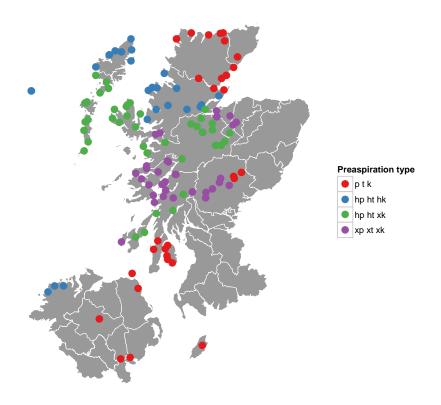
- · Weak preaspiration (the 'Lewis' type) is the most archaic
  - Typological arguments (Ní Chasaide 1986, Silverman 2003, Clayton 2010)
  - Interaction between preaspiration and \* $xt \rightarrow xk$ : lack of boc—bochd merger in Lewis implies lack of  $xk \rightarrow hk$  sound change (provided the chronological assumptions hold)
- · /hk/ becomes /xk/ for functional reasons: preaspiration is longest before [k] (Ní Chasaide 1986, Clayton 2010)
- · Generalization of \* $h \rightarrow x$  before a stop

# The Scottish perspective



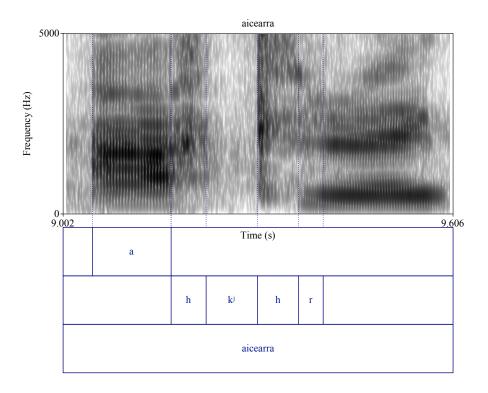
- · Focusing just on Scotland, the spatial pattern is not immediately clear:
  - /hp ht hk/ is 'peripheral' on the islands, but intrudes far into the mainland
  - Both /hp ht xk/ and /hp ht hk/ are 'central' in some sense
- · Several conceivable interpretations
- · In particular, it is possible to see preaspiration spreading from the Western Isles to the east and south

# The Northern Gaelic perspective

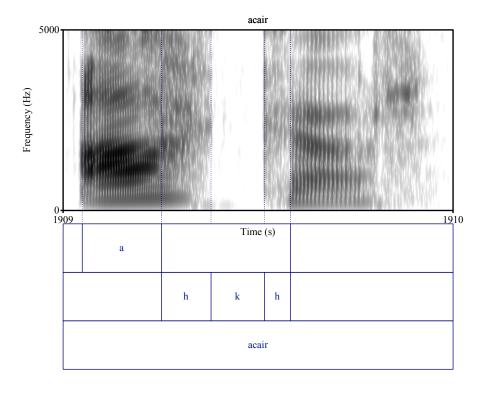


- · In a pan-Gaelic perspective, /hp ht hk/ is clearly a *peripheral* pattern
- · Preaspiration in Irish
  - Securely attested in Gaoth Dobhair (Ní Chasaide & Ó Dochartaigh 1984, Ní Chasaide 1986)
  - Possibly hiding behind some of the descriptions of 'fortis'/'lenis' contrast, e.g. Teileann (Wagner 1959)?
- · Perhaps less obligatory than in Scotland
- · Crucially: Lewis and Irish preaspiration are of the same type and *unlike* that in /hp ht xk/dialects (Ní Chasaide 1986)
- $\cdot /^h p^h h t^h h k^h / vs / h p h t x k /$

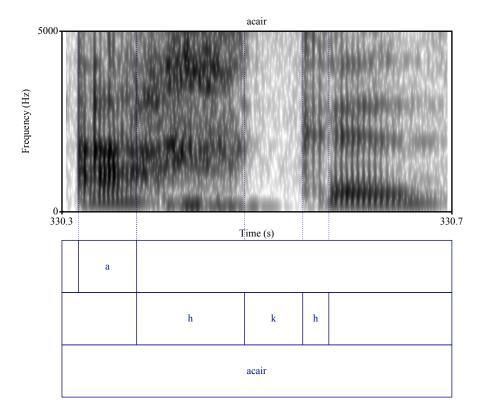
#### **Ulster Irish**



# Lewis Gaelic



#### North Uist Gaelic



# Mapping the interpretation

- · Two possible interpretations:
  - Lewis and West Ulster show the same archaic feature
  - The developments in Lewis and West Ulster are independent but not far advanced
  - Corollary: this kind of preaspiration is relatively easy to get
  - Exactly this kind of preaspiration is attested in Welsh
- · In either case: more advanced preaspiration systems should have gone through this stage!

#### Discussion

- $\cdot$  This map ignores potential *loss* of preaspiration in peripheral areas (cf. /p t xk/ system in SE Argyll)
- Even so: *some* form of preaspiration must have been current in *most* of the Northern Gaelic area
- For discussion of Northern Gaelic, see Ó Maolalaigh (1997), Ó Buachalla (2002), Ó Muircheartaigh (2014)
  - The initial spread of preaspiration does *not* show a strong affinity with areas of extensive Norse settlement
  - · Interesting: persistence of archaic preaspiration, contra Silverman (2003)

#### 1.2 Tone accents

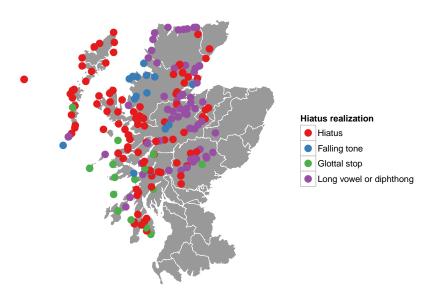
#### Tonal accents in Gaelic

- · See Borgstrøm (1974), Ternes (1980, 2006), MacAulay (1993), Brown (2009), Nance (2015)
- · Lewis 'accent 1': early rise + fall
- · Lewis 'accent 2': late rise, no fall
- · Accent 1: historical disyllables
  - Hiatus words: *adha*
  - Plain disyllables: balach
- · Accent 2: historical monosyllables
  - Plain monosyllables: àth
  - Svarabhakti words: balg
- · Alternations: Lewis leabhar [ $^1$ Λɔ:r] vs leabhraichean [ $^2$ Λɔ:rɪçən]

#### Diversity of realization

- · Lewis: tonal accent as described (Oftedal 1956)
- · Acoustic study of Ness by Brown (2009): L\* towards the end of stressed syllable, followed by intonational H (cf. Ladefoged et al. 1998, Ladefoged 2003)
- · Applecross (Ternes 2006): additional falling onglide in accent 2, otherwise like Lewis (in isolation)
- · SGDS transcriptions of hiatus (Ó Dochartaigh 1994–1997, vol. 1, §7.6.5)
  - /?/: glottal stop (see also Holmer 1938)
  - /|/: 'salient hiatus'
  - /-/: 'hiatus with no glottal catch' (pitch? intensity?)
  - Two symbols that mostly represent falling tone

Sample map: SGDS 474 giuthas



#### Pitch and glottalization

- · Glottalization can be reasonably connected with falling tone
- See Riad (2000), Hognestad (2007) for North Germanic, Kiparsky (forthcoming) for Finno-Ugric
  - · Falling tone across a syllable boundary presupposes a high tone towards the end of the first syllable
  - · But the high tone in Lewis is on the post-tonic syllable: why?

#### Pitch in Ulster Irish

- · Dalton & Ní Chasaide (2005)
  - Gaoth Dobhair nuclear accent is L\*+H, H aligned at the right edge of phrase
  - Cois Fharraige: nuclear accent is H\*+L, left alignment of H
- $\cdot$  The Ulster nuclear accent is (again) similar to the Lewis L\*+H, except for the alignment of the trailing tone
- · Ulster and Scotland show later peaks compared to Connacht and Munster
- · Rising nuclear accents: typologically highly unusual (Köhnlein 2013)

#### Peak delay

- · Rightward drift of H tone: peak delay (Ladd 2008)
- · Connacht/Munster H\*+L is the original system
- · Northern Gaelic shows various stages of peak delay
  - 1. Lewis: trailing H on next syllable
  - 2. West Ulster: trailing H on right boundary
  - 3. Falls/creaks: right-drifting H runs into L

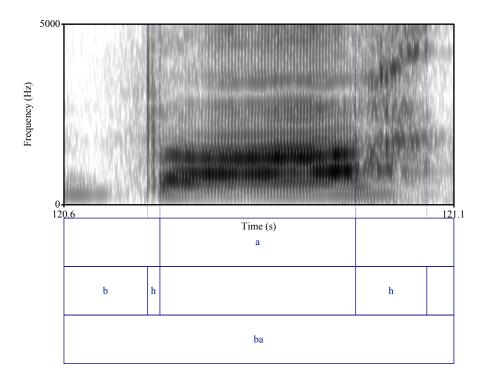
## Glottalization and stress-to-weight

- · South Argyll: glottalization in all main-stressed light syllables: teth, radan
- But not *tapaidh* ['thahpi], *beò* ['pjɔː]
  - Islay (Holmer 1938)
  - (South) Jura (G. Jones 2000, 2006, 2010)
  - Colonsay (Scouller 2015)
- · Stress-to-weight (Smith 1999) generalized to all stressed syllables
- · No glottalization when second mora present from another source
  - Consonant cluster
  - Preaspiration
  - Long vowel or diphthong

#### Stress-to-weight elsewhere

- · Ó Maolalaigh (2014) rounds up the evidence
  - 'Gestoßene Silbe' in Ulster Irish monosyllables, especially Tyrone (Stockman & Wagner 1965, Hughes 1994)
  - [h]-epenthesis in light monosyllables all across Ulster
- · Glottalization and/or aspiration of sonorants: fear [far,?], darna [da?Rnə] (G. Jones 2010) vs [darhnə] (Holmer 1938)
- This is more similar to the stød of Danish
- Although Danish also has varieties with stød on short vowels (Ringgaard 1960, Ejskjær 1967)
  - · Consonants are commonly described as 'fortis' after short vowels in Ulster: might this be glottalization?
  - · Connection between glottalization and sonorant pre-stopping in Manx? Both after short vowels
  - · In Northern Sámi, some dialects have sonorant prestopping (Sammallahti 1998) corresponding to preglottalization in others (Bals Baal, Odden & Rice 2012)

#### Gaoth Dobhair ba



- · Epenthetic [h] is more difficult to connect to tone typologically
- · Possible solution: S. Watson (1996), though see Ó Maolalaigh (2010)
- $\cdot \ \, \text{However, /h/-epenthesis in light syllables is unmotivated unless the stress-to-weight has already been established}$
- · Stress-to-weight arises from tonal developments?

# Summary on glottalization

- · Tones and glottalization all go back to peak delay
- · Peak delay is a Northern Gaelic feature
- · South Argyll, (East?) Ulster and Man: potentially most innovative area
- · Lewis tone is *archaic*
- · Peak delay is typologically *not* unusual
- Recurrent process in North Germanic (Bye 2004, Hognestad 2012)

# 2 Discussion

# 2.1 Preaspiration: why Norse?

Norse and Gaelic preaspiration

- · Is the Gaelic stop system particularly similar to Norse anyway?
- · Yes: Marstrander (1932), Oftedal (1947), Borgstrøm (1974)
- · Special feature of the Gaelic stop system: contrast between (pre/post)aspirated and fully voiceless unaspirated (Ó Murchú 1985)
- · This system in North Germanic: Icelandic, potentially SW Norway
- · Preaspiration in North Germanic found in *other* systems (Pétur Helgason 2002, Pétur Helgason & Ringen 2008, Ringen & van Dommelen 2013)
- · Icelandic preaspiration is *unusual* in a North Germanic context (Pétur Helgason 2002)
- · Icelandic preaspiration is similar to *some*, but not *all* types of Gaelic preaspiration (Ní Chasaide 1986)

#### The internal scenario

- · Preaspiration is commonly found at least as an option in systems with postaspiration in stressed onsets
- English is relatively unusual: widespread foot-internal lenition (Honeybone 2012, Harris 2012), preaspiration attested even in non-contact contexts (Docherty & Foulkes 1999, M. J. Jones & Llamas 2003, K. Watson 2007, Gordeeva & Scobbie 2010, Hejná & Scanlon 2015)
  - · Northern Gaelic innovation: 'non-normative' preaspiration *across the entire area* (now West Ulster, Lewis)  $\Rightarrow$  'normative' preaspiration (now Uist, North Argyll...)
  - · Parallel development in North Germanic: preaspiration is 'normative' in Iceland and bits of Norway (?) but mostly not

## **Summary on preaspiration**

- · Old point 1: preaspiration *can* be an internal innovation (Ó Baoill 1980, Ní Chasaide 1986, Ó Murchú 1985, Ó Maolalaigh 2010)
- · New point 1: preaspiration *must* have been Northern Gaelic in extent (adumbrated by Ó Maolalaigh 2010)
- No specific relationship to areas of Norse settlement
  - · Old point 2: Gaelic preaspiration isn't a unified phenomenon, and only partially similar to Norse (Ní Chasaide 1986)
  - · New point 2: little evidence that Norse preaspiration *can* have been a source for Gaelic, let alone that it must have

# 2.2 Tone accents: why Norse?

# Why Norse?

- · Typologically unusual: happy to talk about this (Iosad 2015)
- · Borgstrøm (1974): Gaelic rising pitch is similar to Western Norwegian accents
- · No wonder! Western Norwegian accent 2 has a later peak than accent 1 by peak delay (Hognestad 2012)
- · Typologically almost trivial

#### Peak delay: a Northern Gaelic feature

- · By the same reasoning: various kinds of delayed peaks are common across the Northern Gaelic area
- Much more instrumental work needed to understand the hiatus realization (Brown 2009)
- However, peak delay must have covered areas like Ulster and all of Argyll, not generally associated with strong Norse influence
  - · The case is slightly less secure for lack of reliable data, but similar reasoning to above

## 2.3 The case for contact?

- · Contact is impossible to deny in view of placename and lexical evidence
- · Multiple causation of language change is *not* unusual (Thomason 2000, 2010)
- The early stages of the Gaelic innovations may have arisen at about the same time as the *early* stages of the relevant innovations in Norse
- This is contentious at least for tone (Riad 1998, 2003, 2005)
- No good understanding of the diachrony for preaspiration yet
  - · Some sort of (mutually?) reinforcing development is difficult to rule out at this stage and probably undesirable?

#### **Summary**

- · Both preaspiration and tonal accents are pan-Northern Gaelic innovations
- · Their distribution shows little cohesion with areas of strong Norse influence
- Similarities between relevant phenomena in North Germanic and Gaelic are explainable by typologically common processes
- · Contact influence is difficult to exclude, but neither are the arguments for it particularly compelling

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