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THE GAELIC DIALECT OF COLONSAY

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MA (Glasgow), BD (Edinburgh), MSc (Edinburgh), FCIL

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Edinburgh

2017

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a description of the Scottish Gaelic dialect spoken on the Inner Hebridean island of Colonsay. This dialect has not previously been the subject of any serious academic research. Gaelic was the dominant language on Colonsay until the 1970s, but the local dialect is now in terminal decline, with only a handful of fluent speakers still living on the island. The study focusses mainly on the phonology of the dialect, but other aspects such as morphology, syntax and lexis are also covered.

Following a brief introduction, Chapter 1 seeks to situate the dialect in its wider geographical, historical and sociolinguistic context, highlighting the major changes that have taken place in the past forty years, and have led to its present endangered situation.

Chapter 2, which comprises approximately half the thesis, examines the phonological structure of the dialect in detail, based on the results of the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland (SGDS)*. Issues of phonetic and phonemic transcription are discussed. The phonemes identified are then listed, with their respective allophones and non-allophonic variants.

Chapter 3 deals with prosodic and other non-segmental features which are of significance for the phonology of the dialect.

Chapter 4 highlights those aspects of morphology and syntax where Colonsay usage differs from other varieties of Gaelic.

Chapter 5 discusses lexical features which are particular to this dialect, or shared with neighbouring dialects in Argyll. An annotated Glossary lists words which are of particular interest in the study of this dialect, some of which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

This thesis will provide future students of Gaelic dialectology with an account of the Colonsay dialect, to complement the numerous monographs that have been written about other varieties of Gaelic. Because of the precarious position of this dialect, the timing of this study is critical: it represents the last opportunity to ‘preserve by record’ a distinctive variety of Gaelic which, sadly, is on the verge of extinction.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare:

- (a) that the thesis has been composed by me, and
- (b) that the work is my own, and
- (c) that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed,

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	1
DECLARATION	3

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	10
List of informants	12
List of abbreviations	13
INTRODUCTION	14
Genesis of the project	14
Structure of the thesis	15
The Linguistic Survey of Scotland	17
1. THE BACKGROUND: AN ISLAND AND ITS LANGUAGE	21
The island	21
Written sources	22
History	28
Recent economic/demographic developments	31
<i>Shift in employment and population patterns</i>	31
<i>Language shift</i>	37
2. THE PHONEMIC ANALYSIS OF COLONSAY GAELIC	42
Transcription practice	44

VOWEL PHONEMES	45
Modified forms	48
Cardinal vowels	50
Non-cardinal vowels	52
<i>Rounded front vowels: y ʏ ø</i>	52
<i>Unrounded back vowels: u ʊ ʌ</i>	53
<i>Lax forms: ɪ ʊ</i>	56
<i>Central vowel: ə</i>	59
Diphthongs	60
CONSONANT PHONEMES	61
Stops	61
<i>Palatalised stops</i>	67
Fricative [ç]	70
Sonorants	72
<i>Laterals and nasals</i>	72
<i>Comparison of the phonemic status of laterals and nasals</i>	73
<i>Rounded and velarised laterals and nasals</i>	75
<i>Comparison with Islay forms</i>	77
<i>Bilabial nasal phoneme /m/</i>	78
<i>Vibrants – a re-assessment</i>	79
<i>Results of fresh fieldwork on Colonsay</i>	84
Semi-vowels	90
REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL PHONEMES	93
VOWEL PHONEMES	94
Front vowels – unrounded	94
Front vowel – rounded	107
Back vowels	112
Central vowel	122
Schematic tables	127

STOP PHONEMES	130
Lenis stops	130
Fortis stops	138
Palatalised stops: lenis	146
Palatalised stops: fortis	151
FRICATIVES	157
Unvoiced fricatives	157
Voiced fricatives	170
SONORANTS	175
Laterals	175
Nasals	185
Vibrant	197
SEMI-VOWELS	201
Summary table	204
DIPHTHONGS	205
Commonly occurring diphthongs	207
Less commonly occurring diphthongs	213
Summary table	227
3. NON-SEGMENTAL (PROSODIC) FEATURES	228
Stress	231
Duration	235
<i>Long and short vowels</i>	235
<i>Lengthening of consonants</i>	238
Tone	239
<i>Representation of tone</i>	244

Glottalisation	255
<i>Glottalisation of sonorants</i>	259
<i>Glottalisation of lenis stops</i>	260
<i>Glottalisation of voiced fricatives</i>	260
<i>Glottalisation in sandhi</i>	261
Epenthesis	262
<i>Previous studies of epenthesis in Scottish Gaelic dialects</i>	264
<i>The 'Argyll' model</i>	269
<i>Epenthesis in Colonsay Gaelic</i>	271
<i>Sonorant + lenis stop</i>	272
<i>Sonorant + fortis stop</i>	272
<i>Sonorant + sonorant</i>	273
<i>Sonorant + fricative</i>	273
<i>Fricative + sonorant</i>	274
<i>Phonological assessment of epenthesis</i>	275
Preaspiration	277
Nasalisation	281
<i>Nasalisation of vowels</i>	281
<i>Voicing of consonants</i>	284
<i>The nasal mutation</i>	284
<i>Word-internal voicing</i>	287
Devoicing	289
<i>Lenis stops</i>	289
<i>Final devoicing</i>	290
<i>Preaspiration of sonorants</i>	290
Some insights from syllable theory	291
Complementarity of prosodic features	295

4. MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX	297
Findings of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland	301
MORPHOLOGY	303
Verbs	303
<i>Regular verbs</i>	303
<i>Irregular verbs</i>	305
Definite article	316
Nouns	318
<i>Genitive and dative case marking</i>	318
<i>Masculine singular nouns</i>	320
<i>Feminine singular nouns</i>	321
<i>Dual number</i>	322
<i>Plural nouns</i>	323
<i>Vocative case</i>	324
Adjectives	325
<i>Plural marking</i>	325
<i>Case marking</i>	326
<i>Comparative and superlative</i>	326
Pronouns	328
<i>Prepositional pronouns</i>	328
SYNTAX	337
Perfect and pluperfect tenses formed with <i>an dèidh</i>	337
Relative clauses involving prepositions	338
Directional v. locational adverbs of place	339
Clefts: <i>'s ann</i> and <i>'s e</i>	341
Formal and informal forms of second person pronouns	342
Summary of findings	343

5. LEXICAL FEATURES	345
Parallels with Irish	346
Preferential choices	349
Substitutionary choices	353
Expressions of time	356
Numerals	357
Intensifiers	358
The influence of English	359
Discourse markers	364
Personal names	365
Lexical comparisons with other Argyll island dialects	368
CONCLUSION	374
Sunset over Colonsay	377
GLOSSARY	378
BIBLIOGRAPHY	388

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis could not have been produced without the willing co-operation of many people.

In the first instance I should like to thank my academic supervisors, Professor William Gillies, Professor Wilson McLeod, and Dr William Lamb, for their sustained interest in the progress of my project, and for constructive criticism and useful suggestions at all stages of the work.

I also wish to thank Professor Elmar Ternes, of Hamburg University, for his helpful observations.

Professor Emeritus John Sheets, of the University of Central Missouri, an expert on the social history of Colonsay in the 19th century, was able to supply a wealth of background information, and has encouraged me at every stage.

Dr George Jones, of Aberystwyth, helpfully supplied me with electronic copies of his own PhD thesis on the Gaelic of Jura, and provided additional information on the Jura dialect.

Dr Cathlin Macaulay, of the School of Scottish Studies Archives, kindly allowed me access to the Scottish Studies Library during the period of its relocation. Her colleague Caroline Milligan has been of enormous help over the years in supplying me with recording equipment, and locating and copying archive recordings.

Most of all I would like to express sincere thanks to those speakers of Colonsay Gaelic who allowed me to record them, and in some cases had to put up with some fairly rigorous questioning. Their names are listed below. The fact that so many of them are being thanked posthumously merely serves to underline the precarious nature of this dialect. In particular I would like to pay tribute to Flora Macneill, Mary Ann MacAllister and Jessie McNeill, all sadly gone from us in the space of just two years, who took a close interest in my project, and were always on hand to answer questions.

My cousin Niall Brown was kind enough to read through drafts of some chapters, and make helpful observations. I would especially like to thank him and Netta Titterton for several hours spent patiently answering my questions, particularly about expressions they remembered being used by a previous generation of Colonsay Gaelic speakers. Dion Alexander was also able to share with me his ‘remembrance of things past’, including a number of typically Colonsay expressions that I had forgotten about.

At the same time, I should like to thank the many other Colonsay people who, although not Gaelic speakers themselves, have encouraged me in my research into this vital aspect of the island’s heritage. Kevin Byrne in particular has provided a wealth of stimulating suggestions and theories, which have occasionally enabled me to see things from a different angle. The late Angela Skrimshire also provided useful and, at times, challenging insights from an ‘incomer’s’ perspective.

Of the many other personal friends who have supported me throughout the course of this project I would mention in particular Sheila Knowles and Shiona Mackay.

Finally, I wish to express sincere thanks to Mr Zahid Mahmood, Cardiac Surgeon, whose professional skills ensured that I was able to complete this thesis with only the briefest of interruptions, despite having to undergo major heart surgery during its latter stages.

List of informants

Mrs Kate Bowman

Mr Niall Brown

Mr John Clark (died 1 August 2016)

Mrs Mary Ann MacAllister (died 1 February 2013)

Mr Donald J. MacArthur

Mr John MacFadyen

Mr Donald ‘Gibbie’ McNeill (died 18 August 2017) and Mrs Margaret McNeill

Mrs Eleanor McNeill (died 7 November 2013)

Mrs Flora Macneill (died 29 December 2013)

Miss Flora Margaret (‘Folalie’) McNeill (died 2 November 2012)

Miss Jessie McNeill (died 12 December 2014)

Mrs Mary O’Mahoney

Mrs Janet (‘Netta’) Titterton

Gu robh math agaibh uile.

List of abbreviations

CUP Cambridge University Press

DIAS Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

GOC Gaelic Orthographic Conventions

IPA International Phonetic Alphabet

LSS Linguistic Survey of Scotland

MIT Massachusetts Institute of Technology

OUP Oxford University Press

SGDS Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland

SGS Scottish Gaelic Studies

URL Uniform Resource Locator

INTRODUCTION

*Ann an cearcall nan eilean a-mach anns an iar,
Chan eil aon nam measg-san gu lèir
Bheir bàrr an grinneas air Colbhasa ciar,
Tìr àlainn nam fàsaichean rèidh.¹*

This thesis provides a description of the Gaelic dialect spoken on the Inner Hebridean island of Colonsay, which has not previously been the subject of any specific academic research. As with other studies of Gaelic dialects, the main focus is on the phonology, based in this instance on the phonetic data contained in the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland (SGDS)* (Ó Dochartaigh 1997). Other aspects such as morphology, syntax and lexis are also covered. Gaelic was the dominant language on Colonsay until the 1970s, but the local dialect is now in terminal decline, with English replacing it as the language of everyday conversation.

Genesis of the project

This thesis is the fruit of a lifetime's exposure to Colonsay Gaelic. My paternal grandmother was from Colonsay, and the local dialect of Gaelic was her first language; like many Gaels of her generation, she spoke no English until she went to school at the age of six. Although my father was not taught the language, he grew up hearing it spoken, especially during long summer holidays spent on the family croft at Uragaig in the 1920s and 1930s. My own experience of Gaelic as a child was limited, although I was certainly aware of it, in particular during family holidays on Colonsay, which in the 1950s was still overwhelmingly Gaelic-speaking, and in Wester Ross.

¹ Edith Clark, 'Colonsay Isle', tr. Duncan Johnston.

Having begun teaching myself Gaelic as a teenager, and after obtaining some knowledge of linguistics while studying French and German at the University of Glasgow, in 1973 I made what was to be the first of many visits to Colonsay with the specific purpose of improving my spoken Gaelic, and acquiring a knowledge of the local dialect. In 1989 I acquired a home on the island, and have since spent around a quarter of my time on Colonsay, conversing regularly in Gaelic with the diminishing cohort of fluent native speakers.

From studying a number of monographs on Gaelic dialects – beginning with Holmer’s *Studies on Argyllshire Gaelic* (1938) – I became aware that no serious study of Colonsay Gaelic had been undertaken. I also realised that the number of people speaking the dialect as their normal everyday language was rapidly declining. A frequently expressed opinion that ‘someone’ ought to undertake such a study, while there was still time, gradually matured into a realisation that I might be the person to do it. In 2008, I approached first Professor Donald Meek, and then Professor William Gillies, with the idea of a PhD. Nine years later, having in the meantime completed an MSc dissertation on ‘Glottalisation in the Gaelic Dialect of Colonsay’ (Scouller 2010), and with the number of Gaelic speakers on Colonsay now down to single figures, I am able to submit the results of my research.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 provides background information about the island, including details of written sources, a brief summary of its history, and an account of the present socio-economic situation, highlighting the major changes that have taken place in the past forty years. A final section addresses the issue of language shift, and the factors that have led to the present critical state of the local dialect.

Chapter 2, entitled ‘The Phonemic Analysis of Colonsay Gaelic’, in tribute to the seminal work of Elmar Ternes (2006), forms the main core of the thesis, making up approximately half of the total word count. The analysis is based on the results of the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland (SGDS)* (Ó Dochartaigh 1997), supplemented as appropriate by the results of further primary research (see below).

An introductory section examines the different categories of speech sounds in turn, identifying phonemes in each case, and in particular addressing the issue of how Gaelic speech sounds can best be represented in both phonetic and phonemic transcription. A sub-section is devoted to new primary research on vibrants (*r* sounds), about which the *SGDS* results showed some ambiguity. The rest of the chapter then gives a detailed account of each phoneme, examining the evidence of the *SGDS*, and concluding in each case with a ‘phonemic definition’ indicating how the phoneme is articulated, and which variants are to be considered as allophones.

Chapter 3 examines Non-segmental (Prosodic) Features, i.e. those phonological elements which operate on the segmental string, but do not form part of it. In addition to the standard suprasegmental features – stress, duration and tone – these include more typically Gaelic elements: preaspiration, epenthesis and, importantly for the Colonsay dialect, glottalisation.² Nasalisation and voicing/devoicing are also included. Where appropriate, illustrations are given based on spectrographic analysis, using Praat software (Boersma and Weenink 2010), and the ToBI system³ for the analysis of tone patterns.

Chapter 4 deals with issues of Morphology and Syntax. No attempt is made to cover the whole of the morphosyntax of Colonsay Gaelic; rather the aim is to identify features which are handled differently in this dialect from most other varieties of Gaelic.

Chapter 5, similarly, identifies Lexical Features which are of interest in this dialect because they differ from forms found elsewhere. A brief Comparative Table sets out some parallels with forms found in the neighbouring dialects of Jura, Islay and Tiree. This chapter is supplemented by an annotated Glossary.

² On glottalisation, see my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010).

³ ‘Tone and Break Indices’. For an introduction, see Ladd 2008: 104-107.

The Linguistic Survey of Scotland

In considering the phonological structure of the Colonsay dialect, and to some extent its morphology, I have had the great advantage of being able to base my analysis on the results of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Gaelic), published as the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland (SGDS)* (Ó Dochartaigh 1997). This monumental, five-volume work represents the fruits of a long period of research involving many distinguished scholars, beginning in the 1950s when the original fieldwork was conducted. As a result, we now have an immensely valuable and detailed phonetic record of the different dialects of Scottish Gaelic, many of which are no longer spoken. The *Survey* provides a narrow phonetic transcription of the pronunciation of 895 individual headwords in 207 geographic locations, spread across almost the whole of the historical *Gàidhealtachd*, from the Butt of Lewis in the north to the Mull of Kintyre in the south, and from Upper Deeside in the east to Barra and even St Kilda in the west. It is remarkable that, as recently as the 1950s, native speakers meeting the very strict criteria of the *Survey* could be found in virtually all the locations where Gaelic had been traditionally spoken.

We pick our informants with very great care, making sure that they were themselves born and brought up in the immediate neighbourhood whose dialect we are studying, and that both their father and mother were likewise. [...] We try if possible also to avoid those who are married to speakers of other dialects, or have themselves lived for a very long time in another dialect area.

(Jackson 1958: 232; quoted in *SGDS*, Vol. I: 80)

Half a century on, such an exercise would have been impossible in the majority of mainland districts, and extremely difficult even in many of the islands.

Colonsay appears in the *SGDS* as Point 57. The informant, in July 1958, was Miss Annabella MacNeill, of No.7 Glassard.⁴ She is described as follows:

Aged 82, born Lower Kilchattan [...], brought up Lower Kilchattan, father Machrins [...], mother Screatan [...]; father was literate in Gaelic. (Vol. I: 86)

‘Bella Ann’, as she was known, was born in 1876 to Donald ‘Gilbert’ MacNeill and his wife Margaret MacNeill (*Peigi Bhàn*); she died in 1962, and is buried with her parents and siblings in Kilchattan cemetery, next to her kinsman Professor Donald MacKinnon.⁵ She had previously been recorded on tape by Calum Maclean for the School of Scottish Studies Archives, and these recordings (SA 1953.120-124) are now available via the *Tobar an Dualchais* website (www.tobarandualchais.co.uk). It is therefore possible to compare her spoken pronunciation with the phonetic record.

The fieldworker who interviewed Annabella MacNeill for the *Survey* was Eric Hamp, who went on to become a much-respected phonetician and linguist, based in Chicago. His essay ‘On the representation of Scottish Gaelic dialect phonetics’ (Hamp 1988) has become something of a *locus classicus* for any study of Gaelic phonetics. However, since Hamp’s original field notes were post-edited by Professor Kenneth Jackson, and further edited and standardised for eventual publication in 1997, the essay is less helpful than might appear in interpreting Hamp’s extremely fine-toothed account of Colonsay Gaelic, and has to be read in conjunction with the extensive explanation of symbols in Vol. I of the *SGDS*.

Jackson’s ‘fair copy’ of Hamp’s field notes, copiously annotated in his own handwriting, is preserved, along with other materials from the *Survey*, in the School of Scottish Studies Archives, and provides a valuable insight into the process of eliciting and editing the raw data. It also preserves a number of forms which did not make it into the published volumes. Because the *Survey* was at that time known as the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Gaelic), this unpublished material is cited here as LSS. As well as the phonetic data, a certain amount of morphological and

⁴ ‘Tigh na Mara, 7 Glas Aird’, according to the *SGDS*. The current anglicised spelling is *Glassard*.

⁵ Graveyard inscription, Kilchattan cemetery. Further information from Professor John Sheets (conversation, 28 August 2017). Annabella MacNeill’s grandmother and Professor MacKinnon’s mother were sisters. Her nephew Donald ‘Gibbie’ McNeill was one of my informants.

morphophonological data is also provided; this content has yet to appear in published form. The latter data will be examined in Chapter 4 (Morphology and Syntax), where it will be shown that the informant's responses reveal a 'fairly conservative' usage, perhaps influenced by her knowledge of the rules of Gaelic grammar (p. 301).

The practice of the LSS, in selecting a representative native speaker for each locality, does carry with it the danger that individual features of the informant's speech (idiolect) may be recorded as definitive for this particular dialect, whereas other speakers may show some degree of variation. It is noteworthy that, where the same headword is recorded more than once in the *SGDS* for the same locality, some slight variation is usually evident. Nancy Dorian's recent work on variation within a dialect, and within the phonetic repertoire of individual speakers, is highly relevant here (Dorian 2010). It is important to bear this in mind, in light of Hamp's very detailed treatment of vowel sounds in particular. In some cases, his exceedingly narrow transcription of Annabella MacNeill's pronunciation over-specifies the degree of variation encountered, beyond what is actually relevant to the characterisation of the dialect. This level of detail in the LSS as a whole is remarked upon by Bosch and Scobbie (2009), although they add a plea in mitigation: 'To their credit, the fieldworkers on this project were making a genuine effort to record the minute details which might, under comparison with the whole, provide evidence of regional variation, either phonetic or phonological' (2009: 357-358). In the days before digital recording, they may have felt that it fell to others to assess the phonological significance of the data they were faithfully transcribing.

In the present study I have relied on the findings of the *Survey* wherever possible; these are supplemented, as appropriate, with the results of my own primary fieldwork. Where I was uncertain about particular items in the *SGDS* results, based on my own acquired knowledge of Colonsay Gaelic, I was able to check these with native speakers, and in the overwhelming majority of cases, to verify that the phonetic forms recorded in the *SGDS* were correct. Any areas of divergence between the *SGDS* results and my own findings are noted as and when they occur. In the case of the (unpublished) morphological data, differences between the forms recorded in the LSS and present-day usage proved much greater, especially in the area of noun and adjective agreement. These discrepancies are addressed more fully in Chapter 4.

This thesis will provide future students of Gaelic dialectology with an account of the Colonsay dialect which, it is hoped, will complement the numerous monographs that have been written about other varieties of Gaelic. Because of the precarious position of the dialect, the timing of this study is critical: it represents the last opportunity to ‘preserve by record’ a distinctive variety of Gaelic which, sadly, is on the verge of extinction.

1. THE BACKGROUND: AN ISLAND AND ITS LANGUAGE

The island

The island of Colonsay is one of the smaller islands of the Inner Hebrides, and one of the least known. Lying between 56° 01' N and 56° 08' N, and between 6° 08' W and 6° 17' W, it measures approximately eight miles end-to-end, and almost three miles at its widest point. To the south, across an area of tidal mudflats known as The Strand (*An Fhadhail*) is the smaller island of Oronsay,⁶ roughly three miles by two, known principally for its ruined Priory, as a bird reserve, and for its grey seal colony. Although Oronsay is cut off by the tide twice a day, and the two islands are now separately owned, they effectively form a single community: all the essential services – shop, post office, school, doctor's surgery, churches, etc. – are to be found on Colonsay, which has a regular ferry service and limited air service to the mainland.

In Gaelic, the islands are known as *Colbhasa* and *Orasa*.⁷ Although folk etymology derives these forms from the names of the two saints most commonly associated with the locality, Columba and Oran, more learned opinion has held that they are of Norse origin, representing **Kolbeins-ey* (Kolbein's island) and **Orfiris-ey* (ebb-tide island) (Loder 1935: xxx, citing W. J. Watson 1922: xviii; 1926: 84). A recent study conducted by *Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba* suggests that a more probable derivation of the name Colonsay is from **Koll-vangs-øy* (hill field island), which in the absence of any positive identification of 'Kolbein', seems a plausible alternative (King and Scammell 2017: 4). Oronsay, in various spellings, is a common name for a tidal island all the way up the western seaboard of Scotland, so 'ebb-tide island' seems a likely derivation in this case.

⁶ Also spelt Oransay.

⁷ The spelling *Colasa* is popularly used on the island, and alternative forms such as *Colbhansaigh*, *Oransaigh* are also attested.

The population of both islands was recorded as 132 in the 2011 Census. After a long period of relentless decline, the population has shown a slight increase at each of the last two Censuses. This is discussed in more detail below.

Colonsay's nearest neighbours are Islay to the south, Jura to the east, and Mull and Iona to the north. To the west the open Atlantic stretches to the horizon, punctuated only by the slender tower of the *Dubh Hirteach* lighthouse, some 18 miles distant.⁸ The ferry crossing to Oban, 38 miles to the north-east, takes 2 hours and 20 minutes; it operates daily in summer, and four times a week in winter. On Saturdays throughout the year, and on Wednesdays in summer, the Islay service from Kennacraig, on the west coast of Kintyre, is extended to Colonsay and Oban (and back again), meaning that round-trip visits are possible on those days.

Since 2007 there has also been an air service from Oban up to four days a week, using the upgraded airstrip at Machrins. The advent of regular flights at weekends means that, for the first time, secondary pupils who have to board at Oban High School can come home at weekends; previously this was only possible about every six weeks in the winter months, because of the timing of ferries.

Written sources

The book *Colonsay and Oronsay in the Isles of Argyll*, by John de Vere Loder (later Lord Wakehurst), first published in 1935, remains the standard work of reference on Colonsay and Oronsay to this day. A new edition was published in 1995, with an introduction by the present Lord Strathcona bringing the history of the islands up to date. Along with a wealth of historical and geographical information, it gives local Gaelic names of plants and birds where these are known, and contains a comprehensive list of Gaelic placenames (pp. 406-448).

⁸ The official spelling, as used by the Northern Lighthouse Board (www.nlb.org.uk), is *Dubh Artach*. However, the pronunciation on Colonsay (and on Iona) is [d̪u 'hiɾˠtʃəx]. Donald MacKinnon, in an 1874 essay describing a visit to the newly-constructed lighthouse (Mackinnon 1956: 270-276), spelt it as one word: *An Duibhirteach*.

Loder's work is a painstaking study, based mainly on primary sources. Slightly over half of it (pp. 191-448) consists of voluminous appendices. Two of these, Appendix II (pp. 193-260) and Appendix III (pp. 194-313) deal respectively with early documentary sources in which Colonsay is mentioned, and with more recent descriptions of the island, beginning with Martin Martin in 1703.⁹ The earliest recorded mention of 'Coluansei' and 'Oruansei' occurs in a 'Constitution' granted by Pope Innocent III to the Abbey of Iona in 1203, in which the two islands are listed as 'pertinents' of the Abbey (p. 193). Over a century later, Colonsay (in various orthographic guises) is listed in various charters granted by the ruling Kings of Scotland (including Edward Balliol)¹⁰ to the Lords of the Isles in the middle years of the 14th century (pp. 194-196). Numerous references to Oronsay Priory in correspondence with the Holy See between 1353 and 1558 (on the eve of the Reformation) are faithfully reproduced (pp. 206-211). From the 16th century onwards, official documentation becomes more established (pp. 213-236), largely detailing the changing fortunes of the Macfies/MacDuffies and Clan Donald, who vied for supremacy over the island, most notably in the time of Colkitto Macdonald (*Colla Ciotach*) (see below).¹¹ Post-Reformation Church records are reproduced, dating from 1655 onwards (pp. 241-260).

Loder, who was not a Gaelic speaker,¹² relied for much of his information on the expertise of Murdoch McNeill, who wrote *Colonsay, One of the Hebrides* in 1910. Born on Colonsay in 1873, McNeill trained as a botanist and horticulturalist at Kew Gardens before returning to his native island, where he became the Head Gardener. As well as an account of the island flora and fauna, McNeill's book includes many examples of oral tradition, some of which is rendered in the original Gaelic. His list of placenames in Loder's book is supplemented by footnotes citing Donald MacKinnon, the first Professor of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh, who was born on Colonsay (see below), and his successor W. J. Watson.

⁹ Dean Monro's description of his visit in 1549 is included among the 'Documents' in Appendix II (pp. 211-212).

¹⁰ Balliol's 'indenture' was confirmed by Edward III of England in 1336, reflecting his vassal status (Loder 1935: 194-195).

¹¹ This period in Colonsay's history is fully documented by Byrne (1997).

¹² He was the brother-in-law of the 3rd Lord Strathcona, who owned the two islands.

A rather more idiosyncratic account of the islands' early history and prehistory was published by Symington Grieve in his two-volume work *The Book of Colonsay and Oronsay* (1923). Grieve was an enthusiastic amateur archaeologist, who was clearly fascinated by the oral tradition of the islands. His book is still regarded as something of a classic by Colonsay aficionados, but his findings lack academic rigour, and his account, while entertaining to read, is largely informed by folk history, and his own speculative theories.

Frances Murray, who spent summer holidays on Oronsay with her family in the 1880s, wrote about her experiences in her memoir *Summer in the Hebrides* (1887). Although essentially anecdotal, her book gives a fascinating first-hand account of Colonsay and Oronsay in the late nineteenth century, including some examples of Colonsay Gaelic; a few of these are transcribed as heard, thus preserving an early attempt at a phonetic record of the Colonsay dialect.

A similarly anecdotal account of life on Colonsay in the late 1960s is provided by the American journalist John McPhee in *The Crofter and the Laird* (1972). The book remains controversial on the island, thanks to McPhee's practice of making liberal use of island gossip, which is quoted verbatim (though unattributed), with names mentioned. It nevertheless gives an endearing portrait of the Colonsay community as it was in an earlier generation.

More recently, Dion Alexander has produced *The Potter's Tale: A Colonsay Life* (2017) recounting his experiences while trying to make a living as a potter on Colonsay in the 1970s. 'Di the Potter' (*Am Potter* [m ˈbʰoːd̪aː]), as he is known locally, became a central player in the island community during that time, and an enthusiastic recorder of all aspects of Colonsay life and tradition, including most importantly its language, which he took the trouble to learn (pp. 24-42). Although his reminiscences were not published until 40 years later, his book provides an affectionate and hugely entertaining account of day-to-day life on Colonsay in the 1970s, only a few years after the period described by McPhee.

Kevin Byrne, a former owner of the Colonsay Hotel, has written *Lonely Colonsay* (2010).¹³ Although essentially a walking guide, it includes a wealth of fairly random information about archaeological sites and oral traditions, presented in an idiosyncratic and humorous style. Byrne has also produced a biography of Colkitto (1997), and a list of Colonsay and Oronsay placenames (1993).

Until recently, Colonsay had produced little in the way of literary output in Gaelic, the one great exception being the work of Donald MacKinnon (1839-1914). MacKinnon was born on a croft in Lower Kilchattan, and became an eminent member of the Edinburgh academic establishment. He was appointed as the first occupant of the Celtic Chair at Edinburgh University, which was established in 1882 following a widespread public campaign, and in 1883-84 served as a member of the Napier Commission into the living conditions of crofters (Cameron 1986: 3, 120). He wrote prolifically, in both English and Gaelic, for publications such as *An Gàidheal*, the *Celtic Review* and *The Scotsman*, on topics ranging from placenames to Gaelic proverbs, as well as more academic subjects (for a full bibliography, see Sheets 2009). A collection of his Gaelic prose writings, including some essays relating directly to Colonsay, was published by the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society (Mackinnon 1956).¹⁴ MacKinnon cultivated a good, if somewhat ponderous, Gaelic prose style, and although some Argyll influences may occasionally be detected (Mackinnon 1956: xxiv), there is little specific evidence of his native Colonsay dialect in his writing.

The celebrated collection *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, by John Francis Campbell, originally published in 1860-62, includes the tale ‘The Knight of the Red Shield’ (*Ridire na Sgiatha Deirge*), which Campbell received from ‘John McGilvray, labourer, Baile Raomainn, Colonsay, aged 72 years’ (Campbell 1994, Vol. 2: 177-210). The tale itself is rambling and grotesque, and represents, in Campbell’s estimation, ‘the fragments of some old romance traditionally preserved, and rapidly fading away before the light of modern times’ (p. 206). What is interesting from our

¹³ The title refers to a phrase first coined by Sir Walter Scott in his poem *The Lord of the Isles* (1857); it was also used as the title of an essay (in English) by Donald MacKinnon, published in *The Scotsman* on 23 August 1887. (Sheets, forthcoming – page numbers not available).

¹⁴ The collection was edited by Lachlan Mackinnon (no relation), whose surname is spelt slightly differently.

point of view is that the Gaelic version as published appears to preserve some features of McGilvray's native Colonsay idiom: *dh'fholbh* for *dh'fhalbh*, *an sean* for *an sin*, *'neis* for *a-nis*, *bu mheasa* for *bu mhiosa*, *ad fhé'* for *iad fhéin*, etc. Campbell himself explains in his Introduction that '*falbh* is spelt *folbh* when a story comes from some of the Western Islands, because it is so pronounced there' (Vol. I: 81, italics added). While his purpose is not to reproduce all the features of his informant's native dialect, enough is included to give a flavour of the original, making this the earliest known record of Colonsay speech.

The Gaelic oral tradition remained strong on Colonsay within living memory. People would compose verses to and about their neighbours, often in satirical vein, and these would be recited at ceilidhs and other gatherings, such as weddings. In the 1980s, Alasdair McAllister (1925-1987) began collecting some of the surviving material, both oral and manuscript, but this work was cut short by his untimely death; his unpublished collection, which I have in my possession, includes some original poems by the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod, famous for his collaboration with Marjory Kennedy-Fraser on *Songs of the Hebrides*, who served as the Church of Scotland minister in Colonsay from 1917 to 1925. There is also some material by Archibald McNeill, known to posterity simply as 'the Bard', from the now abandoned settlement of *Riasg Buidhe* on the east coast of Colonsay, who was active around the same time. The generation of *Colbhasachs* born in the years following the First World War learned to recite many of the Bard's verses from memory, and a rapidly diminishing number of them can still do so (Alexander 2017: 36-40).

Perhaps the last exponent of the Colonsay bardic tradition was Donald A. MacNeill (*Dòmhnall a' Gharbhaird*, 1924-1995). A small selection of his poems, together with some items from the wider Colonsay tradition, was compiled by myself following his death, and published in 1998 under the title *Moch is Anmoch* (Scouller 1998). More recently, Morag Law has published *Dileab Cholbhasach*, a collection of articles written by her mother, Barbara Satchel (*Barbra Cholla*, 1917-1997), which were originally published in the Gaelic periodical *Gairm* (Law 2013). Satchel's Gaelic in part reflects her Colonsay origins, and her essays, some of which describe her childhood on the island in the 1920s, are the only significant examples of recognisably Colonsay Gaelic prose to have been published.

Little attempt has been made until now to record the distinctive characteristics of the Colonsay dialect. In addition to the fragmentary evidence of Frances Murray and John Francis Campbell (see above), the Rev. George Henderson published a series of articles on ‘The Gaelic Dialects’ in 1903 and 1905, in the *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* (Henderson 1903, 1905). These make sporadic use of Colonsay examples, both phonetic and lexical. Although the system of phonetic notation used is archaic by today’s standards, the representation of the Colonsay dialect is clearly recognisable, and remarkably accurate. Henderson is not known to have visited Colonsay, but he studied under Donald MacKinnon in Edinburgh, and it is likely that the pronunciation he recorded is MacKinnon’s own.

As will be abundantly demonstrated in Chapter 2, Colonsay was one of the points chosen for the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland* (Ó Dochartaigh 1997) The results, based on fieldwork conducted on Colonsay in 1958, are the only systematic record to date of the phonetics of this dialect, and as such form the basis of my own detailed analysis.

Sound recordings of interviews with Colonsay people are held in the School of Scottish Studies Archives. These were conducted in Gaelic by Calum Maclean in 1953 (tapes SA1953.120-125), and by Alan Bruford, Donald Archie MacDonald and Ian Fraser in 1969 (tapes SA1969.001-007); and in English by Mary Carmichael in 1979 (tapes SA1979.41-44). Most, though not all, of these recordings are now available online on the *Tobar an Dualchais* website (www.tobarandualchais.co.uk), and constitute a valuable record of a time when Gaelic was much more widely spoken on the island than it is today. My own recordings made in the course of this project have been deposited with the SSS Archives (SA2009.027, SA2009.035, SA2009.036, SA2010.054, SA2010.055, SA2011.007).

History

The history of Colonsay from the earliest times is well documented by Loder (1935). Archaeological finds from caves around Kiloran Bay, and from shell middens on Oronsay, suggest that the two islands were occupied from a very early date, possibly around 7000 BC (Loder 1935: 6). More recent excavations have been carried out on Oronsay by (Sir) Paul Mellars in the 1970s (Mellars 1987), and since 1987 by Steven Mithen at various sites, including an important settlement at *Tràigh Staosnaig*.¹⁵ The earliest settlers are thought to have been seasonal shellfish-gatherers, rather than permanent residents, although Mithen's more recent work has challenged this assumption (Mithen 2010: 218-221).

Local tradition has it that St Columba (*Calum Cille*) landed at Garvard, in the south of Colonsay, on his way from Ireland to Iona in 563 AD, and founded the original monastic settlement on Oronsay (Loder 1935: 20-24). *Tobar Chaluum Chille*, on the north side of Kiloran Bay, bears his name, but may reflect a later dedication (Loder 1935: 15; Byrne 2010: 112-113). Colonsay has also been mooted as a possible location for the island of Hinba, which is mentioned frequently in Adomnán's *Life of St Columba* (Adomnán of Iona 1995: 18-19); the identity of Hinba has not been definitively established, although Jura is generally thought to be a more likely contender (Watson 1993: 81-84; cf. Clancy and Márkus 1995: 132).

From around 800 AD onwards, Vikings began raiding, and later settling, on the west coast of Scotland, leaving a legacy of Norse placenames in all the islands. In Colonsay they also left physical remains in the form of at least three boat burials, one of which, found in the sand dunes at Kiloran Bay in 1882, is now prominently displayed in the National Museum of Scotland (Loder 1935: 29-31).

¹⁵ Also known as Queen's Bay.

In the late Middle Ages, Colonsay became the homeland of the Clan MacDuffie or MacPhee (*Mac Dhuibhshithe*),¹⁶ who built a fortification at *Dùn Èibhinn*, above Scalasaig. The MacPhees became Keepers of the Records to the Lords of the Isles, whose main centre of activity was nearby, at Finlaggan on Islay. The existing ruins of Oronsay Priory date from this period, and are thought to have housed an Augustinian community founded by ‘Good’ John, Lord of the Isles (d.1380) (Loder 1935: 47). Like other religious houses, the Priory was dissolved around the time of the Reformation (Loder 1935: 79-80).

The MacPhee hegemony was brought to an end in 1623 at the instigation of Colkitto Macdonald (*Colla Ciotach*), who had seized control of the island. The last chief of the MacPhees is said to have been captured while hiding among seaweed on *Eilean nan Ròn*, at the south-western tip of Oronsay and, depending on which version of the story is to be believed, was either summarily despatched where he lay, ‘*gun tuilleadh dàlach*’ (Mackinnon 1956: 301), or more formally executed by being tied to a standing stone at *Baile Raomainn Mór*, and shot (Loder 1935: 131-132; see also McNeill 1910: 8; Byrne 1997: 98).¹⁷

Although the population became nominally Protestant from the time of the Reformation (1560), Colonsay was poorly served by the post-Reformation church, doubtless on account of its remote location, and was administered as part of the parish of Jura until 1862. (Loder 1935: 163-167, 172-173).

¹⁶ ‘MacPhee’ or ‘McPhee’ is the spelling found on Colonsay. The present-day clan organisation uses the form ‘Macfie’, as favoured by the Macfie family of Langhouse, who matriculated a coat of arms under this name in the 19th century. ‘MacPhee’ and ‘MacDuffie’ were used interchangeably in the 19th century on Colonsay, as attested by Census returns and parish records.

¹⁷ Loder quotes McNeill’s version verbatim (in Gaelic); the wording is identical to MacKinnon’s slightly earlier account (originally published 1904), and presumably reflects the oral tradition. Both McNeill and MacKinnon state that MacPhee was shot where he was found. It is not clear where the tradition of the *Baile Raomainn Mór* execution came from, but the standing stone was solemnly re-erected by members of Clan Macfie in 1977, and is the focus of clan commemorations on their four-yearly visits to Colonsay.

From 1701 onwards, the islands passed into the ownership of a branch of a mainland family, the McNeills of Taynish, who owned estates in Kintyre and elsewhere in Argyll. Styling themselves McNeills of Colonsay,¹⁸ they set about re-organising farming practices on the island,¹⁹ especially under John McNeill (1767-1846), long remembered after his death as the ‘Old Laird’, and his son Duncan McNeill (1793-1874), a distinguished lawyer who served as Lord President of the Court of Session from 1852 to 1867, taking the title Lord Colonsay. Their agricultural reforms resulted in the division of farms that lasted well into the twentieth century, and which is still visible today.

Agricultural reform came at a price: although Colonsay may have been spared the worst excesses of the Clearances, people were still encouraged to emigrate, and many did so voluntarily in the hope of a better life. Major emigrations to Canada took place in 1806, aboard the *Spencer*, and again in 1852. Colonsay emigrants settled first in Prince Edward Island, and later in Bruce County, Ontario (Sheets 2005: 266-268). As a result, the island population declined rapidly from a peak of 979 at the 1841 Census to 408 in 1871 (Loder 1935: 180).

The turn of the 20th century brought a change of ownership. Donald Smith, the first Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal (1820-1914), was a Scots-born Canadian businessman and politician, who had made a substantial loan to the last of the McNeill lairds, Sir John Carstairs McNeill (1831-1904). On McNeill’s death, Smith accepted title to the islands of Colonsay and Oronsay in settlement of his claim. ‘Labrador’ Smith was a self-made man in the Victorian model, who had made his fortune working for the Hudson’s Bay Company, before investing much of it in the Canadian Pacific Railway. Although he only became the Laird of Colonsay in old age, and rarely visited the island, his family (whose surname changed to Howard after he was succeeded by his daughter) were to dominate the economic life of Colonsay throughout the twentieth century, and still do.

¹⁸ Although McNeill (in a variety of spellings) is a very common surname on Colonsay, and at one time comprised about half the population, the majority of indigenous McNeills on the island claim descent from the MacNeils of Barra, not the landowning family, and wear the Barra tartan. The McNeills ‘of Colonsay’ also owned the Ardlussa estate, in the north of Jura.

¹⁹ ‘Islay and Colonsay were the first islands [in the Hebrides] on which agricultural improvements were carried out’ (Storrie 1961: 91).

Recent economic/demographic developments

As recently as the 1970s, agriculture – both small-scale farming and crofting – formed the basis of the island economy, and a majority of the population was still Gaelic-speaking. In the space of just 40 years, this state of affairs has changed radically in both respects: agriculture has been replaced by tourism as the mainstay of the island economy, and English has replaced Gaelic as the day-to-day language of the population.

Shift in employment and population patterns

The division of farms established by the McNeill lairds in the mid-19th century persisted throughout the 20th century, although some mergers of the original ten holdings took place. In the mid-1970s, six farms were operating as independent units:

Kiloran (incorporating Balavetchy and Balnahard)

Scalasaig

Machrins (incorporating Ardskenish)

Baleromindubh

Garvard (incorporating Balerominmore)

Oronsay

Kiloran, traditionally the ‘home farm’ of Colonsay Estate, was run by a partnership involving the Estate and a largely absentee tenant. The other farms were let to tenants, all local people and all Gaelic speakers,²⁰ who generally ran them as single-family operations, with additional casual labour employed as required.

²⁰ Oronsay Farm was tenanted by a descendant of a Colonsay family, whose first language was English, but who also knew Gaelic. His wife (my informant, the late Flora Macneill) was born and brought up on Oronsay, and was a fluent Gaelic speaker. Her brother, the bard Donald A. MacNeill (mentioned above), was the tenant of Garvard Farm at the same time.

In 2017, Kiloran is still run by the Estate, with a resident manager, but its territory has greatly expanded to include all the other farms except Balnahard and Oronsay. None of the former native-born tenants are still involved in farming; only Balnahard, which is now independent of Kiloran, continues to be worked by a member of the same (non-native, but no longer absentee) family as in the 1970s. The island of Oronsay was sold by Colonsay Estate in 1978, and the farm is now let by the American owner to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who operate it on environmental principles to provide suitable habitats for species including chough and corncrake.

In the two crofting districts of Uragaig and Kilchattan, mergers between holdings have also taken place; the remaining crofters all took advantage of legislation introduced in 1976, enabling them to buy their land from the Estate on favourable terms. By 2017, although some crofters continue to maintain small flocks of sheep, and in some cases a few cattle, very little agricultural activity is taking place on most of the crofts, and the crofters derive their income largely from other sources, including in some cases the sale of building plots on de-crofted land. In an attempt to attract working families to the island, a number of new crofts were created by the Colonsay Development Company in 2008, although most of these holdings have yet to become agriculturally productive.

The eight smallholdings at Glassard, established in 1922, but never officially designated as crofts, were progressively abandoned from the 1980s onwards, and the houses sold off one by one, in some cases to sitting tenants.²¹ Five new houses have been built since 2000, all of them second homes, and the former ‘inbye’ land at Glassard has been re-appropriated as grazing for Kiloran Farm.

²¹ One house continues to be owned by the Estate, and let to a longstanding tenant.

As agriculture gradually ceased to provide a major source of employment on the island, so catering for tourists became the dominant form of economic activity. At one time the Hotel (owned by the Estate) represented the only commercial tourist operation, although individual islanders might let out rooms to ‘boarders’. From the 1960s onwards, under increasing economic pressure, the Estate began to rent out vacant cottages, and later, redundant farmhouses, to holidaymakers. A number of crofters, especially those whose holdings had been merged to form larger units, leaving them with more than one house, began to follow suit. In 2017, approximately half the houses on the island are let as holiday cottages. Only one operator now offers bed and breakfast accommodation; apart from the Hotel, the overwhelming majority of the accommodation on offer to tourists is self-catering.

The Colonsay Hotel itself was sold by the Estate in 1978 to an independent operator, who ran it as a successful business for over 20 years. The next owner was less successful, and the Hotel, which had been placed in administration, was re-purchased by the Estate in 2004. It is now run in conjunction with the holiday letting business. The Hotel is closed during the winter months, although the bar, which until 2010 was the only licensed premises on the island, is open at certain times.²² Seasonal staff are employed, but whereas in the past these would be at least partially drawn from the resident population (including Colonsay-based students seeking employment at home during the summer vacation), most of the hotel staff are now recruited from outside on short-term contracts.

Apart from tourism, the shop and post office provide a handful of jobs, mainly part-time. The primary school, which has a roll of six pupils in 2017, has a full-time Head Teacher, and employs four ancillary staff in part-time roles.²³ The Estate employs a small maintenance team, and recruits additional domestic staff during the summer. The Pantry, a popular café, provides full-time employment for the owner, and a number of part-time jobs. There is work for a jobbing builder, a painter, a plumber, and other trades as required. The ferry operator Caledonian MacBrayne employs a part-time piermaster (known officially as a Port Supervisor) and two to three

²² During the winter of 2012-13, the bar was run as a community venture, with volunteer staff.

²³ Conversation with Mrs Gillian Ashcroft, Head Teacher, 13 August 2017.

additional pier staff, who are required to work only at ‘ferry times’. A small-scale publishing company, House of Lochar, and the associated bookshop, also provide some part-time employment. Colonsay Brewery, established by a locally-based partnership in 2007, is a successful venture, selling its products to mainland outlets, and providing part-time employment to around six people. Both the Brewery and a new independent operator began gin production in 2017; for the time being, distilling takes place off-island using ‘botanicals’ harvested locally.

Apart from occasional lobster fishing, there is now no locally-based fishery on Colonsay, although boats from Islay and the mainland continue to fish around its shores. One man has for many years run a successful business combining oyster farming on The Strand (the tidal mudflats between Colonsay and Oronsay) with beekeeping. In 2015 a commercial company, Marine Harvest, began a fish farming operation off the east coast of the island; this has created up to half a dozen jobs, some of which have been taken up by local workers, while others are brought in from outside on a fortnightly rotation.

The island has a resident doctor (currently a husband/wife partnership) and a part-time district nurse; the practice also employs a part-time secretary. The local authority maintains a manned service point, and also employs 2-3 women as home helps, and two men to carry out road maintenance and refuse collection. Scottish Water employs two people part-time to manage the water supply. The island’s tiny airport provides three part-time jobs, and some additional income for members of the local volunteer fire crew, who are required to be on duty whenever a flight is scheduled.

Apart from this, the working-age population gets by as best it can on casual employment – minor repairs, cutting grass, cleaning, etc. – while others live on benefits. A small number of people have tried ‘teleworking’ from home on Colonsay, with mixed results. All in all, there is very little full-time employment on Colonsay, and whereas in the 1970s many people were able to make some sort of living from casual labour on the farms, this source of income has all but dried up in the 21st century, as contractors from outside are usually brought in to do jobs such as sheep-shearing, fencing and silage-making.

Alongside the decline in agricultural activity, there has been a steady growth in the numbers of retired people coming to live on the island. While some of these people have close connections with Colonsay, in some cases going back several generations, others are simply attracted by the prospect of living in a beautiful and remote location. Their purchasing power undoubtedly benefits the island businesses, but they do little to boost the numbers in the local primary school, and none of them, currently, are Gaelic speakers. Not all stay the course: for some, living the island dream is tempered by the inconvenience of growing old in a remote spot, far from family and friends, with unreliable communications, and limited access to health facilities and other services.

As a result of these changes, the proportion of ‘incomers’ in the local population has increased markedly in the last 50 years, to around three-quarters.²⁴ Around half of these are retired; the rest have mostly come to the island to take up employment, or in some cases to be with local spouses or partners.

The influx of comparatively wealthy incomers and second-home owners has also inflated property prices beyond the reach of most islanders who might want to buy their own homes. Since around 2000 there has been a spate of new houses being constructed, but although some of these were initially built by local people keen to own their own homes, the overwhelming majority are now owned either by retired incomers, or by non-residents as holiday homes. Provision of affordable housing, including sheltered accommodation, is recognised as an urgent necessity: a small housing association development of eight homes was built in the 1990s at Scalasaig, and a further five are planned for a site in Lower Kilchattan.

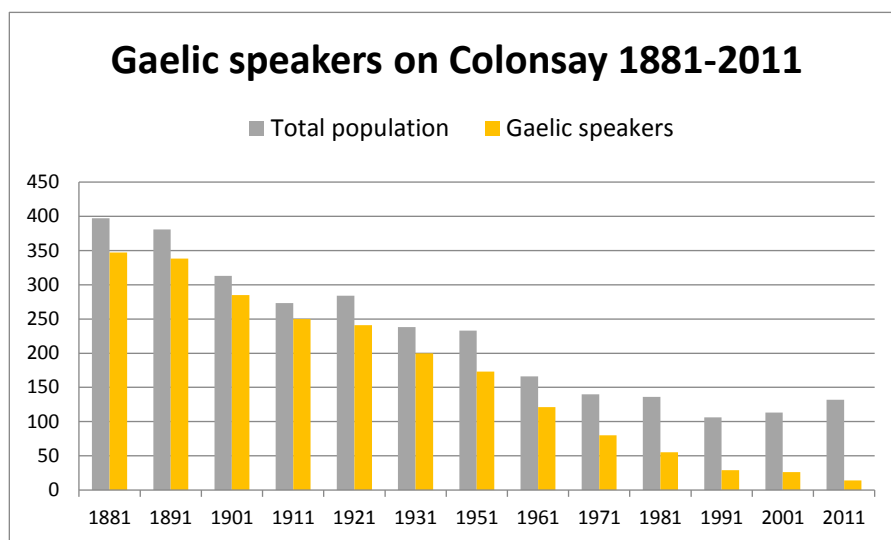
Until the end of 2016, there were two churches on the island, one Church of Scotland and one Baptist. The Baptist congregation traced its origins to a revival movement among the Argyll islands in the early 19th century, and at one time was a significant institution on the island (McNeill and McNeill 2013). Neither Church has had a

²⁴ Own computation, July 2017 (84 out of 112 permanent residents). For this purpose, ‘incomer’ means someone who has moved to the island from elsewhere, and who has no family connection (parents or grandparents) to the settled community. It includes those who have married members of the settled community. The term is used in this sense within the Colonsay community.

resident minister for many years; services are conducted by a succession of visiting preachers, and by a lay Reader who has a second home on the island. Gaelic services have not been held on the island since before 1950, although some preachers like to include a few words of Gaelic in their services. As the number of worshippers declined in the early 21st century, services began to be held jointly, alternating between the two churches, but in 2016 the few remaining Baptist members decided to close their church, and worship now takes place only in the Parish Church in Scalasaig. The former Baptist Church building has been made available to the Colonsay and Oronsay Heritage Trust, to house a museum of island life.

Language shift

Numbers of Gaelic speakers have declined steadily since the mid-19th century, and in recent years the influx of monoglot English speakers has further accelerated the process of language shift. Although many of the incomers have expressed an interest in learning the language, few have yet acquired any degree of conversational fluency.



Numbers of Gaelic speakers on Colonsay 1881-2011, based on Census returns. (Source: Duwe 2006; Scotland’s Census data for 2011 added – for details, see footnote 26).

The Census of 1881 was the first to include a question about respondents’ ability to speak Gaelic. In that year, 347 persons were recorded as Gaelic-speaking on Colonsay and Oronsay, out of a total population of 397 (87.4%). There followed a steady pattern of decline in the numbers of Gaelic speakers, even as a proportion of a decreasing overall population. In 1971, there were still 80 Gaelic speakers out of a total population of 140 (57.1%).²⁵ By 1981, the proportion had dropped to 40%, and Gaelic speakers formed a minority of the Colonsay population for the first time in recorded history.

²⁵ Because the 1971 figures are rounded to the nearest 5, these data must be regarded as approximate.

The Census of 2011 showed a total of 26 people in the categories ‘Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic’ (10), ‘Speaks but does not read or write Gaelic’ (10) and ‘Speaks and reads but does not write Gaelic’ (6).²⁶ Due to the ‘self-certifying’ nature of individual Census returns, such figures give no indication of people’s level of language skills, and must therefore be treated with caution. From my own knowledge of the Colonsay population, I estimate that there were at that point 14 *fluent* speakers out of a total population of 132 (10.6%).²⁷ None of these speakers are now under the age of 65; eight have died since 2011, and one has left the island. So although the overall decline in the island’s population appears to have ‘bottomed out’, with modest increases recorded in 2001 and 2011, the decline in the number of Gaelic speakers looks set to continue to the point of extinction. Although there have from time to time been speakers of other Gaelic dialects among the Colonsay population, all the remaining speakers in 2017 grew up on Colonsay, and speak the local dialect. There are, in addition, a number of people (perhaps around 20) who grew up on Colonsay speaking the local dialect, but now live elsewhere; some of these are included amongst my informants.

The bare statistics do not tell the whole story.

Language shift has primarily occurred between generations. As an illustration of this, two sisters who arrived on the island with their parents in 1947, speaking no Gaelic, discovered that they were the only non-Gaelic speaking pupils in the school, and quickly learned the local dialect to a high degree of fluency from their peers.²⁸ From the 1950s onwards, however, children brought up on the island speaking only English at home were less likely to acquire a knowledge of Gaelic from their classmates, more and more of whom would themselves be from English-speaking

²⁶ A further 2 persons are listed as ‘Reads but does not speak or write Gaelic’, and 4 under ‘Other combination of skills in Gaelic’. (Source: Scotland’s Census 2011 – National Records of Scotland, Inhabited islands report: Table A17 - Gaelic language skills, 2001 and 2011, all people aged 3 and over. Available via URL: <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/analytical-reports>).

²⁷ Colonsay 124, Oronsay 8. Table A17 (Gaelic language skills) lists those aged 3 and over, giving a figure of 129.

²⁸ Interviews with Eleanor McNeill, 28 June 2010, and Netta Titterton, 20 June 2011. Eleanor McNeill commented, ‘*Cha mhòr gun tèid a’am air seo a chreidsinn, ach [...] cha chuala mi Gàidhlig air a bhruidhinn riamh gus an dàna sinn do Cholbhasa*’ (I can hardly believe this, but I never heard Gaelic spoken until we came to Colonsay).

households. The reasons for this shift are complex, and reflect the situation of individual families. In some cases, English-speaking families came to live on the island, usually to take up employment; in other cases, a local Gaelic speaker may have brought an English-speaking spouse to the island. Some parents appear to have thought that speaking English at home would help further their children's education. Whatever the reasons, the result was that English replaced Gaelic as the language of the playground, as well as being the language of instruction in the classroom. Even children brought up in Gaelic-speaking households would spend the day at school speaking only English, and would often find it difficult to switch back to Gaelic when they went home, knowing that their parents could understand English perfectly well. This led to a situation in which parents might well speak to their children in Gaelic, but the children would respond in English. Eventually this proved unsustainable, and English as the home language became the norm. In some families, brought up in the 1950s and 60s, the older children grew up fluent in Gaelic, while their younger siblings had at best a passive understanding of the language. The result is that there are now no fluent native speakers of Colonsay Gaelic, on or off the island, under the age of 55, although some younger island residents have made efforts to learn the language, with varying degrees of success.²⁹

Fewer Gaelic speakers in the community means fewer opportunities for those remaining speakers to use their language. As a result, people who *can* speak Gaelic do not in fact do so on a regular basis. The advent of regular Gaelic television programmes in recent years has helped raise the profile of the language, and has provided an opportunity to hear different varieties of Gaelic.³⁰ This, however, does not compensate for the absence of opportunities to engage actively with other speakers in their own language.³¹

²⁹ Interviews with Kate Bowman, 3 May 2011; Niall Brown, 7 December 2016, supplemented by my own observation over many years. Cf. Alexander (2017: 24).

³⁰ Gaelic radio broadcasts, which lack visual clues, have never been as popular with Colonsay Gaelic speakers as television programmes.

³¹ My informant Mary Ann MacAllister was able to list the people (10) to whom she still spoke Gaelic (interview, 27 August 2009).

Few of the elderly Gaelic speakers who have lived on Colonsay in recent years have been comfortable reading and writing their language; although some Gaelic was taught in the local school while they were growing up, and some were taught Gaelic at Oban High School,³² their education was otherwise conducted entirely through the medium of English, with the result that most of them would struggle to read and write in their own mother tongue, although perfectly able to do so in English. This has meant, for example, that in my own primary research, I have been unable to set reading tasks in order to elicit Colonsay forms, and have had to rely mainly on oral translation exercises, using English prompts. Translation, however, does not always come naturally to people who are quite accustomed to speaking one language or the other in different situations, code-switching as required, but not to the conscious process of semantic transfer between languages.

From time to time attempts have been made to teach Gaelic to both schoolchildren and adults on the island. Gaelic was taught in the local primary school until the 1950s,³³ and Gaelic classes again formed part of the curriculum for a while in the 2000s, with active participation by some of the remaining native speakers. These, however, were heavily dependent on the teachers' ability to learn the language themselves, and on the continuing good health of the elderly 'language assistants'. I myself ran a series of workshops for adults at the Colonsay Hotel in the 1990s, and more recently classes for adults have been organised, initially involving local people as tutors, and later taught remotely, via a video link, by tutors from the Gaelic centre on Islay, *Ionad Chaluim Chille*. Some individuals have taken distance-learning courses run by *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig*. But results have been limited: numbers of local speakers are now too few to provide would-be learners with anything resembling an 'immersion' environment in which to practise their skills. It is all too little, too late, to promote any realistic local revival of the language.

³² Until the 1960s, many Colonsay pupils opted to receive at least part of their secondary education on the island, using correspondence materials sent out by Dunoon Grammar School. Whatever its educational merits, this arrangement had the advantage of keeping them in a Gaelic-speaking environment while they were growing up.

³³ The last Gaelic-speaking teacher left before 1960 (Niall Brown, e-mail, 4 September 2017).

The present study is a last-ditch attempt to document the Colonsay dialect while there are still a handful of speakers living on the island, and thus to preserve a record of its distinctive features for the benefit of future scholars, and all those with an interest in this vital aspect of the island's heritage.

2. THE PHONEMIC ANALYSIS OF COLONSAY GAELIC

In this chapter I have been guided in part by the principles formulated by Elmar Ternes in *The Phonemic Analysis of Scottish Gaelic* (2006), where he describes the process of eliciting the phonemic structure of Applecross Gaelic. Ternes sets out the principles underlying his analysis rather briefly in the opening pages of his account (pp. 1-3); their detailed application has to be deduced largely from his treatment of individual cases. Although he does provide a full phonemic inventory of Applecross Gaelic (pp.123-124),³⁴ his analysis concentrates mainly on sounds and features which raise particular problems of interpretation.

A phonemic analysis involves a process of detachment from the raw phonetic data, as presented, in this case, in the *SGDS* results. The aim must be to see how the various sounds, faithfully represented in terms of their actual realisation by a scheme of phonetic symbols, function in relation to one another. Not all differences, by any means, will be phonologically significant. A particular sound may be pronounced by different speakers, or by the same speaker on different occasions, with a greater or lesser degree of openness, laxness, rounding, etc., without these variations having any significant impact on the meaning of what is said. In most cases, both speaker and listener will be unaware of any difference in articulation. The job of the phonologist is to identify which variations *are* significant, and where, on the map of possible sounds that the human vocal apparatus can produce, lines can be drawn to separate clusters of similar sounds into discrete entities, which we call phonemes. Unlike the minor variations that pass unnoticed, phonemes are recognised by speakers of a particular language or dialect (albeit unconsciously) as separate sounds.

³⁴ Subject to revision of the category ‘half-long’ [·] in the light of Chapter 5, which did not form part of the original (1973) publication.

It is a little like dividing up the visible spectrum: ‘blue’ and ‘green’ are recognised as different colours, although in fact they merge imperceptibly into one another.³⁵

Some variations occur regularly in a particular phonetic environment. An [n] before a labial consonant [b, p, f, m] may be consistently realised as [m] (thus in English, we say *indefinite*, but *impossible*). These regular variations are termed *allophones*.

The *SGDS* results for Colonsay use no fewer than 64 primary phonetic symbols (16 vowels, 48 consonants), most of which are further modified by the use of diacritics. It must not be assumed that each of these sounds represents a distinct phoneme. Experience of other languages, and of Scottish Gaelic as a whole, suggests that this would constitute an extremely large phonemic inventory. Some are likely to be allophones, or in many cases simply articulatory variants with no phonological significance.

The present chapter deals essentially with segmental phonemes and their respective allophones. Features such as duration, glottalisation and epenthesis, which may appear to have ‘phonemic’ value in some instances, are referred to here as appropriate, but these, along with the classic ‘suprasegmental’ features, are analysed in more detail in the next chapter.

³⁵ In Gaelic, the division of the spectrum into colours is notoriously different from English. *Glas* can be translated ‘green’ or ‘grey’; *dearg* or *ruadh* may both be translated ‘red’, etc.

Transcription practice

Forms cited directly from the *SGDS* are reproduced as published, with the number of the headword given in round brackets (...), and the phonetic transcription enclosed in square brackets [...], according to the usual convention. Where no headword number is indicated, the form given is based on my own research; this is usually because the word in question does not appear in the *SGDS*. In the interests of consistency, I have based my own phonetic transcription on the system adopted in the published *SGDS* results, although since I have been less rigorously schooled than Eric Hamp in the art of distinguishing subtle variations, especially of vowel sounds, my transcription is less narrow, making much more sparing use of diacritics.³⁶ In a few instances, where my phonological interpretation is at odds with that suggested by the *SGDS* results, I have given an alternative reading. In *phonemic* transcription, which appears between slash marks /.../ according to convention, I have adopted a somewhat different approach, based more closely on current IPA³⁷ practice. This is explained in detail in the following phonemic analysis.

³⁶ I have also retained the *SGDS* spelling of Gaelic words when citing entries. In some cases this does not conform to current norms, as prescribed in *GOC* (*Gaelic Orthographic Conventions*).

³⁷ International Phonetic Association.

VOWEL PHONEMES

Gillies (2009: 236) presents the phonemic structure of Scottish Gaelic vowels in a 3x3 formation, as follows:

i	ɯ	u
e	ə	o
ɛ	a	ɔ

Ternes (2006: 121-124) considers a similar scheme, but eventually discards it in favour of a triangular pattern:

i	ɨ	u
e	ə	o
ɛ	ɔ	
	a	

I agree with Ternes in recognising four degrees of openness. My own preference would be for a slightly modified presentation, as follows:

i		ɯ	u
e	ə	ɤ	o
ɛ		ɔ	
	a		

My version differs from both Ternes and Gillies in showing /u/ (for which Ternes uses the symbol /i/) as an unrounded back vowel, rather than central, and in differentiating between /ɜ/ and /ə/. Although /u/ and /ɜ/ may be regarded *phonologically* as ‘central’ vowels, to distinguish them from the rounded ‘cardinal’ back vowels, they actually denote unrounded forms of [u] and [o] respectively, and are therefore defined in *phonetic* terms as back vowels. To complicate matters, I shall show that, in the Colonsay dialect with which we are concerned here, the corresponding sounds are in fact rounded *front* vowels, and are realisations of a single phoneme (see below). The only truly central vowel in the above tables is /ə/, which I prefer to treat as a phoneme in its own right, although a case can be made for regarding it as an unstressed allophone of /ɜ/.

Given that the Colonsay dialect is mutually intelligible with other varieties of Gaelic (to a greater or lesser extent), it is not surprising to find that much of its phonemic structure is shared with other dialects. The primary *phonetic* symbols used in the *SGDS* to record the Colonsay vowels, as they occur in stressed syllables, are as follows:

i	y	(u)	u
(i)	ɥ		(o)
	e	ø	o
	ɛ	ɔ	
		a	

The symbols shown in brackets are rare (though not entirely absent) in stressed syllables.

It will be immediately apparent that the main differences between the Colonsay paradigm and the table of Scottish Gaelic phonemes are the following:

- 1) the presence of the rounded front vowels [y ʏ ø];
- 2) the virtual absence, in stressed syllables, of the unrounded back vowels [u ɤ];
- 3) the inclusion of a layer representing ‘lax’ forms of the high vowels: [ɪ ʏ ʊ].

A preliminary conclusion would suggest that the forms [y ʏ ø] are the phonetic realisation, in this dialect, of the ‘missing’ vowels [u ɤ]. Although this hypothesis is essentially correct, in practice the situation is not quite so simple, as will be demonstrated (pp. 52-55).

All these vowels, except those in brackets, may be shown either long or short when they occur in stressed syllables. In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, length is consistently indicated with the half-length marker [·]. This is presumably intended to reflect the fact that, in Colonsay, ‘long’ vowels are not as long as in some other dialects, where the full-length marker [:] is used. In a wide-ranging comparative exercise such as the *Survey*, where the aim is to show the whole scope of dialectal variation across the Gaelic-speaking area, such a distinction is clearly of considerable relevance. However, in a single-dialect study such as this, contrastive indications of actual vowel length are less important. In any case, the absolute duration of vowels in natural speech is highly variable, depending on a number of prosodic constraints, which will be examined in more detail in the next chapter. For the purposes of phonemic analysis, which by definition involves a degree of abstraction from the raw phonetic data, what is important is whether a given vowel is articulated long or short, not the precise measurement of its length. In the interests of consistency, I shall follow the *SGDS* protocols in *phonetic* transcription; when it comes to *phonemic* transcription, however, I intend to use the full-length marker [:], which is more immediately recognisable to those familiar with the IPA system. This should not be taken as implying any judgment as to the actual duration of the vowels so marked.

When unstressed syllables are included, the picture becomes more complicated. The following range of primary symbols is encountered:

i	y		ɯ	u
ɪ	ʏ	ə		ʊ
	e	ø	ɤ	o
		ɛ	ʌ	ɔ
			a	

The addition of three primary symbols [ə ɤ ʌ], which are found *only* in unstressed position, means that, in addition to the central vowel [ə], we now also have a set of back unrounded vowels existing alongside front rounded forms. These forms must clearly be accommodated in any hypothesis about the phonemic structure of the dialect.

Modified forms

In addition to their primary representations, all of these vowel symbols are found in modified forms in the *SGDS* results, using the following diacritics:³⁸

[x̣] – raised [x̤] – lowered [x̠] – retracted [x̟] – centralised [x̞] – rounded

Diacritics may in some cases be combined on a single vowel, e.g. [ỵ ø̤].

Nasalisation, which is marked by the *tilde* [x̃], will be considered separately, as a non-segmental feature (pp. 281-283).

In some cases, modified forms of vowels are more frequently encountered than the primary symbols themselves.

³⁸ For further explanation, see Vol. I: 111-117. Not all of these diacritics, as used by the *SGDS*, correspond to current IPA practice (see IPA 2015).

It must be emphasised that not all of these modifications are phonologically significant. We have already noted that, in those instances where the *SGDS* lists the same word more than once, the exact forms recorded are often different. This suggests that, in the mind of the informant, no significance attached to this variation – she was probably unaware of having offered different forms. As previously discussed, a phoneme is merely an interpretative construct in the study of a language, and its actual realisation may vary within set limits, without affecting the perception of the word in which it occurs.

A variation may count as an *allophone* of the phoneme in question only if it can be shown to occur as part of a pattern, i.e. if it consistently occurs in a particular phonetic environment. On this basis, it is difficult to classify as an allophone a variation which is found in only a few instances, without any obvious common factor, or if counter-examples can be found showing a different variant, or the primary phoneme, in the same phonetic environment. In some cases, a variation which consistently occurs in a particular environment may also occur sporadically in other environments too: it thus appears to be an allophone in the first case, but a random variation in other instances. This raises theoretical questions about whether the same sound can be both an allophone and a variation in different environments, but it is important to reserve the term ‘allophone’ for those cases where the phonetic realisation of the phoneme *necessarily* alters in a particular environment.

what we have here is a significant difference in the *distribution* of phonemes, i.e. which phoneme is used in particular words, rather than a difference in the phonemic structure as such. (On distribution, see Petyt 1980: 19-22).

2. Lowered forms of /e/ and /o/ (shown as [ɛ̞] and [ɔ̞]) are better regarded as variant realisations of the phonemes /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ respectively. This is more easily understood if the range of variation in vowel sounds is seen as a continuum, across which lines distinguishing different phonemes can be drawn at any point, irrespective of the actual symbols used. The table on p. 127 may help to make this clearer.

[ɛ̞] is found only in *faiceadh* (384) [fɛ̞çq̃ʰiɣ], *sàmhach* (733) [sɛ̞ˈvʌx], and one version of *sgamhan* (757) [sq̞ɛˈvaŋ] (758 has [sq̞ɛˈvaŋ]). Both the latter words illustrate the characteristic ‘raising’ of orthographic *a* before a nasal consonant, referred to above. Other instances of this feature in the Colonsay results show the ‘raised’ vowel as [ɛ] or one of its modified forms. This suggests that, phonologically, [ɛ̞] should be considered as a variant (hyper-raised) form of the phoneme /ɛ/ rather than a lowered variant of /e/.

Similarly, [ɔ̞] is found in *bòidheach* (118) [b̥ɔ̞ˈi̯ɛx], *Di-dòmhnach* (327) [d̥iˈzʰi d̥ɔ̞ˈniç],⁴² one version of *olc* (673) [ɔ̞ˈl̥ç] (674 has [ɔ̞ˈl̥ç]), and *seo* (753) [ʃɔ̞], as well as in the characteristic Colonsay pronunciation of *Calluinn* (143) [kɔ̞ˈl̥iˈɲ]. In all these cases, [ɔ̞] appears to function as a variant of /ɔ/ rather than /o/. The form [ɔ̞] (lowered and retracted) is found in *broilleach* (124) [br̥ɔ̞ˈl̥ɛx], one version of *gorm* (497) [g̥ɔ̞r̥əm] (498 has [g̥ɔ̞r̥im]), and as the ‘echoing’ vowel in *bogha* (117) [b̥ɔ̞ʔɔ̞]. Again, this form is best regarded as a variant of /ɔ/ rather than /o/.

⁴² Headword is *Dòmhnach*. This form (without *Di-*) is found in expressions such as *an Dòmhnach seo* ‘this Sunday’, *Dòmhnach eile* ‘another Sunday’, etc.

phonemic difference (/a/ vs. /ɛ/) affecting the vowel. In the Colonsay version, the difference in articulation of the vowel is very slight: the vowel in [kʏɸtʲ] is lowered, bringing it very close to [ɤ], and the main burden of indicating the grammatical form is borne by the final consonant. On the basis of this example, one could even make a case for [ɤ] being an allophone of /ɤ/ before a palatalised consonant, were it not for the fact that [ɤ̃] also occurs in this environment in other examples: *aois* (48) [ɤ̃ʃ], *coille* (223, 224) [kʏʲ ʎə] (225 has [kʏʲ ʎi]), *coinneal* (229,230) [kʏʲ ɲal̩].

The case for separate phonemes in this dialect is therefore ‘not proven’. On the contrary, the existence of variations such as *tairbh* (823) [tøɾɪɣ (823) ~ tʏɾɪɣ (824)] and *taobh* [tøʲɣ (828) ~ tʏʲɣ (829)] suggests a certain fluidity in the phonetic forms actually found. The conclusion that these rounded front vowel sounds constitute a single phoneme in Colonsay Gaelic is thus compelling. In the LSS material, Hamp, as reported by Jackson, comes to the same conclusion, writing the phoneme in all cases as /ø/ (LSS: 7).

Pace Hamp, I would argue that the most appropriate symbol to represent this phoneme is /ɤ/, which lies in the middle of the rather wide phonetic range it covers. Either /ø/ or /y/ would serve equally well, but could be potentially misleading as to the typical quality of the vowel in question.

Unrounded back vowels: u ʊ ʌ

I have argued that */u/ does not occur as a phoneme in this dialect, its functions being taken over by /ɤ/.

The *symbol* [u] is found only a few times in the *SGDS* results, and always in a modified form. Centralised and rounded [ü] is the form most commonly encountered.

The use of this symbol, in only seven entries in the *SGDS*, poses serious problems of interpretation. In the first place, the transcription [ü] appears to mean, confusingly, that a vowel which is defined as being *unrounded* is then shown as rounded. It is

found in the words *annam* (42) [ʏ̥ˈnəm], *ruith* (696, 697, 724) [rʏ̥ç], *righinn* (706) [rʏ̥ʔʏ̥ɲ] (with ‘echoing’),⁴⁴ *ruigidh* (723) [rʏ̥ɡʲiç]. Other modified forms are found in *snaim* (779) [sn̩`ʊ̩m̩], *rud* (720-722) [rʏ̥d̩], and unstressed in *carbad* (153) [kar̩ʔb̩ʏ̥d̩].

In most of these instances, the orthographic representation is *u*. In addition, the majority of instances show [ʊ] following [r] or [ɾ]. In fact, all words in the *SGDS* results beginning with orthographic *r* followed by short *u* have a version of this symbol. On the other hand, combinations involving another consonant plus *r*, or a long vowel or diphthong, show varieties of [u] and [y] as the following vowel. There is therefore a *prima facie* case for regarding [ʏ̥] (short) as an allophone of /u/, following initial /r/. This is, however, contra-indicated by words such as *rugadh* [ruɡəɣ], *rubha* [ruʔʊ], where short [u] follows initial /r/. In addition, this definition does not cover the cases of *annam*, *snaim* or *carbad*.

These anomalies lead Hamp, in his original field notes (LSS: 5), to posit a separate phoneme /ʊ/,⁴⁵ which is found only in this small selection of words. While agreeing that this offers a solution to the problem, I would argue that, acoustically, there appears to be little difference between the sound represented by [ʏ̥] and the range of sounds covered by the /y/ phoneme (see above). I therefore propose to re-analyse the transcription [ʏ̥] as [y̥] (high, centralised, rounded, but not a back vowel). Adjusting the data to fit the interpretation is not generally considered good practice, but in this case I believe it is justified by the obvious difficulty in interpreting the transcription as published.

I further suggest that pronominal compounds of *ann* (see p. 331) should be interpreted in this dialect as *aonnam*, *aonnad*, etc. (reflecting historical *ionn*- rather than *ann*-), and phonemically as /ʏ̥n̩v̩əm̩/, /ʏ̥n̩v̩əd̩/, etc.

⁴⁴ A footnote suggests that the pronunciation may be [rʏ̥ʔʏ̥ɲ]. This is a fine level of distinction indeed.

⁴⁵ Following the conventions of the time, Hamp labels it /ʊ/. This symbol appears as /ʊ/ in the printed results.

Unmodified [ɣ] is not found anywhere in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, although modified forms appear in diphthongs, which will be considered separately (pp. 205-227). The only occurrence of a form of [ɣ], other than in a diphthong, is [ɣ̥] (raised and retracted), which is found only once, unstressed, in *iongantach* (528) [iʔɣ̥n`dəx].⁴⁶ A superscript [ɣ̥̥] (raised and centralised) is also found in *criòch* (257) [kri·ɣ̥̥x]. This extremely scanty evidence suggests that forms of [ɣ] are being used as variants of [ə].

The symbol [ʌ] is found with great regularity in unstressed *-ach* endings: *cladach* (192) [kl`aʌx], *sàmhach* (733) [sə·vʌx], *teaghlach* (832) [tʃø·l`ʌx]. It also occurs in cases where a verb with a base form ending in *-aich* or *-ich* has a grammatical ending added: *cuartachaidh* (from *cuairtich*) (268) [kʌʌʃ`dʌxiç],⁴⁷ *chuartachadh* (269) [xʌʌʃ`dʌxʌʃ],⁴⁸ *eireachaidh* (from *éirich*) (375) [e·rʌxiç].⁴⁹ The use of a ‘broad’ vowel (and hence non-palatalised consonants) in such cases is a salient feature of Argyll dialects (see pp. 303-304). From this evidence, it appears that [ʌ] is functioning as an allophone within the /a/ phoneme, in this very specific phonetic environment.

Not all *-ach* endings, however, are shown with [ʌ]. Where *-ach* follows a palatalised consonant, the vowel is shown as [ə] or one of its modified forms: *cinnteach* (184, 185) [k`iɲ·d`z`əx], *mèirleach* (613) [mɛ·rʌəx]. An apparent exception is *beirteach* (739) [bɛʃ·t`ʃʌx],⁵⁰ where the Colonsay pronunciation reflects an earlier form *beirteach*.⁵¹

On this basis, [ʌ] may be defined as an allophone of /a/, occurring before [x] in unstressed syllables following a non-palatalised consonant.

⁴⁶ Headword is *iongnadh*.

⁴⁷ Headword is *cuairtich*: *cuairtichidh*.

⁴⁸ Headword is *cuairtich*: *chuarticheadh*.

⁴⁹ Headword is *éirich*: *éiridh*.

⁵⁰ Headword is *saibhir*.

⁵¹ I am indebted to Professor William Gillies for this historical information.

Lax forms: ɪ ʊ

The vowels [ɪ ʊ] are generally described by phoneticians as ‘lax’ forms of [i u] respectively. [ʏ], the lax form of [y], has been discussed in the previous section.

In the *SGDS* results, unmodified [ɪ] occurs in stressed position in only four words: *cia mar* (180) [dʒ'z'ɪ mər],⁵² one version of *cinnteach* (184) [k'ɪŋ d'z'əx] (185 has [k'ɪŋ dʒ'z'əx]), *na's fliche* (435) [nəs fl'ɪʊçɪ],⁵³ *iuchair* (537) [ɪxʊəɾ : ɪʊxʊəɾ]. The raised form [ɪ̟] appears in stressed position only once, in one version of *mise* (622) [mɪfə] (623 has [mɪ̟ fɪ̟], with lowered [i] rather than raised [ɪ̟]). All these examples raise problems of interpretation: three lend themselves to alternative readings, and the other two occur in conjunction with a semi-vowel, in a combination similar to a diphthong. The status of [ɪ] or [ɪ̟] in stressed syllables must therefore be considered questionable.

On the other hand, unmodified [ɪ] does occur very frequently in unstressed syllables, particularly in conjunction with a palatal consonant, e.g. *drochaid* (349, 350) [dʒɔxɪdʒ], *éirich* (374) [e'ɪç], *fichead* (420) [fɪçɪd]. It is found in two plural formations in *-an*: *aingealan* (16) [ɪɛ̀ɛ̃lɪŋ] and *peathraichean* (680) [pɛ̃ɪçɪŋ]; and in future endings: *creididh* (254) [krɛ̃dʒ'z'ɪç], *cuartachaidh* (268) [kɪuɔ̃s'dʒɔxɪç],⁵⁴ *labhraidh* (538) [l'a'vɪɪç], etc. The form [i̟] is also found in future endings, with no obvious phonological basis for distinguishing between the two. Unmodified [ɪ] may also occur as an epenthetic vowel in a palatalised environment: *cuirm* (283) [kɔ̃ɪm], *thilgeadh* (843) [hɪlɪçəy], although other forms are also encountered.⁵⁵

Unmodified [i], on the other hand, is rare in unstressed position (see below under *i*).

Given this distribution, I suggest that unmodified [ɪ] should be regarded as an allophone of the /i/ phoneme, occurring in unstressed position, that its articulation covers a fairly wide range [i̟ ĩ̟ ĩ̟̃ ĩ̟̃̃], meaning that in some cases, such as *bithidh* (102) [bɪ̟ɪç], *tapaidh* (830) [təh̃ɪ], its actual articulation may be [i] (see p. 95).

⁵² My own perception of this word, as pronounced in Colonsay, is [t'ɛ' mər].

⁵³ Note that this is not a diphthong, since [ʊ], as a semi-vowel, is classed as a consonant.

⁵⁴ Headword is *cuairtich* : *cuairtichidh*. For the form of this word in the Colonsay data, see pp. 303-304).

⁵⁵ In one single instance in the *SGDS* results, *earball* (371) [urɪbəl], it occurs epenthetically in a non-palatalised environment; this should be regarded as an anomaly or inconsistency in transcription.

There is a large number of modified forms of [ɪ]: ɪ ɪ̃ ɪ̄ ɪ̅ ɪ̆ ɪ̇ ɪ̈ ɪ̉. Of these, only [ɪ] (raised) [ɪ̃] (lowered) and [ɪ̄] (raised and centralised) occur in lexical contexts where they can be regarded as falling within the /i/ phoneme.

[ɪ] is found in unstressed position in only a few words: *b'abhast* (5) [b̩aːvɪʃtʃ], *Calluinn* (143) [k̩ɔːl̩ɪ̃n̩], *peathraichean* (680) [p̩eːθ̩ɪ̃t̩ʃeːn̩], and as an epenthetic vowel in *mairbh* (601) [m̩ɪ̃r̩v̩], *tairbh* (824) [t̩ɪ̃r̩v̩]. All these instances are in palatalised contexts, and three occur following [r], although this latter observation is probably not significant, given that *airgiod* (see below) has [ɪ] or [ɪ̃] as the epenthetic vowel following [r].

[ɪ] is found as an epenthetic vowel in one version of *airgiod* (22) [ar̩ɪ̃g'ɪ̃d̩] (21 has [ar̩ɪ̃g'ɪ̃d̩]), and in the future form *ðlaidh* (512) [ɔːl̩ɪ̃t̩ʃ].⁵⁶

[ɪ̄] is found only in one version of *idir* (514) [īd̩z'ɪ̄r̩] (513 has [īd̩z'ɪ̄r̩]).

The raised and lowered forms [ɪ ɪ̃] are thus seen to occur in unstressed position in similar contexts to unmodified [ɪ]. I suggest that they should therefore be regarded as variants of the unstressed allophone [ɪ] within the /i/ phoneme.

On the other hand, the remaining retracted or centralised forms of [ɪ] are found in contexts which suggest a different phonemic interpretation. The forms encountered are: ɪ̅ ɪ̆ ɪ̇ ɪ̈ ɪ̉. Of these, only [ɪ̄] and [ɪ̅] are at all common.

[ɪ̄] (centralised) appears regularly in an unstressed, palatalised environment, in words such as *àite* (25, 26) [aːd̩z'ɪ̄], *bainne* (68) [b̩aːn̩ɪ̄], *litir* (578, 579) [l̩ɪ̄t̩ɪ̄r̩]. It is the usual realisation of orthographic final *-e* in words of more than one syllable, although [ɪ̅] (retracted) is also found in such contexts.

⁵⁶ Headword is *ibh*: *ibhidh*, although almost all dialects show some form of *ðlaidh* (*SGDS*, Vol. IV: 120-121).

The most significant occurrences of [i] are in the plural ending *-ean* in *bailtean* (67) [b̥al̥t̥ʲi̯n̥], *càirdean* (152) [k̥ḁʃ̥d̥z̥ʲi̯n̥ : k̥ḁʃ̥d̥z̥ʲi̯n̥], *coilltean* (226) [k̥ʲi̯l̥d̥z̥ʲi̯n̥], *leabhraichean* (569) [l̥o̥r̥i̯ç̥i̯n̥]. It is tempting to see this as the ‘default’ pronunciation for plural endings in *-ean* – of which there are not many in the *SGDS* results – but we must also note *abhainnean* (4) [ḁʲv̥i̯n̥],⁵⁷ *peathraichean* (680) [p̥e̥ʲr̥i̯ç̥i̯n̥], *sléibhte* (773) [s̥l̥e̥ʲd̥z̥ʲi̯n̥].

Other modified forms of [i] occur only sporadically:

[i̯] (raised and retracted) is found only in the word *goile* (493) [g̥ʲʲi̯], where it represents orthographic final *-e*.

[i̯] (lowered and centralised) is found for orthographic final *-e* in only two headwords: *coire* (cauldron) (237) [k̥ʲʲi̯] (see pp. 361-362) and *nàire* (644) [n̥ʲʲi̯]. In both cases alternative forms are given, showing [i̯] without lowering. It is also found as the epenthetic vowel in *geamhradh* (469) [g̥ʲʲev̥i̯r̥i̯ç̥] and *samhradh* (736) [sev̥i̯r̥i̯ç̥].

Finally, [i̯] (centralised and rounded) is met with only once, in *faobhar* (396) [f̥ʲʲv̥i̯r̥]. It is likely that in this single example, the vowel quality is influenced by the rounded [ʲ] in the previous syllable.

All these occurrences are in unstressed syllables, and most are in a palatalised context. This suggests that, rather than being seen as variants of the /i/ phoneme, these retracted and centralised forms of [i] should be regarded as variants of /ə/ in a palatalised environment (see below, under **Central vowel: ə**).

The symbol for the ‘lax’ form of [u], namely [ʊ], only occurs short in the Colonsay dataset, and is rare in stressed position. It is found stressed in a series of entries based on the verb *cuir*: *cuiridh tu* (279) [k̥ʲʲʊ̯] (277, 278 have [k̥ʲʲi̯ç̥]), *chuireas tu* (280) [x̥ʲʲʊ̯], *chuireadh* (281) [x̥ʲʲʊ̯], *chuireadh tu* (282) [x̥ʲʲʊ̯], and in a

⁵⁷ Headword is *aibhnichean*.

handful of other words. It is more frequently encountered in diphthongs, especially [aʊ], [ɛʊ]; these will be treated separately. [ʊ] also occurs as the ‘echoing’ vowel in hiatus following glottalisation of [u] and [o]. The modified form [ʊ̥] (raised) is found in only one word: *cluich* (206) [kl̥ʊ̥ç].⁵⁸

A case might possibly be made for treating [ʊ] as a separate phoneme, although since it occurs independently in only a few words, it appears preferable to consider it as an allophone of /u/, occurring regularly in hiatus following glottalisation of /u/ or /o/, and as a possible variant of short /u/ in other positions.

Central vowel: ə

This symbol is commonly referred to as the *schwa*, a term which originates in Hebrew pointing. It represents a completely neutral, central vowel, with no obvious phonetic characteristics other than voicing. This vowel is unique in this dialect in that it only occurs short, and in the IPA system is generally found only in unstressed syllables.⁵⁹ For this reason, it might be regarded as an allophone of several other vowel phonemes in unstressed position, rather than being a phoneme in its own right. However, it is unsatisfactory for a single phone to serve as an allophone of several different phonemes, and it would be difficult and arbitrary to try and allocate the phone [ə] to a particular phoneme in each individual case, relying perhaps on the conventional orthography, which often reflects a historical pronunciation. For these reasons it will be treated here as a separate phoneme.

As discussed above (p. 58), in addition to modified forms of [ə], the following modified forms of [ɪ] are to be seen as falling within the /ə/ phoneme: *ĩ* *ı̃* *ĩ̃* *ĩ̃̃*. Most occurrences are in conjunction with a palatalised consonant. The centralised form [ĩ̃] occurs with sufficient regularity in this phonetic environment for it to be considered an allophone of /ə/, while [ĩ] *ı̃* *ĩ̃* *ĩ̃̃* may be regarded as its variant realisations.

⁵⁸ Headword is *cluich*: *cluiche*.

⁵⁹ In some languages (e.g. Afrikaans) it is used to represent stressed vowels. In Gaelic, both Gillies (2009: 236) and Ternes (2006: 119-121) use it in phonemic analysis to denote the vowel otherwise transcribed as [ɤ].

The scheme of vowel phonemes in the Colonsay dialect is therefore as follows:

i				u
e	ɣ	ə		o
	ɛ		ɔ	
		a		

Diphthongs

A diphthong is a succession of two vowel sounds. Logically, diphthongs should be considered at this point, before moving on to the consonants. However, since my analysis of diphthongs in this dialect depends in part on my interpretation of sonorant phonemes, a detailed study of diphthongs will be presented *after* the examination of consonants. (See pp. 205-227).

CONSONANT PHONEMES

Stops

There is no real consensus among scholars on the way in which Scottish Gaelic stop consonants should be represented in phonetic, let alone in phonemic transcription. The problem lies in the fact that the IPA system normally distinguishes between *voiced* and *unvoiced* consonants. This distinction is relevant for most European languages, including English and modern Irish. Scottish Gaelic, however, presents a more complex picture, and scholars have struggled to accommodate its subtler distinctions within the confines of standard IPA transcription.

In its conventional orthography, Gaelic appears to make a straightforward distinction between voiced stops (*b d g*) and unvoiced stops (*p t c*). On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that *all* stop consonants in Scottish Gaelic are usually voiceless; the essential distinction, in most varieties of the language, is between *unaspirated* stops [b̥ d̥ g̊] and *aspirated* stops [p t k]. In phonological terms, the difference can also be expressed as being between *lenis* and *fortis* stops, based on the degree of tension involved in articulating these consonants. Although the latter terminology may be regarded as old-fashioned, it appears to fit the facts of Gaelic phonology very well. A similar distinction is found in southern dialects of German (Keller 1961: 45-47). It should be emphasised that the lenis/fortis distinction is based on *phonological*, not phonetic considerations. In stressed syllables, it may be accompanied by various non-segmental features, such as pre- and post-aspiration, voicing and, in the case of Colonsay and other neighbouring dialects, glottalisation. These, however, serve to *emphasise* the distinction, rather than being essential to it. In unstressed syllables, such enhancements are usually absent, and the lenis/fortis distinction may be neutralised. Non-segmental features are examined in Chapter 3.

The situation is further complicated by the occurrence of genuinely voiced forms of these consonants, usually in proximity to a nasal. A segmental system of transcription must therefore be capable of accommodating these voiced stops, in addition to showing the lenis/fortis distinction. Precisely how this is done, using standard IPA symbols, raises serious problems. Historically, a variety of solutions have been adopted.

Writing in the days before IPA notation became the norm, Borgstrøm uses *p' t' k'* for post-aspirated stops, and *ḅ ḍ g̣* for 'voiceless (occasionally half-voiced) lenes'.⁶⁰ On the rare occasions when voicing has to be shown, he uses the unmarked forms *b d g* (Borgstrøm 1940: 154-156, and elsewhere). Oftedal deliberately adopts Borgstrøm's notation for his phonetic transcription, which he uses sparingly. In phonemic transcription he writes *p t k* for the aspirated series (post-aspirated in initial position and pre-aspirated elsewhere) and *b d g* for the unaspirated stops, where he introduces a distinction between the 'weaker degree' in initial position, and 'the stronger degree' medially and finally. This distinction is reflected in *phonetic* transcription by his use of Borgstrøm's *b d g* versus *p t k*, but is not relevant in phonemic transcription because it is positionally determined, and therefore allophonic (Oftedal 1956: 98-99). Oftedal does not recognise a separate voiced series, but it should be borne in mind that in Lewis dialects, the effect of the nasal mutation is different from that obtaining elsewhere, with the nasal effectively eclipsing a following stop, rather than causing it to become voiced.

Several authors (Ternes, Dorian, Grand, among others) use [p t k] to represent the lenis or 'unaspirated' stops, and [p^h t^h k^h] for the fortis or 'aspirated' varieties, at least in initial position. This then leaves the series [b d g] free to represent the voiced forms, in accordance with normal IPA usage. This solution has the merit of highlighting the distinction between aspirated and unaspirated stops, and of making clear, to readers who may be unfamiliar with Gaelic, what kinds of sounds are being represented. There is, on the face of it, very little difference, in strictly phonetic terms, between the onset of Gaelic words such as *bainne* (68) [ḅa'ɲĩ], *dubh* (355)

⁶⁰ Confusingly, Borgstrøm's diacritic [.] for 'voiceless' (also adopted by Oftedal) is used in the IPA system to indicate voicing (IPA 2015).

[ɸu] and French *panier* [panjɛ], *tout* [tu], where aspiration and voicing are both absent. From a phonological point of view, however, the French sounds are fortis rather than lenes, and contrast with the voiced series [b d g].

Such an approach raises few problems, at least when the stops in question appear in initial position. Admittedly, the visual dissimilarity to the conventional orthography may be confusing at first sight (e.g. [palə pɛk] for *baile beag*), but this can hardly be a valid objection if the result is closer to the phonetic reality of the spoken language. However, further difficulties arise when it comes to phonemic transcription: in non-initial position, the fortis stops are *pre*-aspirated in Scottish Gaelic, and a transcription which shows them (even as a matter of convention) as post-aspirated may be seen as confusing. In a phonemic transcription there can be no justification for adopting different ways of representing positional variants of the same phoneme (*^hp^{ht} ^hk/ alongside /p^h t^h k^h/); a phonetic transcription, by contrast, would require to make precisely this differentiation.

To make matters worse, the way in which preaspiration is actually realised differs subtly between dialects. Lewis and some other northern varieties have a ‘weak’ form of preaspiration, which can be represented phonetically as [^hp^{ht} ^hk], whereas most central and southern dialects have a more pronounced [h] sound before [p] and [t], and a fricative [x] before [k]: the pre-aspirated stops in these varieties of Gaelic are therefore better represented as [hp ht xk]. In some central dialects the use of the velar fricative has become the norm in all places of articulation, and the forms actually heard are [xp xt xk]. Other permutations are encountered in individual dialects, including that of Colonsay (Ó Maolalaigh 2010).

None of these solutions is adopted by the *SGDS*. In its narrow phonetic transcription of the Colonsay dialect, the *SGDS* uses [ɸ ɸ̣ ɸ̣̣] for the lenis stops in all positions, [p t k] in initial position for the fortis, and [hɸ hɸ̣ xɸ̣] (with variations) for fortis in non-initial position following a short vowel. This gives a fairly accurate phonetic rendering of the acoustic reality in this dialect, save that as a matter of editorial policy, the *SGDS* deliberately does not mark post-aspiration of initial fortis, on the grounds that it is a near-universal feature of Scottish Gaelic pronunciation (*SGDS*,

Vol. I: 134). The symbols [p t k] must therefore be read, in initial position, as [p^h t^h k^h]. Economy in the use of symbols is thus achieved at the expense of strict phonetic accuracy, a result which may cause confusion for researchers who are not familiar with the sounds of the language.

With these reservations, however, the *SGDS* system does offer an elegant way of highlighting distinctions between the different categories of stops, while in most cases retaining a close correspondence with the standard Gaelic orthography (the exception being its treatment of fortis stops in non-initial position).

My own proposed solution is the result of grappling with these issues over a period of time, during which I successively favoured several different schemes. In the end I decided that, since the present study is essentially an analysis of the Colonsay dialect *as recorded in the SGDS results*, I would simply use the *SGDS* system for *phonetic* transcription. Entries are thus transcribed exactly as printed, except in those few cases where further specification is required, and words not included in the *SGDS* are transcribed according to the same principles.

In the interests of consistency, I have also retained the original *orthographic* transcription of *SGDS* entries, even where this no longer corresponds to approved (*GOC*) practice. The two main manifestations of this are the use of the acute accent, and the spelling *na*'s for comparative forms of adjectives (cf. pp. 326-327).

Using the *SGDS* principles as the basis for a *phonemic* transcription, lenis stops could be transcribed as /b̥ d̥ g̥/, and fortis stops as /p t k/, with the corresponding phonetic transcription showing either pre- or post-aspiration as appropriate (allophonic variation). Alternatively, since the individual components are all phonemes in their own right, the pre-aspirated forms could be analysed as sequences of discrete phonemes: /h̥b̥ h̥d̥ x̥g̥/, just as in phonetic transcription;⁶¹ this, however, would be to ignore the functional value of the lenis/fortis opposition in the

⁶¹ Ternes (2006) adopts just such a 'biphonemic' analysis in the case of Applecross, reserving the 'monophonemic' transcription /p^h t^h k^h/ for *initial* fortis stops.

phonology of this dialect. The unmodified symbols /b d g/ could then be used, as in conventional IPA practice, to represent the voiced forms, assuming that these needed to be interpreted as separate phonemes.

In this dialect, however, voiced forms occur only in a limited number of specific environments: word-internally, after a homorganic nasal, as in *teampull* (834, 835) [tʲɛmˈbəl̪], *sunndach* (817) [sʉnˈdʌx], *pongail* (683) [poŋˈgʌl̪ʲ]; and also as a result of morphophonemic changes resulting from the nasal mutation: *am baile* [əmˈbaːl̪ʲ], *an-dé* (41) [nɔːzˈɛː], *gun gabh* [ɡʉnˈgʌv̪]. On this basis, voiced [b d g] may be seen as allophones of /b̥ d̥ g̥/ occurring in these specific phonetic and morphophonemic environments. Ternes would no doubt object that such an approach risks confusing phonemic and morphophonemic data:

Phonemics and morphophonemics operate on different levels of the grammatical hierarchy [...]. Phonemic and morphophonemic levels must strictly be kept apart, and different bracketing symbols must be used to distinguish between them.

(Ternes 2006: 13)

Following Ternes's strictures to the letter would preclude an allophonic interpretation, and lead inevitably to /b d g/ being posited as a separate series of voiced phonemes. On the other hand, it may be difficult in practice to keep the two levels completely separate, and Ternes's view may be regarded as excessively rigid.

Whatever solution is adopted, the fact remains that the voiced forms fit awkwardly, in a segmental transcription, alongside the lenis/fortis distinction (expressed phonetically as unaspirated v. aspirated stops). The voiced series could conceivably be represented using a different series of symbols, for example capitalised forms /B D G/, although such forms are not recognised in the IPA system. Such a solution also violates the generally recognised IPA convention whereby voiced stops are represented by the symbols /b d g/, and it introduces unfamiliar symbols, which would then require explanation.

If, however, voicing were to be interpreted as a *non-segmental* feature, or process, operating on the segmental string in specific phonetic or morphophonemic environments, there would be no need to posit a separate series of voiced segmental phonemes. Voiced stops that occur medially, after a nasal, could indeed be analysed as allophones of the respective lenis stops, while the results of the nasal mutation could be accommodated in an account of non-segmental processes. The opposite process, devoicing, which is also a feature of this dialect, could be accounted for in a similar way.

In the phonemic description of this dialect, I have therefore decided to distinguish only between lenis (unaspirated) and fortis (aspirated) stops. In the interests of economy, plain symbols will be used in phonemic transcription. The fortis phonemes will be labelled /p t k/; these will normally be articulated as [p^h t^h k^h] in initial position, and as [h_ɸ t_ɸ k_ɸ] in medial or final position. The corresponding lenis stop phonemes will be labelled /b d g/, and normally articulated as [b̥ d̥ g̥]. Allophonic variations, including voiced forms of the lenis stops (where appropriate), will be listed for each phoneme. Voiced forms arising from the nasal mutation will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

As a rider to what has just been stated, it must be recognised that the surface form [xg] may arise from two quite different phonological processes, corresponding to the orthographies *c* or *chd* respectively: *cnoc* (213, 214) [krɔxg], *naidheachd* (647) [n^hɛ^hʔɛxg]. Although the synchronic surface forms are phonetically identical, these representations have different historical antecedents. As we have just seen, [xg] is the normal pre-aspirated form of [k], and in such cases should be interpreted phonemically as an allophone of /k/ in non-initial position. In other circumstances, where [xg] corresponds to the orthographic representation *chd*, /x/ functions as a phoneme in its own right, and words such as *ochd*, *naidheachd* should be transcribed phonemically as /oxg/, /nɛ^hʔɛxg/, rather than */ok/, */ nɛ^hʔɛk/, which would be counter-intuitive in the minds of most Gaelic speakers, suggesting as it does the spellings **oc*, **naidheac*.

Palatalised stops

To add further complication to this already complex structure, there are also *palatalised* forms of some of these stops. Palatalisation is an inherent feature of Gaelic phonology, and plays an important part in the morphology of the language; for example, the nominative plural or genitive singular form of many masculine nouns is formed by ‘palatalising’ the final consonant: *cat/cait*, *balach/balaich*, *dàn/dàin*, etc.⁶² Although this process is termed ‘palatalisation’, it should be made clear that this is a phonological, and not necessarily a phonetic description. It provides a convenient shorthand for the mutation whereby consonants are ‘fronted’ in various ways, to produce what, in orthographical terms, are traditionally known as ‘slender’ consonants. This ‘fronting’ is expressed phonetically in different ways, according to the place of articulation of the relevant stop.

In the case of dentals, the phonologically ‘palatalised’ forms are actually *affricates*: palatalised *d* is usually transcribed as [dʲzʲ] in the *SGDS* results, and palatalised *t* as [tʲ]. In phonemic transcription, the forms /dʒ tʃ/ will be used.

In the case of *labials*, it is generally accepted that these are not palatalised in Scottish Gaelic, as they are in Irish (Jackson 1967: 187-189; Oftedal 1963). However, this view has been challenged by MacAulay (1966), among others. In strictly phonetic terms, *palatalisation* of labials would imply that the release of the stop would be followed immediately by a palatal fricative; the tongue is not involved in the production of the stop, and cannot physically ‘slide’ from stop to fricative, as it can with other categories of palatalised stops. That said, many Scottish dialects, from Lewis in the north to Islay in the south, show some kind of transition or ‘j-glide’, in the form of a semi-vowel, after labials (cf. Ternes 2006: 27-43).

⁶² In the category of nouns being considered, the genitive singular and nominative plural usually have identical forms.

In Colonsay, on the other hand, there is no trace of any such transition:

	<i>beanntan</i> (91)	<i>piuthar</i> (679)	<i>feòil</i> (413)	<i>meall</i> (609)
Lewis: ⁶³	b̥i̯aʊj̯n`d̥ən	p̥i̯ö-ir̥	f̥i̯ð:l̥'	m̥i̯aʊj̯l̥'
Islay: ⁶⁴	b̥i̯ɛn`d̥ən	p̥i̯uʔur̥	f̥i̯ø:l̥'	m̥i̯al̥'
Colonsay:	b̥i̯ɛ̃öj̯n`d̥ən	piʔor	f̥i̯ɛø:l̥'	m̥i̯ɛøj̯l̥'

True phonetic palatalisation therefore occurs in this dialect only with the velars [g k], which have the palatalised forms [g' k'] in the *SGDS* transcription. In Colonsay pronunciation, these sounds are often articulated as retro-palatal, rather than palatalised velar, stops; thus *ceàrr* may be pronounced [t'ɛ:r], and *aig* as [ɛð'], i.e. closer to the sounds in English *tune*, *due* than in *queue*, *regular*. In *phonemic* transcription, I initially used the symbols /c ɟ/ to reflect this pronunciation; however, after reading Keating and Lahiri's (1993) account of varying degrees of 'fronting'/palatalisation of velar consonants, it became apparent that this transcription would suggest too great a degree of palatalisation, and that /k' g'/ would be a more accurate representation. I retain the *SGDS* notation [k' g'] for *phonetic* transcription.

It is worth noting, finally, that some of these stops show a further refinement in the Colonsay dialect. When preceded by [i], preaspiration of a palatalised stop is realised as [ç]: *suipeir* (815) [siç̥p̥aɾ̥], *litir* (578, 579) [liç̥d̥'z'ir̥], *bric* (122) [b̥riç̥g'].⁶⁵ Preaspiration with [ç] is the norm in Scottish Gaelic before [g'], but it is particularly interesting to find it also before [b] when, as has just been demonstrated, labials are not normally palatalised in this dialect. The influence of the preceding [i] appears to be dominant in this instance, rather than the quality of the following consonant.

⁶³ Point 4: Carloway.

⁶⁴ Point 55: Bowmore.

⁶⁵ Headword is *breac*: *bric*.

A further point regarding my phonemic transcription of stop consonants relates to the way in which the characteristically Colonsay phenomenon of *glottalisation* is represented. As already stated, for purposes of *phonetic* transcription, I have retained the *SGDS* notation, which uses the glottal stop [ʔ] in hiatus, whereas glottalisation of consonants is indicated with an apostrophe [ʼ]; this is sometimes placed above the consonant symbol, e.g. [d̥]. This form of transcription is no longer in line with standard IPA practice, where the symbol [ʼ] is reserved for ‘ejectives’. In the *phonemic* transcription, therefore, I have chosen to represent glottalisation of consonants, and glottalisation of vowels where the vowel is ‘echoed’ (see p. 258) with the superscript symbol /ʔ/, even though this is also not explicitly sanctioned in IPA practice. Like the *SGDS*, I have retained the symbol /ʔ/ for glottalisation in hiatus, where there is a change of vowel.

Fricative [ç]

The use of [ç] for orthographic final *-dh/-gh* is a notable feature of this dialect. In fact [ç] is found in future endings in nearly all the islands of Argyll, from Islay to Coll and Tiree,⁶⁶ and also in St Kilda (Points 14-16). Before a vowel, or in phrase-final position, future endings are recorded in the *SGDS* results as [iç] or [ɪç]: *bithidh* (103) [biʔiç], *cuiridh* (277) [ku'riç]; *creididh* (254) [kröð'z'ɪç], *leanaidh* (572) [lɛ'niç]. In the case of *falbhaidh* (390) [fɔl'əç], the velarised [ɪ̠] may have influenced the quality of the vowel.

When the future ending is followed by a consonant, [ç] is not pronounced. The only instance of this in the *SGDS* results is *cuiridh tu* (279) [kɔ'ri ɔ].

Other words with final [ç] in this dialect are *aghaidh* (9) [ɣʔɣç], *céilidh* (178) [k'e'ɪç], *iarraidh* (509) [iɣ̥riç], *ionnsaidh* (530) [iɣ̥'s'ɪç]. A particularly prominent example, because of its frequency of occurrence, is *chaidh* (687) [xəç : xəɪç]. The *SGDS* results show that, in most other dialects, [ç] occurs much less frequently in these words.

By no means all words with final *-idh* are shown with [ç] in the Colonsay results. Following a stressed vowel or diphthong, the phonetic realisation is usually indicated with the semi-vowel [ɪ̠]: *buaidh* (130) [bɪ̠uɪ̠ɪ̠], *cruaidh* (262) [krɪ̠uɣ̥ɪ̠] (cf. the comparative form *cruaidhe* (263) [krɪ̠uaɪ̠ɪ̠]), *déidh* (305) [d̥'z'ɣ̥ɪ̠], *suidh* (811) [sɣ̥ɪ̠]. In three words – *cùbhraidh* (270) [ku'ri], *réidh* (698, 699) [ɹè : rè], *tapaidh* (830) [tahɸi] – no form of consonantal ending is indicated, while in the case of *leabaidh* (565, 566) [lɛɸə], the form recorded represents orthographic *leaba*.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Not Gigha (Point 40) or Easdale (point 59).

⁶⁷ The Colonsay form here retains the old nominative *leaba*. *Leabaidh* derives from an earlier dative form.

A similar situation obtains in the case of final *-igh*. [ç] is found in unstressed position in *contraigh* (242) [kɔn`draç], *ùrnaigh* (518) [u`ɾnɪç], *ìomhaigh* (525) [i`vaç], but a semi-vowel in stressed position in the monosyllables *laigh* (547) [l`aɪ̯], *laoigh* (561, 562) [l`ɔ̯i̯], *taigh* (820, 821) [tʲi̯], *tràigh* (861) [tra`i̯]⁶⁸ and *troigh* (870) [trɔ̯i̯].

For a much more detailed account of final unstressed *-igh/-ich* and *-idh* in Scottish Gaelic, especially in Argyll dialects, see Ó Maolalaigh (2000).

⁶⁸ I have heard [tra`ç] in *sandhi*: *mar a tha an tràigh ìseal* [marə ha`n`tra`ç`i`ʃʌ̯].

Sonorants

Laterals and nasals

The question of the phonemic classification of sonorants, especially of laterals and nasals, is one of the thorniest issues in Scottish Gaelic phonology. In the case of nasals, a distinction can be made between ‘coronal/dental’ nasals [n ɲ (nʰ) nʰ]⁶⁹ on the one hand, and bilabial [m] and velar nasals [ŋ (ŋʰ)] on the other. In this dialect, velar nasals occur only as allophones.

As explained by Ternes (2006: 19-23), the essential phonemic distinction observed in the case of laterals and ‘coronal/dental’ nasals is generally held to be threefold: plain, palatalised and velarised. This ternary patterning is also reflected in the *SGDS* results. On the basis of my own observations, however, I intend in the case of the laterals to split Ternes’s ‘velarised’ category (*SGDS* [lʰ]) into two separate phonemes (/lʷ/ and /lʷ/), thus giving four lateral phonemes in the Colonsay dialect.⁷⁰

Sonorant consonants, as the name implies, are normally voiced, but devoiced forms are frequently found in this dialect, either word-finally or when followed by an unvoiced or devoiced consonant. Devoicing is not consistently observed in these environments, and should therefore be seen as an optional variation, rather than evidence of allophonic variation. Devoicing as an expression of preaspiration will be dealt with separately (pp. 278-279).

Glottalisation is found where a sonorant occurs in intervocalic position following a stressed short syllable, except when it forms part of an epenthetic cluster. Because the presence of epenthesis cannot be identified on the basis of the segmental phonetic data alone, *glottalisation of sonorants cannot be considered to be allophonic*, unlike what happens in the case of stops. The whole issue of glottalisation and epenthesis, and how they relate to one another, will be examined under **Non-segmental Features** (pp. 228-296).

⁶⁹ Though phonetically palatal, not dental, [ɲ] functions as the ‘palatalised’ form of [n], and for this reason is included here.

⁷⁰ In his contribution to *Bile ós Chrannaibh* (2010: 191), Hamp refers to a ‘greater numerical outcome’ of laterals and nasals in the Colonsay results, although the extreme terseness of Hamp’s description makes it difficult to be sure what is meant. In the unpublished LSS material, he identifies four n-phonemes, but only three l-phonemes, in this dialect – the opposite of what I claim here.

Comparison of the phonemic status of laterals and nasals

At first sight, there appears to be a wide measure of parallelism in the way laterals and ‘coronal/dental’ nasals are treated in this dialect. On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that the distribution of the ‘plain’, ‘palatalised’ and ‘velarised’ phonemes, and the way in which the different phonemes are represented orthographically, are not the same in the case of laterals and nasals. This analysis also raises questions of phonemic distribution. The case to be made for a ‘rounded and velarised’ lateral phoneme (labelled /l^w/) further complicates the picture, especially given the existence of a similarly ‘rounded and velarised’ nasal [n^w], which I shall argue is *not* a separate phoneme.

In both cases, the ‘plain’ form, [l] or [n] respectively, serves as the lenited form of the corresponding ‘palatalised’ phoneme; in the nature of things, this will normally be in initial position:

<i>nighean</i> (664)	n̠i̠ŋ̠	<i>do nighean</i> (665)	dò ni̠ŋ̠
<i>leum</i> (575)	l̠e̠m̠	<i>cha do leum</i> (576)	xa çə l̠e̠m̠

In the case of nasals, the ‘plain’ form also serves as the lenited form of the ‘velarised’ phoneme, although the only examples given in the *SGDS* results are:

<i>nàdur</i> (646)	n̠`ε̠·çə̠r̠	<i>droch nàdur</i> (643)	drɔx nε̠·çə̠r̠ ⁷¹
<i>nàire</i> (648)	n̠`ε̠ ^(l) ·r̠ ĭ	<i>mo nàire</i> (645, 648)	mò nε̠·r̠ ĭ ⁷²

This is in contrast to the situation with laterals, where /l^w/ appears, admittedly on the basis of only one example in the *SGDS* data, to have no separate lenited form:

<i>làmh</i> (550)	l̠`ε̠·v̠	<i>do làmh</i> (551)	dò l̠`ε̠·v̠
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My own research suggests that this is indeed the case: *anns an loch* [as ə 'l̠`ɔx], *deireadh an latha* [ç'z'ε̠rəv̠ ə 'l̠`aʔa].

⁷¹ Headword is *do nàbaidh*. This word is not used in Colonsay, and the fieldworker presumably substituted *droch nàdur* as an alternative to illustrate lenition of ‘broad’ *n*.

⁷² Headword is *mo nàbaidh* / *mo nàire*.

In medial and final position, [n] (plain) is the usual realisation of orthographic broad single *n* (with accompanying glottalisation or devoicing, as appropriate), whereas broad single *l* is shown as [l̥] (velarised) in such cases:

<i>leanaidh</i> (572)	l̥e'niç	<i>moladh</i> (627)	mɔ'l̥əɣ
<i>bean</i> (88)	b̥eŋ	<i>beul</i> (97)	b̥e:l̥

Again in medial and final position, [ɲ] (palatalised), not [n] (plain), is the usual articulation of **slender** single *n*, whereas single *l* in these positions indicates the 'plain' phoneme:

<i>duine</i> (360, 361)	ɟu'ɲi	<i>baile</i> (65,66)	b̥a'l̥i
<i>min</i> (617)	m̥iɲ	<i>fuil</i> (445, 446)	fu:l̥

Palatalisation occurs, in both medial and final position, in cases where slender *n* or *l* is doubled in the standard orthography:

<i>bainne</i> (68)	b̥a'ɲi	<i>coille</i> (223-225)	k̥y'l̥i
<i>seinn</i> (752)	ʃi:ɲiɲ	<i>chail</i> (140)	x̥[ai]l̥

Palatalisation is also the norm for slender *n* or *l* in initial position, except when lenited:

<i>nighean</i> (664)	ɲ̥i'ɲiɲ	<i>litir</i> (578, 579)	liçd̥'z'ir̥
<i>nead</i> (653)	ɲeɟ	<i>leum</i> (575)	le:m̥

Velarised [n̥] is found initially where the standard orthography has a broad, unlenited *n*, and velarised [l̥] in all cases where broad *l* occurs initially:

<i>nàmhaid</i> (649)	n̥ɛ'viɟ'ʃ	<i>latha</i> (564)	l̥áʔá
<i>naomh</i> (651)	n̥ỹ'ɣ	<i>long</i> (585)	l̥oŋ'ɣ

In medial and final position, velarised [n̠] corresponds to orthographic broad double *nn*. Velarised [l̠], on the other hand, corresponds to broad **single l**:

<i>ceannaich</i> (168)	k'ɛ'n̠ɪç	<i>talamh</i> (826)	ta'l̠əy
<i>caorann</i> (150)	kʏ'rən̠	<i>geal</i> (464, 465)	g'al̠

Rounded and velarised laterals and nasals

It is my contention that a separate, rounded and velarised phoneme /l^w/⁷³ occurs, alongside the velarised phoneme /l̠/, in word-final or syllable-final position following a stressed short ‘broad’ vowel. The [l^w] sound is also *lengthened* in this position [l̠^w]. This sound is represented as *ll* in the standard orthography.

In the *SGDS* transcription, this sound is represented in final position as [l̠] following a diphthong: *ball* (75) [b̠[au]l̠], *toll* (857) [t̠[ou]l̠], or in some cases as [l̠^w]: *ubhall* (877) [uʔu]l̠^w.⁷⁴ I am suggesting that these can equally well be interpreted as [b̠al^w : to]l̠^w : uʔu]l̠^w, and analysed phonemically as /bal^w : tol^w : uʔul^w/. The only true minimal pair I have been able to identify from the *SGDS* results to illustrate this hypothesis is *geal* (464, 465) /*geall* (466) [g'al̠ : g'[au]l̠], which I analyse phonemically as /g'jal^v : g'jal^w/. The pair *meal* /*meall* (609) [m[ɛ]u]l̠] /mɛl^v : mɛl^w/ is only half-exemplified in the *SGDS*; a near-minimal pair is provided by *falt* (392) /*allt* (30-32) [fal̠^v d̠ : [au]l̠^v d̠] /fal̠^v d̠ : al^w d̠/.⁷⁵

In medial position the corresponding sound is shown simply as [l̠] (with glottalisation following a stressed short vowel): *gealladh* (468) [g'a'l̠əy], *sealladh* (744) [ʃɛ'l̠əy]. Although my own findings suggest some degree of rounding in such instances, the evidence is not sufficient to conclude that the lateral in this position is systematically rounded as well as velarised. This means that in morphophonological alternations, a phonemic change takes place: *geall/gealladh* /g'jal^w : g'jal^vəy/, *meall/meallaidh* (fut.) /mɛl^w : mɛl^vɪç/, etc. This is, of course, not unusual in Scottish

⁷³ In the IPA system, superscript [w] indicates ‘labialised’ (IPA 2015). Rounding, as described here, can be regarded as a form of labialisation.

⁷⁴ In the *SGDS* results, the tie bar [̠] extends under the whole of the sequence [l̠^w], and the devoicing mark [̠] (where present) is under the tie bar.

⁷⁵ The lenited form *fhalt* [al̠^v d̠] ‘his hair’ would provide a true minimal pair.

Gaelic, as will be seen from a comparison of headwords *geall* (466, 467) and *gealladh* (468); although most varieties show some form of diphthong in closed syllables in the base form (466), and in the preterite (467), almost none do so in the verbal noun, except where the form offered is *gealltainn* (*SGDS*, Vol. III: 28-29, 32-33).

This may be an unconventional interpretation in Scottish Gaelic phonology, but I believe that it fits the phonetic facts of this dialect better than one based on the analysis: diphthong + [l̥]. In the case of [aʊ εʊ] diphthongs, I am therefore departing from the *SGDS* transcription, and proposing an alternative interpretation of the phonetic data. (See further under **Diphthongs**, pp. 205-209).

A case might plausibly be made for a similar distinction in the case of nasals, with a phoneme */n^w/ representing rounded and velarised *nn*. As with the corresponding lateral, I maintain that the [n^w] in such cases is also lengthened, and appears in word-final or syllable-final position, following a short vowel in a stressed syllable: [n^w]. In the *SGDS* transcription, this sound appears as velar *n* in final position following a diphthong: *ceann* (163-165) [k'ɛ̃ɔ̃n̩], *donn* (329) [d̪oʊn̩]. I propose re-analysing these as [k'ɛ̃n̩^w : d̪on̩^w], which might then be expected to be rendered phonemically as */kɛ̃n^w : don^w/.

Closer analysis reveals, however, that in final position, the ‘unrounded’ sound [n̩] (with no preceding diphthong in *SGDS* transcription) occurs only when unstressed, as in *caorann* (150) [kʲrən̩], *olann* (203) [o'l̩ən̩],⁷⁶ whereas rounded [n^w] is found exclusively in syllable-final position in a stressed syllable. The two are therefore seen to be in complementary distribution, and can be analysed as a single phoneme /n^v/, with [n^w] functioning as an allophone in stressed final position. The minimal pair *lean/leann* would therefore be transcribed phonetically as [λɛ̃n̩ : λɛ̃n̩^w], and phonemically as /λɛ̃n̩ : λɛ̃n̩^v/. As in the case of laterals, this means that changes are seen in morphophonological alternations: *tonn/tonnan* (pl.) [ton̩^w : to'n̩ən̩], *teann/teannaidh* (fut.) [tʃɛ̃n̩^w : tʃɛ̃'n̩ɪç]; unlike /l^v : l^w/, however, the phoneme in all cases is /n^v/.

⁷⁶ Headword is *clòimh*. A footnote indicates that the latter word means ‘down’ in Colonsay.

Despite the attraction of establishing a parallelism with the fourfold division of lateral phonemes, therefore, it appears that in fact only three ‘coronal/dental’ nasal phonemes can be safely identified in this dialect: /n ɲ nʷ/. The *sound* [nʷ] does, however, exist as an allophone, in parallel with the sound [lʷ], and in my view provides a more satisfactory *phonetic* representation of final stressed /nʷ/ than the *SGDS* transcription involving a diphthong.

Phonetic transcriptions are, nevertheless, left unaltered when they are copied directly from the *SGDS*.

Comparison with Islay forms

A characteristic feature of the neighbouring dialect of Islay is the occurrence of short monophthongs followed by lengthened (but unrounded) sonorants, in the phonetic environments described. In Islay, the words *ball* (75), *toll* (857), *allt* (32) are shown in the *SGDS* results⁷⁷ with the transcriptions [b̥al̥ː : t̥ɔl̥ː : ḁl̥ːt], while *ceann* (163-165), *donn* (329) are shown as [kʰɛn̥ː : ɔ̥n̥ː].⁷⁸ The resulting pronunciation, which is quite distinctive, differs from that in other varieties, where diphthongs [aʊ : ɛʊ : oʊ], followed by an unlengthened sonorant, are the norm. If my interpretation is accepted, Colonsay, with rounded and lengthened sonorants, can be seen as forming a ‘transition zone’ between typically Islay monophthongs and the diphthongs found further north, where the rounding is seen to affect the vowel component rather than the following sonorant.

⁷⁷ Forms shown are for Point 55 (Bowmore).

⁷⁸ Similar results (without diphthongs) are found in Jura (Points 51-52) and in a clutch of locations in Mid-Argyll and Cowal (Points 41-49). Arran dialects (Points 31-35) show lengthening of the *vowel* in such cases.

Bilabial nasal phoneme /m/

The bilabial nasal phoneme /m/ does not exhibit the plain/palatalised/velarised distinction just discussed in the context of the ‘coronal/dental’ nasals. As has been shown (p. 67), palatalisation of labials is not a feature of this dialect, while velarisation and lip-rounding are not applicable in the case of a bilabial closure.

On the other hand, the *lengthening* of final [m] in certain words is a feature of Colonsay Gaelic, and according to the *SGDS* results is shared with Islay, Gigha, the south of Jura, and a scattering of dialects in mainland Argyll and central Perthshire. Lengthening only occurs following a short, stressed vowel, either word-finally, or syllable-finally before the voiced homorganic stop [b]. Like the corresponding rounded lateral and nasal forms, it occurs in words which in other dialects are often pronounced with a diphthong:

	<i>àm</i> (33)	<i>trom</i> (871)	<i>teampull</i> (834)
Harris: ⁷⁹	[aʊ]m	tr[ɔʊ]m	t'[aʊ]mbəl̩
Skye: ⁸⁰	[aʊ]m	tr[ɔʊ]m	t'[aʊ]mbø̥l̩
Colonsay:	ɛm̩	tròm̩	t'ʃɛm̩·bəl̩

In phonemic terms, however, [m̩] functions as an allophone of /m/, occurring in the phonetic environments just described.

Lengthening is not found in intervocalic position: *amais* [ɛ'mi̯], *lomairt* (584) [l' o'məst'ʃ].

⁷⁹ Point 11 (Ardhasaig).

⁸⁰ Point 104 (Lower Breakish)

Vibrants – a re-assessment

Like Ternes (2006: 25-26) I have chosen to use the term ‘vibrant’, rather than ‘rhotic’ or ‘trill’, to refer to the various realisations of orthographic *r*. The introduction to the *SGDS* refers to them simply as ‘r-sounds’. These include trills, flaps, fricatives and approximants, involving the tongue tip and the alveolar ridge. The uvular trill, familiar from French and German pronunciation (and as a ‘burr’ in some Scottish and Northumbrian varieties of English) is not present in the Colonsay dialect; in the IPA system, this sound is shown as [ʀ], but in the *SGDS* this symbol is used for a ‘voiced alveolar trill (three or more taps)’ (Vol. I: 132).

The vibrants present an altogether different set of problems, in terms of their phonological analysis, from those encountered in the case of laterals and nasals. In particular, they are the one area in which the *SGDS* results for Colonsay must be treated with some caution, because of the acknowledged difficulty of interpreting the transcription practice of the fieldworker, Eric Hamp (EH). In the introduction to the *Survey* (Vol. I: 131) it is stated that Hamp’s distinction between a single tap and a trill is retained, and shown in the published results as [ɾ] and [ʀ] respectively. In fact this statement is of little value in interpreting the findings for Colonsay: [ʀ] is used sparingly in the Colonsay results, while [ɾ] is found (with devoicing) in only one headword. More to the point, it is stated that ‘EH also uses simple [ɾ] without any indication of the number of flaps’ (*ibid.*), and it is this symbol that dominates in the Colonsay results. This may reflect Hamp’s finding that there is only one ‘r-phoneme’ in this dialect, labelled /r/,⁸¹ meaning that the number of ‘flaps’ is phonemically insignificant. At any rate, it is impossible, in the overwhelming majority of cases, to determine from the *Survey* results alone what the precise quality of the ‘r-sound’ is. Further primary research has been required (see below) before any definitive statement can be made.

⁸¹ Note by Jackson on LSS questionnaire: ‘EH says r-phoneme only /r?’.

The other symbol found in the *SGDS* results is [ɹ]. This is used in the IPA system for an alveolar approximant, corresponding to the usual English (i.e. non-Scottish) pronunciation of *r* in *round*, *carry*, etc. In the *SGDS*, however, it is defined as a voiced alveolar *fricative*, which suggests a closer articulation, with more audible friction.

I shall now examine each of the *SGDS* symbols in turn:

As already stated, the symbol [ɹ] is found in only one headword, appearing (with devoicing) as an alternative to [ʀ] in *air: oirre* (20) [uʀə : uʀə̥]; a footnote helpfully gives the same pair of alternatives for the plural form *orra* [ɔʀə : ɔʀə̥].⁸² This would appear to indicate that the essential phonetic difference between the singular and plural forms of this prepositional pronoun in the Colonsay dialect is the quality of the vowel, rather than the number of flaps. The fact that the vibrants are here shown devoiced, in an intervocalic environment, is unusual, and may imply the presence of (historical) aspiration.

[ʀ] is found in initial position in only four words: *radan* (690) [ɾaɖən], one version of *réidh* (699) [ɾèː] ([ɹèː] is given as an alternative here, and as the only form at 698), *ribeag* (703) [ɾiʔag]⁸³ and *rìgh* (705) [ɾiː]. It is also found medially, with glottalisation, in *barrannan* (80) [ʔaːrənə̥],⁸⁴ and in final position in one version of the corresponding singular form *bàrr* (78) [ʔaːʀ] (79 has [ʔaːɾ]). In addition, it is found in combination with [ɲ] in *ùrnaigh* (518) [uːɾɲiç]. A devoiced form is found in *muc throm* (634) [muxɔ ʀomː], where it represents orthographic *thr*, and as already noted, in one version of *oirre* (20) [uʀə̥] (and, in a footnote, *orra* [ɔʀə̥]).

⁸² Headword is *air:oirre*. The absence of glottalisation probably indicates that the words were elicited in an unstressed environment.

⁸³ Headword is *rib*.

⁸⁴ Headword is *barran*.

The symbol [ɹ] is likewise used in only a handful of words in the Colonsay data set, and in some cases alternatives are given. In its full-sized form it occurs only in *initial* position, and is found in the following words: *a-riamh* (58) [ɹiɹiɹv] (57 has [r'iüɹv]), *ràmh* (693) [ɹè·ɹ] (694 has [rɛ·ɹ : rɛiɹv]),⁸⁵ 695 has *do ràmh* [dò rɛ·ɹ]), *réidh* (698, 699) [ɹè·] (699 also has [Rè·]), *reusanta* (700) [ɹiɹsəndə], *roimhe* (714) [ɹɔɹi], *rud* (720, 721) [ɹüɹ] (cf. *dà rud* (722) [ɹa· rüɹ]). In addition, a superscript form of [ɹ] is found in a few words where orthographic *r* occurs following a long vowel, and before a homorganic (dental or alveolar) consonant. In all cases, these forms are shown as alternatives to forms with no vibrant element at all: *àrd* (55, 56) [a·sɹ : a·sɹ], *càirdean* (152) [kà·s'ɹ'z'ɹ : kà·s'ɹ'z'ɹ],⁸⁶ *càrn* (154) [kà·ɹ : kà·ɹ], *dorn* (339, 340) [ɹɔ·ɹ : ɹɔ·ɹ] (the plural/gen. sg. *duirn* (341) appears as [ɹu·rɹ]).

By far the commonest symbol used to represent these sounds in the Colonsay results, then, is [r], which is used in all positions (initial, medial, final) and in various combinations with other consonants. In the majority of cases it corresponds to orthographic *r*, but as is well-known, it is also the articulation of orthographic *n* in the combinations *cn*, *gn*, *mn* (and, by extension, *chn*, *ghn* and *mhn*); this is also the case for the combination *t-sn* in *anns an t-sneachda* (783) [ɛvns ən tɹɛxg] and, more unusually, for *nn* before *s* in *ionnsachadh* (529) [iɹs'əxəɹ] and *ionnsaigh* (530) [iɹs'ɹ'ɹ].⁸⁷ In the latter two instances, where the presence of [r] is a typically Colonsay feature, it is shown superscript in the *SGDS* transcription.

Many other varieties of Gaelic make a phonological distinction between palatalised and non-palatalised /r/, with /r'/ often realised as [ð] – e.g. Lewis (Point 1 – Ness) has *beir air* (94) [bɛð' əð']. This distinction appears not to operate in the same way in the Colonsay dialect: [bɛ·r ɛɹ].⁸⁸ The form [r'] does occur sporadically in the *SGDS* results, in the words *a-riamh* (57) [r'iüɹv] (58 has [ɹiüɹv]), *éirich* (374) [e·r'ɹ] (but note future form *éireachaidh* (375) [e·ɹɹɹ]),⁸⁹ and with devoicing in *bior* (107) [bɹ'ɹ], one version of *cearc* (171) [k'ɛɹ'g] (170, 172 have [k'ɛɹk], [k'ɛɹg] respectively) and *fìor* (431) [fi·r']. The palatalisation mark ['] is shown superscript and in round

⁸⁵ [rɛiɹv] is presumably a gen. sg. form (*ràmh*).

⁸⁶ Headword is *caraid*: *càirdean*.

⁸⁷ The more 'standard' form [ɹvnsɹ] is said (in a footnote) to have been 'prompted'.

⁸⁸ Headword is *beir*.

⁸⁹ Headword is *éirich*: *éiridh*.

brackets in *tuirce* (285) [tuɾ̥^(l)ɟ' i],⁹⁰ *ùir* (887) [u:ɾ̥^(l)] and the identically-transcribed *ùr* (893, 894) [u:ɾ̥^(l)].⁹¹ It is obvious that the use of this symbol does not correspond to phonological palatalisation, or to the orthographic distinction between ‘broad’ and ‘slender’. With the exception of *ùr/ùir*, the examples given do all occur in conjunction with a *phonetically* front vowel (whatever the conventional spelling may be), but there are also plenty of examples where unpalatalised [r] (or in some cases [ʀ] or [ɹ]) is shown in similar environments.

There is some limited evidence to suggest that [r] may function as the lenited form of [ɹ]: *do ràmh* (695) [dò rɛːɣ], *dà rud* (722) [ɔaː rüð]. These exist alongside the forms *do rallsa* (686) [dò ra^ulːwsĩ],⁹² *mo riochd* (711) [mò riːxɔ], where the base form is shown with [r]. It should be borne in mind, however, that the use of [r] is ambiguous in the *SGDS* results, and therefore no firm conclusion can be drawn.

Like other sonorants, [r] is generally shown as devoiced in final position, although devoicing is by no means universal. In some instances, parallel forms are given: *aimsir* (13, 14) [ɛmɪʃ ɪr : ɛmɪʃ ɪ̥r], *fear* (406, 407) [fɛr : fɛ̥r].

[r] is also devoiced before an unvoiced velar or labial stop, in either medial or final combinations: *adharc* (7) [ɣʔɣ̥ɔ], *cearc* (171, 172) [k'ɛ̥ɔ],⁹³ *coirce* (233, 234) [kɔ̥ɔɟ'ɪ]; *corp* (243) [kɔ̥ɔɓ], *oidheirp* (671) [ɣʔɪ̥ɔɓ]. In these instances, it appears to represent a form of preaspiration, here expressed as devoicing of the vibrant rather than a prefixed [h], [x] or [ç]. Preaspiration is further examined under **Non-segmental features** (pp. 277-280).

⁹⁰ Headword is *cullach*: *cullaich*. *Tuirce* is presumably the gen. sg. of *torc*; the placename *Tòrr an Tuirc*, which omits the final syllable, may be regarded as a more regular form.

⁹¹ In the case of 887 and 894, a footnote reads ‘sic [ɾ̥^(l)]’.

⁹² Headword is *do ràcan*.

⁹³ 170 is written as [k'ɛ̥k],⁹³ while 441 has *cearc fhraoich* [k'ɛ̥k r̥ɣ'ç]

[r] is also shown devoiced in *peathraichean* (680) [pɛʔɪçɪŋ],⁹⁴ as well as in the lenited forms *a shrìan* (799) [ə ʔʰiɑɪŋ],⁹⁵ *mo shròn* (801) [mə ʔʰɔŋ], *thràigheadh* (862) [hɾahəʔ],⁹⁶ *'ga threabhadh* (866) [gə ʔʰeʔɔʔ]. On the other hand, *threabh e* (864) is shown as [ʰreʔʷi a]. In all these instances, it is the influence of the associated (or implied) [h] that causes the devoicing (cf. *'s aithne* (27) [sɛɲi], *froithneach* (692) [frɔɲʌx]).⁹⁷

Before an unvoiced dental stop, fricative (mainly retroflex)⁹⁸ forms are found for orthographic *r*: [ʃ'ɖ], [ʂɖ] or [sɖ]. Examples include *mart* (113) [mɛʃ'ɖ],⁹⁹ *ceart* (174, 175) [k'aʂɖ], *àrd* (55, 56) [a:sɖ : a'ʂɖ]. In a palatalised environment, the combinations [ʃ't's'] or [ʃ'd'z'] are also found: *man cuairt* (267) [man ɟʰuʔʲs't's'],¹⁰⁰ *càirdean* (152) [kə'ʃ'd'z'iŋ : kə'ʂ'd'z'iŋ]. The form [ʃ'] occurs independently, in medial position only, in the words *dorsan* (344) [ɖɔʃ'əŋ] and *ursainn* (895) [ʊʃ'ə'ŋ], and without palatalisation in *farsuing* (399) [faʃiŋ : faʂʲiŋ], where it appears that [ʃ'] has combined with a following [s].

On the evidence of the *SGDS* results, [ʃ'] functions as an allophone of /r/ before an unvoiced dental stop (but see below for a re-assessment of the evidence).

[r] appears with rounding [ɾ] only once, in the word *ruith* (696, 697) [ɾʷiç].¹⁰¹ It is impossible to generalise from a single example, but it is worth noting that the transcription of the vowel [ʷi] in this instance is also unusual (see pp. 53-54).

⁹⁴ Headword is *piuthar*: *peathraichean*. My informants offered the form *piutharan*.

⁹⁵ Headword is *dà shrìan*.

⁹⁶ Headword is *tràigh*: *tràigheadh*.

⁹⁷ Headwords are *aithne*, *raithneach*.

⁹⁸ A note by Hamp (LSS) states that the retroflexion in all cases is 'very slight'.

⁹⁹ Headword is *bó*.

¹⁰⁰ Headword is *cuairt*.

¹⁰¹ Headword in both cases is *reic* / *ruith*.

Results of fresh fieldwork on Colonsay

Faced with this complicated and partly ambiguous picture, it was necessary to re-examine the *SGDS* findings in the light of new evidence. I was able to obtain fresh recordings of a number of the words used in the *SGDS* from the late Mary Ann MacAllister, and to examine these spectrographically using Praat software (Boersma and Weenink 2010). In the spectrogram, each ‘tap’ appears as a strong vertical line. It is therefore possible to determine, in each instance, whether the vibrant is strongly trilled (3 or more taps), weakly trilled (2 taps), flapped (1 tap) or not trilled at all (no taps).

For purposes of comparison with the *SGDS*, I have used the *SGDS* notation in my analysis, using [R] for a strong trill (three taps or more), [r] for a single tap, and [ɾ] where no taps were detected. This means that, unlike the *SGDS*, I have been able to use the symbol [r] exclusively for instances of two taps, which I call a ‘weak trill’. Where there is simultaneous trilling and friction (similar to the Czech ř sound, as in *Dvořák*)¹⁰² this has been indicated as [r̥] or [R̥], depending on the number of taps, with devoicing indicated where appropriate using the customary diacritic [̥]. In the case of *dorsan* (344), where there appears to be strong aspiration, rather than friction, accompanying the trill, this has been shown as [ɖɔ̥ʰən].

The results are somewhat surprising. As expected, the *SGDS* ‘catch-all’ [r] category includes instances of the following:

Single tap: *caraid* [kaʰɾɪʃ], *dorus* [ɖɔʰɾ ɪsɖ], and with devoicing, *coirce* [kɔ̥çç̥ʰi];

Weak trill: *rallsa* [ral̥wsə], *cuiridh mi* [kuɾi mi], and with devoicing, *làidir* [l̥aʰɖʰiɾ];

Strong trill: *righinn* [RYʰiɲ];

Fricative: *ruith mi* [ɾuɪç mi], *dh’èirich* [jɛ̥.ɪç], and with devoicing, *cearc* [k̥ɛ̥ɪç].

¹⁰² In the IPA system the symbol used for the Czech sound is [r̥], with an ‘up-tack’ below the [r] to indicate ‘raising’. Although the effect of raising [r] is to place it closer to the palate, thereby producing audible friction, I believe my notation better reflects the sound heard in Gaelic, where trilling is combined with fricative action.

In those instances where the *SGDS* does indicate the quality of the vibrant, some measure of consistency is observed between the *SGDS* entries and the new recordings, although there are also discrepancies:

	Word	SGDS No.	SGDS	MAM¹⁰³
R	radan	690	raḏə̃n	ɹaḏə̃n (emphasised: raḏə̃n)
	rèidh	698, 699	ɹèː : reː	reː (emphasised: reː)
	riobag	703	riḃaɣ	ɹiḃaɣ
	rìgh	705	riː	ɹiː
	ùrnaigh	518	uːrɲiç	uːɲiç (no audible r)
R/ɹ	oirre	20	uʀə̃ : u ɹə̃	uːʀə̃ (emphasised) ¹⁰⁴
	orrasan	20fn	ɔʀə̃ : ɔɹə̃	ɔːʀə̃sɲ
ɹ	ràmh	693, 694	ɹèːʏ , reːʏ	ɹèːʏ
	riamh	57, 58	r'[iü]ʏ , ɹ[iï]v	ɹ[iï]v ; (emphasised) r[iï]v
	rèidh	698, 699	ɹèː : reː	reː ; (emphasised) reː
	rudeigin	721	ɹüḏ	ɹyḏ'ig'ij̃

It was noted that, in cases where the informant was asked to repeat a word, it was repeated with greater emphasis, and a corresponding increase in the number of taps: [ɹaḏə̃n : raḏə̃n ; reː : reː ; ɹ[iï]v : r[iï]v].

¹⁰³ Mary Ann MacAllister.

¹⁰⁴ The absence of glottalisation in the *SGDS* results is probably due to the forms being elicited in an unstressed context. My informant was asked to contrast *orm*, *oirre*, *orra*, and therefore emphasised those words.

In those instances where the *SGDS* indicates palatalisation [r'], the new findings are less clear-cut, although the predominant sound heard is [ɹ]:

	Word	SGDS No.	SGDS	MAM
r'	dh'éirich	374	e·r'ɪç	je·ɹɪç
	bior	107	bɪr'	biɹ
	cearc	170-172	k'εr'g , etc.	k'εɹg
	fior	431	fɪ·r'	fɪ·ɹ
	Tòrr an Tuirc ¹⁰⁵	[285]	[tuɹ ^(ɹ) g' i]	tərən' dhuɹçg'
	ùr	893, 894	u·r ^(ɹ)	u·ɹ
	an ùir	887	u·r ^(ɹ)	nu·ɹ

(N.B.: vowel following)

The variation observed (i.e. the number of taps) thus appears to correlate more closely to the degree of prominence given to the word in question than to any phonemic or allophonic distinction. In particular, the different forms of vibrants encountered cannot be easily correlated to any of the standard distinctions found in Gaelic phonology (palatalised/non-palatalised, lenited/non-lenited, aspirated/non-aspirated, voiced/unvoiced). I therefore conclude, with Hamp, that in this dialect there is only one vibrant phoneme /r/, with a wide range of variant forms, greater emphasis (and hence increased prominence) being marked by an increase in the number of taps [ʀ], while lesser emphasis results in an approximant [ɹ], or in some cases a single tap [r].

¹⁰⁵ The name of a house on Colonsay, also known in English as *Mill Cottage*.

It is also interesting that in Mary Ann's pronunciation, there is little evidence of the retroflex fricative forms noted in the *SGDS* results before a homorganic stop or affricate: [ʃ'd̥ : ʃ'd̥z' : ʃ't's']. Rather she produces a trill (usually devoiced) with simultaneous friction:

Word	SGDS No.	SGDS	MAM
ceart	174	k'aʃd̥ [k'aʃd̥ʰ ?] , k'aʃ'd̥	k'aʃd̥ʰ
àrd	55, 56	aʃd̥ : aʃ'd̥ , àʃd̥ : àʃ'd̥	àʃd̥ʰ
càirdean	152	kàʃ'd̥z'iŋ : kàʃ'd̥z'iŋ	kàʃ'd̥z'iŋ
man cuairt	267	maŋ ɣh[uʃ]ʃ't's'	maŋ ɣ[uʃ]ʃ't's'

Where a vibrant is followed by phonemic /s/, assimilation takes place. Thus *ursainn* (895), which appears as [ʊʃ'ə̀ː] in the *SGDS* results, is pronounced [uʃ ʃiŋ] by Mary Ann, with [ʃ] and [ʃ] showing only a partial overlap in the spectrogram. In the case of *dorsan* (344), Mary Ann's version sounds like [dɔʃʰən], with strong simultaneous aspiration rather than a sibilant, although this may partly reflect the laminal pronunciation of [s] in this dialect (see under s).

Before a homorganic nasal, where the *SGDS* indicates an absence of any vibrant, or at most a superscript [ɹ], Mary Ann produces the full range of variations, depending on the degree of emphasis placed on the word:

Word	SGDS No.	SGDS	MAM
càrn	154	kà'ŋ : kà'ŋ	ka'rn
Càrn an Eoin ¹⁰⁶	—	—	ˌkaːrn ə 'niːɔjɪn
nam dhòrn	339, 340	dɔ'ŋ : dɔ'ŋ	nam ɣɔ'ŋ : nam ɣɔ'ŋ

Only in the word *ùrnaigh* [u'ɲiç] was there no audible vibrant in Mary Ann's version, whereas the *SGDS* in this instance gives the form [u'ɲɲiç], with a clearly marked trill. Again, this suggests free variation in the realisation of /r/, rather than any allophonic distinction.

¹⁰⁶ The name of the highest hill on Colonsay (143 m). Note that *càrn* receives secondary stress.

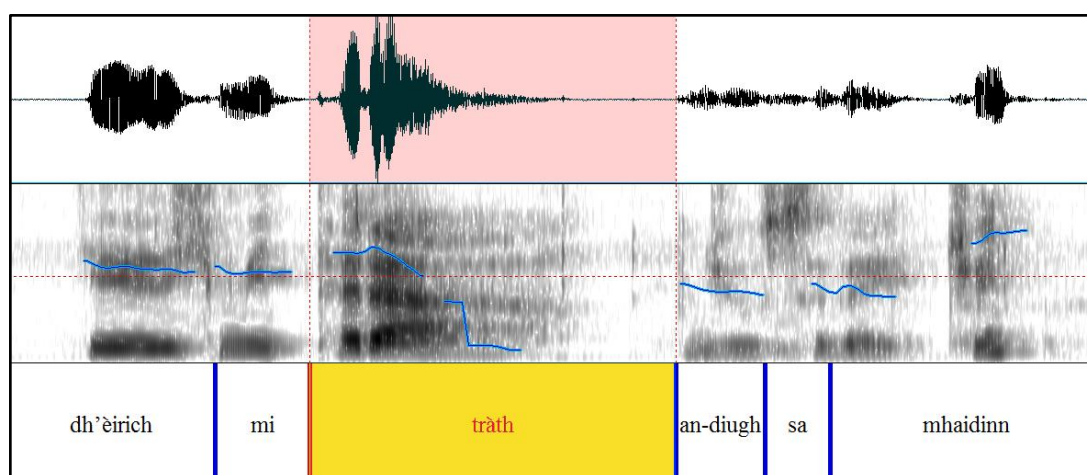
Combinations with other consonants also throw up some interesting results. Before a velar stop, the *SGDS* shows a range of forms [k'ɛ̞rk : k'ɛ̞r'g̊ : k'ɛ̞r̥g̊] for *cearc* (170-172); Mary Ann's version has a devoiced approximant [k'ɛ̞r̥g̊]. The expected preaspiration is expressed as devoicing of the vibrant in all cases. But before a *palatalised* velar,¹⁰⁷ Mary Ann consistently uses a fricative [ç] (with a devoiced flap or an approximant), where the *SGDS* merely indicates devoicing:

Word	SGDS No.	SGDS	MAM
coirce	233, 234	kɔ̞r̥g̊'ĩ , kɔ̞r̥g̊'ĩ	kɔ̞r̥ççg̊'ĩ
adhaircean	7	ʏʔʏr̥g̊	ʏ' r̥ççg̊'ĩ
Tòrr an Tuirc ¹⁰⁸	285	tu̞r̥(ʰ)g̊' ĩ	tə̞rən' d̥hu̞r̥ççg̊'

¹⁰⁷ Phonetically a palatal stop [ç], but shown here as [g'] to maintain consistency with the *SGDS*.

¹⁰⁸ See footnote 105 for an explanation.

A notable feature of Colonsay pronunciation, which also occurs elsewhere, is the insertion of a very brief epenthetic vowel in combinations where a stop is followed by [r]. This might be thought to be merely a reflection of the need for the tongue to move from the stop to the trill or flap, but spectrographic evidence shows a very short vocalic segment in such cases. Thus we find, in Mary Ann’s pronunciation, the words *creic* [kʰreçgʰ],¹⁰⁹ *gruag* [gʰɹ̥uɔɹ̥g], *tràth* [tʰraː], *treabhadh* [tʰreʔuɣ]. This feature is not reflected in the *SGDS* results as printed.¹¹⁰



Waveform, spectrogram and pitch contour for

Dh'èirich mi tràth an-diugh sa mhaidinn

(Mary Ann MacAllister)

The short vocalic segment at the beginning of *tràth* [tʰraː] can be clearly seen.

¹⁰⁹ *Creic*, rather than *reic*, is the usual form of this verb on Colonsay, although the *SGDS* (696, 697) also gives *reic*.

¹¹⁰ The same feature is observed in the speech of some native-born *Colbhasachs* when speaking English: *great* [gʰreːd], *try* [tʰraːj].

Semi-vowels

Semi-vowels are extremely short vocalic articulations, which in phonological terms function as consonants. Examples in English are the sounds represented by *y* in *yes*, *yacht*, and *w* in *walk*, *winter*. These sounds, as they occur in English, are often transcribed [j w]. These symbols are reserved in the IPA table of consonants for ‘palatal approximant’ and ‘voiced labial-velar approximant’ respectively, which are arguably not the same as semi-vowels (IPA 2015; cf. *SGDS*, Vol. I: 118-119). In the *SGDS* results, [w] appears only in the sequence [ɪ̯w].

The *SGDS* favours a transcription with a subscript ‘arch’ or ‘breve’ [ɪ̯] under the relevant vowel symbol. This diacritic is defined in the IPA system as indicating ‘non-syllabic’, which may in practice mean the same as ‘semi-vowel’. It has the advantage of permitting a wider range of semi-vowels to be recorded, apart from just the high vowels [i] and [u], and by avoiding the term ‘semi’, remains uncommitted as to the relative duration of the segment in question.

The *SGDS* results take full advantage of the freedom to define the quality of semi-vowels more narrowly. The following symbols are found in the Colonsay data set:

ɪ̯ (ɪ) ʊ̯ ʊ̯ ɤ̯ (ɤ) ɤ̯ ɤ̯

Many of these are written superscript, presumably indicating an even shorter duration than would be implied by transcribing them as ‘semi-vowels’ (Vol. I: 137). That said, it is difficult to see how these semi-vowels differ, in terms of practical phonetics, from the corresponding full vowel sounds written superscript.

The only one of these symbols to be used at all frequently in the Colonsay results is [ɪ̯], which occurs in initial, medial and final position; it is subject to glottalisation following a stressed short vowel, and to final devoicing in many instances. In this it displays the same features as other consonants, and /ɪ̯/ may therefore be considered to be the only semi-vowel *phoneme* to occur with any frequency in this dialect.

[ɪ̯], which is found only in the word *laigh* (547) [ɪ̯aɪ̯], with devoicing, will be interpreted as a non-allophonic variant of the phoneme /ɪ̯/.

The form [ɥ̥] is more difficult to account for. In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, it occurs only in *treabh* (863) [treɥ̥], and its preterite form *threabh e* (864) [hre'ɥ̥i a]; both these forms have been attested in recent recordings. The devoicing of [ɥ̥], in the base form at least, suggests that the sound is being treated as a consonant, and hence is subject to final devoicing. Devoicing in the preterite is more difficult to explain, although the presence of glottalisation in the latter form suggests that the word is being treated as disyllabic, perhaps representing an underlying form **threabhaigh e*. Even on this interpretation, the transcription with two semi-vowels seems anomalous, since a form such as **[hre'ɥ̥iç a]* would be expected (bearing in mind that final *-igh* is normally pronounced [iç]). It is possible that *sandhi* in the presence of the following [a] may explain the reduction of **[i]* to the corresponding semi-vowel.

On this reasoning, the infinitive/verbal noun form *treabhadh* (865) [treʔoɥ̥] might be explained in terms of the semi-vowel [ɥ̥] having merged with the ending [əɥ̥] to produce [oɥ̥]; this is, moreover, the only example in the *SGDS* results where an *-adh* ending shows final devoicing.

In short, the example of *treabh* raises a number of tricky issues, not least of which is the precise status of [ɥ̥]. Despite the anomalies surrounding it, [ɥ̥] does appear to be functioning here as a consonant in its own right, which cannot easily be attached to any other phoneme. The conclusion has to be that this dialect has a phoneme /ɥ̥/, which is found in the *SGDS* results only in the verb *treabh* and one (arguably two) of its derived forms. Positing a phoneme on the basis of only one instance seems quite unsatisfactory, however, and I therefore propose to treat the identification of this phoneme as provisional, in the absence of any other examples.

The other semi-vowel forms can largely be accounted for as non-phonemic variations reflecting the ‘accommodation’ of the vocal cavity to a following consonant:

[ɔ̥] occurs in *fliuch* (434) [fl̥iʊx̥], and superscript in *iuchair* (537) [iʊ̥ʰəɾ̥ : iʊ̥ʰəɾ̥]. In both cases it appears to represent a transition from a narrow vowel sound to a velar consonant, although it may also reflect some consciousness of the fact that these words are pronounced [fl̥iʊx̥, iʊx̥əɾ̥] in other dialects;¹¹¹ its occurrence in the comparative form *na’s fliche* (435) [nəs fl̥iʊç̥i] is probably influenced by the positive form. In the remaining instance in the *SGDS*, *rallsa* (685, 686) [raʊ̥l̥ws̥i],¹¹² it appears to be influenced by the following rounded and velarised lateral [l̥w̥].

[ɤ̥] appears in the Colonsay data set only in two modified forms: [ɤ̥̥] and [ɤ̥̥̥]. These are found only in the word *riochd*, which appears as [ri̥̥ʰx̥g̥] at 709,¹¹³ [ri̥̥ʰx̥g̥] at 710, and as *mo rìochd* [mò ri̥̥ʰx̥g̥] at 711. In all three cases, the [ɤ̥̥ : ɤ̥̥̥] is shown superscript. Once again, it is likely that this represents a transition from a high front vowel to a following velar consonant.

[ə̥] appears only twice in the Colonsay data set, in both instances superscript. These are one version of *sgreuch* (762) [sq̥r̥ɛ̥ʰx̥ : sq̥r̥ɛ̥ʰx̥] and the gen. sg. form *taighe* (822) [tḁʰʲi̥]. Again, this is likely to represent a transition to a velar consonant in the case of *sgreuch* (especially in light of the parallel form, with no transition indicated) and some degree of phonetic accommodation in the case of *taighe*.

[æ̥] is a rhotacised version of the previous symbol, and occurs superscript in two words, in both cases representing orthographic *r*: one version of *farsuing* (399) [fḁʰɲ̥ : fḁʰʂ̥i̥ɲ̥] and *màirnealach* (596) [mḁʰɲ̥al̥əx̥]. It is not clear to what extent the sound indicated as a superscript semi-vowel differs from the superscript full vowel shown in the alternative versions of *ceart* (174) [k̥ʰḁʰʂ̥d̥], *feart* (411) [fe̥ʰʂ̥t̥ʰf̥]; probably this reflects some slight variation in transcription.

¹¹¹ Cf. Point 55 (Bowmore): [fl̥iʊx̥, iʊx̥əɾ̥].

¹¹² Headword is *ràcan* (685), *do ràcan* (686).

¹¹³ Note the grave accent [̀] indicating velarisation of the vowel (not present in the other examples).

In summary, all the recorded instances of semi-vowels, other than [ɨ], its variant [ɨ̃], and (provisionally) [ɨ̄], represent vocal transitions or accommodations, as the tongue moves to produce a different sound, rather than having any obvious consonantal function. As such they are not phonologically significant for this dialect.

REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL PHONEMES

Following this analysis, I shall now look in detail at each of the phonemes identified for this dialect, in each case examining what symbols are used, and which modified forms are found, in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay. Where appropriate, I shall supplement the *SGDS* evidence with examples drawn from my own fieldwork.

I shall propose a phonemic definition for each phoneme, stating which variations are to be considered allophones, in what phonetic environments, and which are to be seen merely as variations in articulation, without phonological significance.

VOWEL PHONEMES

Front vowels – unrounded

i

This is a high front vowel. Like other vowels in Colonsay Gaelic, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position. The long form is sometimes heard as a slight glide ([i̯] or [i̯]), although this is not noted in the *SGDS* results, and should be regarded as a spontaneous variation rather than a consistent feature.

Generally speaking, in the *SGDS* transcription, long [iː] corresponds to orthographic ì, and short [i] to orthographic i: *chì* (381, 382) [çìː], *ìm* (515) [iːm̩]; *briste* (123) [br̩ɪst̩ʲɪ̯], *fichead* (420) [fiçɪd̩]. Because *i* is a marker for palatalisation in the standard orthography, the orthographic forms ìo, io are regularly found before unpalatalised consonants: *fìon* (429) [fiːn̩], *ìobairt* (522) [iːb̩əʃˈt̩ʲʲ]; *crios* (258) [kris], *fios* (432) [fis]. In Colonsay the simple vowel is found even in words where, in other dialects, the orthographic combination ìo would be pronounced as a diphthong: *sìos* [ʃiːs], *mìosa* (621) [miːsə],¹¹⁴ *Ìosa Crìosd* (531) [iːsə kriːsd̩]. In the case of *fiodh* (425, 426) [fi̯], the Colonsay form reflects not only the tendency towards a monophthong, but also the absence of any j-glide after a labial consonant. In *diallaid* (309) [d̩ʲz̩iːl̩ɪd̩ʲ], the digraph *ia* is used in the *SGDS*, although *diollaid* is now the approved spelling. In *suipeir* (815) [siç̩p̩əɾ̩], short [i] corresponds to the digraph *ui*, perhaps reflecting the Scots form *sipper*.

¹¹⁴ Headword is *mìos*.

Occurrences of unmodified [i] in unstressed position are rare in the *SGDS* results, but it is found in one version of *bithidh* (102) [bʲiʲiç] (103 has [bʲiʲiç]), one version of *cuiridh* (278) [kuʲriç] (277 has [kuʲriç]), *Di-Dòmhnach* (327) [dʲzʲi dʲoːniç],¹¹⁵ *tapaidh* (830) [tahʲi] and in the plural form *ughan* (for *uighean*) (881) [uʲiŋ]. It also appears as the epenthetic vowel in *na's doirche* (333, 334) [nəs dʲuriçʲi]. For the most part, however, unstressed orthographic *i*, and an epenthetic vowel in a palatalised context, are more likely to show a modified form of [ɪ].

Nasalised forms are found in *nighean* (664) [nʲiʲŋ] (but not in *do nighean* (665) [dʲo niʲŋ]), and also in *sniomh* (785, 786) [snʲiːŋ], and its preterite form *shniomh* (787) [nʲiːŋ] (784 has [snʲiːŋ]). Nasalisation of vowels in the presence of a nasal consonant will be considered, as a non-segmental feature, at pp. 281-280.

Apart from nasalisation, the only other modified form of [i] to appear in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay is [ɪ] (lowered). This is found in stressed position in only a handful of words: one version of the word *cridhe* (256) [kriʲɪ] (255 has [kriʲi]), *iompachadh* (560) [imːbaxəɪ],¹¹⁶ *ithe* (536) [içɪɪ] (*ithidh* (535) is [içɪç] – see below), one version of *mise* (623) [miːʃɪ] (622 has [miːʃə]), *ris* (702) [riːʃ], and *thill* (844) [hiːʌ]. Since there is no obvious common feature, and half of these instances offer alternative forms with unmodified [i], such occurrences are best regarded as articulatory variants.

In unstressed syllables, on the other hand, [ɪ] is commonly found, especially in the future ending *-idh*, *-aidh*, which in Colonsay is pronounced with a final [ç] when not followed immediately by a consonant. Thus in the *SGDS* we find the following: *bithidh* (103) [bʲiʲiç] (102 has [bʲiʲiç]), *buailidh* (131) [bʲuəʲiç], *cuiridh* (277) [kuʲriç] (278 has [kuʲriç]), *éireachaidh* (for *éiridh*) (375) [eːɾaxiç],¹¹⁷ *fòghnaidh* (436) [foːniç], *ithidh* (535) [içɪç]. Other verbs have unmodified [ɪ] in such endings.

¹¹⁵ Headword is *Dòmhnach*.

¹¹⁶ Headword is *iompaich*.

¹¹⁷ Headword is *éirich*: *éiridh*.

As previously discussed (p. 56), the lax vowel [ɪ] and certain of its modified forms also require to be considered in the context of the /i/ phoneme.

Unmodified [ɪ] has been defined as an allophone of /i/, occurring in unstressed position.

Of the large number of modified forms of [ɪ] found in the *SGDS* results, only [i̥] (raised), [ɪ̠] (lowered) and [i̠] (raised and centralised) can be regarded as falling within the /i/ phoneme. Details of the words concerned have already been given in the course of the phonological discussion on p. 57.

Other retracted and centralised forms [i̠ i̠ i̠ i̠] will be considered in the context of the /ə/ phoneme.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /i/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

Long /i:/ may be realised as [i̠] ~ [i̠].

The realisation of short /i/ may vary between [i] and [i̠] in stressed position.

It has the allophone [ɪ] in unstressed position; the actual realisation of this allophone may vary within the range [i̠ i̠ i̠ i̠].

Retracted and/or centralised forms of [ɪ] (apart from [i̠]) fall within the /ə/ phoneme.

This is a high-mid front vowel. Like other vowels in Colonsay Gaelic, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position.

In the *SGDS* spelling system, the lengthened form [eː] may correspond to orthographic *é* in final position, as in *glé* (476) [gl'eː].¹¹⁸ Before palatalised consonants it appears more commonly as *éi*, as in *céilidh* (178) [k'eːlɨç], *théid* (688) [heːd'zʲ]; before an unpalatalised ('broad') consonant, the orthographic rendering is *eu*, as in *'s fheudar* (414) [f'eːd̪əɾ̪], *feum* (415) [f'eːm̪], *sgeul* (761) [sg'eːl̪] (760 has [sg'eːl̪]). In the case of *greim* (502,503) [gr'eːm̪], the headword is spelt without an accent, reflecting the fact that in most other dialects this word is pronounced with a diphthong: [gr'ʲiːm̪], etc.; in Islay and Jura, it is shown with a short vowel and lengthened [m]: [gremː] (*SGDS*, Vol. IV: 100-103).

The short form [e] generally corresponds to orthographic *ea*, as in *beag* (84) [bɛg], *seasamh* (750) [ʃesəv]; or with a following palatalised consonant, to orthographic *ei*, as in *reic* (696, 697) [rɛçgʲ]. In *éibhleag* (372) [ev̪l̪'ag], *éi* is written with an accent, to reflect the pronunciation elsewhere, but in Colonsay the vowel is pronounced short, with an epenthetic vowel inserted in the following consonant cluster. In *leth* (574) [lɛ], [e] corresponds to the single letter *e*. The word *air*, which appears in the *SGDS* results only in relation to other words, shows [e] corresponding to orthographic *ai*: *beir air* (94) [bɛːr ɛr̪],¹¹⁹ *air mo chois* (156) [ɛr m̪ə xoɨ].¹²⁰

The following modified forms are found in the *SGDS* results:

[ɛ̥] (raised) is found in only three entries: *eaglais* (368) [ɛ̥ɟl̪'ɨʃ] (the gen. sg. form has unmodified [e] in (369) [nə he̥ɟl̪'ɨʃ]); *eile* (373) [ɛ̥'l̪'ɨ] (882 has *uibhir eile* [uʲir e̥'l̪'ɨ]¹²¹); *cha do leum* (576) [xa d̪ə l̪'e̥m̪] (575 gives the base form as *leum* [lɛːm̪]). Since in all three instances there appears to be free variation between the modified and unmodified forms, it may be concluded that the use of [ɛ̥] as opposed to [e] is not phonologically significant.

¹¹⁸ The form given by the informant is *glé mhath* [gl'eː vɛ].

¹¹⁹ Headword is *beir*.

¹²⁰ Headword is *cas: cois*.

¹²¹ Headword is *uibhir*.

[è] (retracted) is found in *an-dé* (41) [nd'z'è], *breac* (122) [brèxg], *ceist* (179) [k'èftʃ], *réidh* (698, 699) [rè], *Seumas* (755) [fè·məs], one version of *sgeul* (760) [sg'è·l̩] (as noted above, 761 has [sg'e·l̩]), *teth* (839) [t'fè]. These seven words cover the full range of orthographic representations already noted for unmodified [e]. It is difficult to establish any reliable phonological criterion for distinguishing the modified from the unmodified form, and hence [è] should be regarded as a variant of /e/ rather than an allophone.

As previously discussed (p. 51), [ɛ] (lowered) should be considered as a variant of the phoneme /ɛ/ rather than a lowered variant of /e/.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /e/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

It has no allophones, but its actual articulation may vary within the range [e ɛ è].

The lowered form [ɛ] is to be considered as a variant within the /ɛ/ phoneme.

This is a low-mid front vowel. Like other vowels in Colonsay Gaelic, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position. This phoneme has a wider distribution in Colonsay Gaelic than in many other dialects.

In common with much of Argyll, Colonsay participates only to a very limited extent in the ‘breaking of original long ē’, as described by Kenneth Jackson (1968).¹²² Of Jackson’s list of eight keywords, only one (*a’ cheud* (182) [ç̥iə̃ɸ̥])¹²³ is pronounced on Colonsay with a diphthong; the others having [ε] (or one of its modified forms), or [è] in the case of *Seumas*. Thus [ε̇] is found in *sè* (741) [ʃε̇]; the *SGDS* spelling in this instance reflects the Argyll pronunciation, although *sia* would nowadays be the approved orthographic form.

[ε̇] is also found for orthographic *eu* in *beul* (97) [b̥ε̇l̥],¹²⁴ *eunlaith* (378) [ε̇l̥iç̥], *feur* (416) [fε̇r̥], *reult* (712) [r̥ε̇l̥ɸ̥],¹²⁵ *sgreuch* (762) [sq̥r̥ε̇x̥ : sq̥r̥ε̇ʔx̥]. In *deanadh*, (302) [d̥z̥'ε̇n̥əɸ̥],¹²⁶ [ε̇] corresponds to orthographic *ea*. In two examples, *mèirleach* (613) [m̥ε̇r̥l̥əx̥] and *sèimh* (751) [ʃε̇v̥], [ε̇] corresponds to orthographic *èi*.

The short form [ε] corresponds to orthographic single *e* in *dheth* (300) [j̥ε]. More commonly, however, short [ε] corresponds to orthographic *ea*, as in *beatha* (92) [b̥εh̥ε], *each* (365) [εx̥], *nead* (653, 654) [n̥εɸ̥], and to orthographic *ai* in *aimsir* (13, 14) [εm̥iʃ̥'ir̥], *ainm* (17, 18) [εn̥im̥]. In a number of words, however, Colonsay has [ε] for *ea* where other dialects have [ja]. These include a number of examples where *ea* follows a labial consonant: *beairteach* (739) [b̥εʃ̥'t̥ʃ̥l̥x̥],¹²⁷ *feannadh* (405) [fε̇'n̥əɸ̥], *feart* (411) [fεʃ̥'t̥ʃ̥]; such combinations never show any element of palatalisation or j-glide in Colonsay.¹²⁸ But they also include words such as *ceannaich* (168) [k̥'ε̇'n̥iç̥], *sealladh* (744) [ʃε̇'l̥əɸ̥], where there is no labial.

¹²² This variation had been previously identified by Donald MacKinnon, himself a native of Colonsay, in a paper presented to the Gaelic Society of Inverness (MacKinnon 1886: 352-353). I am grateful to Professor John Sheets for drawing this paper to my attention.

¹²³ Headword is *ceud*.

¹²⁴ In 99, *beul*: *air beulaibh*, the transcription is [b̥ε̇'l̥əv̥].

¹²⁵ Headword is *rionnag*.

¹²⁶ Headword is *dean*: *deanadh*. This is the conditional (‘imperfect’) form, spelt here without an accent. The lengthened form [d̥z̥'ε̇n̥əɸ̥] also serves in Colonsay for the verbal noun *dèanamh*.

¹²⁷ Headword is *saibhir*. The forms given are [s̥iə̃v̥ir̥ : b̥εʃ̥'t̥ʃ̥l̥x̥].

¹²⁸ This feature will be more closely examined in the context of labial consonants.

A prominent feature of Colonsay Gaelic, which is also found in other Argyll dialects, notably in Islay, is the appearance of [ɛ : ɛ̃] for orthographic *a/à* in a large number of words where other varieties have [a] or [ɑ]. This ‘raising’ of [a] appears to happen when the vowel is either preceded or followed by a nasal consonant, including [v] as the lenited form of [m]: *a-mach* (34) [mɛx], *math* (603) [mɛ], *cam* (144) [kɛm̃], *damh* (293-295) [d̪ɛv̪]; *màthair* (606) [mɛːhɑ̃],¹²⁹ *nàire* (644, 645, 648) [ñɛ:r̪ ɪ̃], *thàinig* (841) [hɛːnɪg̃],¹³⁰ *snàmh* (781) [sñɛːv̪]. Along with glottalisation, this is the feature of my own Colonsay-influenced pronunciation that is most frequently commented on by other Gaelic speakers.

However, since the pronunciation of orthographic *a* as [ɛ] does not occur automatically in a nasal environment (see p. 50), [ɛ] cannot be considered an *allophone* of [a]; rather there is a difference in the *distribution* of these two phonemes in the Colonsay dialect (and other Argyll dialects) as compared to other varieties (Petyt 1980: 19-22).

In the parallel words *geamhradh* (469) [g̊ɛv̪i̯r̪i̯v̪] and *samhradh* (736) [sɛv̪i̯r̪i̯v̪], Colonsay has [ɛ], with an epenthetic vowel inserted, where many other varieties of Gaelic would have an [au] type diphthong, e.g. Skye [g̊ʼãð̪r̪v̪ : s̪ãð̪r̪v̪].¹³¹ A similar process operates in the case of *Oidhche Shamhna* (734) [ɪ̯i̯ç̪i̯ hev̪i̯nə].¹³² Perhaps by analogy with these words, we find the forms [d̪ɛv̪əsəv̪] ‘dancing’ and [trɛv̪əl̪’əv̪] ‘travelling’ (see p. 356).

The nasalised form [ɛ̃] is found in the *SGDS* results in a number of words where [ñ] is followed by a long (or glottalised) [ɛ]: *naidheachd* (647) [ñɛ̃ʔ̪x̪g̊], *nàmhaid* (649) [ñɛ̃ːv̪i̯d̪ʃ̪], *snàithlean* (780) [sñɛ̃ː : sñɛ̃ːç̪ɑ̃], *snàmh* (781, 782) [sñɛ̃ːv̪] – but not in *nàire* (644,645) [ñɛ:r̪ ɪ̃],¹³³ *nàdur* (646, cf. 643) [ñɛːd̪ər̪]. It also occurs regularly where the diphthong [ɛv̪] is followed by a velarised nasal [ñ] in words such as

¹²⁹ More commonly heard as [mɛː].

¹³⁰ Headword is *thig*: *thàinig*.

¹³¹ Point 114 (Braes).

¹³² Headword is *Samhainn*. The transcription [sɛːv̪i̯] is also given.

¹³³ Headword 645 is *mo nàbaidh/mo nàire*. The word *nàbaidh* is unknown in Colonsay (cf. 642).

beanntan (91) [bʲɛ̃ũɲn`dəŋ], *ceann* (163-165) [kʲɛ̃ũɲn`], etc.¹³⁴ This is the only environment in which nasalisation appears to be a regular feature of Colonsay Gaelic, and even here non-nasalised forms are found in some instances. Therefore, rather than treating [ɛ̃] as an allophone, I prefer to consider nasalisation, to the extent that it does occur in this dialect, as a non-segmental feature. (See pp. 281-283).

Other modified forms of this symbol recorded by the *SGDS* are as follows:

[ɛ̄] (raised) is found in the words *amh* (35) [ɛ̄ɲ], *bean* (88) [bʲɛ̄ɲ], *meadhg* (607) [mɛ̄ːg], *reult* (712) [rɛ̄ːɫ̄ɟ],¹³⁵ and one version of *sgamhan* (758) [sqɛ̄ːvaŋ] (757 has [sqɛ̄ːvaŋ]). Apart from the fact that some of these illustrate the ‘raising’ of [a] to [ɛ̄] in the presence of a nasal, it is difficult to find any common phonological denominator among them that would enable us to consider this form an allophone.

[ɛ̇] (raised and retracted) is found only in *deug* (308) [dʲzʲɛ̇ːg]. It is difficult to draw any conclusions on the basis of a single instance, and other forms are found in similar phonetic environments in *deanadh* (302) [dʲzʲɛ̇ːnəɲ], *meadhg* (607) [mɛ̇ːg]. I propose to regard [ɛ̇] as a spontaneous variation affecting only this word.¹³⁶

[ɛ̈] (retracted) is found as a simple vowel only in *ràmh* (693) [ɹɛ̈ːɲ]; it also occurs in diphthongs, which will be treated separately. The existence of the alternative form *ràmh* (694) [rɛ̈ːɲ : rɛ̈ːɲ],¹³⁷ and of *do ràmh* (695) [dò rɛ̈ːɲ],¹³⁸ both with unmodified [ɛ̈], suggest that [ɛ̈] is a spontaneous variation, occurring in only one version of this word.

[ɛ̆] (lowered) is found only once, in a diphthong (see p. 218).

¹³⁴ I propose re-interpreting the phonetic data, in such cases, as [bʲɛ̃nʷːdəŋ : [kʲɛ̃nʷː]. (See pp. 75-76).

¹³⁵ Headword is *rionnag*.

¹³⁶ Besides which, my own impression is that this word is pronounced [dʲzʲɛ̇ːg] by Colonsay speakers.

¹³⁷ Headword is *ràmh* / *ràcan*. The second form given is presumably the plural/gen. sg. form *ràimh*.

¹³⁸ Headword is *do ràmh* / *do ràcan*.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ε/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

It has no allophones.

Its actual articulation may vary within the range [ε ɛ ɛ̃], and in rare cases [ɛ̃ ɛ̃ ɛ̃].

a

This low front vowel is very common in Colonsay Gaelic. It is found both long and short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed syllables. In stressed syllables especially, it is a ‘clear’, front sound, with little tendency to move in the direction of [ɑ], although retracted forms are found in certain specific environments (see below).

Generally speaking, long [aː] corresponds to orthographic à, and short [a] to orthographic a. Thus we find *bàta* (81, 82) [b̥aːd̥ə], *fàg* (379) [faːg]; *aran* (52) [aːraŋ], *cladach* (192) [kl̥`aḁˠx], *slat* (768) [sl̥`ahḁ]. With a following palatalised consonant, the spelling is ài, ai: *làidir* (546) [l̥`aːd̥`z`iṛ̥], *baile* (65) [b̥aːl̥`i]. The standard orthography is, however, a very unreliable guide to actual pronunciation. In many instances, as has been shown (see above under ε), orthographic à, a is pronounced [ɛː : ε], especially when in contact with a nasal consonant. The word *cat* (158, 159), exceptionally, is pronounced [k̥yḁḁ], and its plural/gen. sg. form *cait* (160) [k̥yḁt̥ʰ].

In unstressed syllables, short [a] is found, especially in the masculine singular ending *-an*: *aran* (52) [aːraŋ], *bradan* (120) [b̥raḁaŋ], *lagan* (544) [l̥`aḁaŋ]. The identically spelt *plural* ending *-an*, however, is generally pronounced [iŋ] or [əŋ] (see under i and ə for other variants). The corresponding feminine singular ending *-ag* is also pronounced with short unstressed [a]: *duilleag* (358) [d̥uː`laḁ], *uinneag* (885) [uː`naḁ].

Short [a] is also regularly found in the verbal noun/infinitive ending *-ail*: *fàgail* (380) [faː`gaḁl̥ʰ], *fantail* (412) [fɛṅˠaḁl̥ʰ],¹³⁹ *gabhail* (448) [gaː`vaḁl̥ʰ], and in the identical adjectival ending: *fearail* (409) [fɛː`raḁl̥ʰ], *pongail* (683) [poŋ`gaḁl̥ʰ].¹⁴⁰

In *cuilein* (274) [kuː`l̥`aŋ],¹⁴¹ [a] corresponds to orthographic *ei*. This is listed as the plural/gen. sg. form of this word; in fact the nom. sg. form *cuilean* is identical in this dialect, with palatalised coda and no modification of the vowel sound in either nominative or genitive. The same holds true for *eilean* [eː`l̥`aŋ].

¹³⁹ Headword is *feith*: *feitheamh*.

¹⁴⁰ Headword is *puncail*.

¹⁴¹ Headword is *cuilean*: *cuilein*.

The *SGDS* results for Colonsay show a single modified form [â] (retracted). This is found before orthographic *r* + following dental consonant in one version of *àrd* (56) [âːsd̥ : âːˈsd̥] (55 has [aːsd̥ : aːˈsd̥]), in *càirdean* (152) [kâːʃˈd̥zːiŋ̥ : kâːˈʃˈd̥zːiŋ̥], *càrn* (154) [kâːŋ̥ : kâːˈŋ̥], and one version of *ceart* (175) [kʰâːʃˈd̥] (174 has [kʰaːʃd̥]). It is noteworthy that all these examples include a variant showing some degree of retroflexion immediately after the [â].

[â] is found in a number of other entries: in hiatus in *latha* (564) [l̥ˈâʔâ] (but cf. *soillse latha* (790) [s̥i̯i̯ l̥ˈf̥i̯ l̥ˈaʔa]);¹⁴² in *Alasdair* (29) [âˈl̥ːəs̥d̥i̯r̥], one version of *lag* (541) [l̥ˈâːŋ̥]¹⁴³ (542 has [l̥ˈaŋ̥]), unstressed in *gànradh* (458) [ŋ̥ɛːrâŋ̥], and twice (unstressed) in the comparative particle *na's*: *na's blàithe* (108) [nâs ɸl̥ˈaːç̥i̯] and *na's teotha* (840) [nâf̥ t̥ˈfoʔo];¹⁴⁴ other comparatives are shown with [nas] or [nəs].

The consistency with which [â] occurs before original *r* + dental consonant suggests that this constitutes an allophone of /a/ in that specific environment. Although a synchronic study cannot take any account of a historical pronunciation, my own research suggests that many Colonsay speakers do in fact produce an /r/ sound in such cases. Moreover, I define [r̥] (shown as [ʃ̥] in *SGDS*) as an allophone of /r/ before a dental or alveolar stop (p. 200). An allophonic definition whereby /a/ is realised as [â] before the phoneme /r/ + coronal/dental stop or nasal (whatever the actual realisation of /r/ in a particular environment) therefore becomes feasible.

It is tempting to suggest that the allophone [â] occurs also in hiatus, and possibly in proximity to the velarised lateral [l̥]. This, however, would be to ignore the numerous counter-examples in which unmarked [a] is found in these same environments: *chaidh* (687) [xaʔiç̥],¹⁴⁵ *dathadh* (298) [d̥aʔaŋ̥]; *cladach* (192) [kl̥ˈaɸˌl̥x̥], *lagan* (544) [l̥ˈaŋ̥aŋ̥], etc. Rather it appears that [â] occurs as a possible, though infrequent, variant form in these environments. The unstressed instances of [â], for their part, appear to be random variations.

¹⁴² Headword is *soillsich*.

¹⁴³ The effect of the [̥] symbol is not entirely clear, but may indicate a lesser degree of retraction.

¹⁴⁴ Headword is *teth*: *teotha*.

¹⁴⁵ Headword is *rach*: *chaidh*. The alternative forms [xaç̥ : xaʔiç̥] are given; I suggest that [xaç̥] is used in an unstressed environment: *Chaidh an cù a mharbhadh* [xaç̥ əŋ̥ ˈghuː ə ˈvarâŋ̥].

As previously discussed (p. 55), the symbol [ʌ] is found before [x] in unstressed *-ach* endings, where the preceding consonant is not palatalised: *cladach* (192) [kl̪ˈad̪ʌx], *sàmhach* (733) [sɛ̃ˈvʌx], *teaghlach* (832) [tʰj̪øˈl̪ʌx]. It also occurs in cases where a verb whose base form ends in *-aich* or *-ich* has a grammatical ending added to a stem ending in *-ach*: *cuartachaidh* (from *cuairtich*) (268) [kʷʌj̪ʂˈd̪ʌxʲɪç],¹⁴⁶ *chuartachadh* (269) [xʷʌj̪ʂˈd̪ʌxʲɪç],¹⁴⁷ *eireachaidh* (from *éirich*) (375) [eˈrʌxʲɪç].¹⁴⁸ [ʌ] is therefore to be regarded as an allophone of the /a/ phoneme in these environments. Where *-ach* follows a palatalised consonant, however, the vowel is usually shown as [ə] or one of its modified forms (see p. 55).

A modified form [ʌ̃] (raised) is found in only three words in the *SGDS* results: one version of *balach* (69) [b̪al̪ˈʌ̃x] (70 has [b̪al̪ˈə̃x]), *ìosal* (532) [iˈʃʌ̃] and *froithneach* (692) [fr̪ɔ̃n̪ʌ̃x].¹⁴⁹ Since none of these appear to fit any pattern, [ʌ] must be regarded simply as a variant in these three instances.

Finally, we must consider the symbol [æ], which occurs only once in the Colonsay data set, in the entry for (886) *uinneag: uinneige*, where the form given is [braːj̪ n̪ə huˈn̪æq̪i], apparently meaning ‘upper part of the window’. This is anomalous on at least two counts (quality of the vowel and absence of palatalisation of [g]), and is either an error in transcription, or reflects some uncertainty on the part of the informant over the genitive form being sought.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Headword is *cuairtich: cuairtichidh*. For discussion of the morphology, see p.303.

¹⁴⁷ Headword is *cuairtich: chuairticheadh*.

¹⁴⁸ Headword is *éirich: éiridh*.

¹⁴⁹ Headword is *raithneach*. In this one example, the ending [ʌx] occurs following a palatalised consonant.

¹⁵⁰ Feminine genitive endings are not generally found in present-day Colonsay usage (see pp. 321-322).

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /a/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position. It has the following allophones:

[ã] when followed by the phoneme /r/ + coronal/dental stop or nasal (whatever the actual realisation of /r/ in these combinations may be); [ã] may also occur as a variant of /a/ in other phonetic environments, particularly in hiatus and in proximity to [ɾ].

[ʌ] when followed by [x] in unstressed syllables following a non-palatalised consonant.

[ʌ] ~ [ʌ̃] may also occur elsewhere as a variant of /a/ in an unstressed syllable.

Front vowel – rounded

Y

This phoneme is characterised by being fronted and rounded. As previously discussed (pp. 52-53), it is the only rounded front vowel phoneme found in the Colonsay dialect. In the *SGDS* results, its articulation on the ‘vertical’ scale varies quite widely over the range represented by the phonetic symbols [y ʏ ø], with several modified forms. The representation /ɻ/ has been chosen because it lies in the middle of this range.

As has been observed, this phoneme covers the same lexical ground as the phonemes /u/ and /ʊ/ in other varieties of Scottish Gaelic.¹⁵¹ These symbols represent unrounded back vowels. The Colonsay articulation, by contrast, is produced much further forward in the mouth, with lip-rounding. In practice, the acoustic difference is not all that great, and is unlikely to hamper communication with speakers of other dialects. It is important to realise that the sound heard on Colonsay, while high and rounded, is never the ‘pure’ [y] of French *lune* [lyn] or German *Mühle* [my:lə], but is nearly always retracted or centralised, and often lowered.

Like other vowels, this phoneme may occur long or short in stressed syllables. The minimal pair *lagh* (545) [l̪ˠˠɻ̪] and *laogh* (559) [l̪ˠˠˠɻ̪] (phonemically /l̪ˠˠɻ̪/ and /l̪ˠˠˠɻ̪/) indicates that the primary distinction is indeed one of quantity and not quality.¹⁵² It is rare in unstressed position, except following a stressed form of /ɻ/, e.g. *Aonghas* (50) [j̪n̪ɻs], *nas lugha* (85) [nas l̪ˠˠˠɻ̪].¹⁵³ For this reason, a case could be made for regarding [ə], which *only* occurs in unstressed syllables, as an allophone of /ɻ/ in unstressed position, or *vice versa*, although this is not the approach adopted here (see p. 46).

¹⁵¹ Modified forms of the symbols [u] and [ʊ] do occur in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay. Those involving [u] are discussed below, as variants of this phoneme. Forms of [ʊ] are classified as variants of /ə/ (see p. 55).

¹⁵² The indication of final devoicing in the case of *laogh* is not phonemically significant.

¹⁵³ Headword is *beag: lugha*.

In standard orthography, a wide variety of different representations are found for this phoneme. Its most characteristic manifestation, particularly when lengthened, is the digraph *ao*: *caomh* (148, 149) [kʲ·v̩], *craobh* (247) [krʲ·v̩], *saoghal* (738) [sə̃·l̩]; also short in *Aonghas* (50) [ɲn̩s]. Where the vowel is short, and the following consonant palatalised, the orthographic representation is usually a digraph containing *i* as its second element: *coille* (225) [kʲ·l̩i], *creid* (253) [kr̩d̩'z'],¹⁵⁴ *tairbh* (824) [tʲr̩iɲ]. In non-palatalised environments the same sounds may be written as *adh*, *agh*, *ugh*: *feadhainn* (404) [fʲə̃ʲɲ̩], *aghaidh* (9) [ə̃ʲə̃ʲç̩], *teaghlach* (832) [tʲʃ̩l̩'ʌx], *nas lugha* (85) [nas l̩'ə̃ʲə̃ʲ]. As will be seen from the following examples, this list is not exhaustive.

Unmodified [y] is not found, and unmodified [y ø] hardly ever occur, in the Colonsay data set. There are three occurrences of [y], in *adhairc* (7) [yʲv̩ɲ̩ç̩], one version of *cat* (158) [kʲv̩ɲ̩ç̩] (159 has [kʲv̩ɲ̩ç̩]), and *goile* (493) [gʲv̩'l̩'i]; one occurrence of [ø] in *goid* (491) [gø̃d̩'j];¹⁵⁵ and a few instances in diphthongs. Modified forms, on the other hand, are plentiful, and show a wide variation.

Nasalisation (following [n̩]) is found only in the words *naoi* (650) [n̩'ɲ̩i] and *naomh* (651) [n̩'ə̃·v̩] (diphthong [ɲ̩i] in the plural/gen. sg. form *naoimh* (652) [n̩'ɲ̩i·v̩]). As previously suggested, nasalisation does not appear to be a regular feature of this dialect, and will be discussed elsewhere (pp. 281-283).

Apart from nasalised forms, the following modified forms of [y] are found in the Colonsay results: ɲ̩ ɲ̩̃ ɲ̩̃̃ ɲ̩̃̃̃ .

The commonest of these is [ɲ̩] (retracted). This is found long in *aontachadh* (51) [ɲ̩·n̩'dəxəɲ̩], *caol* (147) [kʲ·l̩], *caomh* (148, 149) [kʲ·v̩], *déidh* (305) [d̩'z'ɲ̩·i], and with nasalisation in *aon* (49) [h̩ɲ̩̃̃̃̃], *naomh* (651) [n̩'ə̃·v̩]. It occurs short in *airm* (62) [ɲ̩r̩m̩], *bruidhinn* (127) [br̩ɲ̩̃̃̃̃], *troigh* (870) [tr̩ɲ̩̃̃̃̃], and unstressed following another modified form of [y] in *Aonghas* (50) [ɲ̩n̩s], *feadhainn* (404) [fʲə̃ʲɲ̩̃̃̃̃].

¹⁵⁴ The glottalisation of [d̩] is probably due to the word being used in *sandhi* before a vowel, e.g. *creid e*.

¹⁵⁵ Again, the glottalisation of [d̩] is probably due to the word being used in *sandhi* before a vowel, e.g. *goid e*.

[y̆] (lowered and retracted) is found long in *aoradh* (47) [y̆ːrəy̆], *lughdaich* (589) [l̪ˠy̆ːd̪iç], and short in *aghaidh* (9) [y̆ːʔy̆ç], *coille* (225) [k̪y̆ːl̪i] (223, 224 have [k̪y̆ːl̪ə]), *feadhainn* (404) [f̪y̆ːʔy̆n̪].

[y̆] (lowered but not retracted) is found short in *cait* (160) [k̪y̆t̪ʲ] (plural of [k̪y̆d̪], k̪y̆d̪), and long in *faoin* (398) [f̪y̆ːn̪].

[y̆] (centralised) is found short in *Aonghas* (50) [y̆n̪y̆s], *nas lugha* (85) [nas l̪ˠy̆ːʔy̆], *tionndadh* (847) [t̪ʲf̪ y̆n̪ˠd̪ay̆], and as the ‘echoing’ sound following glottalisation in *aghaidh* (9) [y̆ːʔy̆ç].

By far the commonest form of [y] is [y̆] (retracted). This is found long in *aois* (48) [y̆ːʃ], *craobh* (247) [kr̪y̆ːv̪], *faobhar* (396) [f̪y̆ːv̪i̯r̪], *gaoth* (459-461) [g̪y̆ːç], and short in *coileach* (220-222) [k̪y̆ːl̪əx̪], *coille* (223, 224) [k̪y̆ːl̪ə] (225 has [k̪y̆ːl̪i]), *oibrich* (668) [y̆ːb̪riç]. *lagh* (545) [l̪ˠy̆ːx̪], *leaghadh* (571) [l̪ˠy̆ːʔy̆ç]. The long form [y̆ː] is the most frequent realisation of the digraph *ao* in the *SGDS* results, although [y̆ː] is also common.

A further, centralised variant [y̆] is found long in one version of *laogh* (560) [l̪ˠy̆ːx̪] (559 has [l̪ˠy̆ːx̪]), and short in *leac* (570) [l̪ˠy̆ːx̪g̪], with a footnote suggesting possible confusion with the word *sliochd* [sl̪ˠy̆ːx̪g̪]. Since both these entries are subject to qualification, no conclusions can be drawn as to the status of [y̆] on the basis of the *SGDS* results.

The commonest form of [ø] is the retracted form [ø̆], which is found long in *fraoch* (440) [fr̪ø̆ːx̪], *saoghal* (738) [s̪ø̆ːl̪ˠ], *saothair* (740) [s̪ø̆ːr̪],¹⁵⁶ and short in *feadh* (402, 403) [f̪ø̆ːy̆], *goirid* (495, 496) [g̪ø̆ːr̪i̯d̪ʲ], *oide* (669) [ø̆ːd̪ˠz̪i̯], *roghainn* (713) [r̪ø̆ːʔø̆n̪] (with characteristic ‘echoing’ of the vowel in hiatus).

¹⁵⁶ A footnote in the *SGDS* results suggests the form offered may actually be the word *saor*.

Other modified forms of [ø] are as follows:

[ø̥] (raised and retracted) occurs long in *subh craobh* (806) [su 'krø̥ːv̥]¹⁵⁷ (247 has *craobh* [kr̥ːv̥]), *taobh* (828) [tø̥ːv̥] (829 has [t̥ːv̥]), *teaghlach* (832) [tʲf̥ø̥ːlʲʌx], and short in *creid* (253) [krø̥ːzʲ]. It is interesting that in at least two instances, alternatives with [v̥] are offered, reinforcing the argument for a single phoneme.

[ø̥] (centralised) is found in only three entries, all short: the future form *creididh* (254) [krø̥ːzʲiç] (cf. the base form *creid* (253) [krø̥ːzʲ]), the comparative form *glaine* (475) [gl̥'ø̥ːn̥i], and *laigse* (543) [l̥'ø̥ːgʲi].

[ø̥] (raised and centralised) is found stressed in one version of *seadh* (366) [ʃø̥ː] (the alternative [ʃø̥] also appears in 367), and unstressed in *bliadhna* (110) [bl̥'i̥n̥'ø̥] (111 has [bl̥'i̥n̥'ø̥]).

Finally, as argued at pp. 53-55, modified forms of the symbol [u] are to be regarded as falling under this phoneme. These include [ü̥] in words such as *ruith* (696, 697, 724) [r̥ü̥ːç], *ruigidh* (723) [r̥ü̥ːç], but also *aonnam* (for *annam*) (42) [ü̥ːnəm]¹⁵⁸ and also the rare forms [ü̥] in *righinn* (706 – footnote) [r̥ü̥ːɲ̥], [ü̥] in *rud* (720-722) [r̥ü̥ːd], and long [ü̥] in *snaim* (779) [sn̥'ü̥ːm]. For the reasons stated, I am suggesting that these forms should be interpreted as equivalent to [y̥].

Allophones are difficult to establish: despite the very wide range covered by this phoneme,¹⁵⁹ it is hard to pin down precise phonetic environments in which one form is preferred over another. In fact there seems to be a surprisingly large amount of free variation in the realisation of this phoneme.

¹⁵⁷ Headword is *subh*.

¹⁵⁸ Headword is *ann*: *annam*. See p. 331.

¹⁵⁹ Perhaps less wide in practice than is suggested by the *SGDS* transcription, bearing in mind that some of the distinctions noted represent very slight variations in articulation.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ɤ/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, but is rarely found in unstressed position, except as the ‘echoing’ vowel following hiatus.

Its realisation occurs most commonly in the range covered by the retracted forms [ý ȳ ø].

The forms [ý y ȳ ȳ ø ø ø] (and in the *SGDS* results, the symbols [ũ ũ ũ ũ]) are found as variants, along with unmodified forms [ɤ ø].

Back vowels

u

This is a high, rounded back vowel. Like other vowels in this dialect, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and (rarely) short in unstressed position. In Colonsay, it is pronounced well back in the mouth, giving a very ‘rounded’ sound (although it is actually the retraction of the tongue that gives it this quality), quite unlike the Central Scottish [u] sound in *foot*, or the Lewis pronunciation of *cù* (265) as [k^hö:].¹⁶⁰

As in the case of the high front vowel /i/, long /u:/ is sometimes heard as a slight glide ([u̯] or [u̯]); this is not noted in the *SGDS* results, and is less marked than in the case of /i/. It is best regarded as a variation rather than a consistent feature.

In the *SGDS* transcription, the long form [uː] almost invariably corresponds to orthographic ù, or ùi before a palatalised consonant: *cù* (265) [kuː], *dlùth* (317) [d̪l̪uː], *dùisg* (363) [d̪uːʃgʲ], *sùil* (813) [suːl̪]. In the case of *duirn* (341) [d̪uːr̪n̪], the form recorded, with long [uː], represents the current approved spelling *dòrn*: *dùirn*. (The *SGDS* results as published omit the grave accent).

Short [u] generally corresponds to orthographic *u*, *ui*: *dubh* (354, 355) [d̪u], *muc* (633, 634) [mux̪], *duine* (360, 361) [d̪uːn̪i], *tuiteam* (874) [tu̯d̪z̪ə̯m̪]. It occurs frequently with glottalisation in hiatus; in the majority of cases, the ‘echoing’ vowel is [ʊ]: *thubhairt* (1) [hu̯ʊs̪t̪s̪],¹⁶¹ *cumhachd* (287) [ku̯ʊx̪g̪], *cumhang* (288) [ku̯ʊh̪ŋ̪], *giuthas* (474) [g̪u̯ʊs̪], *ubhall* (877) [u̯ʊl̪w̪].¹⁶² Only in *dubhach* (356) [d̪u̯ʊx̪] and the somewhat unusual form *cnò* (212) [kru̯ʊ] does [u] appear as the ‘echoing’ vowel. In the headwords *buidhe* (135) [b̪u̯i], *luibhean* (590) [l̪u̯i̯n̪],¹⁶³ *ughan* (881) [u̯i̯n̪], *uibhir* (882) [u̯i̯r̪],¹⁶⁴ there is a distinct change of vowel after the hiatus, indicating a new syllable.

¹⁶⁰ Point 7 (Lower Bayble, Point).

¹⁶¹ Headword is *abair*: *thubhairt*.

¹⁶² The devoicing mark [̥] is shown under the tie bar [̯] in the *SGDS* transcription, but it is not possible to reproduce this using the present software.

¹⁶³ Headword is *luibh*.

¹⁶⁴ The form given is [u̯i̯r̪ e̯l̪i̯] ‘as much again’.

[u] hardly ever occurs in unstressed position in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay; apart from the two examples noted (*dubhach* and *cnò*), it is found only in a phrasally unstressed context in *cia mar a tha thu?* (180) [d̪'z'ɪ mər ə ha' u],¹⁶⁵ and with secondary stress in *subh craobh* (806) [ˌsu 'kr̪ə'v̪].¹⁶⁶

[u] also corresponds to orthographic *oi* in *oirre* (20) [u̠ɾə : u̠ə], in this case reflecting the form *uirthi*, which is standard in Irish. In the case of *earball* (371) [u̠ɾb̪ə̀], the Colonsay form would be better spelt *urball*; this pronunciation is in any case fairly widespread in Scottish Gaelic (*SGDS*, Vol. III: 290-291).

The following modified forms of [u] are found:

[ù] (retracted) is found in the following words: *a-muigh* (38) [mù̠] (39 has [mu̠ : mu̠^ç]),¹⁶⁷ *bruith* (128) (b̪r̪u̠ç), *cnuic* (215) [kr̪u̠çg'], *a' chruidh* (261) [ə xru̠j̪],¹⁶⁸ *'ga muing* (636) [ˌg̪a 'mù̠j̪],¹⁶⁹ *muilichinn* (637) [mù̠l'ič̪aɲ],¹⁷⁰ *muir* (639) [mù̠r̪] (640 has *anns a' mhuir* [sə vu̠r̪]), *uile* (883) [ù̠'l̪i̪], *uisge* (888) [ù̠f̪g'i̪] (889, 890 have [u̠f̪g'i̪]).

It should be noted that, in the case of back vowels, 'retracted' means 'slightly centralised', i.e. retracted with respect to the trapezium of cardinal vowels. All of the examples found are short, and occur in a palatalised context, corresponding to orthographic *ui*.¹⁷¹ The 'retraction' may therefore result from forward movement of the tongue in anticipation of the palatalised consonant. However, not all instances of *ui* are indicated as being 'retracted': *duine* (360, 361) [d̪u'ɲi̪], *tuiteam* (874) [tu̠f̪d̪'z'ə̠m̪]. The most one can say is that short [ù] is generally found before [ç] and [j̪], and may occur before other palatalised consonants. The number of instances is, however, small, and not conclusive. [ù] therefore appears to be a variant of [u] in a palatalised environment, rather than an allophonic modification.

¹⁶⁵ Headword is *cia mar*.

¹⁶⁶ Headword is *subh*.

¹⁶⁷ A footnote indicates, correctly, 'word rarely used'; *a-mach* is used in Colonsay for position as well as motion.

¹⁶⁸ Headword is *crodh: cruidh*.

¹⁶⁹ Headword is *muing*.

¹⁷⁰ Headword is *muinichill*.

¹⁷¹ The [ç] in *muir* is not phonetically palatalised in Colonsay pronunciation, although it is written with a preceding *i*, and is palatalised in other dialects. *Fairge* is the word more commonly used for 'sea'.

[ụ] (lowered) is found in *cluinnidh* (207) [kl̥`ụ`ɲiç],¹⁷² *muime* (635) [m̥ụi`m̥i],¹⁷³ *sunndach* (817) [s̥ụn`d̥ax]. In the case of *cluinnidh* and *sunndach*, the adjoining velarised consonants may have a lowering effect on the vowel. However, counter-examples such as *glùn* (482) [gl̥`ụ`n̥], *cunntas* (289) [k̥ụn`d̥əs], and indeed *cluinntinn* (208) [kl̥`uịɲịɲd̥`z̥ịɲ], argue against this form being allophonic. Once again, therefore, it is to be seen as a variant.

As discussed earlier (pp. 58-59), the symbol [ʊ], representing the ‘lax’ form of [u], only occurs short in the Colonsay dataset, and is rare in stressed position. Apart from inflected forms of the verb *cuir*, unmodified [ʊ] is found in stressed position only in the words *cuirm* (283) [k̥ʊɾim], *chum* (286)¹⁷⁴ [xʊm̥], *smuilceach* (778) [smʊʎg̥`əx] and *ursainn* (895) [ʊs̥`ə`n̥].

As well as supplying the ‘echoing’ vowel in hiatus following [u], [ʊ] also occurs as the echo of [o], when followed by a consonant: *seabhag* (195) [ʃoʎʊk],¹⁷⁵ *gobhar* (488, 489) [goʎʊg̥], *leabhar* (568) [ləoʎʊr], *lobhar* (580) [l̥`òʎʊr].¹⁷⁶ It is also found in hiatus following other vowels, usually where some element of ‘rounding’ is present in other varieties of Gaelic, although not always reflected in the spelling: *bleoghan* (109) [bl̥`eʎʊn̥],¹⁷⁷ *feabhas* (401) [f̥eʎʊs], *treabhadh* (865, 866) [treʎʊg̥] (cf. *treabh* (863) [trẹị]), *piuthar* (679) [piʎʊr].

¹⁷² [ụ] is shown with a following grave accent [˘], indicating velarisation, in this word and in one version of *luibh* (591) [l̥`ụ`ị] (590 has [l̥`ụị]). The effect of this notation is not clear, and for the purposes of this analysis I propose to disregard it. Vol. I of the *SGDS* offers the following, rather tentative explanation: ‘In these cases, *one may assume* that the vowel articulation is accompanied by a setting of the back of the tongue somewhat raised, and possibly tensed, to a degree greater than that found with a normal vowel articulation’ (p.125, emphasis added).

¹⁷³ Note that *muime* breaks the rule just stated, whereby /u/ is generally expressed as [ụ] before the semi-vowel [ị].

¹⁷⁴ Past tense of *cum*.

¹⁷⁵ Headword is *clamhan*.

¹⁷⁶ In open syllables the echoing vowel is [o]: *gobhar* (488) [goʎʊg̥], but *gobha* (487) [goʎo] (See under **o**).

¹⁷⁷ Headword is *bleagh*: *bleaghan*.

A less reliable instance in the *SGDS* results is *ionnsaidh* (530), where the pronunciation is indicated as [i̯i̯ʲʳʲsʲ'ɪç : ɪɒnsɪç]. A footnote makes it clear that the second form was prompted, and the ‘word not used’ (Vol. IV: 157).¹⁷⁸ I have found [i̯i̯ʲʳʲsʲ'ɪç] to be the form commonly used on Colonsay, including in the compound preposition *a dh'ionnsaidh*, and the homophonous verb *ionnsaich* (cf. *ionnsachadh* (529) [i̯i̯ʲʳʲ'əxəɣ]). The example involving [ʊ] is therefore not to be regarded as an indigenous Colonsay pronunciation.

The only modified form of [ʊ] encountered in the data set is [ʊ̟] (raised), which is found only in the word *cluich* (206) [kl'ʊ̟`ç].¹⁷⁹ Like [ù], this is probably influenced by the following palatal consonant, but there is insufficient evidence to regard it as an allophone.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /u/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and occasionally short in unstressed position. Long /u:/ may be realised as the variant [u̟] ~ [ʊ̟] in this dialect.

In its short form, it has the allophone [ʊ] in hiatus following glottalisation of /u/ or /o/. The realisation [ʊ̟] may also occur as a variant in other environments.

The variant [ù] may be found before palatalised consonants, notably [ç] and [j̟].

The variant [ʊ̟] may also occur, especially in a velarised environment.

¹⁷⁸ A note in LSS quotes the informant as saying that [i̯i̯ʲʳʲsʲ'ɪç] is the form ‘used here’.

¹⁷⁹ For the velarisation symbol [̟] after the vowel, see footnote 172 above.

This is a high-mid, rounded back vowel. Like other vowels, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position. Similarly to /i:/ and /u:/, the long form /o:/ is sometimes pronounced with a slight u-glide, especially before [r]: *mór* [moʊr]. This is not reflected in the *SGDS* results.

In the orthographic system used by the *SGDS*, long unmodified [oː] generally corresponds to ó: *bó* (113) [bʰoː], *cóig* (219) [koːgʰ], *mór* (628) [moːr]. In a couple of instances it corresponds to ò: *dòbhran* (321) [dʰoːraŋ], *fòghnaidh* (436) [foːniç]. This usage predates the more recent spelling reform, which abolished the use of the acute accent. An anomalous transcription is found in *donn* (328, 329) [dʰoːˠŋ],¹⁸⁰ where [oː], followed by the superscript raised form [oːˠ], appears to correspond to unmarked *o*; the lengthening is probably influenced by the following double consonant *nn*, but there are no other examples of this form of transcription in the Colonsay data. Headword 329 gives the more conventional alternative reading [dʰoʊnˠ]. (See p. 226 for an alternative interpretation of the phonetic data in this instance.)

In *leabhraichean* (569) [lʰoːriçŋ], long [oː] corresponds to orthographic *ea* followed by *bh* (and a following consonant); the presence of an [o] sound in this word is normal in Scottish Gaelic.

Short unmodified [o] generally corresponds to orthographic *o*, or *oi* before a palatalised consonant: *bog* (116) [bʰog], *lomairt* (584) [lʰoːmæɪtʰ],¹⁸¹ *ochd* (666) [oxg]; *air mo chois* (156) [er mə xoɪ],¹⁸² *toiseach* (856) [toɪʃəx].¹⁸³ In three instances the *SGDS* results show the Colonsay form with [o] where the orthographic version has *u*: *cupan* (290) [kohpʰaŋ],¹⁸⁴ *duilich* (357) [dʰoːlʰiç] and *puncail* (683) [poŋgalʰ]. These reflect differences in the distribution of the phonemes /o/ and /u/, and could be spelt *copan*, *doilich*, *pongail*.

¹⁸⁰ The devoicing mark [ˠ] under the initial [d] appears in brackets in the *SGDS* transcription.

¹⁸¹ Headword is *lom*: *lomadh*.

¹⁸² Headword is *cas/cois*.

¹⁸³ The alternative [toɪʃəxg] is also listed.

¹⁸⁴ The form [kuhpaŋ] is given as an alternative, but a footnote suggests ‘literary’.

Short [o] is also found in the future form *gheibh* (385) [j̥o].¹⁸⁵ This pronunciation is widespread throughout the Gaelic-speaking area (*SGDS*, Vol. III: 318-321), and again reflects a difference in phonemic distribution; the word is occasionally spelt *gheobh*. Likewise, in *leabhar* (568) [l̥oʔʊr] and *seabhag* (195) [ʃoʔʊk],¹⁸⁶ the use of [o] reflects common usage in Scottish Gaelic, enhanced in the Colonsay version by glottalisation and an ‘echoing’ vowel. As has been shown, the ‘echoing’ vowel in such circumstances is generally [ʊ] after [o], when followed by a consonant; in word-final position it is [o]. Contrast *gobhar* (488) [gʊʔʊr̥] and *gobha* (487) [gʊʔo].

The *SGDS* results use a whole range of modified forms of [o]: ɔ ɔ̆ ɔ̇ ɔ̈ ɔ̉ .

Of these, only [ɔ̈] (retracted) occurs with any frequency. It is found particularly in the possessive adjectives *mo*, *do*: *mo nàire* (645, 648) [mò nɛːr̥i̯], *mo sheanmhair* (749) [mò hɛn̥iːv̥aːr̥];¹⁸⁷ *do làmh* (551) [dò l̥ɛːv̥], *do nighean* (665) [dò niʔi̯n̥]. Often, however, *mo* is reduced to [mə]: *mo bhàta* (83) [mə vaːd̥ə], *mo shròn* (801) [mə ʃʰɔːn̥]; in a single example, it appears as [mo]: *mo shlat* (769) [mo ʃˠwʰahd̥]. It appears that [ɔ̈] in these instances is a prosodically weakened variant of /o/ in an unstressed context, which may be further weakened to [ə].

[ɔ̈] also appears unstressed in the vocative form *a dhuine* (362) [ə yuːni̯], although one suspects that in this case the informant may have interpreted the prompt ‘O man’ more literally than was intended.

In stressed position, [ɔ̈] is found, with glottalisation and ‘echoing’ vowel in *clobha* (202) [kl̥ˈòʔò̈], as well as in one version of *coire* (235) [kòˈr̥i̯] (236, 237 have [kòˈr̥i̯ : kɔˈr̥i̯]),¹⁸⁸ *cosnadh* (238) [kòsn̥ˈəv̥], *deoch* (307) [d̥zˈòx̥], one version of *Donnchadh* (330) [d̥ɔn̥ˈəxəv̥] (331 has [d̥ɔn̥ˈəxəv̥]), *lobhar* (580) [l̥ˈòʔʊr̥], *tom* (859) [tòmˈ], *trom* (871) [tròmˈ] (but note *muc throm* (634) [mux̥g̥ ɣòmˈ]), *tromb* (872) [tròmˈ] (but note *trombaid* (873) [tròmˈbaɟˈf̥]). It is difficult to find a common phonological feature at

¹⁸⁵ Headword is *faigh*: *gheibh*. The pronunciation in Colonsay, and elsewhere, could be written **gheobh*.

¹⁸⁶ Headword is *clamhan*. *Seabhag* in Colonsay means ‘hawk’.

¹⁸⁷ Headword is *do sheanmhair*.

¹⁸⁸ All three headwords illustrate *coire* with the meaning ‘kettle’. *Coire* meaning ‘fault’ is pronounced [kòˈr̥i̯].

work in these instances. In three of them, [ò] occurs before lengthened [mː], and in two cases before a hiatus (marked by [ʔ]), but other examples show unmodified [o] in these environments. It is therefore difficult to justify regarding [ò] in stressed position as an allophone of /o/.

The other modified forms of [o] occur only sporadically:

[o̞] (raised) is found in *bodhar* (114) [b̥o̞ʔor], *crodh* (259, 260) [kr̥o̞], and long in *fòid* (625) [f̥o̞ːz̥].¹⁸⁹ As reported above, it also appears superscript in *donn* (328, 329) [d̥o̞ː̃n̥] (but see above for an alternative reading in 329). There appears to be no common phonological feature operating in these few examples.

[ò] (raised and retracted) is found only in the words *bogha* (117) [b̥òʔò], *loisg* (582) [l̥ːòʃg̊] (with the derived form *losgadh-braghad* (121) [l̥ːòsgə̃ b̥raːd̥])¹⁹⁰ and *dol* (689) [d̥ò̞]. Again, there is no obvious common factor, and I propose to treat the two forms [o̞] and [ò] as variants within the /o/ phoneme, rather than allophones.

The forms [o̞] (lowered) and [ò] (lowered and retracted) will be treated phonemically as variants of /ɔ/ rather than /o/, in the same way as the form [ɛ̞] was classified within the /ɛ/ phoneme (see p. 51).

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /o/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

It has no allophones, but its realisation may vary within the range [o ɔ ò ò̞]. In particular, it may be realised as [ò] when unstressed, especially in the possessive pronouns *mo*, *do*.

The forms [o̞] and [ò] are to be considered as variants of the /ɔ/ phoneme.

¹⁸⁹ Headword is *mòin*: *mòine*, and the form given is *fòid mòine* [f̥o̞ːz̥ m̥ɔ̞ːn̥i]. It is unlikely that the *fòid* element would be fully lengthened when under secondary stress, unless the two words were being enunciated separately for the benefit of the interviewer. No indication of stress is given.

¹⁹⁰ Headword is *braghad*.

This is a low-mid, rounded back vowel. It may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position.

In the *SGDS* results, long unmodified [ɔː] corresponds to orthographic ò or òi in words such as *ceòl* (181) [k'ɔːl̪], *pòca* (681) [pɔːxqə], *sròn* (800, 801) [srɔːŋ]; *clòimh* (203) [kl'ɔːi], *còir* (232) [kɔːr̪]. In two instances, it corresponds to unmarked *o*: *combanach* (240) [kɔːmˌbənəx],¹⁹¹ *dorn* (339, 340) [dɔːŋ : dɔː'ŋ]. Both of these are subject to qualification: in *combanach*, my findings suggest that the lengthening affects the [m], but not the [ɔ], giving [kɔmˌbənəx]; while in the case of *dorn*, the accepted spelling nowadays is *dòrn*.

It also appears in an alternative version of *toiseach* (856) [tɔʃəx : tɔːʃəxq], although here it is clear that the second form given is the verbal noun *tòiseachd*.

Short unmodified [ɔ] is found in a large number of words, almost always corresponding to orthographic *o*, or occasionally *oi* before a palatalised consonant: *cnoc* (213-215) [krɔxq], *moladh* (626, 627) [mɔ'l'əy]; *coirce* (233, 234) [kɔrg'i], *soirbheas* (791) [sɔras].

In a handful of words, short [ɔ] corresponds to orthographic *a*. This tends to be the case where *a* is followed by a ‘broad’ *l* in an epenthetic combination: *balg* (74) [bɔl'əg], *falbhaidh* (390) [fɔl'aç], *dh'fhalbhadh* (391) [yɔl'əy]. These are characteristically Argyll pronunciations, reflecting a difference in distribution of phonemes. Short [ɔ] is also found in *famhair* (393) [fɔhə], and in *froithneach* (692) [frɔŋəx], where the *SGDS* orthography is *raithneach*.

In situations involving hiatus, the ‘echoing’ vowel is almost invariably [ɔ]: *domhain* (325) [dɔʔəŋ], *gnothach* (484) [grɔʔəx], *nas motha* (630) [nas mɔʔɔ],¹⁹² *tomhas* (860) [tɔʔɔs]. In *roimhe* (741) [rɔʔi]¹⁹³ and *coimhearsnach* (642) [kɔʔiʃ'nəx],¹⁹⁴ the vowel following the hiatus forms a separate syllable.

¹⁹¹ Headword is *combach*.

¹⁹² Headword is *mór*: *motha*.

¹⁹³ Headword is *roimh*: *roimhe*.

¹⁹⁴ Headword is *nàbaidh*; this word is never used on Colonsay.

The only modified forms of [ɔ] found in the *SGDS* data for Colonsay are [ɔ̠] and [ɔ̡].

[ɔ̠] (raised) is found long in *bròn* (125) [br̠ɔ̠·ŋ] and *mòine* (625) [m̠ɔ̠·ni],¹⁹⁵ and short in *dorchadas* (335) [d̠ɔ̠r̠ɔ̠x̠əd̠əs] (332 gives the underlying adjective as *dorcha* [d̠ɔ̠r̠ɔ̠x̠ə]), *drochaid* (349, 350) [dr̠ɔ̠x̠id̠'j], one version of *gorm* (498) [g̠ɔ̠r̠im̠] (497 has [g̠ɔ̠r̠əm]), and *morair* (631) [m̠ɔ̠r̠a̠]. All but one of these instances has [ɔ̠] occurring before or after [r], although it is not clear that this indicates allophonic variation; two offer alternative forms with unmodified [ɔ], and several other instances show unmodified [ɔ] in contact with [r]: *cnoc* (213, 214) [kr̠ɔ̠x̠g], *sròn* (800) [sr̠ɔ̠·ŋ], *soirbheas* (791) [s̠ɔ̠ras].

[ɔ̡] (retracted) is found only in the words *cnothag* (216) [kr̠ɔ̡ʔaɣ],¹⁹⁶ *dorus* (343) [d̠ɔ̡·r̠i·ft̠] (342 has the nom.sg. *dorus* [d̠ɔ̡·r̠i·s̠d̠]; 344 gives the plural as *dorsan* [d̠ɔ̡s̠'ə̠]), and as the epenthetic vowel in *comharradh* (241) [k̠ɔ̡h̠ərə]. Again there is involvement of [r] in all these examples, but the same observations apply as in the case of [ɔ̠].

For reasons already discussed (p. 51), [ɔ̠] (lowered) and [ɔ̡] (lowered and retracted) should be regarded phonemically as variants of /ɔ/ rather than /o/.

[ɔ̠] is found in *bòidheach* (118) [b̠ɔ̠·i̠əx̠], *Di-dòmhnach* (327) [d̠'z̠'i̠ d̠ɔ̠·niç],¹⁹⁷ one version of *olc* (673) [ɔ̠·g̠] (674 has [ɔ̠·g̠]), and *seo* (753) [ʃɔ̠], as well as in the characteristic Colonsay pronunciation of *Calluinn* (143) [k̠ɔ̠'l̠i̠ŋ].

[ɔ̡] (lowered and retracted) is found in *broilleach* (124) [br̠ɔ̡'ləx̠], one version of *gorm* (497) [g̠ɔ̡r̠əm] (498 has [g̠ɔ̡r̠im̠]), and as the 'echoing' vowel in *bogha* (117) [b̠ɔ̡ʔɔ̡].

¹⁹⁵ Headword is *mòin*: *mòine*. The form offered is *fòid mòine* [f̠ɔ̠·d̠'z̠' m̠ɔ̠·ni].

¹⁹⁶ Headword is *cnuimh*.

¹⁹⁷ Headword is *Dòmhnach*.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ɔ/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

It has no allophones, but its realisation may vary within the range [ɔ ɔ̃ ɔ̄ ɔ̆ ɔ̇].

The forms [ɔ̆ ɔ̇] are found especially, though not invariably, in conjunction with [r].

Central vowel

Although ‘centralised’ forms of many vowels are indicated in the *SGDS* results, and the vowels represented in Colonsay Gaelic by the phoneme /ɤ/ are often regarded phonologically as ‘central’ vowels in Scottish Gaelic, there is only one truly central vowel phoneme in this dialect: /ə/. Its actual realisation covers a wide range of central and centralised vowel sounds, although the distinctions involved are generally quite subtle.

ə

This symbol represents a neutral, central vowel. It is found only in unstressed position, and only short.

Although any vowel may be used to represent this phoneme orthographically, the choice being based for the most part on historical considerations, by far the most frequent orthographical representation in Gaelic is *a* in a non-palatalised (‘broad’) context, and *e* when palatalised (‘slender’).

Because of its frequency in unstressed syllables, this phoneme occurs in a huge number of words in the *SGDS* results. Examples include *buachaille* (129) [b̥ʲuʌɹxəʎi̯],¹⁹⁸ *caorann* (150) [k̥ʲrən̩], *dorchadas* (335) [d̥ɔrəxəd̥əs], *fòghluim* (437) [f̥ɔʎəm], *teampull* (834, 835) [tʲɛmːb̥ʎ].

A number of particular situations in which /ə/ occurs are worth highlighting. These include the *plural* ending *-an* /ən/ (unlike the masc.sg. diminutive ending *-an*, which is /an/), verbal noun/infinitive endings in *-adh* /əɣ/, most adjective endings in *-ach* /əx/, and nouns ending in *-ach* following a palatalised consonant. As indicated under **o** above, unstressed possessive adjectives *mo*, *do* [m̥ò : d̥ò] are also frequently reduced to [m̥ə : d̥ə].¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Headword is *buachail*: *buachaille*.

¹⁹⁹ Mary Ann MacAllister (interview, 20 August 2012) even produced *stressed* citation forms with [ə] when emphasising the possessive adjective *mo*: [ˈm̥ə r̥aʎ̥sə : ˈm̥ə r̥eːɣ].

/ə/ is also found as the epenthetic vowel in the ‘weak’ pattern of epenthesis typical of Argyll and other southern and eastern dialects of Gaelic, but only following a ‘broad’ vowel: *balg* (74) [b̥ɔl̥əg], *dorcha* (332) [d̥ɔrəxə], *gorm* (497) [g̥ɔrəm].²⁰⁰ In a palatalised environment, the epenthetic vowel is phonemically /i/: *nas doirche* (333,334) [nəs̥ d̥ur̥iç̥i], *cuirm* (283) [k̥ur̥im]. Epenthesis is examined in more detail in the next chapter (see pp. 262-276).

Despite its lack of distinctiveness, no fewer than four modified forms of [ə] are listed in the *SGDS* results: ə̊ ə̋ ə̌ ə̍ . Apart from [ə], none of these occur in more than a few words.

[ə̊] (raised) is found mainly in final unstressed syllables: *bàta* (81, 82) [b̥aːd̥ə̊], *coille* (223, 224) [k̥ʲˈl̥ə̊], *tuiteam* (874) [tu̥f̥d̥ˈz̥ˈə̊m̥]. It also occurs in the ending *-adh* in *Donnchadh* (330) [d̥ɔn̥ˈəxə̊] (331 has *Donnchadh* [d̥ɔn̥ˈəxə̊]), *paiseanadh* (677) [pḁʃə̊nə̊], *sgrìobhadh* (764) [sg̥riːvə̊]. However, most instances of *-adh* have unmodified [ə] (but see [i̊] below).

[ə̋] also appears in *Alasdair* (29) [äˈl̥ˈəs̥d̥i̋r̥], and *a shiùil* (754) [ə̋ h̥i̋űl̥], and as the epenthetic vowel in *balbh* (73) [b̥al̥ˈə̋], *dealg* (301) [d̥ˈz̥ˈal̥ˈə̋], and one version of *gorm* (497) [g̥ɔr̥əm̥] (498 has [g̥ɔr̥im̥]). These examples suggest that instances of [ə̋] are cases of free variation, rather than an allophone.

[ə̌] (lowered) is found in *bliadhnanach* (110 fn) [bl̥i̋ˈi̋i̋n̥ˈəxə̌],²⁰¹ *bòidheach* (118) [b̥ɔ̌ˈi̋ə̌x], *combanach* (240) [k̥ɔ̌m̥ˈb̥ə̌nə̌x]²⁰² and *mèirleach* (613) [m̥ěˈr̥lə̌x]. All these examples involve the consonant [x], although in the case of *combanach*, the [ə̌] is not the form in direct contact with [x]. However, given that there are plenty of examples of unmodified [ə], and indeed [ʌ], being used in conjunction with [x], it is difficult to make a case for an allophone *[ə̌] on the basis of these four instances.

²⁰⁰ The allophone [i̊] is also found, in *geamhradh* (469) [g̥ˈe̋v̥i̋r̥i̋], *samhradh* (736) [s̥e̋v̥i̋r̥i̋].

²⁰¹ Headword is *bliadhna*.

²⁰² Headword is *combach*.

[ə̞] (rounded) is found in one version of *bliadhna* (111) [b̥l̥ʲi̯i̯n̥ə̞] (110 has [b̥l̥ʲi̯i̯n̥ə̞]), *mo nead* (655) [m̥ə̞ n̥e̞d̥]²⁰³ and *soitheach* (792) [s̥y̯h̥ə̞x]. It is difficult to see any obvious phonological reason for the rounding in these three examples, unless it reflects some degree of vowel harmonisation involving the underlying vowel [ə̞] in *mo*, and the preceding [y̯] in *soitheach*.

[ə̞̃] is technically a phonetic symbol in its own right, representing a rhotacised form of [ə̞], or alternatively, a vocalised form of [r]. It is found in *tighearna* (845) [t̥ʲi̯ʲə̞̃n̥ə̞], and superscript in alternative versions of *ceart* (174) [k̥ʲã̞ʲd̥] and *fear* (411) [f̥ẽ̞ʲt̥ʲ],²⁰⁴ in similar circumstances to superscript [ɹ] (see p. 199).

As discussed in the introductory section (p. 58), the following modified forms of [ɪ] are also to be seen as falling within the /ə/ phoneme: ɪ̠ ɪ̡ ɪ̣ ɪ̤ ɪ̥. These are all retracted or centralised forms of [ɪ]; raised and lowered forms of [ɪ], on the other hand, are variants within the /i/ phoneme. For the reasons stated there, [ɪ̣] (centralised) functions as an *allophone* of /ə/ in a palatalised environment, and is the usual realisation of orthographic final *-e* in words of more than one syllable.

[ɪ̣] also occurs before [y̯] in some infinitive or conditional endings, following a palatalised consonant: *bhuaileadh* (132) [v̥u̯i̯l̥ʲi̯y̯], *faiceadh* (384) [f̥e̞çg̥ʲi̯y̯].²⁰⁵ It is found in a similar phonetic environment in the verbal noun *itheadh* (536) [i̯ç̥i̯y̯],²⁰⁶ and (more surprisingly) following a non-palatalised consonant in *bualadh* (133) [b̥u̯ə̞ʲl̥ʲi̯y̯], which is no doubt influenced by *bhuaileadh*. [i̯y̯] is also found in *geamhradh* (469) [g̥ʲe̞v̥i̯r̥i̯y̯], *samhradh* (736) [s̥e̞v̥i̯r̥i̯y̯], and in the proper name *Murchadh* (641) [mur̥ə̞x̥i̯y̯]; *Donnchadh* (330, 331), on the other hand, is transcribed [d̥ɒ̞n̥ə̞x̥ə̞y̯ : d̥ɒ̞n̥ə̞x̥ə̞y̯]. The transcription [ə̞y̯] is in fact the most frequent representation of the ending *-adh/-eadh*, irrespective of whether the preceding consonant is palatalised or not. It is difficult to find any criteria governing the use of

²⁰³ Headword is *dà nead*. The glottalisation of [d] suggests the example was used in *sandhi*, with a following vowel.

²⁰⁴ In these two examples, the forms actually listed are [k̥ʲã̞ʲd̥], [f̥ẽ̞ʲt̥ʲ], with footnotes suggesting ‘perhaps [k̥ʲã̞ʲd̥] / [f̥ẽ̞ʲt̥ʲ]’. Headword 175 gives the form [k̥ʲã̞ʲd̥].

²⁰⁵ Headword is *faic*: *faiceadh*.

²⁰⁶ Headword is *ith*: *ithe*.

one or other form in such cases; it appears that in practice, [ĩ̃ : ə̃] are used interchangeably.

On these grounds, it appears that [ĩ̃] occurs regularly as an allophone of /ə/ in a palatalised environment, but may also occur as a variant of /ə/ in other contexts, notably before final [ɣ].

[ĩ̃] (retracted) is found in the plural ending *-ean* in *bailtean* (67) [b̥a'ɫ't'f̥ĩŋ], *càirdean* (152) [k̥a's'd̥z'ĩ̃ŋ : k̥a's'd̥z'ĩ̃ŋ], *coilltean* (226) [k̥i'ɫĩŋk̥d̥z'ĩ̃ŋ], *leabhraichean* (569) [l̥o'rĩçĩ̃ŋ]. It is also found for orthographic final *-e* in the comparative forms *na's buidhre* (115) [nas b̥uĩrĩ], *na's doirche* (333) [nas d̥urĩçĩ̃] (334 has [d̥urĩçĩ̃]); also in *oidhche* (670) [ĩyĩ̃çĩ̃], *slige* (774) [s̥lĩçĩ̃], *uisge* (888, 889, 890) [ũf̥çĩ̃]. It also occurs in the conditional form *chuireadh tu* (282) [x̥o'rĩ d̥u], where final [ɣ] is not sounded before a following consonant. [ĩ̃] is also found as the epenthetic vowel in *aimsir* (13, 14) [ɛmĩf̥ĩ̃], *fairrge* (388) [f̥arĩçĩ̃], *iomradh* (527) [imira], and in a superscript form in *labhraidh* (538) [l̥a'v̥rĩç]. The last two examples are in non-palatalised contexts. Because it appears to be interchangeable with [ĩ̃], and no criteria for distinguishing the two can be deduced, [ĩ̃] is best seen as a variant of the allophone [ĩ̃].

The remaining forms of [ĩ̃] may be briefly summarised:

[ĩ̃] (raised and retracted) is found only in *goile* (493) [g̥o'ɫĩ].

[ĩ̃] (lowered and centralised) is found in one version of *coire* (cauldron) (237) [k̥o'r̥ĩ] (235, 236 have [k̥o'r̥ĩ : ko'r̥ĩ]), and in one version of *nàire* (644) [n̥ɛ:r̥ĩ] (645 has *mo nàire* [m̥o n̥ɛ:r̥ĩ]; 648 has [n̥ɛ^(^):r̥ĩ : m̥o n̥ɛ:r̥ĩ]). It is also found as the epenthetic vowel in *geamhradh* (469) [g̥ɛv̥rĩç], *samhradh* (736) [s̥ev̥rĩç]. All these examples show it preceding or following [r].

Finally, [ĩ̃] (centralised and rounded) is found only in *faobhar* (396) [f̥v̥v̥ĩ].

All these occurrences may be regarded as variants of the allophone [ĩ̃].

Finally, in addition to [ə] and [ɪ], forms of [ɤ] are also to be classified as falling within the /ə/ phoneme (p. 55). Such forms are rare, and none can be regarded as an allophone.

[ɤ̟] (raised and retracted) is found only once, in unstressed position following glottalisation in *iongantach* (528) [iʔɤ̟n`dəx].²⁰⁷

[ɤ̟̞] (raised and centralised) is found superscript in *crìoch* (257) [kri^{ɤ̟̞}x], and in diphthongs.

[ɤ̟̞̞] (retracted), [ɤ̟̞̞̞] (centralised) and [ɤ̟̞̞̞̞] (raised, centralised and rounded) are found only in diphthongs.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ə/ occurs only short, and only in unstressed position. Its articulation may vary within the range [ə ə ə̟], and in rare instances may appear as [ə̟ ɤ̟ ɤ̟̞].

It has the allophone [i̞] in a palatalised environment. The actual realisation of this allophone may vary within the range [i̞ i̞ i̞̞ i̞̞̞], although only the forms [i̞] and [i̞] are common.

²⁰⁷ Headword is *iongnadh*.

Schematic tables

The system of vowel phonemes and their allophones, as they occur in the Colonsay dialect, may be schematically represented as follows:

i			[ü ü]	ù	u	
í			[ú ú]		u	
ɪ	ĩ	ĩ		ə	ɔ	
ɪ		í	ĩ ĩ	ə	ɔ	
ɪ̇			ĩ	ə̇	ɔ̇	
e			ý	ÿ	ò	o
e	é	y	ý		ó	o
ė		Y	ÿ	ÿ	ò	o
ɛ	è		ø	ø̇		ɔ
ɛ	é	ø	ø	ø̇	ó	ɔ
ɛ̇						
a	á				ʌ	
					ʌ	

Solid lines indicate phoneme boundaries; dotted lines indicate allophone boundaries.

Base forms of phonemes are shown large and bold; base forms of allophones are shown bold. Other symbols in boxes are attested variants of the phoneme or allophone concerned.

The front rounded vowels, constituting the /ɤ/ phoneme, have been deliberately shown lower in the table than their phonetic articulation would require, in order to accommodate retracted and centralised forms of [ɪ] within the /ə/ phoneme, which is shown higher. For similar reasons, forms of [ʏ] have been placed higher, to bring them within the /ə/ phoneme.

Forms of [u] are included because they appear in the *SGDS* results, but these have been re-analysed as equivalent to [y] (p. 54).

The following symbols are found in *stressed* syllables:

i		[ü ü]	ù	u	
ï		[û û]		ұ	
				ʊ	
				o	
ɛ		ý	ÿ	ò	o
e	è	y	ÿ	ó	o
ɛ		Y	ÿ	ÿ	o
ε	è		ø	ø	o
ɛ	è	ø	ø	ø	o
a	á				

The following symbols are found in *unstressed* syllables:

i		[ü ü]	u
i̇		[̈́]	
ı̇ ĩ̇	ı̇	ə	
ı	ı ĩ ĩ̇	ə	ɤ ʊ
i̇	ĩ̇	ə	
e	ý ÿ		ø o
	ÿ		
ε	ø ö		ɔ ɔ
a	á		ʌ
			ʌ

Any symbols not included in either of these two tables occur only in diphthongs or are shown superscript.

STOP PHONEMES

Lenis stops

b

This is an unvoiced, lenis, bilabial stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic *b*.

In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, the symbol [b̥] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position: *baile* (65, 66) [b̥a'ɫ̪ ɪ], *ìobairt* (522) [i' b̥əʃ't's̪], *gob* (485, 486) [gob̥].

As already noted, there is in Colonsay Gaelic no sign of palatalisation or j-glide following /b/, as occurs in other Scottish Gaelic dialects (and in Irish): *Bealtuinn* (86, 87) [b̥ɛɔɪ̯̪ d̪ɪ̯̪], *beanntan* (91) [b̥ɛ̃ö̯̪n`də̯̪], *beò* (95, 96) [b̥ɛɔɪ̯] (cf. Islay²⁰⁸ [b̥ɪal`d̪ɪ̯̪' : b̥ɪɛn`d`ə̯̪n : b̥ɪɔ̯]). In this respect, Colonsay seems to go further than most other dialects in avoiding all trace of palatalisation in the case of labials. When asked about the differences between Colonsay and Islay Gaelic, Colonsay speakers will often cite the word *bealach* as a shibboleth ([b̥ɛ'ɫ̪ ʌx] in Colonsay, [b̥ɪa'ɫ̪ ɛx] in Islay).

This phoneme is followed by a sonorant in the initial combinations [b̥ɫ̪ b̥ɫ̪' b̥r]: *na's blàithe* (108) [nàs b̥ɫ̪`a`ç̪ɪ],²⁰⁹ *bliadhna* (110, 111) [b̥ɫ̪'ɪi̯̪n`ə̯̪], *bradan* (120) [b̥raɔ̯̪ɔ̯̪].

The orthographic combination *sp* is shown in the *SGDS* as [sb̥]: *speal* (793) [sb̥ɛɫ̪], *spéis* (794) [sb̥ɛ:ʃ], *spìon* (795) [sb̥i:n]. The *SGDS* examples all show this combination in initial position, but the same phonetic rendering is also found in other positions, e.g. in *cuspair* [kusb̥ɪ̯̪]. The stop in these instances is *lenis*, and is articulated without post-aspiration. Phonemically, therefore, this combination should be analysed as /sb/, although it could also be claimed that the lenis/fortis opposition is neutralised in this environment.

²⁰⁸ Point 55 (Bowmore).

²⁰⁹ Headword is *blàth*: *na's blàithe*. The spelling *na's*, as used in the *SGDS*, has been retained here.

When it occurs intervocalically following a stressed short vowel, [b̥] is glottalised. In *SGDS* transcription, this is shown as [b̥]: *leabaidh* (565, 566) [lɛb̥ə], *riobag* (703) [riɔb̥ə],²¹⁰ *tobar* (851, 852) [toɔb̥ə]. Because of the regularity with which this occurs, it may be regarded as an allophone of the /b/ phoneme in this phonetic environment. Glottalisation as it occurs more widely in this dialect will be considered under **Non-segmental features** (pp. 255-261).

The voiced form [b] is shown in only four words in the *SGDS* results: for orthographic *b* in *combanach* (240) [kɔmˈbənəx],²¹¹ *trombaid* (873) [tromˈbɑdʲf]; and for orthographic *p* in *iompachadh* (526) [iɪmˈbəxəɣ], *teampull* (834, 835) [tʲɛmˈbəl̩]. In all cases this occurs following a long [mː]. This is discussed under *Word-internal voicing* (pp. 287-288). Voiced [b] may be regarded in this context as an allophone of either /b/ or /p/, occurring only after a homorganic nasal.²¹²

Voicing of an otherwise devoiced stop is also found following a nasal in initial position, as a result of the nasal mutation. As argued in the introductory section, it is preferable to regard the voicing in this instance as a non-segmental feature rather than an allophone (see pp. 284-286).

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /b/ is normally articulated as [b̥].

It has the following allophones:

[b̥] when it occurs intervocalically following a stressed short vowel;

[b] when it occurs after the homorganic nasal [m].

²¹⁰ Headword is *rib* (ensnare).

²¹¹ Headword is *combach*. The juxtaposition of long vowel [ɔː] and lengthened sonorant [mː] is unique to this example, and may be a mistake in transcription.

²¹² Etymologically, three of the four entries in the *SGDS* results derive from English *p*: *companion*, *trumpet*, *temple* (all derived ultimately from Old French). The synchronic forms have, however, been thoroughly assimilated to the Gaelic phonetic system.

d

This is an unvoiced, lenis, dental stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic *d*, although in some few cases (see below) it is represented orthographically as *t*. As in other varieties of Scottish Gaelic, the articulation is clearly dental, with the tongue touching the upper teeth, rather than the alveolar ridge as in English.

In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, the symbol [ɖ] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position: *dubh* (354, 355) [ɖu], *bruadar* (24) [br̥u̯iɖ̥iɾ̥];²¹³ *nead* (653-654) [nɛɖ].

In the unlenited form of the pronoun *tu*, following inflected forms of the verb *cuir*, we find *cuiridh tu* (279) [kʊ'ri ɖu], *chuireas tu* (280) [xʊ'ris ɖu], *chuireadh tu* (282) [xʊ'ri ɖu], with [ɖ] for orthographic initial *t*. Although these are the only examples of such inflected forms in the *SGDS*, the same pattern applies to the corresponding forms of other verbs. On the strength of this, *tu* should be analysed phonemically as /du/ rather than /tu/.

The orthographic combinations *sd*, *st* are shown as [sɖ] in all positions: *'s dòcha* (322) [sɖɔːxə],²¹⁴ *stad* (802) [sɖaɖ], *Alasdair* (29) [ä'ɫ'əsɖiɾ̥], *fasdadh* (400) [fasɖəɣ], *Ìosa Crìosd* (531) [iːsə kriːsɖ].²¹⁵ There is no example with non-palatalised final *-st* in the *SGDS* results, but *fhathast* [haʔasɖ] illustrates the point. This combination should therefore be analysed phonemically as /sd/ in all cases.

When it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel, [ɖ] is shown with glottalisation, as [ɖ̠]: *cladach* (192) [kl̠`aɖ̠ɫx], *radan* (690) [ɾaɖ̠ən]. As has already been shown in the case of /b/, the glottalised form may be regarded as an allophone of /d/ in this phonetic environment.

²¹³ Headword is *aisling*.

²¹⁴ Headword is *dòcha*.

²¹⁵ Headword is *Ìosa*.

As in the case of /b/, the voiced form [d] is found word-internally following a homorganic nasal, as seen in the words *tionndadh* (847) [tʲ ʲn`dax], *sunndach* (817) [sʲn`dax]. Voiced [d] also appears as an allophone of the /t/ phoneme in the same phonetic environment: *aontachadh* (51) [ʲn`daxə], *beanntan* (91) [hʲɛ̃ʊn`də], *iongantach* (528) [iʲn`dax], etc. This is discussed fully under *Word-internal voicing* (see p. 287-288). The voiced form [d] is therefore to be regarded (where appropriate) as an allophone of either the /d/ or the /t/ phoneme, following a homorganic nasal. Only the spelling (or in some cases the etymology) will enable the underlying phoneme to be identified from the synchronic surface form.

As in the case of /b/, voicing of an otherwise devoiced stop is also found following a nasal in initial position, as a result of the nasal mutation (see pp. 284-286).

In the *SGDS* results, [d] is also consistently shown as voiced in the possessive pronoun *do*: *do ghobhar* (489) [dò ɣoʔoʁ], *do làmh* (551) [dò ɫɛ ɣ], *do nighean* (665) [dò niʔiŋ]. By contrast, the verbal particle *do* is shown with devoicing in *cha do leum* (576) [xa ɬə ɫ'e m]. To avoid having to make a phonemic distinction between /d/ and */ɬ/, the apparent difference in treatment (which may not always be maintained in practice) must be interpreted as a variation, without phonological significance.

A further complication is that in words involving the initial orthographic combinations *dl-*, *dr-*, we find variation between unvoiced and voiced forms: thus we have *dleasdanas* (314) [ɬ^Lɫ'esnəs], *dlùth* (317) [ɬ^Lɫ'u], but also *dligheach* (315) [ɬ^Lɫ'iʔəx : d^Lɫ'iʔəx];²¹⁶ *dreas* (347) [ɬres],²¹⁷ *droch* (348) [ɬrɔx], but also *drochaid* (350) [ɬrɔxɪɬʲ] (349 has [ɬrɔxɪɬʲ]), *druim* (351) [ɬrɫiɪm]. Confusion also arises with the word *damh*, where we find the forms [dɛv] (293), [ɬɛɣ] (294), and [dɛɣ] (295), while the plural/gen. sg. form is shown as *daimh* (296) [ɬɛɪv]. This suggests that before a sonorant, the opposition between [ɬ] and [d] is neutralised.

²¹⁶ Headword is *dlighe*. Note the insertion of superscript [^L] in the *dl-* examples, indicating 'lateral plosion'.

²¹⁷ Headword is *dreim* / *dreas*.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /d/ is normally articulated as [d̪].

It has the following allophones:

[d̪] when it occurs intervocalically following a stressed short vowel;

[d] when it occurs after a homorganic nasal.

It has the variant [d] ~ [d̪] when it occurs before a sonorant.

This is an unvoiced, lenis, velar stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic *g*.

In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, the symbol [g̊] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position: *gaoth* (460) [g̊ʸːç], *fàgail* (380) [faːg̊alʲ], *beag* (84) [b̊eg].

The initial orthographic sequence *gl-* may represent either [gl̊] or [g̊lʲ], depending on the quality of the following vowel: *glòir* (480) [gl̊ːɔːr̊], *glùn* (482) [gl̊ːuːŋ̊]²¹⁸ *glé mhath* (476) [g̊lʲeːvɛ].²¹⁹ [g̊] is not palatalised before a lateral, even when the following vowel is ‘slender’; nor is the sequence *[g̊ʌ] found anywhere in the Colonsay results: *gleann* (477, 478) is shown as [g̊lʲʲi̯ɔ̯ŋ̊].

As in other varieties of Gaelic, the orthographic sequences *gn-* and *gr-* are both pronounced [gr̊]: *gnè* (483) [gr̊eː],²²⁰ *gnothach* (484) [gr̊ɔʔɔx]; *gràdh* (499) [gr̊aːɣ], *grian* (504, 505) [gr̊i̯a̯ŋ̊]. Despite the difference in spelling, these combinations do not present any problems in terms of phonemic analysis: /gr̊/ is the appropriate phonemic transcription in all cases. It should be noted that this combination is often pronounced with a strongly rolled or flapped [r] by Colonsay speakers, in some cases producing the effect of an epenthetic syllable: [g̊^(ə)r̊i̯a̯ŋ̊].

The orthographic combination *sg-* is transcribed as [sq̊] when it occurs in a non-palatalised environment: *sgaoil* (759) [sq̊ʸːlʲ], *sgrìobhadh* (764) [sq̊riːvəɣ]; *iasgach* (510) [i̯i̯sq̊əx], *rùsgadh* (725) [ruːsq̊ʌɣ]. Rather surprisingly, there are no recorded instances of final unpalatalised [sq̊] in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, although words such as *iasg* [i̯i̯sq̊], *a-measg* [mesq̊] are commonplace. It is worth noting that the name of the island’s principal settlement, *Scalasaig* [sgalːəs̯i̯gʲ], is normally spelt with initial *sc-* rather than *sg-*.

When it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel, [g̊] is accompanied by glottalisation, written [g̊̚] in the *SGDS* transcription: *cogadh* (218) [ko̯g̊̚əɣ], *lagan* (544) [l̊ːa̯g̊̚ŋ̊]. As has already been shown in relation to other lenis stops, this may be

²¹⁸ Headword is *glùn*: *glùin* (dat.sg.). The dative singular is not in common use in Colonsay Gaelic.

²¹⁹ Headword is *glé*.

²²⁰ A footnote indicates that this word is rarely used in Colonsay.

regarded as an allophone of the /g/ phoneme in this phonetic environment. In the case of *teanga* (836) [tʰʲɛŋǵə], [ǵ] represents orthographic *ng*, with no trace of [n] or [ŋ] (cf. *ceangail* (162) [kʰɛʔɛlʰ], where even the [g] is absent).²²¹ Glottalisation is also indicated by the *SGDS* in the word *eaglais* (368, 369) [ɛǵlʰiʃ], although it is not clear why this should be the case.²²²

The voiced form [g] occurs only twice in the Colonsay data set, in both cases corresponding to orthographic *g*:

It is found in one version of *gainmheach* (449) [gɛpax]. This is an isolated occurrence in initial position; as such, it may simply be an error in transcription, or there may have been some feature in the preceding context (e.g. a nasalising particle) which led the informant to voice the initial consonant. In any case, the following entry (450) shows [gɛpax], with devoiced [ǵ].

The other occurrence is in *pongail* (683) [poŋǵalʰ],²²³ where it follows a (lengthened) homorganic nasal consonant. This seems to follow the same pattern as has already been observed in the case of /b/ and /d/, although this is the only example involving /g/ in the *SGDS* results. The preceding consonant, of course, is only homorganic (as an allophone of /nʷ/) by assimilation with the following [g], producing a somewhat circular relationship.²²⁴ The circularity is avoided if it is accepted that the assimilation of /n/ or /nʷ/ to [ŋ] before a velar stop (of any kind) is phonologically prior to the voicing of /g/ following a homorganic nasal.

The words *fang* (394) [fɛŋǵ] and *long* (585) [lʰoŋǵ] are shown with *devoiced* [ǵ] in a similar context, but this is almost certainly due to final devoicing; they should be written phonemically as /fɛn:ǵ : lʰon:ǵ/.

Voicing of an otherwise devoiced stop is also found initially as a result of the nasal mutation. For the reasons previously stated, it is preferable to regard the voicing in this instance as a non-segmental feature rather than an allophone (see pp. 284-286).

²²¹ In the *SGDS* results this transcription is preceded by the symbol ‘=’ (equivalent to *sic*), to indicate that it is considered surprising (Vol. I: 107).

²²² William Gillies suggests there may be an unconscious association with the word *eagal* ‘fear’.

²²³ Headword is *puncail*. The meaning in Colonsay is ‘neat, tidy’.

²²⁴ [ŋ] is defined as an allophone of /n/ or /nʷ/ when it occurs before /g/ (pp. 187, 194).

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /g/ is normally articulated as [g].

It has the following allophones:

[g̊] when it occurs intervocalically following a stressed short vowel;

[g] when it occurs after a homorganic nasal.

Fortis stops

p

This is an unvoiced, fortis, bilabial stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic *p*, and like the other fortis stops, is generally accompanied by distinctive patterns of aspiration: post-aspiration in initial position and preaspiration elsewhere.²²⁵

In the *SGDS* results, the symbol [p] is used in initial position to represent this sound in just eight words: *paca* (676) [paxqə],²²⁶ *paiseanadh* (677) [paʃənəʏ], *pàp* (678) [paːp],²²⁷ *piuthar* (679) [piʔor] and its plural *peathraichean* (680) [peʔiçim], *pòca* (681) [pəːxqə], *pongail* (683) [pon̩ˌgaɪ̯]²²⁸ and *purgadair* (684) [purigəðar]. As previously noted (p. 63-64), this form of transcription implies, but does not explicitly indicate, post-aspiration: these words should be read as [pʰaxqə : pʰaʃənəʏ], etc.²²⁹

The transcription of *piuthar* (679) as [piʔor] illustrates the fact that in Colonsay Gaelic, labial consonants are not normally palatalised, or followed by any form of j-glide. In other dialects, this word is pronounced quite differently (cf. Islay [piuʔur], Barra [pju|ər']).²³⁰ There are no instances in the *SGDS* results involving the initial combinations [pl̥], [pl̥'] or [pr], although these certainly occur, in words such as *plaosg* [pl̥ːøːsq], *plèan* [pl̥'eːn], *preas* [prəs].

There are, in addition, two words in the Colonsay data set where [p] is used in final position. These are the English loan-word *lamp* (556,557) [l̥'əm̩ːp : l̥'əm̩p],²³¹ where preaspiration is evident in the devoicing of [m] (see below); and *pàp* (678) [paːp], which originally is a Latin borrowing, although it is not perceived as such by present-day speakers. Since both are loan-words, perhaps not too much attention should be paid to any apparent inconsistencies. The word *papa*, which is commonly used in Scotland to mean 'grandfather', is pronounced [paːb̥a] by Colonsay speakers.

²²⁵ Preaspiration as a phonological process is examined elsewhere (p. 277-280); here we are concerned only with its phonemic interpretation.

²²⁶ Headword is *pac*.

²²⁷ Headword is *pàpa*.

²²⁸ Headword is *puncail*.

²²⁹ *SGDS*, Vol. I, 134.

²³⁰ Points 55 (Bowmore), 29-30 (Castlebay).

²³¹ Headword is *lampa*.

Otherwise, in the *SGDS* results, orthographic *p* in non-initial position usually corresponds to [h̥] in phonetic transcription. The examples given in the *SGDS* results all follow a stressed short vowel: *copan* (290) [koh̥paŋ],²³² *tapaidh* (830) [tah̥pi]; *siop* (139) [ʃəh̥].²³³ Following [i], the preaspiration takes the form [ç̥]: *cipean* (188) [k'iç̥paŋ], *suipeir* (815) [siç̥paŋ]. In the combination *rp* there is no [h] in the transcription, but the [r] is shown as devoiced, producing a similar acoustic impression: *corp* (243) [kə̥r̥b̥], *oidheirp* (671) [ʔ̥iʔ̥r̥b̥]. The regularity with which these variations occur implies that they are allophones of the /p/ phoneme.

An interesting case is *leabaidh* (565, 566) where the form generally used in Scottish Gaelic derives from an original dative; here, the Colonsay version retains the original nominative form *leaba* [lɛ̥b̥ə] in the singular, with glottalisation, while the plural form *leabaidhean* (567) [lɛ̥h̥b̥ən̥ən],²³⁴ with preaspiration, is best spelt as *leapannan*. This clearly indicates a phonemic difference between singular and plural: /lɛ̥b̥ə/ versus /lɛ̥pənən/.

There are no examples of [p] following a long vowel in the *SGDS* results. Results using the words *pàipear* and *rùp* (both English/Scots loanwords) proved inconclusive, although some degree of preaspiration was sometimes heard.

The post-aspirated combination [b̥h] is not exemplified in the *SGDS* results, but is recorded in Hamp's field notes as the form resulting from the nasal mutation: *am poll* [m̥ b̥h̥oʊl̥] (LSS: 36).

As discussed above under **b**, [b] appears as the voiced form of /p/ in word-internal position, following the homorganic nasal [m]: *iompachadh* (526) [im̥b̥əxəɣ], *teampull* (834, 835). Although these are the only two examples in the *SGDS* results, this fits the pattern of other stops in this phonetic environment, and may therefore be regarded as allophonic.

²³² The rounding of [h] is due to lip-rounding for [o], followed by the bilabial stop.

²³³ Headword is *bùth*. *Siop*, which is more commonly used, is readily acknowledged to be an English borrowing, but still shows preaspiration, as evidence of its having been 'naturalised' in Gaelic (see p. 361).

²³⁴ Headword is *leabaidh*: *leabaidhean*.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /p/ has the following allophones:

[p^h] when it occurs alone in word-initial position

[h_ɔ] following a stressed short vowel, except [ɪ]

[ç_ɪ] following [ɪ]

[b] following the homorganic nasal [m]

The combination /r/ + /p/ is realised as [r_ɔb].

t

This is an unvoiced, fortis, dental stop. Like /d/ it has a distinctly dental articulation, unlike the alveolar articulation in English. It normally corresponds to orthographic *t*, and like other fortis stops is generally accompanied by distinctive patterns of aspiration: post-aspiration in initial position and preaspiration elsewhere.

In the *SGDS* results, the symbol [t] is systematically used, in initial position, to represent this phoneme in around 40 headwords in the *SGDS* data set. These include *taigh* (820, 821) [tʲi], *tobar* (851, 852) [toɓ̥əɾ], *tuiteam* (874) [tuɓ̥d̥z'əɱ]. It should be borne in mind that [t] in this instance represents the articulation [t^h], for the reasons explained above in relation to /p/.²³⁵

No fewer than 13 of these instances involve the initial combination [tr] (861-873): *trom* (871) [tròm], *tric* (868) [triçɣ], etc. Post-aspiration is not really present in these cases, the tongue moving immediately from dental closure into alveolar trill; nevertheless, the fortis/lenis distinction is evident in minimal (or near-minimal) pairs such as *treas/dreas* (347) [tres : d̥res] or *truime/druim* (351) [tr̥y̥i' m̥i : dr̥y̥i' m̥i]. This reinforces the point that fortis and lenis articulations are not differentiated solely by aspiration. Despite the absence of post-aspiration, therefore, this combination should be transcribed /tr/ rather than /dr/ in phonemic notation.

The initial combination *tl* is not well represented in the *SGDS* results; the only headword included in the questionnaire, *tligheachd* (849), elicited a nil response from the Colonsay informant. The words *tlachd* and *tlachdmhor* are known, although not regularly used; here too there is no audible post-aspiration, the stop in this instance being released laterally: [tɫ`axɣ]. A true minimal pair cannot be found, but again there is a clear difference in articulation between *tlachd* and *dlùth*, *dleasdanas*. The phonemic transcription therefore has to be /tɫ^v/, reflecting the fortis/lenis distinction, despite the absence of post-aspiration.

²³⁵ *SGDS*, Vol. I, 134.

In non-initial position, following a short, stressed vowel, this phoneme generally appears with preaspiration, as [h̥d̥]: *brat* (273) [b̥rah̥d̥],²³⁶ *slat* (768, 769) [sl̥`ah̥d̥], *Cille Chatan* [k'ɪl̥i 'xah̥d̥aŋ].²³⁷ There are no instances in the *SGDS* results of unpalatalised *t* following [i]. Examples obtained involving *dhiot* tended to be phrasally unstressed, and therefore inconclusive, but such evidence as was obtained suggested the articulation [jih̥d̥], rather than *[i̥içd̥]. Preaspiration with [ç] is also found with *palatalised* orthographic *t* (see under **ɔ̥ʃ/ʃ**).

In one single instance, the word *cat* (158, 159) [kʏϕ̥d̥], preaspiration is indicated using the bilabial fricative [ϕ̥]. The same symbol is found before [t'ʃ] in the pl./gen. sg. form *cait* (160) [kʏϕ̥t'ʃ], and before [d'z'] in *tuiteam* (874) [tuϕ̥d'z'ə̃m]. It seems, on this slender evidence, to occur following a rounded vowel, pre-aspirating a dental stop; [ϕ̥], after all, is merely a rounded form of [h], often heard as the *wh* sound in English *which*, *while*.

Following a lateral, preaspiration takes the form of devoicing of the preceding consonant: *allt* (32) [ɹaʊ̥l̥t̥] d̥, *falt* (392) [fal̥t̥] d̥,²³⁸ *reult* (712) [rɛ̥l̥t̥] d̥.²³⁹ With /r/, the preceding consonant is modified to become [s̥']: *mart* [mɛs̥'t̥].²⁴⁰ This will be further studied in relation to the /r/ phoneme.

In the forms *cuartachaidh* (268) [kɹuɑ̥ʃ'd̥ɑ̥xɪç] and *chuartachadh* (269) [xɹuɑ̥ʃ'd̥ɑ̥xɪç],²⁴¹ [d̥] is shown with a dot below [d̥] to indicate retroflex pronunciation, following the retroflex [s̥']. The modified form [d̥] is not found anywhere else in the Colonsay results.

Following a long vowel, preaspiration is less marked, though still audible; the *SGDS* ignores this, transcribing *bàta* (81, 82) as [b̥ɑ̥d̥ə], although [b̥ɑ̥^hd̥ə] would be a more accurate rendering.

²³⁶ Headword is *cuibhrig*.

²³⁷ The Colonsay placename anglicised as *Kilchattan*.

²³⁸ In the case of *allt* and *falt*, alternative transcriptions are given: [ɹaʊ̥l̥t̥] (30, 31), [fal̥t̥] (392). The word *falt* is not commonly used in Colonsay (see p. 355).

²³⁹ Headword is *rionnag*.

²⁴⁰ Headword is *bó*, which is the more commonly used word for 'cow' in Colonsay.

²⁴¹ Headwords are *cuairtich*: *cuairtichidh*; *cuairtich*: *chuarticheadh* respectively.

k

This is an unvoiced, fortis, velar stop, and corresponds to orthographic *c*. In the *SGDS* results, the symbol [k] is systematically used to represent this sound. It should be borne in mind that [k] in this instance represents the articulation [k^h], for the reasons explained above in relation to /p^h/.²⁴⁴

The symbol [k] occurs in initial position in a very large number of words in the Colonsay data set, including: *cailleach* (141) [ka'λax], *caorann* (150) [kʲrən`], *cogadh* (218) [koǵəʎ], *cù* (265) [ku`], *cuiridh* (277, 278) [ku'riç].

It is also found in the initial combination [kl`], or less commonly [kl']: *cladach* (192) [kl`aɖax], *cluas* (205) [kl`uĩs]; *cliabh* (199, 200) [kl'ĩĩʎ], *cliù* (201) [kl'ĩu]; as well as the initial combination [kr], which may represent orthographic *cr* or *cn*: *craobh* (247) [krʲʎ], *cridhe* (255, 256) [kriʲi]; *cnàimh* (209, 210) [kriĩĩʎ], *cnoc* (213, 214) [krəxǵ]. As in the case of other fortis stops, the [k] element is not post-aspirated in such combinations. True minimal pairs are hard to find, but there is clearly a difference in articulation between the onset of words such as *cluas* (205) [kl`uĩs] and *glùn* (482) [gl`u`ŋ], or *cnoc* (213-215) [krəxǵ] and *gnothach* (484) [grəʎəx].

In non-initial position following a stressed vowel, this phoneme generally appears with preaspiration, realised as [xǵ]: *socair* (788) [səxǵiʲ]; *cnoc* (213-215) [krəxǵ], *muc* (633, 634) [muxǵ]. In the case of /k/ this form of preaspiration is also found following a *long* vowel, in *pòca* (681) [pə`xǵə]. This differs from the *SGDS* treatment of other fortis stops, although as previously noted (p. 142), some preaspiration of /t/ has been found to occur following a long vowel also.

²⁴⁴ *SGDS*, Vol. I: 134.

In a very few cases, [g] corresponds to orthographic *c* following *r* or *l*. In all these instances, the preceding sonorant is shown as devoiced: *cearc* (171, 172) [kʰɛ̞r̥g] (170 has [kʰɛ̞rk]), *torc* (285) [tɔ̞r̥g],²⁴⁵ *adharc* (7) [ɪʔɪr̥g],²⁴⁶ *olc* (673, 674) [ɔ̞l̥g]. Such devoicing of the sonorant is an indicator of preaspiration, as has already been seen in the case of other fortis stops: *corp* (243) [kɔ̞r̥p], *falt* (392) [fal̥d̥], etc. These words should therefore be interpreted phonemically as /kʰɛ̞rk : tɔ̞rk/, etc.²⁴⁷

The post-aspirated combination [gh] occurs only once in the Colonsay data set, in the compound preposition *man cuairt* (267) [maŋ gh[u̞i̯ʃ'tʰʃʰ].²⁴⁸ As in the case of [bh dh] (see above), this illustrates the effect of the nasal mutation, which is discussed elsewhere (pp. 284-286).

There are no recorded instances of [k] occurring after a homorganic nasal in the Colonsay data set. The one potential contender, *puncail* (683), has the form *pongail* in this dialect, probably as a result of historical word-internal voicing.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /k/ has the following allophones:

[kʰ] when it occurs alone in word-initial position

[x̞g] following a short or long vowel.

The combinations /r/ + /k/, /l/ + /k/ are realised as [r̥g : l̥g] respectively.

²⁴⁵ Headword is *cullach*: *cullaich*.

²⁴⁶ Headword is given as *adharc*: *adhairc*, implying that the form sought is the gen. sg. *adhairc*. However, it would appear that the form offered is in fact *adharc*; *adhairc* would be pronounced [ɪʔɪr̥gʰ].

²⁴⁷ In the version given in the *SGDS* results, the progressive form *ag amharc* (36) [gɛʰvə̞r̥gʰ]²⁴⁷ also illustrates this feature. In fact this word is generally pronounced [gɛʰr̥ax̞g] in Colonsay, with metathesis of *a* and *r*, producing a more ‘standard’ form of preaspiration. Cf. *SGDS* results for Islay (points 53-56).

²⁴⁸ Headword is *cuairt*.

Palatalised stops: lenis

dʒ

This phoneme is included here because of its phonological function as the palatalised form of /d/. Phonetically, it is an unvoiced, lenis, alveolar or post-alveolar *affricate*, a combination of [d̪] and [ʒ] in which the stop element (which in this instance is realised as palato-alveolar, rather than dental) is released as a homorganic fricative, conveying the impression of a single sound. The voiced combination [dʒ] is commonly used in IPA transcription for other languages, including English *judge* [dʒʌdʒ], Italian *giorno* [dʒorno].

The phonemic transcription /dʒ/ corresponds to orthographic *d* in contact with *i* or *e*, and also to orthographic *t* in certain circumstances. Like other lenis stops, such as /d/, it is normally unvoiced.

By far the commonest representation in the *SGDS* results, both initially and medially, is the sequence [d̪ʒʰ], which is found in initial and medial position: *deanadh* (302) [d̪ʒʰɛːnəɣ], *deoch* (307) [d̪ʒʰòx]; *làidir* (546) [l̪ˈaːd̪ʒʰiɾ̪], *saighdear* (730) [s̪(øi)d̪ʒʰaɾ̪]. It should be noted that the symbol for a voiced postalveolar fricative [ʒʰ] is used only in this combination in the Colonsay results; the fricative usually transcribed [ʒ] does not occur independently in this dialect, or in Scottish Gaelic generally.²⁴⁹ The transcription [d̪ʒʰ] also occurs finally in *creid* (253) [kr̪ød̪ʒʰ] and *théid* (688) [heːd̪ʒʰ]. Final palatalised *d* is, however, more frequently shown as [d̪ʃ]: *goid* (491) [g̪ød̪ʃ], *goirid* (495, 496) [g̪øˈriːd̪ʃ],²⁵⁰ showing the effect of final devoicing. The [d̪ʃ] sequence is only found in final position, and may be regarded as an allophone, with the variant [d̪ʒʰ]. The example of *diallaid* (309) [d̪ʒʰiːl̪ˈiːd̪ʃ] illustrates both sequences.

²⁴⁹ The use of the symbol [ʒʰ], without devoicing, in this combination seems somewhat anomalous, but appears to indicate a lenis, rather than a voiced, fricative.

²⁵⁰ The glottalisation in *creid* and *goid* is presumably due to *sandhi* forms being given in the original utterance.

Intervocally, following a stressed short vowel, the [d̪ʰzʰ] sequence is glottalised: *creididh* (254) [kr̪ö̪d̪ʰzʰiç], *maide* (593) [m̪e̪d̪ʰzʰi], *idir* (513,514) [i̪d̪ʰzʰi̪r̪]. It thus behaves in the same way as other lenis stops in intervocalic position: glottalised [d̪ʰzʰ] may therefore likewise be regarded as an allophone of /dʒ/.

A number of *SGDS* entries show [d̪ʰzʰ] for orthographic *t*. In almost all cases this is best interpreted as an allophonic realisation of the /tʃ/ phoneme (see below), occurring in certain specific phonological environments (see under **tʃ**). However, in *aimhreit* (12) [ɛv̪i̪r̪Λd̪ʰzʰ] and, arguably, *coilltean* (226) [k̪i̪l̪i̪Λd̪ʰzʰi̪n̪],²⁵¹ *sléibhteán* (773) [s̪l̪e̪v̪d̪ʰzʰi̪n̪],²⁵² there is no obvious phonological reason, and these words should be phonemically analysed as /ɛvr̪d̪ʒ/, /k̪i̪l̪d̪ʒ̪n̪/, /s̪l̪e̪vd̪ʒ̪n̪/.

Past participles in *-te* also show this transcription: *fillte* (423) [fi̪l̪ʰd̪ʰzʰi̪], *sailte* (731, 732) [s̪i̪l̪i̪l̪ʰd̪ʰzʰə̪]; note that in the case of *ceannaichte* (169) [k̪e̪n̪ʰi̪d̪ʰzʰi̪], there is no [ç] preceding the [d̪ʰzʰ]. Given the absence of preaspiration (or devoicing of a sonorant) in this very limited sample, the evidence of the *SGDS* points to the phonemic interpretation being /d̪ʒ̪/ rather than /tʃ̪/ in most cases. In the case of *briste* (123) [b̪ri̪ʃ̪tʰi̪], the preceding palatalised *s* results in the form [ʃ̪tʰ] (see below under **tʃ**). It is worth bearing in mind that, in an unstressed context such as this, the difference in articulation between /d̪ʒ̪/ and /tʃ̪/ is actually very slight.

In one instance only in the *SGDS* results, the *voiced* form [d̪ʰzʰ] is found for orthographic *d*: *an-dé* (41) [n̪d̪ʰzʰe̪]. The same form occurs in the parallel form *andiugh* [n̪d̪ʰzʰu], which is not included in the *SGDS* results. This is clearly an effect of the nasal mutation (pp. 284-286). Other occurrences of [d̪ʰzʰ], corresponding to orthographic *t*, have been analysed as allophones of the /tʃ/ phoneme (see below).

²⁵¹ Headword is *coille*: *coilltean*.

²⁵² Headword is *sliabh*: *sléibhteán*. Note the devoicing of [v] before a following devoiced lenis.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /dʒ/ is normally realised as [d͡ʒ], and has the following allophones:

[d͡ʒ̟] when it occurs intervocalically following a stressed short vowel;

[d͡ʒ̟] ~ [d͡ʒ̟] in final position.

gʲ

This is an unvoiced, lenis, retro-palatal (or palatalised velar) stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic *g* in contact with *i* or *e*.

In the *SGDS* results, the symbol [gʲ] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position in a number of words, including *geal* (464, 465) [gʲaɫ̪], *gille* (472, 473) [gʲiʲ ʎi], *airgiod* (21, 22) [ariɣʲiɔ], *cóig* (219) [koʲgʲ], *thàinig* (841) [hɛʲniɣʲ]. In Colonsay pronunciation, the sound heard is often closer to a devoiced form of the palatal stop [ɟ̥] (similar to the English *d* in *due*), especially in final position.²⁵³

Following the practice adopted with other lenis stops, the symbol /gʲ/ has been chosen to denote this phoneme.

There are no instances in the *SGDS* results where an initial combination involving orthographic *g* plus another consonant is shown with [gʲ], even when the following vowel is ‘slender’. Where such combinations do occur, the first element is invariably [g]: *gleann* (477, 478) [gl̪ʲiʲ ɲ̪], genitive *glinne* (479) [gl̪ʲiʲ ɲ̪i]; *grian* (504, 505) [gr̪ʲiaɲ̪].

However, [gʲ] does occur before a palatalised consonant in medial position: *laigse* (543) [l̪ʲ ɔgʲʃ i], *uaigneach* (875) [uaɣʲɲ̪x]; and also following a palatalised consonant (especially [ʃ]) in medial or final position: *uisge* (888-890) [uʲʃgʲi], *dùisg* (363) [d̪uʲʃgʲ ʲ],²⁵⁴ *loisg* (582) [l̪ʲ ɔʃgʲ]; *faing* (395) [f̪iɛɲ̪gʲ].

On the other hand, the *initial* orthographic combination *sg-*, when followed by a ‘slender’ vowel, is pronounced [sgʲ], without palatalisation of the [s] element. The only example given in the *SGDS* results is *sgeul* (760, 761) [sgʲeʲ], but from my own observation, words such as *sgiort*, *sgian*, *sgeith*, *sgìth* are all pronounced with [sgʲ] in Colonsay.

²⁵³ This is particularly noticeable in the local pronunciation of the placenames *Scalasaig* [sgal̪ʲ əsiɣʲ], and *Uragaig* [urəɣʲiɣʲ], which are often mispronounced as [skaləsɛiɣ] and [j̪urəɣɛiɣ] by non-natives.

²⁵⁴ A footnote indicates ‘sic [gʲ ʲ]’, presumably drawing attention to the ‘fronting’ of [gʲ], referred to above (*SGDS*, Vol. I: 136).

Like [g], [gʰ] in intervocalic position following a stressed short vowel is accompanied by glottalisation, and written [ḡʰ] in the *SGDS* transcription: *ruigidh* (723) [rũḡʰiç], *slige* (774) [sʎiḡʰi]. As with other lenis stops, this may be considered an allophone in this phonetic environment. Glottalisation is also indicated in *cha tig* (842) [xa ḡʰzʰiḡʰ]; here the context is clearly not intervocalic, but it may be that in the original utterance [ḡʰ] was produced in *sandhi*, with a following vowel, e.g. *cha tig e* [xa ḡʰzʰiḡʰ a].

There are no recorded instances of voiced *[gʰ] in the Colonsay data set, even following a homorganic nasal as in [fʰɛɪŋʰgʰ], although it is likely that final devoicing would in any case occur in this example. In medial position, the *SGDS* results do not show any stop element at all in words such as *aingeal* (15) [ɛʰŋaʰ] and *luinge* (585) [lʰuʰŋi].²⁵⁵ However, my informant Flora Macneill, who lived near the head of *Port na Luinge*, on Oronsay, for most of her life, pronounced it [lʰuŋḡʰi].²⁵⁶

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /gʰ/ may be realised as [j] ~ [ḡʰ] (consistently shown as [ḡʰ] in the *SGDS* results).

It has the following allophone:

[ḡʰ] when it occurs intervocalically following a stressed short vowel.

²⁵⁵ Headword is *long*. The form [lʰuʰŋi] appears to have been offered spontaneously by the informant.

²⁵⁶ The same placename was rendered ‘phonetically’ as *Port-na-lutch*a by Frances Murray, in her account of holidays spent on Oronsay in the 1880s (see p. 24); this presumably reflects her perception of the sound as a palatal [j] (devoiced) rather than palatalised velar [ḡʰ] (Murray 1887: 23).

Palatalised stops: fortis

tʃ

Like /dʒ/, this phoneme is included here because of its phonological function as the palatalised form of /t/. Phonetically, it is an unvoiced, fortis, alveolar or post-alveolar *affricate*, a combination of [t] and [ʃ] in which the stop element (again, realised as palato-alveolar, rather than dental) is released as a homorganic fricative, thus conveying the impression of a single sound. It normally corresponds to orthographic *t* in contact with *i* or *e*.

In the *SGDS* results this sound is transcribed as [tʃ] in initial position: *teaghlach* (832) [tʃøˈlˌʌx], *tinn* (846) [tʃiˈnː], *tiugh* (848) [tʃuɣ].

Like other fortis stops, when used medially or finally after a stressed short vowel, /tʃ/ is accompanied by preaspiration, which takes a variety of forms. The form [hʃˈzʲ] (or [hʃˈʃ] in final position) is not actually found at any point in the *SGDS* results,²⁵⁷ but is heard in words such as *dathte* [dˌahʃˈzʲiː], *toit* [tˌohʃˈʃ] and the personal name *Ceit* [kehʃˈʃ]. As has been seen in the case of other stops, preaspiration is realised as [ç] when it occurs after [i], as in *litir* (578, 579) [liçˈzʲiːr]; in *ite* (534) [ihˈʃˈzʲiː], the symbol [hʲ] is used, rather than [ç], although the acoustic difference is not great, and [hʲ] should probably be regarded as a variant of [ç]. Following a rounded vowel, the form encountered is the bilabial fricative [ɸ]: *cait* (160) [kyɸˈtʃ],²⁵⁸ *tuiteam* (874) [tuɸˈzʲəɪm].

²⁵⁷ The one headword where it might have been expected to occur, *cleit*: *cleite* (198), elicited a nil response from the Colonsay informant.

²⁵⁸ Headword is *cat*: *cait*.

Devoicing of a preceding sonorant, which has been observed as a form of preaspiration in relation to other fortis stops, does not seem to occur in the case of /tʃ/. In most instances, the *SGDS* uses the phonetic transcription [d̥ʰzʰ] – indicating a lenis – where devoicing might be expected. The form *bailtean* (67) [b̥aɪ̯tʰʲi̯n̩], with [tʰʲ], is attested,²⁵⁹ but otherwise we find *coilltean* (226) [k̥i̯l̩ʲtʰʲzʰi̯n̩],²⁶⁰ and the past participle forms *fillte* (423) [fi̯l̩ʲtʰʲzʰi̯], *sailte* (731, 732) [s̥i̯aɪ̯l̩ʲtʰʲzʰə] (already discussed under **d3**). In none of these instances is there devoicing of the sonorant.

After a long vowel, the *SGDS* transcription once again ignores the lenis/fortis distinction, using the sequence [dʰzʰ] in *àite* (25, 26) [aːdʰzʰi̯], which as it happens is the only entry to exemplify this feature. Although not as distinct as in the case of /t/ and /k/ (see above), it appears that there is some degree of preaspiration present, so that the phonetic transcription would be better shown as [aː^hdʰzʰi̯], and the phonemic as /aːtʃə/.

The effect of the nasal mutation on initial /tʃ/ can be seen in the form *seann té* (747) [ʃ̥i̯ẽõ̯n̩ dʰzʰe], where the base form /tʃe:/ is given a lenis onset.²⁶¹ In the placename *Cinn Tìre* (166) [kʰi̯n̩ dʰzʰhi̯rə],²⁶² the sequence [dʰzʰh], with post-aspirated lenis, appears in *sandhi* following the homorganic nasal [ŋ]; this is in line with what has already been noted in the case of *an t-uisge* (890) [ən d̥huf̥gʰi̯] (p. 143) and *man cuairt* (267) [maŋ ɡh̥u̯ʲʃʰtʰʲ] (p. 145). The nasal mutation, as a morphophonemic process, is discussed elsewhere (pp. 284-286).

²⁵⁹ Headword is *baile*: *bailtean*.

²⁶⁰ Headword is *coille*: *coilltean*.

²⁶¹ ‘Lenited’ would be a good word to use here, but this term is used in Gaelic morphophonology to describe a different process altogether. The vowel [e] is shortened because, in this particular instance, it is not stressed.

²⁶² Headword is *ceann tìre* [*sic*]. This placename (Kintyre) is stressed on the second element: [kʰi̯n̩ dʰzʰhi̯r(ə)].

The sequence [d'z'] (voiced) is regularly found for orthographic *t* following the homorganic (palatalised) nasal [ɲ]: *cinnteach* (184) [k'ɲ̃ d'z'əx],²⁶³ *cluinntinn* (208) [kl̥ ɲ̃ d'z'ɲ̃], *muinntir* (638) [m̥ ɲ̃ d'z'ɲ̃]. This shows the effect of word-internal voicing (see pp. 287-288). In this case, [d'z'] can be analysed as an allophone of /tʃ/ following the homorganic nasal [ɲ].

The orthographic combination *st*, in a palatalised context, is transcribed as [ʃtʃ] in initial, medial and final position: *stiùir* (805) [ʃtʃuːr], *briste* (123) [b̥riʃtʃɪ], *ceist* (179) [k'ɛʃtʃ]. Phonemically, it should be rendered as /ʃtʃ/.

The orthographic combination *rt*, when palatalised, is transcribed as the *retroflex* sequence [ʃ'tʃ'] in words such as *thubhairt* (1) [huʔʊʃ'tʃ'],²⁶⁴ *man cuairt* (267) [man̥ ɣh̥ɹ̥ʃ'tʃ'].²⁶⁵ The occurrence of [ʃ'] as an allophone of /r/ will be discussed under that phoneme (p. 200); what is of interest here is that the retroflex articulation is carried through into the following affricate. Variants do occur: in *lomairt* (584) [l̥ o'məʃtʃ']²⁶⁶ and *beairteach* (739) [b̥ɛʃ'tʃʌx],²⁶⁷ the [tʃ] element is shown without retroflexion, while in *labhairt* (539) [l̥ a'vəʃ'tʃ']²⁶⁸ there appears to be no final palatalisation – although this may simply be a transcription error. In the case of *sagart* (727) [saɣəʃ'tʃ'], the form recorded appears to be the gen. sg. form *sagairt*.

²⁶³ Headword (185) has the unvoiced variant form [k'ɲ̃ d'z'əx], which appears to be an exception, along with *bainntreach* (77) [b̥ɛɪɲ̃ d'z'ɪrəx].

²⁶⁴ Headword is *abair*: *thubhairt*.

²⁶⁵ Headword is *cuairt*.

²⁶⁶ Headword is *lom*: *lomadh*. *Lomairt* is the form of the verbal noun used in Colonsay.

²⁶⁷ Headword is *saibhir*.

²⁶⁸ Headword is *labhair*: *labhairt*.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /tʃ/ is realised in initial position as [tʃ], and in other positions has the following allophones:

[^hɖʒ'] following a long vowel;

[çɖʒ'] following a stressed short [i] (transcribed in one instance as [h'ɖʒ']);

[ɸtʃ] following a stressed short rounded vowel;

[hɖʒ'] ([hɖʃ] in final position) following any other stressed short vowel;²⁶⁹

[ɖʒ'] ~ [dʒ'] following the homorganic nasal [ŋ];

[tʃ] ~ [tʃ] following [ʃ].

²⁶⁹ Not attested in the published *SGDS* results.

kʲ

This is an unvoiced, fortis, retro-palatal (or palatalised velar) stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic *c* in contact with *i* or *e*.

In the *SGDS* results the transcription used is [kʲ]. As in the case of /gʲ/ (see above), I have found that in Colonsay pronunciation, the root of the tongue is often held much further forward than for [k], against the back part of the palate, and closer to the palatal stop [ç]. The effect can sound more like the English *t* in *tube* than *c* in *cube*.

In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay the transcription [kʲ] is found only in initial position: *ceann* (163-165) [kʲɛ̃ũɲ̃], *ceist* (179) [kʲɛ̃ftʲ], *cinnteach* (184, 185) [kʲiɲ̃ːdʲzʲəx], *ciùin* (189) [kʲuːɲ̃]. The lenis/fortis distinction is reflected in (near) minimal pairs such as *cille/gille* (472, 473) [kʲiʲːkʲiː : gʲiʲːkʲiː],²⁷⁰ *ceàrr/geàrr* (470) [kʲɛːr : gʲaːr].

Medial or final *c* when palatalised is shown as [çgʲ]: *faiceadh* (384) [fɛçgʲiʲ],²⁷¹ *bric* (122) [briçgʲ], *cnuic* (215) [krüçgʲ], *creic* (252) [kreçgʲ].²⁷² Once again, this is the result of preaspiration, and represents the palatalised form of [xg]. The relationship between [xg] and [çgʲ] is neatly illustrated in the *SGDS* results by the pair *breac*: *bric* (122) [brɛxg : briçgʲ].²⁷³ These can be analysed phonemically as /brek : brikʲ/.

Preaspiration is also evident in words such as *coirce* (233, 234) [kɔrgʲi], *smuilceach* (778) [smuɫgʲəx], where it results in devoicing of the preceding sonorant. This is entirely in line with what has already been seen in the case of /k/.

²⁷⁰ The word *gille* is little used in Colonsay, although it is known from literary sources, including songs. The usual word for ‘boy’ is *balach*.

²⁷¹ A footnote suggests ‘perhaps [fɛhʲgʲiʲ]?’ This is one of only two instances of the form [hʲ] in the Colonsay results. The difference in articulation between [ç] and [hʲ] is not great, and is best regarded here as a variation in transcription, without significance. This is the only instance of palatalised orthographic *c* in intervocalic position to be found in the *SGDS* results.

²⁷² As already noted, *chunnaic* (383) is shown as [xuːnʲiqʲ / hɛːnʲiqʲ]. Phonemically, the final consonant in this instance is /gʲ/.

²⁷³ The two forms are actually reversed in the phonetic version as printed in the *SGDS*.

There are no instances of nasalisation involving /kⁱ/ in the published *SGDS* results, but the LSS notes include the form *an ceòl* [ŋ' g'hə·l̥] (LSS: 36), where the nasal mutation produces post-aspiration following the corresponding unvoiced lenis, as has been seen in the case of other fortis stops.

There are no instances of word-internal voicing of /kⁱ/ in any of the Colonsay data.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /kⁱ/ may be realised as [c] ~ [k'] (shown as [k'] in the *SGDS* results).

It has the following allophone:

[çg'] in non-initial position.

The combination /r/ + /kⁱ/ is realised as [r̥çg'] (shown as [r̥g'] in the *SGDS*)

The combination /ʎ/ + /kⁱ/ is realised as [ʎ̥çg'].

FRICATIVES

Unvoiced fricatives

f

This is an unvoiced labio-dental fricative. It generally corresponds to orthographic *f*.

In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, the symbol [f] is used to represent this sound in initial position in some 60 headwords, including *fàg* (379) [faːq], *fear* (406, 407) [fɛr], *fichead* (420) [fiçɪd], *fuil* (445, 446) [fuɪʰ].

As with other labial consonants, there is in Colonsay Gaelic no trace of palatalisation or j-glide in any words beginning with *fe-*, *fi-*, as is found in other varieties of Gaelic. Thus we find: *feadhainn* (404) [fj̥ʔj̥n̩], *feannadh* (405) [fɛˈnˠəɣ], *feòil* (413) [f[ɛo]ɪʰ], *fiodh* (425, 426) [fiɣ]. (See p. 67). When *f* is lenited, however, it becomes silent, and palatalisation is found: *an fheadhainn* [(ə) n̩ʔj̥ʔj̥n̩], *an fheòil* [(ə) n̩ʔɪʰ] (Cf. Ternes 2006: 28-29).

Initial [f] is also found in combination with a sonorant in *fliuch* (434) [fl̩ʰiʊx̩], *fraoch* (440) [fr̩ʰox̩].

In non-initial position, [f] is found in the *SGDS* results only medially, in three words where the orthographic representation is *f* or *bh*: *cuibhrig* (‘coverlet’) (273) [kʰifriɲ],²⁷⁴ *ifreann* (684) [ifr̩n̩ˠ],²⁷⁵ and *siobhag* (765) [ʃifag]. A further example would be *cabhag* [kafag]. In other words, e.g. *abhainn* (2-3) [aˈvɪn̩], medial *bh* is pronounced [v] (with glottalisation after a short vowel), indicating a phonemic difference: /kafag/ v. /avɪn̩/.

Although there are no instances to be found in the *SGDS* results, it is important to note that [f] is also the lenited form of [p], corresponding to orthographic *ph*, as in *phòs* [fɔːs], *a phiuthar* [ə fiʔɔr] and the traditional Colonsay surname *Mac a Phì* [mɛxɔ ə ˈfiː].

No modified forms are found.

²⁷⁴ Probably a gaelicised form of English ‘covering’. *Brat* [br̩hɪd] is given as an alternative.

²⁷⁵ Headword is *purgadair* – not a common word on a traditionally Protestant island like Colonsay.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /f/ has no allophones.

This symbol is generally used for an alveolar fricative. Although not reflected in the *SGDS* transcription, it should be noted that in Colonsay Gaelic it is usually articulated with the front part of the tongue held against the lower teeth, and the blade against the alveolar ridge, producing more of a ‘lisped’ sound than the English *s*. In phonetic terms this makes it a lamino-alveolar, rather than an apico-alveolar, fricative: [ʃ̺] rather than [s̺].²⁷⁶

This phoneme corresponds to orthographic *s* in a non-palatalised environment. In a palatalised environment, orthographic *s* is generally pronounced [ʃ] (see below).

In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, the symbol [s] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position.

Initial [s] is found, for example, in *sabhal* (726) [saˈvə̀], *samhradh* (736) [sev̺iˈr̺iʃ̺], *socair* (788) [sɔxg̺iː], *sùil* (813) [suˈl̺].

Initial [s] also combines frequently with other consonants, either lenis stops [b̺ d̺ g̺ gʻ] or sonorants [l̺ ʎ̺ n̺ ɲ̺ r̺ m̺]. In the case of the palatalised consonants [gʻ ʎ̺ ɲ̺], the initial consonant remains unpalatalised [s], whether the second element is palatalised or not: *sgeul* (760, 761) [sq̺ˈèː], *slige* (774) [sʎ̺iɡ̺ˈi], *sniomh* (784-786) [sn̺iˈv̺].

Before the affricate combination [tʃ̺], however, it becomes [ʃ]: *steall* (803) [ʃ̺tʃ̺[au]l̺w̺],²⁷⁷ *stiùir* (805) [ʃ̺tʃ̺uˈr̺].

The initial orthographic combination *sr-* is consistently realised as [sr] in Colonsay Gaelic, with no sign of the ‘intrusive’ [t] or [d̺] found in more northerly dialects: *srath* (796) [sra], *srian* (797, 798) [sr̺iə̺n̺], *sròn* (800) [sr̺ɔ̺n̺]. Cf. North Uist (Points 20, 21) [straːh : str̺ˈ[ɪə̺]n̺ : str̺ɔ̺:n̺].²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ I was schooled in this pronunciation by the late Katie Brown (*Ceitidh Cholla*), who maintained that an apico-alveolar articulation was evidence of *blas na Beurla*.

²⁷⁷ The tie mark should extend under the whole sequence [l̺w̺], with the devoicing symbol [̺] under the tie mark.

²⁷⁸ The [sr] pronunciation is found in all Argyll and Perthshire dialects, except for Tiree and Coll (Points 84, 85). Forms with ‘intrusive’ [t : d̺] are found in all other dialects (*SGDS*, Vol. V: 242-250).

In medial position, [s] is found in *Ìosa* (531) [iːsə],²⁷⁹ *reusanta* (700) [ɾiːi̯səndə], *seasamh* (750) [ʃesəv]. In the *SGDS* results, it also occurs medially in the combinations [sɔ̯ sɔ̯ sn̩]; *Alasdair* (29) [aːl̩ːəsɔ̯ɪ̯r̩], *iasgach* (510) [iːi̯sɔ̯x], *cosnadh* (238) [kòsn̩ːəɣ]. To these might be added [sɔ̯] in *cuspair* [kusɔ̯ɪ̯r̩], [sl̩ː] in *masladh* [masl̩ːəɣ], [sr] in *fiosrach* [fisrəx].

Final [s] is found in many words, including *cluas* (205) [kl̩ːu̯i̯s], *deas* (304) [d̩ːz'es], *dorchadas* (335) [d̩ːrəxədəs]. It is found in the particle *nas* (spelt *na*'s in the *SGDS*) in a number of comparative forms: *nas lugha* (85) [nas l̩ːy̯ʔy̯],²⁸⁰ *nas blàithe* (108) [nàs ɔ̯l̩ːaːç̩i̯],²⁸¹ etc. It also occurs in the relative future ending *-as* /*-eas*, of which the only instance in the *SGDS* results is *chuireas tu* (280) [xɔ̯ːr̩s̩ ɔ̯u].

In a few instances an intrusive [ɔ̯] is found after final [s] in Colonsay Gaelic. The only example of this in the *SGDS* results is *dorus* (342) [d̩ːr̩ ɪ̯sɔ̯], but *solas* [soːl̩ːəsɔ̯] also exhibits this feature. There is some individual variation in the use of this pronunciation.

A retroflex form [ʃ] is found in *ceart* (174) [k'aʃɔ̯],²⁸² *farsuing* (399) [faʃi̯ ɲ : faːʃi̯ ɲ] and *fear* (411) [fɛʃt̩ʃ];²⁸³ the form [ʃ'] is more common, particularly in the sequence [ʃ'tʃ']. For reasons stated above (p. 153), these forms are treated as allophones of /r/, and will be considered further in the section on that phoneme.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /s/ has no allophones.

²⁷⁹ Form offered is [iːsə kriːsɔ̯].

²⁸⁰ Headword is *beag: lugha*.

²⁸¹ Headword is *blàth: na's blàithe*.

²⁸² A footnote suggests 'perhaps [k'aːʃɔ̯]?'

²⁸³ A footnote suggests 'perhaps [fɛːʃt̩ʃ]'.

ʃ

This is an unvoiced post-alveolar fricative, with some degree of lip-rounding, and is the normal palatalised congener of /s/. It corresponds to orthographic *s* in a palatalised environment.

In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, the symbol [ʃ] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position.

Initially, [ʃ] is found in a large number of words, including *sè* (= *sia*) (741) [ʃɛ̃·], *sealladh* (744) [ʃɛ̃ˈl̪əʎ], *siop* (139) [ʃɔh̪ɔ],²⁸⁴ *sìol* (767) [ʃiˈl̪].

It is also found for the copula *is* ('s) in a palatalised environment: '*sè* (= *is e*) (364) [ʃɛ̃·],²⁸⁵ *seadh* (366, 367) [ʃ əʎ : ʃ ɔ̃],²⁸⁶ '*s fheudar* (414) [ʃɛ̃ˈd̪ɔɹ̪], *is fhèarr* (605) [ʃɛ̃ˈr̪].²⁸⁷

Medially, it is found in *iseal* (532) [iːʃl̪],²⁸⁸ *mise* (622, 623) [miːʃi], *toiseach* (856) [toʃəx : tɔʃəxɔ], and following an epenthetic vowel in *aimsir* (13, 14) [ɛmiʃi̯r̪]. In some words, mostly either fem. sg. nouns or comparative forms of adjectives exhibiting syncope, a contiguous sonorant is 'absorbed' into the [ʃ]: *banais: bainnse* (76) [b̪ɛ̃iʃi̯], *ìosal: nas ìsle* (533) [nas iːʃi̯], *milis: mìlse* (616) [miːʃi̯]. In the case of *soillse* (789, 790), alternative forms are given: [s̪i̯iʃi̯ : s̪i̯iʃi̯].²⁸⁹ The word *làimhsich* (555) [l̪ɛ̃iʃi̯ç] also appears to follow this pattern.

In final position, [ʃ] is found in *aois* (48) [i̯ʃ], *eaglais* (368, 369) [ɛ̃ɣl̪iʃ], *spéis* (794) [s̪p̪ɛ̃iʃ].

²⁸⁴ Headword is *bùth*.

²⁸⁵ Headword is *è*: '*sè*.

²⁸⁶ Headword is *eadh*: *seadh*.

²⁸⁷ Headword is *math*: *is fhèarr*.

²⁸⁸ Headword is *ìosal*.

²⁸⁹ Headword is *soillsich*.

As has already been noted under **tf**, the orthographic combination *st*, when palatalised, is consistently articulated as [ʃtʲ], no matter what the position in the word: *stiùir* (805) [ʃtʲuːr], *briste* (123) [bɾiʃtʲi],²⁹⁰ *ceist* (179) [kʲèʃtʲ]. In the comparative form *nas teotha* (840) [nəʃ tʲoʔo],²⁹¹ the final [s] of [nəs] is assimilated to the following affricate to form, in effect, the sequence [ʃtʲ].

The form [ʃgʲ], corresponding to orthographic *sg* in a palatalised environment, is found both medially, in *uisge* (888-890) [uʃgʲi] and finally, in *dùisg* (363) [duːʃgʲ ˘], *loisg* (582) [lʲòʃgʲ]. In initial position, however, this orthographic combination is shown as [sgʲ] (see above, under **s**).

No modified forms of [ʃ] are found in the *SGDS* results.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ʃ/ has no allophones.

²⁹⁰ Headword is *bris*: *briste*.

²⁹¹ Headword is *teth*: *teotha*.

This is an unvoiced palatal fricative. In Scottish Gaelic generally, it functions as the lenited form of [k'], and corresponds to orthographic *ch*, or occasionally *th*, in a palatalised environment. In this dialect, it also corresponds to orthographic *dh* in final position.

The only examples of initial [ç] in the Colonsay data set are *a' cheud* (182) [ç̥iə̃d̥]²⁹² and the future form *chì* (381, 382) [ç̥ĩ].²⁹³

In medial position this symbol corresponds to orthographic *ch* in *fichead* (420) [fiç̥iɔ̃d̥], *oidhche* (670) [yĩç̥ĩ]; it is also found in the genitive form *cloiche* (190, 191) [kl̥' oç̥ĩ], the comparative forms *na's doirche* (333, 334) [nəs̥ d̥uriç̥ĩ] and *na's fliche* (435) [nəs̥ fl̥' iç̥ĩ], and the plurals *leabhraichean* (569) [l̥õ' riç̥iɲ̥] and *peathraichean* (680) [p̥ẽ' riç̥iɲ̥].²⁹⁴

In a handful of entries, [ç] corresponds to orthographic *th* in medial position: the comparative form *na's blàithe* (108) [nəs̥ bl̥' ã ç̥ĩ]; the future form *ithidh* (535) [iç̥iç̥] and verbal noun *ithe* (536) [iç̥ĩỹ] (from *ith* [iç̥]); *ràithe* (691) [rã ç̥ĩ] and *snàithlean* (780) [sn̥' è̃ ç̥ãɲ̥], where an expected [ʌ] has apparently been 'swallowed' by the preceding [ç̥].

By far the greatest number of headwords in the *SGDS* results showing this symbol have it in final position. These include the plural/gen. sg. forms *balaich* (71, 72) [bal̥' iç̥], *coilich* (222) [k̥ỹl̥' iç̥], *Di-dòmhaich* (327) [d̥'z̥ĩ d̥õ' niç̥],²⁹⁵ *cearc-fhraoich* (441) [k̥' ẽr̥k̥ r̥ỹ ç̥].²⁹⁶ It is also found in verbs with the same endings: *ceannaich* (168)

²⁹² Headword is *ceud*.

²⁹³ Headword is *faic: chì*.

²⁹⁴ This is a less productive plural ending in Colonsay than in many other varieties of Gaelic. (See p. 323).

²⁹⁵ Headword is *Dòmhnach*.

²⁹⁶ Headword is *fraoch: fraoich*.

[k'ɛ'n`iç] (but note *ceannaichte* (169) [k'ɛ'n`iç'z'i]), *éirich* (374) [e'r'iç], *oibrich* (668) [y'br'iç]; and in the words *cluich* (206) [kl`ɔ`ç],²⁹⁷ *duilich* (357) [dɔ'l'iç] and *fiadhaich* (419) [fiu`iç], the last of which is commonly used on Colonsay as an intensifier (= 'very').

[ç] is also found for orthographic final *th* in *bruith* (128) [brüç], *eunlaith* (378) [e'l'iç], *ruith* (696, 697, cf. 724) [rüç].²⁹⁸ In the case of *gaoth* (459, 460) [gɔ'ç], the dative form *gaoith* has become generalised as the base form (but note *gallan-gaoithe* (461) [ga'l`aŋ`gɔ'ç]).²⁹⁹

The use of [ç] for orthographic final *-dh/-gh* in this dialect has already been commented on (p. 70). This is most frequently found in future forms: *bithidh* (103) [bi'ðiç], *cuiridh* (277) [ku'riç], but also in *aghaidh* (9) [y'ðyç], *céilidh* (178) [k'e'liç]; *contraigh* (242) [kɔn`draç], *ùrnaigh* (518) [u'rniç], etc.

As already mentioned (p. 68), a notable feature of Colonsay Gaelic, which is shared with neighbouring dialects, is the occurrence of [ç] as the phonetic realisation of preaspiration after [i] across the full range of fortis stops, and not just before [g'] and [k'] as occurs in Scottish Gaelic generally. These occurrences of [ç] have already been dealt with as realisations of the phonemes /p t k' tʃ/. They are not to be interpreted as instances of the *phoneme* /ç/.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ç/ has no allophones.

²⁹⁷ Headword is *cluich*: *cluiche*. The verbal noun has the form *cluich* in Colonsay Gaelic. (Interview with Niall Brown, 7 December 2016). The word most commonly used is *playadh* [pl'e'əy].

²⁹⁸ Headword is *reic* / *ruith*.

²⁹⁹ Headword is *gaoth*: *gaoithe*. Forms ending in [ç] are also recorded in Islay (Points 53-56) and Gigha (Point 40).

This is an unvoiced velar fricative. It corresponds to orthographic *ch* in a non-palatalised environment, and represents the lenited form of [k]. It is a very common sound in Scottish Gaelic, especially in final position.

In the *SGDS* results, initial [x] is found in the negative particle *cha*: *cha do leum* (576) [xa ɸə l'ɛ m̩], *cha tig* (842) [xa ɸ'z'iɸ']. It is also found in the preterite forms *chail* (140) [xɪaɪɪ], *chum* (286) [xʊm], and in the irregular preterites *chunnaic* (383) [xu'n'iq']³⁰⁰ and *chaidh* (687) [xaç : xaʔiç]. It also occurs in conditional forms: *chuireadh tu* (282) [xʊ'ri ɸu], and in the relative future: *chuireas tu* (280) [xʊ'ris ɸu]. In nouns, it is found wherever initial *c* is lenited: *air mo chois* (156) [er mə xoɪ],³⁰¹ *as a' chraoibh* (250) [ɛs ə xɪ'ʔiɪɸ],³⁰² *a' chruidh* (261) [ə xɪiɪ].³⁰³

In medial position, [x] is found in *buachaille* (129) [bʊaɪxəɪɪ], *drochaid* (349, 350) [ɸɾɔxiɸ'j], *thachair* (818) [haxiɾ]. When preceded by a sonorant, an epenthetic vowel [ə] is inserted: *Donnchadh* (330, 331) [ɸɔn`əxəɸ], *dorcha* (332) [ɸɾəxə], *Murchadh* (641) [murəxiɪ]. The issue of epenthesis will be dealt with separately (pp. 262-276).

[x] is also found in this dialect in future and conditional forms of verbs ending in -*aich*: *cuartachaidh* (268) [kɪaɪɪʂ'ɸɪxiç],³⁰⁴ *chuartachadh* (269) [xɪaɪɪʂ'ɸɪxɪɪɸ].³⁰⁵ The future form of *éirich* (375) is shown as *eireachaidh* [e'ɪxiç].³⁰⁶ (See pp. 303-304).

By far the majority of occurrences of [x] in the Colonsay data set are found in final position. Thus we find: *a-mach* (34) [mɛx], *crìoch* (257) [kɾi'x], *fraoch* (440) [frɔ'x], *sgreuch* (762) [sɾe'x : sɾe'x], and a large number of words ending in unstressed -*ach*, both nouns and adjectives: *balach* (69, 70) [bəl'ɪx], *teaghlach* (832) [t'ʃɔ'ɪɪx]; *cinnteach* (184, 185) [k'ɪn'd'z'əx], *sàmhach* (733) [sɛ'vɪx].

³⁰⁰ A footnote suggests that this form is 'literary'. The form more frequently heard on Colonsay is [hɛ'niɸ']. (See p. 307).

³⁰¹ Headword is *cas/cois*.

³⁰² Headword is *craobh*: *craoibh*.

³⁰³ Headword is *crodh*: *cruidh*.

³⁰⁴ Headword is *cuairtich*: *cuairtichidh*.

³⁰⁵ Headword is *cuairtich*: *chuarticheadh*.

³⁰⁶ Headword is *éirich*: *éiridh*.

As previously noted (p. 144), [x] can combine with [g] to form the combination [xg]. This transcription may correspond to orthographic *c* or *chd*: *cnoc* (213, 214) [krɔxg], *naidheachd* (647) [n`ɛʔɛxg]. The former represents the pre-aspirated form of /k/, and is to be interpreted phonemically as an allophone of /k/ in non-initial position. Where it corresponds to the orthographic representation *chd*, on the other hand, /x/ operates as a phoneme in its own right (see p. 66).

The modified form [x̥] (rounded) is shown in only two headwords in the *SGDS* results: *fliuch* (434) [fl̥iʊx̥] and *iuchair* (537) [iʊx̥əɾ̥ : iʊx̥əɾ̥], in both cases accompanying the rounded semi-vowel [ʊ]. This is insufficient evidence on which to regard [x̥] as an allophone of /x/ in this very limited environment. Besides, it should be noted that other instances of /x/ in a rounded environment show it simply as [x]: *luchd* (588) [l̥uxg], *muc* (633) [muxg], and the various forms of *cuir* noted above. At best, therefore, [x̥] should be regarded as a variant occurring in proximity to the semi-vowel [ʊ].

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /x/ has no allophones.

It may have the variant [x̥] when preceded or followed by the semi-vowel [ʊ].

h

This is an unvoiced glottal fricative. Initial orthographic *h* is a rarity in Gaelic, and there are no words in the *SGDS* results beginning with this letter. It occurs mainly as the lenited form of [s ʃ t tʃ] (orthographic *sh, th*) and in certain other circumstances, as detailed below.

Initial [h] is regularly indicated for orthographic *h-*, in cases where *a* or *na* is followed by a vowel; it is not an integral part of the word. Examples in the *SGDS* results are *a h-aon* (49) [hỹ·ŋ],³⁰⁷ *na h-eaglaise* (369) [nə heɣl̥ ɨ ʃ],³⁰⁸ *na h-uamha* (876) [nə h₁ua₁],³⁰⁹ *bràigh na h-uinneige* (886) [bra·ɨ nə hu'ɲægi].³¹⁰

As previously noted, the symbol [h] is also found as the normal form of preaspiration before [b] and [d]. According to the analysis adopted here, such occurrences are to be seen as allophones of /p/ and /t/ respectively, rather than instances of the *phoneme* /h/.

Apart from its use in the context of preaspiration, the symbol [h] is found in the Colonsay data set either initially or medially. It is not found in final position.

Given the nature of Gaelic morphology, instances of initial [h] recorded in the *SGDS* tend to be either verbal forms, or inflected forms of nouns and adjectives. Since the *SGDS* questionnaire mainly elicited citation forms, examples of the latter are few in number.

[h] is found for orthographic *th-* in regular verbs such as *thachair* (818) [hax̥ɪr], *thilgeadh* (843) [hiliɣ'əɣ], *thogainn* (853) [hoɣ̥ɲɲ], and in the irregular forms *thubhairt* (1) [huʔos'tʃ'],³¹¹ *théid* (688) [he'ɣ'z']³¹² and *thàinig* (841) [hɛ'niɣ'],³¹³

³⁰⁷ Headword is *aon*.

³⁰⁸ Headword is *eaglais: na h-eaglaise*.

³⁰⁹ Headword is *uaimh: uamha*.

³¹⁰ Headword is *uinneag: uinneige*.

³¹¹ Headword is *abair: thubhairt*.

³¹² Headword is *rach: théid*.

³¹³ Headword is *thig: thàinig*.

as well as *theannaig* [hɛ'n`ɪg'], which is the Colonsay form of *chunnaic* (383) (see p. 307).³¹⁴ It also occurs very frequently in the present tense of the verb 'to be', *tha* – although in the *SGDS* results this word appears only once, in the phrase *cia mar a tha thu* (180) [d'z'ɪ mər ə haː u].³¹⁵

Initial [h] corresponds to orthographic *sh* in the lenited forms *oidhche Shamhna* (734) [ʲiçɪ hɛvɪnə],³¹⁶ *mo sheanmhair* (749) [mò hɛnɪvɑɾ].³¹⁷ It is noteworthy that, as with the labials, there is no palatalisation of [h] when it occurs as the lenited form of [ʃ] or [tʃ]: *a shiùil* (754) [ə hʲiʉɪʲ] (singular: *a sheòl* [ə hʲɛɔɪʲ]), *thionndaidh e* [hʲiõɲ`dɪç a].

Initial [h] is also found in combination with sonorants, especially [r] or [l']. The phonetic representation in the *SGDS* results varies: in most cases the [h] is shown superscript, and *after* the sonorant, suggesting metathesis, but a full [h] appears before the [r] in *thràigheadh* (862) [hʳahəy].³¹⁸ It is shown superscript before the [r] in *threabh e* (864) [ʰre'ʉi a],³¹⁹ but after the sonorant in *'ga threabhadh* (866) [gɑ rʰeʔʉy], *a shrian* (799) [ə rʰiɑɲ],³²⁰ *mo shròn* (801) [mə rʰɔɲ], *mo shliasaid* (772) [mə ʲhʲiʲiʲsɪd'ʃ].³²¹ Note the devoicing of the sonorant in most of these instances. In *mo shlat* (769) [mo ʲwʰahd],³²² we find the *voiced* glottal fricative [ɦ], and no devoicing; this is the only instance of this symbol in the Colonsay results, and for lack of further evidence will be regarded as a free variant. Phonemically, these combinations are best analysed as /hr hl hʲ/ etc., normally realised as [rʰ ʲʰ ʲʰ] etc., with the variants [hr], [ʰr], [ʲwʰ] attested in the *SGDS* results.

In the case of nasals, no [h] element is present, but [ɲ] is lenited to [ɲ]: *shnàmh* (782) [n`ɛ̃ɣ], *shnìomh* (787) [nĩ̃ɣ]. There is no need to indicate anything other than /n/ in phonemic transcription.

³¹⁴ Headword is *faic: chunnaic*. The *SGDS* transcription is [xu'n`ɪg' / hɛ'nɪg'].

³¹⁵ Headword is *cia mar*.

³¹⁶ Headword is *Samhainn*.

³¹⁷ Headword is *do sheanmhair*.

³¹⁸ Headword is *tràigh: tràigheadh*. This is indicated as the conditional form, rather than the verbal noun.

³¹⁹ Possibly representing the form **threabhaigh e*.

³²⁰ Headword is *dà shrian*.

³²¹ Headword is *mo shliabh / mo shliasaid*.

³²² The tie mark [̲] extends under the sequence [ʲw].

Medially, [h] is found in *athair* (63, 64) [ahəɾ], *beatha* (92, 93) [b̥ɛhɛ], *soitheach* (792) [s̥yh̥ɛx]. It is also found for orthographic *mh* in *comharradh* (241) [kəh̥ɔrə] and *famhair* (393) [fəh̥aɾ], while in *thràigheadh* (862) [h̥rəh̥ɔy]⁵⁷ it represents orthographic *gh*.³²³ My own research suggests that in many of these instances, [ʔ] is substituted for [h].

In the words *'s aithne* (27, 28) [sɛɲi̯],³²⁴ *froithneach* (692) [fr̥ɔɲɔx],³²⁵ the devoicing of [ɲ] implies an underlying phonemic reading /seh̥nə/, /fr̥ɔh̥nax/, with /h̥ɲ/ realised phonetically as [ɲ], even although no [h] is shown in the phonetic transcription. This interpretation is reinforced by the spelling, and the absence of glottalisation.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /h/ has no allophones.

The combination /hr/ is generally realised as [r̥^h], with variants [hr] ~ [h̥r].

The combinations /hl hɫ/ are generally realised as [l̥^h l̥^h], with variant [l̥^{w^h}] attested.

The combination /hɲ/ is realised as [ɲ].

³²³ My impression is that in medial position, [h] tends to be replaced by [ʔ]. Flora Macneill, when asked if there was ‘an *h* sound’ in *beatha*, replied ‘Yes’, but then pronounced it [b̥ɛʔɛ]. Islay entries show [ʔ] in such cases, e.g. Point 55 (Bowmore) [b̥ɛʔɛ].

³²⁴ Headword is *aithne*.

³²⁵ Headword is *raithneach*.

Voiced fricatives

Only two voiced fricative phonemes are found in this dialect, /v/ and /ɣ/.

v

This is a voiced labio-dental fricative, the voiced counterpart of [f].

In word-initial position, /v/ is always a lenited form of /b/ or /m/: *mo bhàta* (83) [mə vaːɸə], *bhuaileadh* (132) [v|uĩ|ĩĩ]; *glé mhath* (476) [g|eː vɛ],³²⁶ *a mhic* (592) [ə viçgʷ], *mholadh* (626) [vɔːlˈəɣ]. It is also found in the initial combination [v|] in *bhleith* (610) [v|e].³²⁷

Contrary to what is stated in my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 10, 54-55), [v] in medial position is accompanied by glottalisation³²⁸ in intervocalic position after a short, stressed vowel: *abhainn* (2, 3) [aːv|ɲ], *ghabhadh* (447) [ɣaːvəɣ],³²⁹ *sabhal* (726) [saːvəɣ], *sleamhuinn* (770) [s|eːv|ɲ]. After a long vowel or a diphthong, there is no glottalisation: *sgrìobhadh* (764) [s|riːvəɣ], *làmhán* (554) [lˈeːv|ɲ]; *craoibhe* (248) [kr|ĩi|vĩ], *saibhir* (739) [s|ai|vĩr].

Where [v] occurs in conjunction with a sonorant consonant, an epenthetic vowel is inserted: *éibhleag* (372) [evĩ|ˈaɣ], *geamhradh* (469) [gˈevĩrĩ], *samhradh* (736) [sevĩrĩ]. This is also the case where the sonorant precedes the [v]: *balbh* (73) [ɸalˈəɣ], *mo sheanmhair* (749) [mò henĩvaɣ].³³⁰ No glottalisation is found with epenthetic combinations, as is illustrated by the pair *Samhainn/Oidhche Shamhna* (734) [sɛːv|ɲ : ɲĩĩçĩ hevĩnə]. An apparent exception is *labhraidh* (538), which is shown as [lˈaːvˈrĩç], with glottalisation, and weak epenthesis; the informant may in this case have been influenced by the base form *labhair*. Epenthesis as a phonological process will be considered at pp. 262-276.

³²⁶ Headword is *glé*. This intensifier has the meaning ‘quite’ in Colonsay Gaelic, rather than ‘very’.

³²⁷ Headword is *meil*: *mheil*.

³²⁸ Represented in the *SGDS* results as [ˈv] rather than [v̥].

³²⁹ Headword is *gabh*: *ghabhadh*.

³³⁰ Headword is *do sheanmhair*.

In final position, [v] is often shown with devoicing: [ɥ]. Final devoicing of voiced consonants is a feature of Colonsay Gaelic, but does not seem to be observed consistently (see p. 290). Thus we find parallel forms in the *SGDS* results: *sàibh* is transcribed as [s{ai}v] at (728), but [saiɥ] at (729);³³¹ *a-riamh* as [r'iüɥ] (57), but [ɹiüv] (58); *damh* appears as [dɛv] (293), [d̥ɛɥ] (294), [dɛɥ] (295), and in the pl./gen. sg. form as *daimh* (296) [d̥ɛiɥ]. It should be noted that in *sléibhtean* (773) [sl̥eːɥd̥z'ɪ̃ŋ], devoicing occurs at the end of a syllable, before a devoiced consonant. Since the acoustic difference between devoiced [ɥ] (lenis) and [f] (fortis) is fairly slight, it should be noted that [f] is not found in final position anywhere in the Colonsay results (see above).

When it occurs as the lenited form of /m/ in any position, /v/ is generally associated with the same raising of [a] to [ɛ] as occurs in proximity to nasals. This is not the case where /v/ is the lenited form of /b/. At first sight, this may appear to present a problem of phonemic interpretation, since there are no auditory criteria for differentiating /v/ as the reflex of /m/ from /v/ as the reflex of /b/. While it may be easy to understand how forms such as *mo mhàthair* [mə vɛːɾ], *mo bhàta* (83) [mə vaːd̥ə] would follow the pattern of their respective base forms *màthair* [mɛːɾ],³³² and *bàta* (81, 82) [b̥aːd̥ə], the difference in treatment between *làmh* (550-551) [l̥ɛːɥ] and *sàbh* (729) [saːv] is not easily explicable in allophonic terms.

It will be recalled, however, that the [a : ɛ] alternation has been defined as a difference in *distribution* of separate phonemes rather than any form of allophonic variation (see under ɛ). If, therefore, the words are analysed phonemically as /mo vɛːɾ : mo vaːtə : l̥ɛːv : saːv/, the apparent difficulty does not arise.

³³¹ Headword 729 in fact offers the pair *sàbh*: *sàibh* [saiɥ / saːv]. (N.B. forms reversed in the transcription). The absence of dropped brackets around the diphthong [ai] is a transcription error, but is irrelevant to the point being discussed here.

³³² Shown as [mɛːhaɾ] in the *SGDS* results, but [mɛːɾ] is the form commonly heard.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /v/ has the following allophones:

[^hv] when it occurs intervocalically following a stressed short vowel;

[v̥] ~ [v] when it occurs word-finally or before an unvoiced consonant.

This is a voiced velar fricative, the voiced equivalent of [x]. It generally represents the lenited form of either /g/ or /d/, and corresponds to orthographic *gh* or *dh* in a non-palatalised context. It may occur in initial, medial or final position.

Occurrences in initial position are under-represented in the *SGDS* results, because the entries listed are mainly citation forms. The only examples of initial [γ] are the following:

- two pronominal forms of the preposition *do*: *dhomh* (318) [γɔ]³³³ and *dhaibh* (319) [γ(ai)v]³³⁴
- a vocative form: *a dhuine* (362) [ò γu'ni];
- a construction involving a possessive adjective: *do ghobhar* (489) [dò γoʔoɽ];
- three conditional forms of verbs: *dh'fhalbhadh* (391) [γɔl'ay], *'s math dh'fhaoidte* (397) [,smɛʔɛ 'γø'd'z'i]³³⁵ and *ghabhadh* (447) [γa'vəy].

Medial occurrences of [γ] are even scarcer, the only instances being *fiodhan* (427) [fi'γaŋ] and *ìodhal* (523) [i'γal̩], neither of which is a particularly common word. The former word shows glottalisation following a stressed, short vowel, which on the basis of this one example (and by analogy with other consonants in such an environment) may be regarded, however tentatively, as allophonic – again contradicting what is stated in my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 10, 54-55). The dearth of examples may reflect the fact that, in this dialect, medial *gh* and *dh* are much more likely to be realised as a glottalised interval (shown in the *SGDS* results as [ʔ]), rather than a fricative: *leaghadh* (571) [lɛʔʔyγ], *ughan* (881) [uʔiŋ], *aghaidh* (9) [ɔʔʔç], *feadhainn* (404) [fɛʔʔɲ].

³³³ Headword is *do*: *domh*. A footnote suggests the pronunciation is ‘almost [gɔ]’.

³³⁴ Headword, somewhat surprisingly, is *do*: *dóibh*.

³³⁵ Headword is *faod*: *math dh'fhaoidte*. The more usual expression in Colonsay is *cha lughaide*.

The overwhelming majority of occurrences of [ɣ] in the *SGDS* show it in final position, most commonly in the ending *-adh*, indicating either a verbal noun or a conditional form. These are too frequent to list in full, but include *bualadh* (133) [b̥uə̃l̥'ɪ̃ɣ], *gealladh* (468) [g'a'l̥'ə̃ɣ]; *chuireadh* (281) [xu'raɣ], *faiceadh* (384) [f̥ẽççg'ɪ̃ɣ]. The verbal nouns *fighe* (421) [fiʔĩɣ], *ithe* (536) [ĩçɪ̃ɣ], which do not end in *-adh* in conventional spelling, are also shown with final [ɣ], as is [g̥ɪ̃'ə̃ɣ] for *goil* (492); suggesting that, in this dialect, use of the *-adh* ending has spread by analogy.

Instances of final [ɣ] in nouns (other than verbal nouns) include *biadh* (104) [b̥ĩũɪ̃ɣ], *cladh* (193) [kl̥'ɪ̃ɣ]; *lagh* (545) [l̥'ɪ̃ɣ], *laogh* (560) [l̥'ɪ̃'ɣ], and the personal names *Donnchadh* (330, 331) [d̥ɔ̃n`ə̃xə̃ɣ] and *Murchadh* (641) [murə̃xɪ̃ɣ].

In a small number of cases, [ɣ] is shown with final devoicing: *seadh* (366) [ʃ̥'ə̃ɣ],³³⁶ *gèadh* (463) [g'ẽ'ɣ], one version of *laogh* (559) [l̥'ɪ̃'ɣ] (560 has [l̥'ɪ̃'ɣ]), *tiugh* (848) [t̥'ʃũɣ] and *treabhadh* (865, 866) [treʔõɣ]. Since final devoicing of voiced consonants is a common feature of Colonsay Gaelic, although not occurring consistently, it is noteworthy that in the majority of instances, final [ɣ] remains voiced.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ɣ/ has the following allophone:

[ɣ] when it occurs intervocalically following a stressed short vowel;

The devoiced form [ɣ̥] occurs as an occasional variant in word-final position.

³³⁶ Headword is *eadh*: *seadh*. The form [ʃ̥] is given as an alternative in 366, and as the only form in 367.

SONORANTS

Laterals

l

This is a post-alveolar (i.e. slightly palatalised) lateral approximant, and is shown in the *SGDS* results as [l̪]. Because this is a rather cumbersome notation, for a frequently occurring sound, the form /l/ has been chosen to represent the phoneme. It corresponds to orthographic single *l* in a ‘slender’ environment, but only under certain circumstances.

In word-initial position, this phone occurs independently in the *SGDS* data only in the English loan-word *lampa* (556, 557) [l̪ˈeɪm̪ˠp̪], where it is presumably intended to reflect the English [l] sound. It is also heard in the preposition *le* [l̪ˈe], and its derived pronominal forms *leam*, *leat*, etc. [l̪ˈeɪm̪ˠ : l̪ˈeɪh̪ɔ̪]. These are not listed in the *SGDS*.

Otherwise the *SGDS* results show this phone word-initially either as the lenited form of [ɫ], as in *cha do leum* (576) [xa d̪ə l̪ˈeːm̪ˠ] (cf. *leum* (575) [ɫeːm̪ˠ]), or in conjunction with another consonant, as in *bliadhna* (110, 111) [b̪l̪ˈiːi̪n̪ˠə], *cliabh* (199, 200) [k̪l̪ˈiːi̪y̪], *fliuch* (434) [fl̪ˈiːu̪x̪], *gleann* (477, 478) [g̪l̪ˈe̪o̪i̪n̪ˠ]. Words beginning with *sl*, however, have [sɫ], unless the initial cluster is lenited: *sliasaid* (771) [sɫ̪iːi̪sɪd̪ˠʃ], but *mo shliasaid* (772) [mə l̪ˈiːi̪sɪd̪ˠʃ].

In the combination *dl*, the situation is complicated in the *SGDS* results by the insertion of a superscript [L] in *dleasdanas* (314) [d̪^Ll̪ˈeːsɲəs], and an alternative version of *dligheach* (315) [d̪l̪ˈiːəx̪ : d̪^Ll̪ˈiːəx̪].³³⁷ This symbol is intended to indicate ‘lateral plosion’, which presumably means that the stop is released simultaneously with the accompanying lateral.³³⁸ In any case, this very limited use of superscript [L] in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay is not to be confused with the small capital [L] sometimes used in traditional Celtic linguistics for velarised *l*, and in the IPA system to denote a ‘velar lateral approximant’.

³³⁷ Headword is *dlighe*.

³³⁸ *SGDS*, Vol. I:137. Apparently the symbol is used in this way only by Eric Hamp, who was the fieldworker in Colonsay.

In medial position, [l̥] is shown with glottalisation when it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel: *baile* (65) [b̥aːl̥ˈi̯], *coileach* (221) [k̥yːl̥ˈəx],³³⁹ *duilich* (357) [d̥oːl̥ˈi̯ç], *uile* (883) [uːl̥ˈi̯].³⁴⁰ No glottalisation is found after a long vowel or diphthong, e.g. *Ìleach* [iːl̥ˈəx], *bhuailleadh* (132) [v̥u̯i̯l̥ˈi̯ɣ]; or where [l̥] forms part of an epenthetic cluster: *éibhleag* (372) [ev̥i̯l̥ˈaɣ], *seilg* (743) [ʃel̥ˈi̯ɣ],³⁴¹ *thilgeadh* (843) [hil̥i̯ɣˈəɣ].³⁴² The presence of [l̥] before orthographic *a* in *Beurla* (100) [b̥eːrl̥ˈə] is surprising (and attracts a footnote: ‘sic [l̥]’), but I have been able to verify this form with informants. The truncated form [b̥eːrl̥] is frequently heard also.

In a few instances, [l̥] also occurs medially in combination with other consonants, corresponding to orthographic *ll*. This is the case in *soillse* (789, 790), where we find the forms [s̥i̯l̥ˈi̯ʃi̯ : s̥i̯l̥ˈi̯ʃi̯] (alongside the form [s̥i̯l̥i̯ʃi̯], without [l̥]),³⁴³ it is also found in the past participles *fillte* (423) [fi̯l̥ˈd̥zˈi̯],³⁴⁴ *sailte* (731, 732) [s̥ai̯l̥ˈd̥zˈi̯]. On the other hand, *coilltean* (226) is shown as [k̥i̯l̥ˈi̯ɳd̥zˈi̯ɳ].³⁴⁵ This suggests that forms showing [l̥] are to be regarded as occurrences of the /l/ phoneme, rather than [l̥] being an allophone of /l/ before a following consonant.

In final position, [l̥] is shown in most cases with devoicing: *anail* (40) [ɛːnal̥ˈ], *fàgail* (380) [faːɣal̥ˈ], *fuil* (445, 446) [ful̥ˈ], *sùil* (813) [suːl̥ˈ]. Some words are, however, shown without final devoicing: *fantail* (412) [fɛ̃ntal̥ˈ],³⁴⁶ *ceangail* (162) [kˈɛ̃ɛl̥ˈ], *sgaoil* (759) [sg̥yːl̥ˈ], *thadhail* (819) [hãɾl̥ˈ].³⁴⁷ There is likewise no devoicing shown before the devoiced final combination [d̥ʃ] in *mìorbhailt* (620) [miːral̥ˈd̥ʃ]. As has already been observed, final devoicing appears to be an optional feature in Colonsay Gaelic.

³³⁹ 220 has *coileach* [k̥yːl̥ˈi̯ç], without glottalisation, but this appears to be an isolated example. It may have been used in an unstressed context by the informant.

³⁴⁰ The form *muilichinn* (637) [m̥u̯l̥ˈi̯çɪ̃] (for headword *muinichill*, with complex metathesis) is shown without glottalisation. This may reflect an unconscious alignment, by present-day speakers, with words showing historical epenthesis.

³⁴¹ Headword is *sealg*.

³⁴² The quality of the [l] in *thilgeadh* is ambiguous as transcribed, but has been verified as [l̥].

³⁴³ Headword in both instances is *soillsich*.

³⁴⁴ For the lengthening of [l̥] in *fillte*, see below under *l*.

³⁴⁵ Headword is *coille*: *coilltean*.

³⁴⁶ Headword is *feith*: *feitheamh*.

³⁴⁷ Headword is *tadhail*: *tadhail*.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /l/ is normally recorded as [l] in the *SGDS* transcription, and has no allophones.

It has the variant [l̥] ~ [l̥̥] when it occurs word-finally or before an unvoiced or devoiced consonant.

When it occurs after initial /d/, the resulting combination may be shown in the *SGDS* results as [d̥l̥].

The glottalised form [l̥̥̥] occurs only intervocalically following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [l̥] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [l̥̥̥] cannot be defined as an allophone.

This is a palatal lateral approximant. It corresponds to orthographic *l* or *ll* in a palatalised environment, but only under certain circumstances.

The symbol [ʎ] is found in initial position in all words in the *SGDS* results where unlenited *l* is followed by *e* or *i*. These include: *leabaidh* (565, 566) [ʎɛb̥ə], *leabhar* (568) [ʎoʔɔɾ]; *lìon* (577) [ʎiːŋ], *litir* (578, 579) [ʎiçd̥zʲiɾ]. It also occurs in the initial combination *sl* before *e* or *i*: *sleamhuinn* (770) [sʎɛˈvʲiŋ], *sliasaid* (771) [sʎiːiːsiɟʲ].

In medial and final position, [ʎ] corresponds to orthographic *ll* in contact with a slender vowel. It is found medially in *broilleach* (124) [br̥ɔˈʎəx], *cailleach* (141) [kaˈʎax], *coille* (223-225) [kʲəˈʎə], *duilleag* (358) [d̥uˈʎag], *gille* (472, 473) [g̥iˈʎi]. In all these instances, glottalisation is indicated, following a stressed short vowel.³⁴⁸ Glottalisation does not occur, for example, in *buachaille* (129) [b̥iuaˌxəʎi], where the immediately preceding vowel is not stressed, or in the plural form *coilltean* (226) [k̥iˌiːʎd̥zʲiŋ], where [ʎ] is not in intervocalic position (and in any case follows a diphthong). There are no instances of epenthetic combinations involving [ʎ]. For this reason, [ʲʎ], unlike other glottalised sonorants, may be defined as allophonic.

[ʎ] is also found for orthographic single *l* in medial position in *aingealan* (16) [ʎɛːʎiŋ], *annlan* (43) [ʎɛːʎəŋ]. It also occurs syllable-initially following [r] in *mèirleach* (613) [mɛːrʎəx].

In final position, it is found in *chail* (140) [xʎiʎ], *foill* (438) [fʎiʎ] and *tuill* (858) [tʎiʎ]. Final devoicing is shown in *foill* and *tuill*; devoicing also appears before a voiceless stop in *smuilceach* (778) [smʊʎgʲəx].

³⁴⁸ In many of these words, there is a tendency for the l-colouring to be lost, so that the words are pronounced [kaˈj̥ax], [kʲəˈj̥ə], etc.

Lengthening of [ʌ] occurs in *fill* (422) [fiʌ̃] and *thill* (844) [hiʌ̃], in both cases following a short vowel. This suggests an allophone [ʌ̃], occurring in word-final position following a stressed short vowel. On the other hand, the past participles *fillte* (423) [fiʌ̃ˈdʒɪ], *sailte* (731, 732) [sʌɪʌ̃ˈdʒɪ] have the phoneme /ʌ/. In the case of *fillte*, the lengthening of [ʌ] in [fiʌ̃] is carried over to the [ʌ̃]; *sailte*, having a diphthong, does not have a lengthened sonorant.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ʌ/ has the following allophones:

[ʌ̃] in word-final position following a stressed short vowel;

[ʌ̃] when it occurs intervocalically following a stressed short vowel.

It has the variant [ʌ̃] ~ [ʌ] when it occurs word-finally or before an unvoiced or devoiced consonant.

This is a velarised dental lateral approximant, corresponding to orthographic *l* in a non-palatalised environment. The term ‘dental’ is used to highlight the fact that this sound is realised with the tongue placed either behind or between the teeth, rather than on or behind the alveolar ridge as in the case of /l/. It is this dental quality, as much as the accompanying velarisation, that gives this phoneme its ‘thick’ character.

The superscript gamma [ʲ], rather than the grave accent [˘], is now the accepted IPA diacritic for ‘velarised’, and is so used in the phonemic transcription. A transcription using the bar or tilde [ɫ̄] would also be possible, but may be difficult to read. For phonetic transcription the form [lˠ], as used in the *SGDS*, will be retained.

Traditionally, Celticists have favoured the use of small upper-case [L] to denote this sound; this symbol, which is also sanctioned by the IPA system for ‘velar lateral approximant’, is used only very occasionally in the *Survey*, for an exceptional degree of velarisation (Vol. I: 124-125);³⁴⁹ in the Colonsay data it appears only as a superscript symbol in some words beginning with the combination *dl* (see above).

The symbol [lˠ] appears in the *SGDS* results in initial position in all cases where the standard orthography has *l* followed by *a*, *o* or *u*: *labhairt* (539) [lˠ aː vəʃˈtʰʲs̪], *lagh* (545) [lˠ ɣ̥], *long* (585) [lˠ oŋ ɡ], *luchd* (588) [lˠ uxɡ]. There is no separate lenited form: *làmh* (550) [lˠ ɛ ɣ̥] sits alongside *do làmh* (551) [dò lˠ ɛ ɣ̥]. This means that *a làmh* (his hand) and *a làmh* (her hand) are homophones in this dialect.

[lˠ] also appears as the second element in a large number of initial consonant combinations: *na’s blàithe* (108) [nàs ɸlˠ aː ç̥iː]³⁵⁰, *cluas* (205) [klˠ ɸu̯iːs̪], *glòir* (480) [ɡlˠ ɔː r̥], *sluagh* (775, 776) [slˠ ɸu̯ɣ̥]. The combinations [flˠ ɣ̥lˠ pˠ tˠ xˠ] also occur, e.g. in *flùr*, *ghluais e*, *plangaid*, *tlachd*, *a’ chlann*, but are not instantiated in the *SGDS* results. As already discussed, in the case of [dlˠ], superscript [lˠ] is inserted: *dlùth* (317) [d̥lˠ ɸu̯].³⁵¹

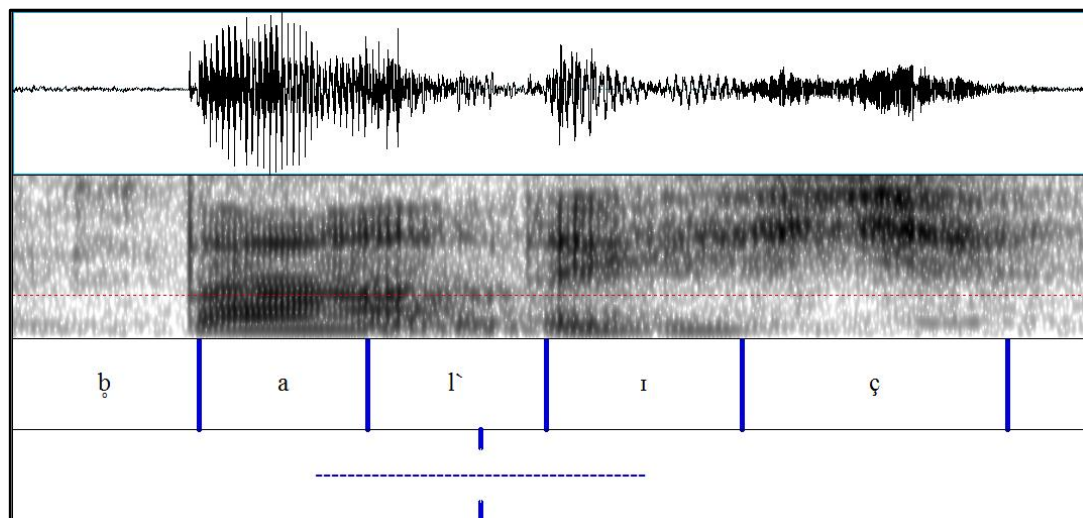
³⁴⁹ This symbol is stated to have been used in this way only by Kenneth Jackson (KHJ) in his fieldwork notes.

³⁵⁰ Headword is *blàth*: *na’s blàithe*.

³⁵¹ The devoicing mark [̥] under the [l] appears in brackets: (o). This cannot be reproduced using the present software. Devoicing is unusual in such a context.

In medial position, [ɫ] is found in *diallaid* (309) [dʲzʲiːɫɪ dʲʃ], *eòlas* (376) [ɛoɫəs], *teaghlach* (832) [tʲʃøːɫʌx]. Following a short, stressed vowel, glottalisation is found: *galar* (454) [gʲaːɫaɾ], *moladh* (627) [mɔːɫəɟ], *talamh* (826) [taːɫəɟ]. On the other hand, glottalisation does not occur in cases of epenthesis: *balbh* (73) [bʲalːəɟ], *dealg* (301) [dʲzʲalːəɟ], *balg* (74) [bʲɔːɫəɟ]. This is in line with the pattern of glottalisation already noted in the case of /l/. The form recorded for *uileann* (884) [uːɫən] is surprising, since the orthography would suggest medial [ɫ] rather than [ɫ̰].³⁵²

In *balach* (69-70) [bʲalːʌx] and its plural/gen. sg. form *balaich* (71-72) [bʲalːiç], the [ɫ] is shown lengthened in the *SGDS* results, and a footnote describes it as ‘slightly fricative [*sic*] and lenis’. Given that this is the only word in the Colonsay data set to show lengthened [ɫ], I would take issue with this transcription, which does not fit any established pattern for this dialect. I have found the usual pronunciation of these words on Colonsay to be [bʲaːɫʌx : bʲaːɫiç], with glottalisation, rather than lengthening, of the [ɫ], as would be normal after a stressed short vowel. The spectrogram shows a disturbed pattern of voicing, typical of glottalisation (see p. 257):



Waveform, spectrogram and glottalisation tier for *balaich*

(Jessie McNeill)

³⁵² Niall Brown pronounced this word [uːɫən]. (Conversation, 17 October 2017).

In final position, [ɫ̥] is generally shown with devoicing: *beul* (97) [b̥ɛɫ̥], *geal* (464, 465) [g̥'aɫ̥], *sabhal* (726) [sa'vəɫ̥]. In a handful of words, however, final devoicing is not shown: *caol* [*na coise*] (46) [kʲɫ̥ nə kɔʃə] (perhaps influenced by the following nasal),³⁵³ *cùl* (284) [kuɫ̥], *òl* (511) [ɔɫ̥].³⁵⁴

Devoicing is also found before a fortis stop, where it reflects preaspiration: *diùltadh* (312, 313) [d̥'z'uɫ̥ d̥əɣ̥],³⁵⁵ *falt* (392) [faɫ̥ d̥ : faɫ̥ t̥], *olc* (673, 674) [ɔɫ̥ g̥], *reult* (712) [r̥ɛɫ̥ d̥].³⁵⁶ This is sufficiently regular to be defined as an allophone in this environment.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ɫ/ is normally recorded as [ɫ̥] in the *SGDS* transcription.

It has the allophone [ɫ̥] before a fortis stop.

It has the variant [ɫ̥] ~ [ɫ̥] when it occurs word-finally.

When it occurs after initial /d/, the resulting combination may be shown in the *SGDS* results as [d̥ɫ̥].

The glottalised form [ɫ̥] occurs only intervocalically following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [ɫ̥] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [ɫ̥] cannot be defined as an allophone.

³⁵³ Headword is *aobrann*.

³⁵⁴ Headword is *ibh*, although all recorded entries show forms of *òl*.

³⁵⁵ The devoicing mark [̥] under the second [d] is shown in brackets: (o).

³⁵⁶ Headword is *rionnag*.

This is a rounded and velarised dental lateral approximant. In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, it is represented either as [l̥^w], with or without devoicing, or in some cases simply as [l̥], especially following the diphthongs [aʊ ɛʊ]. It occurs only in non-initial position, and generally corresponds to orthographic *ll* in a non-palatalised environment.

As explained in Vol. I of the *Survey* (p.133), the transcription [l̥^w] was adopted ‘for typographical reasons’, and the ‘precise phonetic difference’ in realisation between [l̥^w] and [l̥] is not clear. It appears that Hamp, in his field notes for Colonsay, used a ‘superimposed’ [w], which was re-interpreted typographically as [l̥^w], and was intended to convey the same meaning as the subscript [̣], which it closely resembles. (In the *SGDS* transcription, the tie bar extends under the whole [l̥^w] combination, and the devoicing symbol [̥], where present, appears below the tie bar. I have not been able to reproduce this exactly, and have placed the devoicing symbol under the [w].)

As argued above (pp. 75-77), I have found that in Colonsay Gaelic this sound, however it is transcribed, represents a separate phoneme from /l̥/. I am suggesting that the transcription ‘diphthong + [l̥]’ is better represented as ‘short vowel + lengthened [l̥^w]’. For the sake of consistency, I have given the *SGDS* transcription in the following examples, but have added a phonemic interpretation, using slash marks /.../, to indicate my alternative interpretation.

In the *SGDS* results, this phoneme is found medially in *ùbhlan* (878) [u·l̥^wəŋ] /u:l̥^wəŋ/. It also occurs syllable-finally (with devoicing) in *Bealtuinn* (86, 87) [b̥ɛʊl̥^wɪ̥ d̥ɪŋ] /b̥ɛl̥^w:dɪŋ/, *gallda* (456) [g̥ɪaʊl̥^wɪ̥ d̥ə] /g̥al̥^w:də/, *rallsa* (685, 686) [ra^ʷl̥^wɪ̥ ʷsɪ] /ral̥^w:sə/.³⁵⁷ There are no instances of epenthetic combinations involving this phoneme.

³⁵⁷ Headword is *ràcan*.

This phoneme is found most frequently in final position following a short, stressed vowel (shown as a diphthong in the *SGDS* results). In such instances I have consistently found it to be lengthened: *ball* [b̥al^{w:}], *dall* [d̥al^{w:}], *meall* [m̥el^{w:}], *toll* [tol^{w:}] (*SGDS*: (75) [b̥raʊ_ɪˀ], (292) [d̥raʊ_ɪˀ], (609) [m̥ɛʊ_ɪˀ], (857) [t̥oʊ_ɪˀ]). All these examples, moreover, show final devoicing. Lengthening and devoicing after a short, stressed vowel, either word-finally or syllable-finally, therefore appear to be allophonic.

It is found without lengthening, following a glottalised vowel, in *ubhall* (877) [uʔo_ɪˀw̥] /uʔul^w/.³⁵⁸ It is also found in unstressed position (without devoicing) in *teampull* (834, 835) [t̥ʃɛmːbəl̥ˀ] /t̥ʃɛmːbəl^w/. The same phoneme is found in a final consonant combination in *allt* (30-32) [raʊ_ɪˀd̥ : raʊ_ɪˀt] /al^wd̥ : al^wt/, which as we have seen (p. 75), forms a minimal pair with *fhalt* ‘his hair’ /al^vd̥ : al^vt/.³⁵⁹ In this example, devoicing occurs before an unvoiced or devoiced (but not necessarily fortis) consonant. This suggests that devoicing here is probably a manifestation of preaspiration, as seen with other sonorant phonemes. However, the evidence in this instance is not sufficient to define this variation as allophonic.

Phonemic definition

N.B. *In this definition I have given my own phonetic interpretation. The transcription found in the SGDS results is shown in brackets.*

The rounded and velarised phoneme /l^w/ (*SGDS*: [l̥^w] or [l̥ˀ]) occurs only in non-initial position.

It has the allophone [l̥^{w:}] (*SGDS*: diphthong + [l̥ˀ], or [l̥^wˀ]) in word-final or syllable-final position, following a short, stressed (but not glottalised) vowel.

It has the variant [l̥^w] ~ [l^w] (*SGDS*: [l̥ˀ] ~ [l̥ˀ]) before an unvoiced or devoiced consonant.

³⁵⁸ In this instance the *SGDS* spelling is a better representation of Colonsay pronunciation than the *GOC*-approved *ubhal*.

³⁵⁹ The word more generally used for ‘hair’ in this dialect is *gruag* (see p. 355).

Nasals

n

This is a postdental or alveolar nasal. It corresponds to certain occurrences of orthographic *n* in a non-palatalised environment. In Ternes's classification, it represents the 'plain' nasal phoneme.

In initial position it is found principally as the lenited form of both /n/ and /nʲ/: *mo nead* (655) [mə nɛd̪],³⁶⁰ *do nighean* (665) [dò niʲiŋ]; *droch nàdur* (643) [drɔx nɛːd̪ɔɾ̪],³⁶¹ *mo nàire* (645, 648) [mò nɛːr̪i].³⁶² In the case of the initial combination *shn*, the lenition extends to the whole initial combination, with no *[h] as might be suggested by the spelling: *shnìomh* (787) [n̪iːv̪].

In the *SGDS* results, initial [n] is also found in the comparative particle *nas* (spelt *na's* in the *SGDS*) in forms such as *na's lugha* (85) [nas ɫ̪ˈyʲy̪],³⁶³ *na's blàithe* (108) [nàs ɸl̪ˈaːç̪i], and in the feminine genitive singular form of the definite article *na* in *caol na coise* (46) [k̪ˌɫ̪ nə kɔf̪ə],³⁶⁴ *na h-eaglaise* (369) [nə heɟl̪ˈiʃ], etc. Its occurrence in *a-nuas* (44) [n̪uaɪs], *a-nunn* (45) [n̪ũn̪ˈ]³⁶⁵ probably implies the presence of lenition.

Medial [n] corresponds to orthographic single *n* in a non-palatalised environment. After a long vowel, a diphthong, or in (historically) epenthetic combinations, it is shown without modification: *drùnadh* (359) [druːnəv̪],³⁶⁶ *fòghnaidh* (436) [foːn̪iç̪]; *grianach* [gr̪iːaɪn̪ax], *Aonghas* (50) [j̪n̪ys]. Where it follows a short, stressed vowel, it is normally glottalised: *anail* (40) [ɛːn̪al̪ˈ], *leanaidh* (572) [lɛːn̪iç̪]. In an epenthetic cluster, however, there is no glottalisation: *mo sheanmhair* (749) [mò heːn̪iːv̪ɔɾ̪];³⁶⁷ this follows the pattern already observed in the case of laterals.

³⁶⁰ Headword is *dà nead*.

³⁶¹ Headword is *do nàbaidh*. This word is not used in Colonsay, and the fieldworker presumably substituted *droch nàdur* as an alternative which would illustrate lenition of 'broad' *n*.

³⁶² Headword is *mo nàbaidh* / *mo nàire*.

³⁶³ Headword is *beag: lugha*.

³⁶⁴ Headword is *aobrann*, which is not known on Colonsay. The usual word for 'ankle' is *mughairne*.

³⁶⁵ Headword is *a-null*, *a-nunn*.

³⁶⁶ Headword is *dùin: dùnadh*. The form *drùin: drùnadh* is found in Colonsay, Islay and Jura (cf. Grand 2000: 34 and Map 41).

³⁶⁷ Headword is *do sheanmhair*.

Where *n* is doubled in the standard orthography, the transcription generally used in the *SGDS* results is [n`], analysed here as representing the phoneme /n^v/, with the allophone [n^w] in the coda of a stressed syllable (see below). In the case of *aonnam* (42) [ʔ̥n`nəm],³⁶⁸ however, the transcription is [ʔn], with a footnote indicating that the use of [n] (rather than [n`]) was queried.

Unmodified [n] is found occasionally in medial position in combination with other consonants: *ciontach* (187) [kʰʔ̥ntəx],³⁶⁹ *dleasdanas* (314) [d̥l̥ʰesnəs] (with syncope of original *d*), *coimhearsnach* (642) [kɔʔ̥ɪʂ'nɒx].³⁷⁰ Devoicing is found medially before a fortis stop in *fantail* (412) [fəntalʰ].³⁷¹ Unlike other nasals, /n/ does not appear to cause word-internal voicing of a following stop, although it can trigger the nasal mutation (see p. 288).

In final position, [n] is particularly prevalent. It is usually shown with final devoicing, but in some words it is shown voiced, e.g. *leapannan* (567) [lɛhɔ̃n`ən],³⁷² *radan* (690) [rɑd̥ən], *spìon* (795) [sɔ̃i`n]. Voiced [n] is also found in the definite article *an*, which appears only twice in the *SGDS* results: *anns an t-sneachd* (783) [ɛnɒs ən tɾɛxɔ̃],³⁷³ and *an t-uisge* (890) [ən d̥hufg'i]. As might be expected, a number of the words with final [n̥] ~ [n] are plural forms in *-an* or *-ean*: *làmhnan* (554) [l`ɛ`v̥ĩn̥], *ùbhlan* (878) [u:l`wə̃n̥]; *bailtean* (67) [b̥al' tʰĩn̥]. Others have the singular masculine suffix *-an*: *amadan* (29) [ɛ`məd̥ə̃n̥],³⁷⁴ *bradan* (120) [br̥əd̥ə̃n̥]. Other words include *aran* (52) [a`rãn̥], *bean* (88) [b̥ẽn̥], *duan* (353) [d̥[ua]n̥], *sean* (745) [ʃẽn̥] and *sròn* (800, 801) [srɔ̃n̥].

³⁶⁸ Headword is *ann*: *annam*.

³⁶⁹ Headword is *cionta*.

³⁷⁰ Headword is *nàbaidh*.

³⁷¹ Headword is *feith*: *feitheamh*, and the form [fehiv] is also given. This means 'waiting', while *fantail* is used for 'staying', or 'living' (in the sense of 'dwelling').

³⁷² Headword is *leabaidh*: *leabaidhean*.

³⁷³ Headword is *sneachda*: *anns an t-sneachda*.

³⁷⁴ Headword is *Alasdair*.

Before /g/, /n/ appears as [ŋ]: *man cuairt* (267) [maŋ ɣh₁u₃ṣ't'ṣ'].³⁷⁵ The form [ŋ·] (lengthened) is found in *fang* (394) [fɛŋ·g], *long* (585) [l'ɔŋ·g], *pongail* (683) [poŋ·gaɫ'],³⁷⁶ but I shall argue that this is to be interpreted as an allophone of the /n^v/ phoneme (see below).

It should be noted that [ŋ] never occurs independently in the Colonsay results, but always as an allophone of /n/ or /n^v/.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /n/ is normally realised as [n] in the *SGDS* results, and has the following allophone:

[ŋ] when it occurs before /g/.

It has the variant [ŋ] ~ [n] when it occurs word-finally or before an unvoiced or devoiced consonant.

The glottalised form [ʔn] occurs only intervocalically following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [n] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [ʔn] cannot be defined as an allophone.

³⁷⁵ Headword is *cuairt*.

³⁷⁶ Headword is *puncail*. The pronunciation *pongail* is very widespread (*SGDS*, Vol. V: 16-17).

ɲ

This is a palatal (or palatalised interdental) nasal, and corresponds to orthographic *n* or *nn* in a palatalised, non-lenited context.

In initial position, it is relatively rare in the *SGDS* results, but is found in words beginning in unlenited *n* followed by *e* or *i*. These include: *nead* (653, 654) [nɛɖ, ɲ<ɛɖ], *Niall* (657) [ɲial̩], *nighean* (664) [ɲ<ĩ̃ʔĩ̃ŋ]. [ɲ] is also found initially in *an-dé* (41) [ɲd'z'è], representing a palatalised form of [n], assimilated to the following palatalised affricate grouping [d'z'].

It also occurs in the initial combination [sɲ] in *sneachd* (581) [sɲɛxɔ]³⁷⁷ and *snìomh* (784-786), which has a range of phonetic interpretations [sɲ<(<)ĩ ɣ : sɲ< ɪ̃ ɣ : sɲĩ̃ ɣ].³⁷⁸

In *nigheadarachd* (663) [ɲ'ĩʔĩd̩ɔrɛxɔ],³⁷⁹ the transcription is [ɲ'], not [ɲ]. This is the only instance of [ɲ'] in the Colonsay results, and should be regarded as equivalent to [ɲ]. The transcription [ɲ'] (with subscript bar) is probably intended to signify alveolar rather than interdental articulation, but in any case there appears to be some degree of variation in the place of articulation of this phoneme (see *snìomh* above).

Although examples with initial [ɲ] are few, this symbol is frequently found in medial and final position. When it occurs in an intervocalic environment, glottalisation is generally found following a short, stressed vowel: *duine* (360-362) [ɖu'ɲĩ], *glaine* (475) [ɔl̩'ø'ɲĩ],³⁸⁰ *na's sine* (746) [na ʃi'ɲ< ɪ]. Glottalisation is absent in *mòine* (625) [mɔ'ɲi],³⁸¹ where the preceding vowel is long, and in *abhainnean* (4) [a'vɪɲĩŋ],³⁸² where it is unstressed. It is also absent in cases of epenthesis: *ainm* (17, 18) [ɛɲĩɲ], including examples where historical epenthesis, while reflected in the spelling, is no

³⁷⁷ Headword is *lòineag*. Form offered is [kl'a'ɖaŋ sɲɛxɔ] (= *clàdan-sneachd*). Neither was recognised by my informant Flora Macneill.

³⁷⁸ The modified form [ɲ<] is intended to represent an *interdental* realisation of [ɲ] (Vol. I: 136); the frequency with which this occurs in initial position (admittedly on a small sample) suggests that this articulation is the 'default' Colonsay pronunciation of /ɲ/ in initial position.

³⁷⁹ Headword is *nigheadair*.

³⁸⁰ Comparative of *glan*. Headword is *glan*: *glaine*.

³⁸¹ Headword is *mòin*: *mòine*. Form offered is [fɔ'ɖ'z' mɔ'ɲi] (= *fòid mòine*).

³⁸² Headword is *abhainn*: *aibhnichean*.

longer audible: *gainmheach* (449, 450) [gɛɲax], *coingheall* (228) [kɔɲaɫ̚] (contrast *coinneal* (229-230) [kʲɯ'ɲaɫ̚]). For this reason, the glottalised form [ʲɲ] cannot be defined as allophonic.

[ɲ] also corresponds to double *nn* in medial position, again with glottalisation following a short, stressed vowel, as in *bainne* (68) [b̥a'ɲĩ], *coinneal* (229, 230) [kʲɯ'ɲaɫ̚], *uinneag* (885, 886) [u'ɲaɟ]. There is no glottalisation in *fàinne* (387) [fa'ɲĩ], where the vowel is long, or following a diphthong, as in *cuimhne* (275) [kʲɯiɲĩ], *nas doimhne* (326) [nas d̥ɔɲiɲĩ].³⁸³

In the case of *cluinnidh* (207) [kl̥`u'ɲiç], it appears that the [̚] following the vowel (which would be an unusual feature in the transcription of this dialect) is actually a misprint for [ʲ]. The corresponding entries for Islay (Points 53-56) all show glottalisation, e.g. Point 55 (Bowmore) [kl̥`u'ɲiç].

No distinction appears to be made in this dialect between the realisation of single and double orthographic *n* in a palatalised context. Thus *sine* and *sinne* are homophones: [ʃi'ɲ<sup>(⁾ĩ].

Where [ɲ] occurs medially before the palatalised stop [d̥'z'], as in *cinnteach* (184, 185) [k'ɲɲ d'z'əx], *cluinntinn* (208) [kl̥`ɯiɲd'z'ĩɲ], word-internal voicing is found (see pp. 287-288).

In final position [ɲ] is usually devoiced. Again, no distinction is made between orthographic single *n*, as in *arain* (53) [a'raɲ̥], *coin* (266) [kɔɲ̥],³⁸⁴ *min* (617) [miɲ̥]; and double *n*, as in *abhainn* (2, 3) [a'vɲ̥], *bruidhinn* (127) [br̥y'ɲ̥], *seinn* (752) [ʃɛiɲ̥]. Final devoicing is by no means universal: *anns a' bhroinn* (126) [ans əvr̥ɛiɲ̥],³⁸⁵ *buain* (134) [b̥ɯaɲ̥] and the conditional form *thogainn* (853) [hoɟ̥ɲ̥] are shown without it.

³⁸³ Headword is *domhain*: *doimhne*.

³⁸⁴ Headword is *cù*: *coin*.

³⁸⁵ Headword is *brù*: *anns a' bhroinn*.

As discussed under **h**, devoicing is also found medially in 's *aithne* (27, 28) [sɛɲĩ],³⁸⁶ and *froithneach* (692) [frɔɲʌx].³⁸⁷ This implies that an original preceding [h] has become fused with the [ɲ] to form [ɲ]: *[sɛh-ɲĩ], *[frɔh-ɲʌx]. This interpretation is further supported by the absence of glottalisation following a stressed short vowel in both cases, implying that the nasal is not perceived as following the vowel *directly*. Although it may appear a rather clumsy solution, it is probably best to analyse these words phonemically as /sɛɲə/, /frɔɲax/, in order to maintain the devoicing.

In a small group of words of one syllable, final [ɲ] is shown lengthened: *binn* (105, 106) [bɪɲː], *cinn* (167) [kʲɪɲː] and *tinn* (846) [tʲɪɲː]. This is also the case in *mion* (619) [mɪɲː], where a note by the fieldworker (LSS: 5) suggests that the word actually supplied by the informant was *minn*, the plural of *meann* 'kid' (young goat).

Lengthening thus appears to be the rule in final position after a short, stressed [i], as is the case with /ʌ/ (cf. p. 179). However, the example of *min* (617) [mɪɲ] shows that lengthening in this case is not automatic, and hence cannot be allophonic.

For lengthening of medial [ɲ] in *cinnteach* (185) [kʲɪɲːdʲzʲəx], see *Word-internal voicing* (pp. 287-288).

In the case of *faing* (395) [fɛɪɲʲgʲ], the dative singular of *fang* (394) [fɛɲːg],³⁸⁸ the palatalised nasal is shown as [ɲʲ] before /gʲ/, just as unpalatalised /n/ appears as [ɲː] before /g/ in the base form (see p. 187). This is the only instance of [ɲʲ] to occur in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, and is probably best regarded as phonetically equivalent to [ɲ].

³⁸⁶ Headword is *aithne*.

³⁸⁷ Headword is *raithneach*.

³⁸⁸ Headword is *fang*: *faing*. The existence of a field name *Fang Mór* on Colonsay suggests that this word may in fact be masculine in this dialect, in which case *faing* would be the plural/gen. sg. On the other hand, the neighbouring field is recorded as *Fang Bheag* (Loder 1935: 426). The dative singular feminine form is no longer commonly found in this dialect (see p. 322).

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ɲ/ has no allophones.

It has the variant [ɲ̞] ~ [ɲ] when it occurs word-finally.

The combination /h/ + /ɲ/ is realised as [ɲ̞].

The glottalised form [ʔɲ] occurs only intervocally following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [ɲ] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [ʔɲ] cannot be defined as an allophone.

n^v

This is a velarised interdental nasal, corresponding to certain occurrences of orthographic *n* or *nn* in a non-palatalised environment. As explained under *l^v*, the superscript gamma [ʷ], rather than the grave accent [˘] is now the accepted IPA diacritic for ‘velarised’, and will be used in the phonemic transcription.³⁸⁹

This sound is realised with the tongue placed between the teeth, rather than on the alveolar ridge or behind the upper teeth as in the case of /n/. As has been observed in the case of /l^v/, it is this interdental quality, as much as the accompanying velarisation, that gives this phoneme its ‘thick’ character. There is in practice remarkably little difference acoustically between the sounds [l^v] and [n^v] in intervocalic position, especially when glottalised; the placename *Bruach a’ Bheannain* [b̥ruχəˈvɛˈn̥ˠɪŋ], for example, is easily mistaken for **Bruach a’ Mheallain* [b̥ruχəˈvɛˈl̥ˠɪŋ].³⁹⁰

All the instances of initial [n̥] recorded in the *SGDS* have orthographic *a* following, although this is usually realised phonetically as [ɛ] in this dialect: *nàire* (644, 648) [n̥ːɛːr̥i], *naidheachd* (647) [n̥ːɛ̃ʔɛ̃xq̥], *naomh* (651) [n̥ːỹːʷ]. It is also found in words such as *Nollaig* [n̥ːɔˈl̥ˠaɣ̥], *nuadh* [n̥ːɫuaɣ̥], which are not listed in the *SGDS*.

[n̥] is also found in the initial combination [sn̥]: *snaim* (779) [sn̥ːuːm̥], *snàithlean* (780) [sn̥ːɛ̃ːçɑŋ], *snàmh* (781) [sn̥ːɛ̃ːʷ]. The same combination is found in medial position in *cosnadh* (238) [kòsn̥ːəʷ].

In non-initial position, the orthographic rendering is always double: *nn*.

³⁸⁹ The symbol [ɲ], much favoured by Celtic scholars to transcribe this sound, is used in the IPA system for a ‘uvular nasal’; in the *Survey* it serves (superscript) to indicate ‘nasal plosion’ (Vol. I: 137), but does not, in fact, appear in the Colonsay data.

³⁹⁰ *Bruach a’ Bheannain* is the name of the steep pass behind Scalasaig Farm, which used to carry the road across to Kiloran. Most people nowadays refer to it simply as ‘the Old Road’.

In intervocalic position, the *SGDS* shows [n̘] in *ceannaich* (168) [k'ɛ'n̘ɪç], *teannaich* (838) [t'fɛ'n̘ɪç], *chunnaic* (383) [xu'n̘ɪç], with glottalisation following a stressed short vowel, as has been seen with other sonorants. Although there may be a slight degree of rounding in such instances, the sound concerned is best represented phonetically as [n^v] rather than [n^w], and /n^v/ may thus be seen as the normal correlate of orthographic broad *nn* in medial position. As has been shown, *single* orthographic *n* in a non-palatalised, medial environment represents the phoneme /n/.

Following a stressed vowel in final position, a rounded form of this phoneme is found. This is analysed in the *SGDS* results as a diphthong ending in [ʊ], followed by [n̘]: *ceann* (163-165) [k'ɛ̃ʊn̘], *clann* (196) [kl̘ɪ̃ʊn̘], *donn* (329) [d̘ɪʊn̘].³⁹¹ Rounding is also found at the end of a syllable: *beanntan* (91) [b̘ɛ̃ʊn̘d̘]. As explained elsewhere (p. 76), I would interpret these words phonetically as [k'ɛ̃n̘^w : kl̘ɛ̃n̘^w : d̘on̘^w : b̘ɛ̃n̘^wd̘], and phonemically as /k'ɛ̃n̘^v : kl̘ɛ̃n̘^v : d̘on̘^v : b̘ɛ̃n̘^vd̘/. The form [n̘^w] is thus defined as an allophone of /n^v/ in word-final or syllable-final position, following a stressed short vowel. Nasalisation is also found in the case of [ɛ] in this environment, and is also to be considered as allophonic (see p. 282).

Where final [n̘] occurs in an unstressed environment, the articulation is simply [n^v] (*SGDS* [n̘]), with no rounding, but a very pronounced interdental articulation. This corresponds to orthographic *nn* in an unstressed syllable: *caorann* (150) [k̘ɪ'r̘n̘], *olann* (203) [o'ɪ'r̘n̘],³⁹² *uileann* (884) [u'ɪ'r̘n̘].³⁹³

The only word in the *SGDS* results not to be caught by this explanation is *contraigh* (242) [k̘n̘'draç], where rounding would be expected at the end of a syllable, but is not shown either as a diphthong in the *SGDS* transcription, or by doubling in the standard orthography.³⁹⁴ It would, however, be disproportionate to postulate a phonemic difference between /n^v/ and */n^w/ on the basis of a single example.

³⁹¹ The word *sannt* (737) [s̘ɛ̃ʊn̘], is shown with unmarked [n]. This appears to be a transcription/typographical error.

³⁹² Headword is *clòimh*. A footnote indicates that this word means 'down' in Colonsay.

³⁹³ In the case of *dorsan* (344) [d̘ɔs'ən̘], the final consonant is shown as superscript [n̘], with a dot indicating retroflex articulation, presumably under the influence of the preceding retroflex [s̘]. This is an unusual form, since other plural forms ending in *-an* have unmodified [n], and a footnote indicates that it was queried at the time.

³⁹⁴ Flora Macneill confirmed the pronunciation [k̘n̘'draç]. (Interview, 20 July 2011).

The form [ŋː] (lengthened) is found in *fang* (394) [fɛŋːg̊], *long* (585) [lˠoŋːg̊], *pongail* (683) [poŋːgal̪ˠ].³⁹⁵ Because this form occurs only before the homorganic lenis stop /g/, it may be defined as an allophone of /nˠ/ occurring in this phonetic environment.

Like other nasals, /nˠ/ causes voicing of a homorganic stop within a word: *cunntas* (289) [kunˠːdəs], *aontachadh* (51) [yˠnˠːdɛxəɣ],³⁹⁶ *pongail* (683) [poŋːgal̪ˠ]. This is discussed at pp. 287-288.

As with other voiced consonants, final devoicing may occur.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /nˠ/ is normally shown as [nˠ] in the *SGDS* transcription.

It has the allophone [nˠwː] ~ [ŋˠwː] (shown as diphthong + [nˠ] ~ [ŋˠ] in *SGDS*) when it occurs after a stressed short vowel in word-final or syllable-final position.

It has the allophone [ŋː] when it is followed by /g/.

The glottalised form [ˠnˠ] is found intervocalically following a stressed short vowel.

³⁹⁵ Headword is *puncail*.

³⁹⁶ Headword is *aontaich*: *aontachadh*.

m

This is a bilabial nasal. It corresponds to orthographic *m*, and in the *SGDS* results, [m] is the only symbol used to represent this sound. As already noted, it presents fewer complexities than the ‘coronal/dental’ nasals. In particular, there is no separate palatalised form, or even any form of j-glide after [m]: *meall* (609) [m_ɪɛʊ_ɪˠ] and *meadhg* (607) [mɛˠg] sit alongside *math* (603) [mɛ] and *moladh* (627) [mɔˠlˠəɣ]. This is in accordance with the pattern already observed for other labial consonants in this dialect.

Initial [m] is found in a large number of words, including *maide* (593) [mɛˠɟˠzˠiˠ], *mìorbhailt* (620) [miˠraˠlˠɟˠʃ], *moladh* (627) [mɔˠlˠəɣ], *muc* (633) [muxg], as well as in the possessive adjective *mo*: *mo bhàta* (83) [mə vaˠɟə], *mo sheanmhair* (749) [mò hənivaˠɟ],³⁹⁷ *mo shròn* (801) [mə ʃˠɔˠn̩]. It is also found in the initial combination [sm] in *smuilceach* (778) [smʊˠɟˠəx].

Medially, [m] is found in *amadan* (29) [ɛˠməɟəɲ],³⁹⁸ *lomairt* (584) [lˠoˠməʃˠtˠʃ]. As with other sonorants, glottalisation occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel. Glottalisation is not present following a long vowel in *Seumas* (755) [ʃèˠməs], nor in epenthetic clusters in *aimsir* (13, 14) [ɛmiʃˠiˠʃ], *farmad* (850) [farimɟ].³⁹⁹ The contrast between glottalised and unglottalised forms is well illustrated by the pair: *imire* (516)⁴⁰⁰ / *iomradh* (527) [iˠmiriˠ : imira], where the second word has [m] in an epenthetic combination with [r].

In common with other nasals, [m] in this dialect usually has the effect of ‘raising’ a contiguous [a] sound to [ɛ]: *math* (603) [mɛ], *maide* (593) [mɛˠɟˠzˠiˠ], *amadan* (29) [ɛˠməɟəɲ], *cam* (144) [kɛmˠ]. There are, however, exceptions to this rule: the words *marbh* (600) [mariv̩] and *màirnealach* (596) [maˠɟˠnaˠlˠəx] are shown with unraised [a], reinforcing the view that this change reflects a difference in the distribution of separate phonemes, rather than [ɛ] being an allophone of /a/. There are no recorded instances of the sequence *[am] or *[aˠm] in the Colonsay data.

³⁹⁷ Headword is *do sheanmhair*.

³⁹⁸ Headword is *Alasdair*.

³⁹⁹ Headword is *tnùth*.

⁴⁰⁰ Headword is *imir*.

Lengthening of final [m] is found word-finally following a stressed short vowel: *àm* (33) [ɛm̩], *cam* (144) [kɛm̩], *trom* (871, cf. 634) [tròm̩]. Lengthening is also found, more surprisingly, and with devoicing, before a fortis stop in one version of the English loanword *lamp* (556) [l̥'ɛm̩p] (557 has [l̥'ɛmp]).⁴⁰¹

For lengthening of [m] before a homorganic stop in *teampull* (834, 835) [tʰɛm̩bəl̩], *trombaid* (873) [trom̩baɟʃ], *combanach* (240) [kɔ̩m̩bənəx], *iompachadh* (526) [ɪm̩bəxəɣ], see *Word-internal voicing* (pp. 287-288).

In unstressed position, in epenthetic combinations, or following a long vowel or diphthong, final [m] is not lengthened, and may then be shown with devoicing: *tuiteam* (874) [tuɸɟ'z'ə̩m̩], *ainm* (17, 18) [ɛ̩m̩], *leum* (575,576) [lɛ̩m̩], *druim* (351) [dr̩y̩i̩m̩]. In a number of instances, however, [m] appears voiced under these conditions: *annam* (42) [ɔ̩n̩əm̩], *arm* (61) [ar̩m̩] (the plural/gen. sg. form *airm* (62) is shown as [y̩r̩m̩]), *cuirm* (283) [k̩r̩m̩]. The word *gorm* is shown voiced in 497 [g̩ɔ̩r̩əm̩], but devoiced in 498 [g̩ɔ̩r̩m̩]. Once again, final devoicing appears to be a less than universal rule in Colonsay Gaelic, and certainly not allophonic.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /m/ has the following allophone:

[m̩] when it occurs word-finally following a stressed, short vowel, or word-internally before a homorganic stop.

It has the variant [m̩] ~ [m] when it occurs word-finally in other conditions, or before a fortis stop.

The glottalised form [m̩] occurs only intervocally following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [m] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [m̩] cannot be defined as an allophone.

⁴⁰¹ Headword is *lampa*. As an English loan-word, *lamp* is perhaps more prone to variation in its Gaelicised form.

Vibrant

r

This phoneme is variously articulated as an alveolar trill or flap, or a voiced alveolar approximant. In the *SGDS* results it is generally shown as [r], irrespective of its actual articulation, but [R ɹ r'] and, in one instance only, [r̥] are also found, indicating a trill, approximant,⁴⁰² palatalised trill and single flap respectively. [ɹ] is only shown in initial position, although a superscript form [ɹ̥] is found in a few words before a homorganic nasal. Further research (see pp. 84-89) has shown that these articulations are variants of the /r/ phoneme, reflecting degrees of emphasis, rather than separate phonemes or allophones.

In the overwhelming majority of cases it corresponds to orthographic *r* or *rr*, but in the combinations *cn*, *gn*, *mn*, the corresponding lenited forms *chn*, *ghn*, *mhn*, and the derived form *t-sn*, it corresponds to the orthographic element *n*.

In the *SGDS* it is found initially, in its various realisations, in *rallsa* (685) [ra^ʷl̥ws̥i],⁴⁰³ *reic* (696, 697) [reçq'], *radan* (690) [Raḍən], *rìgh* (705) [Riː], *rud* (720, 721) [r̥üḍ]. In *ruith* (696, 697) [r̥üç̥],⁴⁰⁴ it is shown with rounding. It also occurs as the second element in numerous initial combinations: *bradan* (120) [b̥raḍaṅ], *cnoc* (213, 214) [kr̥ɔxq], *grian* (504) [g̥ri̯aṅ], *sròn* (800) [sr̥ɔṅ], *tric* (868) [triçq'], and as the final element in the combination [sq̥r]: *sgriòbhadh* (764) [sq̥riːvəʃ].

In medial position it is found in *caraid* (151) [kaːr̥iḍʲ], *cuiridh* (277, 278) [kuːr̥iç̥], *barrannan* (80) [b̥aːr̥ən̥əṅ],⁴⁰⁵ *éirich* (374) [eːr̥iç̥], and with devoicing in *oirre* (20) [uːr̥ə : uḍə].⁴⁰⁶ Glottalisation is observed following a stressed short vowel. In epenthetic combinations, glottalisation is absent: *urball* (371) [uriḍə̚],⁴⁰⁷ *dearbh* (303) [d̥ˈz̥ːeriv̥].

⁴⁰² The *SGDS* defines [ɹ] as a voiced alveolar *fricative*.

⁴⁰³ Headword is *ràcan*.

⁴⁰⁴ Headword in both cases is *reic* / *ruith*.

⁴⁰⁵ Headword is *barran*.

⁴⁰⁶ Headword is *air: oirre*. A footnote also gives the plural form as *orra* [ɔḍə / ɔḍə]. The absence of glottalisation, in both instances, probably indicated that the words were elicited in a phrasally unstressed environment.

⁴⁰⁷ Headword is *earball*.

It appears very occasionally as the second element in medial combinations, e.g. *oibrich* (668) [ʲb̥r̥iç],⁴⁰⁸ *contraigh* (242) [kən`draç].

In final position it is found in a large number of words, including *mór* (628) [moːr̥], *piuthar* (679) [piːʋər], *athair* (63,64) [ahər̥], *fìor* (431) [fiːr̥]. As with other voiced consonants, final devoicing is common, although not universal. The word *bàrr* (78) [b̥aːr̥] is the only instance in the *SGDS* results in which the symbol [r̥] appears in final position.

Before a homorganic stop, whether palatalised or not, /r/ takes on a fricative quality. This is represented in the *SGDS* as [s̺], or occasionally as [s̺] or simply [s]; in some cases an alternative form is given, with a preceding superscript [ɹ]. The dot under the [s] indicates a retroflex articulation ([s̺], in current IPA practice). As explained above (p. 84), I prefer to use the transcription [r̺] to indicate that frication is present, as a secondary articulation, in addition to the vibrant (and also to make the point that this is an allophone of /r/, not /s/). Examples from the *SGDS* include *mart* (113) [mɛs̺ˈd̺],⁴⁰⁹ *ceart* (174, 175) [kʰaːs̺d̺], *cèardach* (173) [kʰɛːs̺ˈd̺ʌx], *man cuairt* (267) [man̺ ɣh̺uːx̺iːs̺ˈt̺s̺],⁴¹⁰ *càirdean* (152) [k̺aːs̺ˈd̺z̺ˈiːn̺ : k̺aːs̺ˈd̺z̺ˈiːn̺]. I would prefer to transcribe these as [mɛr̺ˈd̺ : kʰar̺ˈd̺ : kʰɛːr̺ˈd̺ʌx : man̺ ɣ̺h̺uːər̺t̺ʃ : k̺h̺aːr̺ˈd̺z̺iːn̺], with [r̺] functioning as an allophone of /r/ before a homorganic stop.

The same transcription is used by the *SGDS* in the words *ursainn* (895) [ʋs̺ˈə̺n̺] and *dorsan* (344) [d̺ɔ̺s̺ˈə̺n̺], where the orthographic representation is *rs*. In my own research (see p. 87) I have found the pronunciation to be [ʋr̺f̺iːn̺] and [d̺ɔ̺r̺ˈh̺ən̺] respectively.⁴¹¹ Similarly in *farsuing* (399), the *SGDS* transcription is [fas̺iːn̺ : faːs̺iːn̺], which I would transcribe as [far̺s̺iːn̺].

⁴⁰⁸ The glottalisation in this example is surprising, and perhaps influenced by the verbal noun *obair*.

⁴⁰⁹ Headword is *bó*.

⁴¹⁰ Headword is *cuairt*.

⁴¹¹ Because I have concluded that variations in the articulation of /r/ are due to prosodic, rather than phonemic factors, I have not further specified the quality of [r] at this point.

Preaspiration before a non-homorganic fortis stop is shown in the *SGDS* results as devoicing of the vibrant: *adharc* (7) [ʏʔʏr̥g], *cearc* (171, 172) [k'ɛr̥g],⁴¹² *coirce* (233, 234) [kɔr̥g'ɪ]; *corp* (243) [kɔr̥b], *oidheirp* (671) [ʏʔɪr̥b]. My own research has shown the presence of [ç] in examples involving a palatalised velar stop: *adhaircean* [ʏ'ɪçç'ɪ], *coirce* [kɔr̥çç'ɪ], *Tòrr an Tuirc* [tərən'ðhuɪçç'].⁴¹³

Devoicing and aspiration are also found in the *SGDS* results where /r/ is combined with a preceding /h/. This takes varying forms: *peathraichean* (680) [pɛɪɪçɪɪ],⁴¹⁴ *mo shròn* (801) [mə ɪʰɔ'ɪ], *thràigheadh* (862) [hɪrahəɪ],⁴¹⁵ *'ga threabhadh* (866) [gə ɪʰeʔʊɪ], *threabh e* (864) [ʰre'ɪj̥ a]. Mary Ann MacAllister used a simple, voiced vibrant in all cases, with no trace of an [h] sound: [piu:riçɪɪ : mə rɔ'ɪ̥ : ɡə reʔʊɪ : ɪeʔʊj̥ ə] (cf. pp. 84-89). This may reflect a process of phonetic simplification in the 55 years since the fieldwork for the *Survey* was carried out, or may just be a feature of this particular informant's idiolect.

Before a homorganic nasal, the *SGDS* shows alternative forms with and without a superscript [ɪ]: *càrn* (154) [kà'ɪ̥ : kà'ɪ̥ɪ], *dorn* (339, 340) [dɔ'ɪ̥ : dɔ'ɪ̥ɪ] (the plural/gen. sg. form *duirn* (341) appears as [dʉ'ɪ̥ɪ]).⁴¹⁶ In the case of *tighearna* (845) [t'ɪʔə'n`ə], the transcription [ə] represents [ə] + [ɪ]. I have found a vibrant to be present in all cases, the precise articulation once again varying with the degree of emphasis.

⁴¹² 170 is written as [k'ɛr̥k],⁴¹² while 441 has *cearc fhraoich* [k'ɛr̥k r̥ɪ'ç]

⁴¹³ See footnote 105.

⁴¹⁴ Headword is *piuthar*: *peathraichean*. Mary Ann MacAllister insisted that *piuthraichean*, not *peathraichean*, is the form used on Colonsay. Other speakers used the form *piutharan*

⁴¹⁵ Headword is *tràigh*: *tràigheadh*.

⁴¹⁶ The *SGDS* headwords are given as *dorn*, *duirn* respectively, with no indication of length.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /r/ is generally transcribed as [r] in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, although the forms [R ɹ r' ɹ] are also found, indicating different qualities of articulation. These have been shown to depend on prosodic factors, involving the degree of emphasis placed on the word in question, and are not phonologically significant. In this definition, only the form [r] is used.

It has the following allophone:

[r^h] (shown in the *SGDS* results as [ʃ' ʃ s]) before a homorganic (dental or alveolar) stop, either plain or palatalised.

It has the variant [ɾ] ~ [r] when it occurs word-finally.

The combination /r/ + /kⁱ/ is realised as [ɾçq'] (shown as [ɾq'] in the *SGDS*).

The glottalised form [ʔr] occurs only intervocalically following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [r] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [ʔr] cannot be defined as an allophone.

SEMI-VOWELS

i

This phoneme is a high front, unrounded semi-vowel. In Gaelic it corresponds to orthographic *dh*, *gh* in a palatalised environment, although other orthographic representations also occur (see below). In Colonsay Gaelic it functions as the lenited form of [dʲzʲ], [gʲ].

It occurs initially in *dheth* (299-300) [i̯ɛ],⁴¹⁷ *gheibh* (385) [i̯o],⁴¹⁸ and in the preterite forms *gheall* (467) [i̯ɑʋɪ̯], *dh'iarr* (508) [i̯i̯i̯r], *dh'innis* (521) [i̯i̯ʲi̯]. In some varieties of Gaelic these words are pronounced with a voiced palatal fricative [j], although the *SGDS* results are somewhat ambiguous in this regard (Vol. I: 118-119). Jones, writing about Jura, states that 'the variety under discussion here does not have a voiced palatal fricative' (Jones 2011: 26); the same holds true for Colonsay.

Medially, [i̯] occurs in *bòidheach* (118) [bʲo̯i̯ɛx], *coimheach* (227) [kʲo̯i̯ɛx], *suidheachadh* (812) [sʲy̯i̯ɛxəʋ]. Note that where it follows a stressed, short vowel, there is accompanying glottalisation, which serves to emphasise the consonantal character of this phoneme.

By far the largest number of instances of [i̯] show it either in final position (*clòimh* (203) [klʲo̯i̯], *laoigh* (561, 562) [lʲo̯i̯], *suidh* (811) [sʲy̯i̯]) or following a vowel and preceding a consonant: *daimh* (296) [dʲe̯i̯v], *nas luime* (583) [nəs ɪ̯u̯i̯mʲi̯],⁴¹⁹ *muime* (635) [mʲu̯i̯mʲi̯]. In these environments it could reasonably be analysed as forming the coda of a diphthong. However, the presence of forms such as *buaidh* (130) [bʲu̯i̯i̯], *cruaidh* (262) [krʲu̯i̯i̯],⁴²⁰ *fuaim* (443) [fʲu̯ai̯mʲ], where it follows a marked diphthong, suggests that it is in fact being interpreted as a consonant, and not as the third component of a triphthong. No triphthongs are recorded in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay.

⁴¹⁷ Headword is *de*: *deth* (299), *de*: *dheth* (300).

⁴¹⁸ Headword is *faigh*: *gheibh*.

⁴¹⁹ Headword is *lom*: *luime*.

⁴²⁰ Cf. the comparative form in *cruaidh*: *cruaidhe* (263) [krʲu̯ai̯i̯], with a full vowel.

This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that, in the majority of cases where [i̠] occurs finally, it is shown with final devoicing, like other voiced consonants: *a'* *chruidh* (261) [ə xr̥i̠],⁴²¹ *féidh* (418) [fe̠·i̠],⁴²² *taigh* (820, 821) [tʲi̠].

Unlike other (non-phonemic) semi-vowels, [i̠] is not normally shown superscript in the *SGDS* results. The only exception is in a footnote to the headword *fìù* (433), which references the form *fìtheach* [fʲi̠ʲʌx]. The [i̠] in this instance may be explained as a momentary continuation of the [i] sound, in transition, following the glottalised interval.

The form [ɪ̠], which is presumably intended to indicate a more relaxed pronunciation than [i̠], is found only in the word *laigh* (547) [l̥`aɪ̠], with final devoicing. This may be regarded as an isolated, non-allophonic variant.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /i̠/ has no allophones.

The variant [ɪ̠] is found in one instance only, in the word *laigh* (547) [l̥`aɪ̠].

⁴²¹ Headword is *crodh*: *cruidh*.

⁴²² Headword is *fiadh*: *féidh*.

ɯ

As discussed in the introductory section, the identification of this phoneme must be considered provisional. It is a high, back, rounded semi-vowel, and occurs only in the phonetic realisation [ɯ̥] (with devoicing) in the verb *treabh* (863) [treɯ̥], and its preterite form *threabh e* (864) [hre'ɯ̥ a].⁴²³ In the absence of further evidence, it is impossible to offer a phonemic definition.

In the LSS notes (cover page, back), Hamp includes a phoneme /w/ to cover these two occurrences.

⁴²³ Hamp queried the 'intrusive [i]' in *threabh e* (LSS), but I obtained the same form.

Summary table

The scheme of consonant phonemes in Colonsay Gaelic is therefore as follows:

	STOPS		Palatalised:		
	Lenis	Fortis		Lenis	Fortis
Bilabial	b	p			
Dental	d	t	Alveolar	dʒ	tʃ
Velar	g	k	Velar	gʲ	kʲ

FRICATIVES

	Voiced	Unvoiced
Labio-dental	v	f
Alveolar		s
Post-alveolar		ʃ
Palatal		ç
Velar	ɣ	x
Glottal		h

SONORANTS

	Plain	Palatalised	Velarised	Rounded + velarised
Lateral	l	ɫ	lʷ	lʷ
Dental	n	ɲ	nʷ	
Bilabial	m			
Vibrant	r			

SEMI-VOWELS

Front	i̇
Back	[u̇]

DIPHTHONGS

We come, finally, to an analysis of diphthongs.

The *SGDS* results offer a bewildering variety of representations of diphthongs in this dialect, with 57 different combinations of two vowel symbols appearing in the results as published. No fewer than 30 of these occur only once in the data, while 16 appear in only two headwords each. This means that only 11 diphthong combinations occur more than twice in the entire data set.

From the preceding analysis of the vowel system in this dialect, it will be seen that many of the components of these diphthongs have been defined as allophones or variants of vowel phonemes. In a phonemic analysis of diphthongs, therefore, these components should be transcribed using the phonemes of which they are part. The combination [ɛɔ] appears in one version of *beò* (95); [ɛ] has been defined as a variant of /ɛ/, and [ɔ] as a variant of /o/ (see pp. 102, 118), meaning that [b₁[ɛɔ]] is to be analysed phonemically as /bɛo/.⁴²⁴ This approach will lead to a considerable reduction in the number of diphthong combinations to be regarded as ‘phonemic’.

With very few exceptions, diphthongs are shown in the Colonsay results within dropped square brackets: [] . According to the explanation given (Vol. I: 117-118), this is intended to signify that ‘the second element is of about equal prominence with the first’. It is difficult to verify this claim spectrographically, since the diphthong will show up on the spectrogram as a gradient between start-point and end-point, making exact measurements difficult to achieve. Since this ‘equal prominence’ of the two elements appears to be such a universal feature of Colonsay Gaelic, there is no need to indicate it in phonemic transcription, where no comparison with other dialects is being made. I shall therefore dispense with dropped square brackets in phonemic transcription, writing diphthongs simply as a succession of vowel phonemes.

⁴²⁴ The transcription [b₁[ɛɔ]] is found at (96).

Diphthongs in Gaelic function in the same way as long vowels. This is particularly relevant in relation to issues of stress, glottalisation and tone (see **Non-segmental features**, pp. 228-296). Among other things, it means that, like long vowels, diphthongs are usually only found in stressed syllables, and are not followed by glottalised segments.

Commonly occurring diphthongs

Five combinations [aʊ, εʊ, εi, ua ui] occur with some regularity in the *SGDS* results (more than five instances). These will be dealt with first, and the remaining pairs will then be grouped according to their onset symbol.

ao

This diphthong occurs (in the *SGDS* results) only before the velarised lateral [l̪], in word-final or syllable-final position: *ball* (75) [b̥l̪aʊl̪], *dall* (292) [d̥l̪aʊl̪]; *gallda* (456) [g̥l̪aʊl̪ d̥], *allt* (30-32) [l̪aʊl̪ d̥ : l̪aʊl̪ t̪].

The word *geall* (466) [g̥l̪aʊl̪] and its preterite form *gheall* (467) [l̪aʊl̪] are shown with [aʊ] rather than [au]. Since these represent two of only three recorded instances of the symbol [α] in the Colonsay data set,⁴²⁵ its use may be regarded as an anomaly, and treated as equivalent to [aʊ].

In my treatment of lateral consonants, I argue that Colonsay Gaelic has a rounded form of [l̪] which functions as a separate phoneme /l^w/ (pp. 75-77). On this reading, the rounding is seen as a property of the following lateral, rather than the second element of a diphthong. Forms with [aʊ] (or [au]) in the *SGDS* results are therefore rendered phonemically as /al^wd/, /bal^w/, /dal^w/, etc. Such an interpretation renders the use of this diphthong in either phonemic or phonetic transcription superfluous. It is worth noting that, in the neighbouring dialects of Islay, neither a diphthong nor rounding is shown in these words. Instead the [l̪] is shown as lengthened: [a]̃ t̪ : b̥al̪̃ : d̥al̪̃].⁴²⁶

The word *rallsa* (685, 686) is transcribed [ra^ʷl̪ws̪i] in the *SGDS* results.⁴²⁷ This transcription implies the presence of a semi-vowel ‘glide’ into the rounded lateral, rather than a diphthong. The word can be written phonemically as /ral^wsə/, bringing it into line with the treatment of *allt*, *ball*, *dall*.

⁴²⁵ The other occurrence is unstressed in *snàithlean* (780) [sn̪ ɛ̃ː ç̪ɑ̃ p̪]. In LSS, Jackson comments: ‘EH here writes with my α’, suggesting this was not Hamp’s usual notation.

⁴²⁶ Point 55 (Bowmore).

⁴²⁷ Headwords are *ràcan* (685), *do ràcan* (686).

This diphthong presents certain similarities to [aʊ]. It too occurs in the *SGDS* results before the velarised lateral [l̥] in word-final or syllable-final position: *meall* (609) [m̥εʊl̥], *Bealtuinn* (86, 87) [b̥εʊl̥ d̥iɲ]. More frequently, however, it occurs before the velarised nasal [n̥] in the same environments, when it is usually shown as nasalised: *ceann* (163-165) [k̥'ε̃ʊɲ̥], *gleann* (477, 478) [ɡl̥'ε̃ʊɲ̥], *beanntan* (91) [b̥ε̃ʊɲ̥ d̥ən̥].

It will be recalled that in Colonsay, as in other Argyll dialects, orthographic *a* is often ‘raised’ to [ɛ] in the presence of a nasal consonant. Where it occurs before a nasal, [εʊ] can therefore be regarded as the ‘raised’ equivalent of [aʊ], and much of what is discussed above in relation to [aʊ] can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to this diphthong. This also explains why there are no examples of [aʊ] occurring before [n̥].

It is, however, more difficult to find minimal pairs for this diphthong in the *SGDS* results, the only true one being *sean* / *seann* (745/747) [ʃɛɲ̥ : ʃε̃ʊɲ̥],⁴²⁸ which as it happens are positional variants of the same word.

As in the case of [l̥], I maintain that Colonsay Gaelic has a rounded form of /nʷ/, which I have transcribed as [n^w]. Unlike /l^w/, this sound does not form a separate phoneme (see p. 76). As in the case of [aʊ], the rounding is seen, on this interpretation, as a property of the following lateral or nasal, rather than forming the second element of a diphthong. Forms with [εʊ] in the *SGDS* results can therefore be rendered phonetically as [mɛl̥^w : k̥'ɛ̃ɲ̥^w : ɡl̥ɛ̃ɲ̥^w : b̥ɛn^wdən], etc., and phonemically as /mɛl^w : k̥ɛn^v : ɡlɛn^v : bɛn^vdən/, etc. (Once again, cf. forms for Islay: [m̥ɟal̥^v : k̥'ɛn̥^v : ɡl̥'ɛn̥^v : b̥ɟɛn̥^v d̥ən̥]).⁴²⁹ The use of this diphthong thus becomes similarly superfluous in both phonetic and phonemic transcription.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁸ Headword in the latter case is *seann-té* [ʃε̃ʊɲ̥ d̥'z'e].

⁴²⁹ Point 55 (Bowmore).

⁴³⁰ An alternative analysis would be to regard the forms [aʊ εʊ] as allophones of /a ε/ before [l^w] and [n^w], although in my opinion this step is not necessary.

In the case of *sannt* (737) [s[ẽũ]nɔ̃], *seann-té* (747) [ʃ[ẽũ]n̩ ɔ̃'z'e], *anns an* (783) [ɛʊns ən],⁴³¹ and *teann* (837) [tʃ[ɛʊ]n̩], the following [n] is not shown as velarised in the *SGDS* results, although there is evidence in the LSS notes that the fieldworker attempted to correct this in the case of *sannt* and *teann*. I would maintain that in all these cases the following nasal is both velarised and rounded.

⁴³¹ Headword is *sneachda: anns an t-sneachda* [ɛʊns ən tʃɛxɔ̃]. In this instance, the diphthong is not shown within dropped square brackets. The *SGDS* entry must have been elicited with some degree of stress on *anns*, since this phrase would normally be pronounced [as ən 'tʃɛxɔ̃] by Colonsay speakers.

This diphthong is found in the words *banntlach* (77) [b̥₁εɪɲɔ̃'z'irəx], *cainnt* (142) [k₁εɪɲɔ̃'z'], one version of *cnàimh* (210) [k₁εɪɲ̩] (209 has [k₁éiɲ̩]), *faing* (395) [f₁εɪɲ̩'ɔ̃],⁴³² *làimhsich* (555) [l̩₁εɪɲ̩ʃɪç], *seinn* (752) [ʃ₁εɪɲ̩].

It would be tempting to see this diphthong as a positional variant (possibly an allophone) of [ε] before [ɲ] (or [ɲ']) in final position or when followed by a palatalised consonant, were it not for the examples *cnàimh* and *làimhsich*. However, the presence of these two forms without following [ɲ] means that it should be regarded as phonemic. Because [ɪ] has been defined as an allophone of the /i/ phoneme, the diphthong should be transcribed phonemically as /εi/.

The modified forms [éɪ] and [éi] are discussed below.

⁴³² Headword is *fang*: *faing* (dat. sg.). The nominative is given at 394 as *fang* [fεɲ'ɔ̃]. The dative singular of feminine nouns is generally not used in Colonsay Gaelic; moreover, the existence of the field name *Fang Mór* would suggest that *fang* is masculine in Colonsay, and that this form is in fact plural/gen. sg. On the other hand, the neighbouring field is given in Loder's list as *Fang Bheag*, so there is some inconsistency (Loder 1935: 426).

ua

This diphthong is found in the following words: *gruthan* (6) [gr[ua]ŋ],⁴³³ *a-nuas* (44) [n[ua]s], *buain* (134) [b[ua]ɲ], *duan* (353) [d[ua]ŋ], *ruamhar* (719) [r[ua]r̥], *uaigneach* (875) [uaɣ'ŋəx]⁴³⁴ and the genitive form *na h-uamha* (876) [nə h[ua]ɲ].⁴³⁵

In another set of words it combines with [i], in various phonetic guises, to form what might, on an alternative reading, be considered a triphthong. These include the comparative form *cruaidhe* (263) [kr[ua]i] (262 has the positive *cruaidh* with a subtly different diphthong [kr[u̘]i]), *fuaim* (443) [f[ua]i̯m̩], *luaidhe* (586) [l̥[ua]i], and the comparative form *nas luaithe* [nas l̥[ua]i]. The diacritic in the last example is the syllabic marker [̥], which appears nowhere else in the Colonsay results; presumably the transcription [ua̯i] is also intended to signify that [i] belongs to a separate syllable, and hence that this sequence is to be interpreted as diphthong + [i], rather than as a triphthong (see discussion, p. 201).

Both /u/ and /a/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect, and the diphthong /ua/ may therefore be considered to be phonemic.

The modified forms [uʌ uà uə uʁ u̘ u̙] are discussed below.

⁴³³ Headword is *àdha*, a word which is not known on Colonsay. The pronunciation of *gruthan* with a diphthong is a little surprising, since with the intervening *th* it might be expected to be pronounced *[gruʔaŋ]. The spelling **gruan* would be a better representation of the Colonsay pronunciation.

⁴³⁴ Note the absence of dropped square brackets. It appears that their omission is merely an inconsistency in the transcription.

⁴³⁵ Headword is *uaimh*: *uamha*.

ui

This diphthong is found in the comparative form *na's buidhre* (115) [nas b̥[ui]ri], in *cluinntinn* (208) [kl̥[ui]nd'z'ɪ̯n̩], *cruinn* (264) [kr[ui]n̩], *muinntir* (638) [m[ui]nd'z'ɪ̯r̩], *suim* (814) [s[ui]m̩] and the plural/gen. sg. form *tuill* (858) [t[ui]ɫ̩].⁴³⁶

Both /u/ and /i/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect, and the diphthong /ui/ may therefore be considered to be phonemic.

The modified forms [uĩ uĩ̯ uĩ̯̃] are discussed below.

⁴³⁶ Headword is *toll: tuill*.

Less commonly occurring diphthongs

The remaining diphthongs found in the *SGDS* results will now be considered.

Diphthongs beginning with [i]

Three diphthong combinations beginning with [i] occur more than twice in the Colonsay data set:

[ia] is found in the following words: *grian* (504, 505) [gʲr̥ia₁ŋ], *Niall* (657) [nia₁ˠ] (note absence of square brackets round the diphthong), *srian* (797-799) [sr̥ia₁ŋ].⁴³⁷

[iï] is found in one version of *a-riamh* (58) [ɹ̥iïv] (57 has [r̥'iïv]), one version of *bliadhna* (110) [b̥l̥'iïn`ø] and its plural *bliadhnachan* [b̥l̥'iïn`əxəŋ]⁴³⁸ (111 has [b̥l̥'iï̃n`ə]), *cliabh* (199, 200) [kl̥'iïv], *iasgach* (510) [iïsgəx], *sliasaid* (771, 772) [sʌiïsidʲ].⁴³⁹

[iÿ] is found in *ionnsachadh* (529) [iÿs`əxəv] (note absence of square brackets), *ionnsaidh* (530) [iÿs`iç],⁴⁴⁰ *reusanta* (700) [ɹ̥iÿsəndə].⁴⁴¹

Two pairs occur twice in the data:

[iü] is found in *biadh* (104) [b̥iüv] and *fiadhaich* (419) [fiüç]

[iÿ̃] is found in *bliadhna* (111) [b̥l̥'iÿ̃n`ə] (110 has [b̥l̥'iï̃n`ø] – see above) and *fiadh* (417) [fiÿ̃v]

⁴³⁷ Headword in 799 is *dà shrian*, and the form given is [ə ʁ̥hia₁ŋ] (= *a shrian*).

⁴³⁸ Plural form is recorded in a footnote.

⁴³⁹ Headword is *sliabh / sliasaid* in 771, and *mo shliabh / mo shliasaid*, given as [mə ʲ'h̥iï̃sidʲ], in 772.

⁴⁴⁰ The form [iõsiç] is given as an alternative, but a footnote states that this form was prompted, and is not used on Colonsay.

⁴⁴¹ This word is remarkable in that the usual 'breaking' of [e:] to [ia] in northern forms of Gaelic is reversed, with Colonsay showing a 'broken' form, while most Outer Hebridean dialects have [e:]. Cf. Jackson (1968).

The following six pairs occur only once:

[iə] is found in *a' cheud* (182) [ç[iə]d]⁴⁴²

[iÿ] is found in *iarraidh* (509 – verbal noun) [iÿriç] (preterite *dh'iarr* given at 508 as [iÿriç])

[iö] is found in *fiach* (433) [fiöx]⁴⁴³

[iu] is found in *a shiùil* (754) [ə h[iu]l]⁴⁴⁴

[iü] is found in one version of *a-riamh* (57) [r'iüv] (as already noted, 58 has [riüv])

[iÛ] is found in *dh'iarr* (508) [iÛriç]⁴⁴⁵ (509 has *iarraidh* [iÿriç] – see above)

In addition, [iu] (with lowered [i] in onset) is found in *triùir* (869) [triùir], although a footnote warns (correctly) that this word is rarely used in Colonsay. This is the only instance of a diphthong beginning with [i], and can perhaps be discounted.

Analysis

Such a wide range of representations in the *SGDS* results suggests that the fieldworker, Eric Hamp, was trying to catch some very subtle variations in the articulation of these diphthongs. However, for purposes of phonemic description we need to try and derive some degree of abstraction from the raw data, according to the principles already enunciated.

/i/ and /a/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect. The combination /ia/ may therefore be regarded as phonemic.

/i/ and /ə/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect. The combination /iə/ may therefore be regarded as phonemic.

⁴⁴² Headword is *ceud*.

⁴⁴³ Headword is *fiù*.

⁴⁴⁴ Headword is *seòl: a shiùil*.

⁴⁴⁵ Headword is *iarr: dh'iarr*.

[ī] has been defined as an allophone, and [ĩ ỹ ỹ̄] as free variants, of the /ə/ phoneme. The combinations [īĩ ỹ̄ ỹ̄ ỹ̄] may therefore be regarded as variants of the diphthong /iə/.

/i/ and /u/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect. The combination /iu/ may therefore be regarded as phonemic.

Forms involving [ú ü û] as the second element present a problem. These sounds have been defined as variants within the /y/ phoneme (pp. 53-54). Following the approach adopted thus far would lead us to regard the diphthongs [iü iür iû] as variants of /iy/. Instinctively, however, it seems a little counter-intuitive to analyse the words in question phonemically as *biadh* (104) */b̥iy̆/, *fiadhaich* (419) */fiy̆ç/, *a-riamh* (57) */riyv̆/, *dh'iarr* (508) */j̥iy̆r/, especially since the parallel forms *a-riamh* (58) [ɹīīv̆] and *iarraidh* (509) [īj̄r̄īç] would have to be analysed phonemically as /riəv̆/, /iəriç/ respectively. I suggest, therefore, that all these combinations should be regarded as variants of the /iə/ diphthong.

/ø/ has been defined as a variant within the /y/ phoneme. The combination [iø] should therefore, strictly speaking, be represented phonemically as /iy/. For the same reasons as in the previous paragraph, it seems preferable to regard this combination too as a variant of the /iə/ diphthong.

Finally, it should be noted that many words which have a diphthong in other dialects are realised in Colonsay Gaelic with long [ī]. These include: *dìomhain* (311) [d̥'z'iv̆], *fìon* (429) [fīn̆], *Iosa Crìosd* (531) [īsə krīsd̆],⁴⁴⁶ *lìon* (577) [līn̆], *mìos* (621) [mīsə], *sìos* [fīs]. In fact, this pronunciation is found throughout most of Argyll, apart from some northern mainland areas (Grann 2000: 52-53 and Map 69). Boyd notes the same finding for Tiree (2014: 340).

⁴⁴⁶ Headword is *Iosa*.

Diphthongs beginning with [ɪ]

Only two diphthongs beginning with [ɪ] are found in the Colonsay data:

[ɪʊ] is found in *ionnsaidh* (530) [ɪʊnsɪç], as an alternative to [iʏrʃ'ɪç]. However, a footnote makes clear that the [ɪʊnsɪç] form was prompted, and that the 'word [is] not used'. This must mean that this particular form is not used in Colonsay. My own findings confirm this to be the case; however, the word *ionnsaidh*, and the compound preposition *a dh'ionnsaidh*, certainly are found, and they are pronounced [iʏrʃ'ɪç : i̇iʏrʃ'ɪç]. In any case, since the diphthong [ɪʊ] is not attested anywhere else in the data, it can be discounted as part of the repertoire of native Colonsay sounds.

[ɪu] is found in *cliù* (201) [kɫ'ɪu]. Note that the [ɪ] here is raised, bringing it closer to [i]. The presence of this sound means that the Colonsay pronunciation of this word sounds quite different from other varieties of Gaelic (e.g. Islay: [kɫ'u];⁴⁴⁷ Barra: [kɫ'u:]).⁴⁴⁸ Since [ɪ] has been defined as a (rare) variant of [i] within the /i/ phoneme, the combination [ɪu] may be regarded as a variant of the phonemic diphthong /iu/ (see above).

⁴⁴⁷ Point 55 (Bowmore).

⁴⁴⁸ Points 28-30.

Diphthongs beginning with [ɛ]

The pairs [ɛɔ] and [ɛɪ] have already been discussed, as two of the more common diphthong combinations in Colonsay Gaelic. This section will cover modified forms of [ɛ] as well as the unmodified symbol. It will also include [ɛ̘], since lowered [e] has been defined as a variant within the /ɛ/ phoneme; there are no other instances of a diphthong beginning with [e] or any of its modified forms in the Colonsay data.

Apart from [ɛɪ], already considered, the only pair in [ɛ] to occur more than twice in the *SGDS* results is [ɛ̘ɪ], in *annlan* (43) [ɪ̘ɛɪɫəŋ`], the genitive form *bainnse* (76) [b̘ɛ̘ɪɫ̘ ɪ̘],⁴⁴⁹ and one version of the dative *làimh* (553) [ɪ̘`ɛ̘ɪɫ̘] (552 has the subtly different form [ɪ̘`ɛ̘ɪɫ̘v]).⁴⁵⁰

Two pairs are found twice:

[ɛ̘ɪ] is found in one version of *cnàimh* (209) [kr̘ɛ̘ɪɫ̘] (210 has [kr̘ɛ̘ɪɫ̘v]) and, as has just been seen, in *làimh* (552) [ɪ̘`ɛ̘ɪɫ̘] (also *làmh* (549), where we find the forms [ɪ̘`ɛ̘ɪɫ̘v : ɪ̘`ɛ̘v]).⁴⁵¹

[ɛɪ] is found in *beinn* (106) [b̘ɛɪɫ̘]⁴⁵² and *anns a' bhroinn* (126) [ans ə vr̘ɛɪɫ̘].⁴⁵³

The following seven pairs occur only once:

[ɛ̘ɪ] is found in *ràmh* (694) [r̘ɛ̘ɪɫ̘].⁴⁵⁴

[ɛ̘ɛ] is found in *aingealan* (16) [ɪ̘ɛ̘ɛɫ̘].

[ɛɔ] is found in one version of *beò* (96) [b̘ɛɔ].

⁴⁴⁹ Headword is *banais*: *bainnse*.

⁴⁵⁰ Headword in both cases is *làmh*: *làimh*.

⁴⁵¹ A footnote indicates that the first form is 'rarely used'. Dative forms of feminine nouns are unusual on Colonsay, except in set phrases. Note that 550 has *làmh* [ɪ̘`ɛ̘v], and 551 *do làmh* [dó ɪ̘`ɛ̘v].

⁴⁵² The headword is *binn*, and the forms given are [b̘ɪɫ̘ / b̘ɛɪɫ̘]. From my knowledge of Colonsay Gaelic, I am sure that the second word elicited is in fact *beinn*. The informant may have misunderstood which word she was being asked to pronounce.

⁴⁵³ Headword is *brù*: *anns a' bhroinn*.

⁴⁵⁴ Headword is *ràmh* / *ràcan*, and the forms given are [r̘ɛ̘v / r̘ɛ̘ɪɫ̘]. The second form must be the plural/gen. sg. (*ràmh*).

[ɛø] (both elements raised) is found in the parallel version of *beð* (95) [b_h[ɛø]].

[ɛø] is found in the pl./gen. sg. form *eðin* (377) [ɛøɪ̯n].⁴⁵⁵

[ɛø] is found in *eðlas* (376) [ɛøɪ̯lʰəs].

[ɛø] is found in *feðil* (413) [fɛøɪ̯lʰ].

It is clear from this analysis that diphthongs beginning in [ɛ] fall broadly into two categories: those ending in a high front vowel ([ɛi], etc.) and those ending in a rounded back vowel ([ɛo], etc.)

The forms [ɛ ɛ̂ ɛ̃ ɛ̄ ɛ̅] have all been defined as variants within the phoneme /ɛ/. The first element of diphthong combinations beginning with all these symbols can therefore be regarded phonemically as /ɛ/.

The form [ɪ] has been defined as an allophone within the /i/ phoneme, and [i] as a variant within this allophone. The second element in combinations involving these symbols can therefore be regarded phonemically as /i/.

This means that all diphthongs in the first category [ɛɪ ɛ̂ɪ ɛ̃ɪ ɛ̄ɪ ɛ̅ɪ] may be regarded phonemically as variants of the phonemic diphthong /ɛi/.

The raised form [ø] has been defined as a variant within the /o/ phoneme. The second element in combinations involving this symbol can therefore be regarded phonemically as /o/.

This means that all diphthongs in the second category [ɛø ɛ̂ø ɛ̃ø ɛ̄ø ɛ̅ø] may be regarded phonemically as variants of the phonemic diphthong /ɛo/.

⁴⁵⁵ Headword is *eun*: *eðin*.

It is worth pointing out, in relation to the latter diphthong, that orthographic *eo* or *eò*, after a palatalised consonant, is pronounced as a monophthong [o] or [ɔː] (sometimes modified): *deoch* (307) [d̪ʰzʰòx], *seo* (753) [ʃɔ], *leabhar* (568) [λoʔɔr], *ceòl* (181) [kʰɔːl̪]. The /εo/ diphthong is found only where there is no palatalisation: this may be initially, as in *eòlas* (376) [ɛ̃ɔl̪ʰəs], *eòin* (377) [ɛ̃ɔɪ̪n];⁴⁵⁶ following the ‘plain’ lateral [l̪], as in *leotha* [l̪ʰɛ̃ɔɪ̪xə], or following any of the labial consonants, which in Colonsay are not palatalised or followed by a j-glide: *beò* (95, 96) [b̪ʰɛ̃ɔ : b̪ʰɛ̃ɔɪ̪], *feòil* (413) [f̪ʰɛ̃ɔl̪ʰ] (Cf. Islay: [b̪ʰɔː : f̪ʰɔːl̪ʰ]).⁴⁵⁷

The only diphthong beginning with [ɛ] not to be caught by this analysis is [ɛè], which occurs only in the plural form *aingealan* (16) [ɛ̃èɪ̪l̪n̪]. This is a rather surprising form; the singular is shown as *aingeal* (15) [ɛ̃ʲn̪al̪]. Flora Macneill pronounced the plural as [ɛ̃ʲn̪al̪ə̃n̪], which accords much more closely with the singular. It may be that in Annabella McNeill’s version for the *SGDS*, the palatalisation of [ɲ] was transferred to the [l̪] (or heard as such), leaving the two vowels to glide into one another in a diphthong. Since this is the only instance of [ɛè] in the Colonsay results, and I have been unable to reproduce the form [ɛ̃èɪ̪l̪n̪] from my own research, it can be ignored as a significant diphthong in this dialect.

⁴⁵⁶ Headword is *eun*: *eòin*.

⁴⁵⁷ Point 54 (Port Ellen). In the case of *meòirean* (614, 615) [mɛ̃ rən], there is no diphthong, but the form given corresponds to *meuran* ‘thimble’ (confirmed by LSS); the word for ‘finger’ in this dialect is *corràg*, pl. *corràgan*, as indicated at (614).

Diphthongs beginning with [a]

The combination [aʊ] and its variant [ɑʊ] have already been discussed.

The only other pairs with [a] as the first element are the following:

[ai] is found in *dhaibh* (319) [ʏ[ai]v],⁴⁵⁸ *sàibh* (728, 729) [s[ai]v],⁴⁵⁹ *saibhir* (739) [s[ai]v̄ir].

[aɪ] is found in *chail* (140) [x[ai]ʎ]⁴⁶⁰ and *saille* (731, 732) [s[ai]l'd'z'ĩ].

Since [ɪ] has been defined as an allophone of the /i/ phoneme, both may be regarded phonemically as /ai/.

⁴⁵⁸ Headword is *do: dóibh*.

⁴⁵⁹ This is the plural/gen. sg. form. 729 has [saiy / sa'v], where the second form is clearly the nominative. Note the absence of brackets in this entry. Headword in both cases is *sàbh: sàibh*.

⁴⁶⁰ A footnote indicates 'perhaps [x[ǎĩ]ʎ]?' This notation is used in the *SGDS* results for 'a series of very short diphthongs which may express themselves as super-short equal-prominence ones' (Vol. I: 118). This, however, appears to be the only occurrence of this form of notation in the Colonsay results.

Diphthongs beginning with [y]

There are four combinations involving a form of [y] as the first element:

[yi] is found in *druim* (351) [dr₁y₁m̩]⁴⁶¹ and *oidhche* (670) [₁y₁ç₁] (but *oidhche Shamhna* (734) [₁y₁ç₁ hev̩nə]).⁴⁶²

[ÿi] is found with nasalisation in *naoi* (650) [n`₁ÿ̃₁] and *naoimh* (652) [n`₁ÿ̃₁ɣ], and without nasalisation in *oidhche Shamhna* (734) [₁y₁ç₁ hev̩nə], as just noted.

[ÿi] is found only in the dative form *mhnaoi* (90) [vr₁ÿ̃₁],⁴⁶³ with a footnote explaining, correctly, that this form is not used in Colonsay Gaelic. It can therefore be discounted as a significant diphthong in this dialect.

[ÿi] is found only in *maighdean* (594) [m₁ÿ̃₁d'z'ɲ], a word which would only normally be encountered in a literary or poetic context.⁴⁶⁴ Again, this can probably be disregarded in an analysis of the Colonsay dialect.

Since [y ÿ] have been defined as variants within the /y/ phoneme, these combinations may be regarded phonemically as /yi/.

⁴⁶¹ A note of incredulity is expressed in a footnote: ‘sic [₁y₁]’.

⁴⁶² Headword is *Samhainn*.

⁴⁶³ Headword is *bean: mnaoi*.

⁴⁶⁴ Flora Macneill professed not to know this word. However, in MacKinnon’s essay ‘Air an Duibhirtich’, one of the boats used for the excursion is named as the *Maighdeann Orasach* (Mackinnon 1956: 270-276).

Diphthongs beginning with [y]

There are five combinations involving a form of [y] as the first element. Two of these occur in more than one headword:

[yi] is found in *foill* (438) [f₁y₁ʎ] and *oighre* (672) [i₁y₁r₁].

[ÿi] is found in two oblique forms of *craobh*: gen. sg. *craoibhe* (248) [kr₁ÿ₁i₁v₁] and dat.sg. *craoibh* in *às a' chraoibh* (250) [εs ə x₁r₁ÿ₁i₁v₁].⁴⁶⁵ Non-nominative forms of feminine nouns are rarely used in Colonsay Gaelic (see pp. 321-322).

The other combinations are each found only once:

[ÿi] is found only in one version of *soillse* (789) [s₁ÿ₁i₁ʃ₁ ÿ₁ : s₁ÿ₁i₁ ʃ₁ ÿ₁] (790 has *soillse-latha* [s₁ÿ₁i₁ ʃ₁ ÿ₁ ʎ₁aʎ₁]).⁴⁶⁶

[ÿi] is found in *coilltean* (226) [k₁ÿ₁i₁ʎ₁d₁'z₁i₁ŋ₁].

[ÿi] is found in *coinnleir* (231) [k₁ÿ₁i₁ʎ₁a₁r₁].

Since [ÿ ÿ] have been defined as variants within the /y/ phoneme, and [i] as a variant of the allophone [i] within the /i/ phoneme, these combinations, like those beginning with [y], may be regarded phonemically as /yi/.

⁴⁶⁵ Headword in the latter instance is *craobh:craoibh*.

⁴⁶⁶ Headword in both cases is *soillsich*.

Diphthongs beginning with [ø]

Only two diphthongs with [ø] as the first element are found in the Colonsay data:

[øi] is found in *croinn* (246) [krøiŋ]⁴⁶⁷ and in one version of *soillse*, in the form *soillse-latha* (790) [søiʎ'ĩ ɪ ɪʔa] (as noted above, 789 has [sʎĩ ʎ'ĩ : sʎĩ ʎ'ĩ]).⁴⁶⁸

[øi] is found only in *saighdear* [søiɖ'z'aɾ].

Since [ø ø] have been defined as variants within the /y/ phoneme, these combinations, like those beginning with [y] and [ɣ], may be regarded phonemically as /yi/.

It will be noted that all diphthongs involving a rounded front vowel [y ɣ ø] as the first element have a form of [i] or [ɪ] as the second element, and have been analysed phonemically as /yi/.

⁴⁶⁷ Headword is *crann*: *croinn*.

⁴⁶⁸ Headword in both cases is *soillsich*.

Diphthongs beginning with [u]

There are no fewer than 12 diphthongs in the Colonsay data set with [u] as the first element. In all cases, the [u] is given in its unmodified form, without any diacritics. Only three of these diphthong combinations occur more than twice.

The combinations [ua] and [ui] have already been dealt with, as two of the relatively common diphthongs in Colonsay Gaelic. Only one other pair occurs more than twice:

[uΛ] is found in *buachaille* (129) [b_ɹuΛ_ɹxəʎi],⁴⁶⁹ in the future form *cuartachaidh* (268) [k_ɹuΛ_ɹs'ḑΛxɪç] and corresponding conditional *chuartachadh* (269) [x_ɹuΛ_ɹs'ḑΛxΛɣ],⁴⁷⁰ and in *ruadh* (717) [r_ɹuΛ_ɹɣ].

Since [Λ] has been defined as a variant within the /a/ phoneme,⁴⁷¹ this combination may be regarded phonemically as /ua/ (see above).

The following pairs are each found in two headwords:

[uĩ] is found in *bruadar* (24) [b_ɹuĩ_ɹḑĩr] and the conditional form *bhuaileadh* (132) [v_ɹuĩ_ɹl'ĩɣ]. The fluidity of these diphthongs is well illustrated by the fact that the two other forms of *buail* listed (future tense and verbal noun) are given as *buailidh* (131) [b_ɹuə_ɹl'ĩç] and *bualadh* (133) [b_ɹuṣ_ɹl'ĩɣ] respectively.

[uĩ] is found in *cluas* (205) [kl'ɹuĩ_ɹs] and *fuair* (444) [f_ɹuĩ_ɹr].

[uṣ] is found, as already noted, in *bualadh* (133) [b_ɹuṣ_ɹl'ĩɣ] and also in *man cuairt* (267) [maŋ qh_ɹuṣ_ɹs't's']⁴⁷² (cf. *cuartachaidh* (268) [k_ɹuΛ_ɹs'ḑΛxɪç], *chuartachadh* (269) [x_ɹuΛ_ɹs'ḑΛxΛɣ]).

[uṣ] is found in *cruaidh* (262) [kr_ɹuṣ_ɹɹ] (cf. comparative form *cruaidhe* (263) [kr_ɹua_ɹi]) and *duais* (352) [ḑ_ɹuṣ_ɹɹ].

⁴⁶⁹ Headword is *buachail*: *buachaille*. There is no separate entry for the nominative *buachail*.

⁴⁷⁰ Headwords are *cuairtich*: *cuairtichidh* and *cuairtich*: *chuarticheadh* respectively.

⁴⁷¹ [Λ] has also been defined as an allophone of /a/, when it occurs before [x] in unstressed syllables. However, this condition is met by only one of the examples listed here.

⁴⁷² Headword is *cuairt*.

[i̯] has been defined as an allophone of the /ə/ phoneme, and [i̯] as a variant of this allophone. [ɨ̯] has been defined as a variant of /ə/; the form [ɨ̯] does not occur in any other context, but it seems reasonable to include it, too, as a variant of /ə/. All these combinations may therefore be interpreted phonemically as /uə/ (see below).

The remaining pairs each occur in only one headword:

[ui] is found in *cuimhne* (275) [k₁ui₁ɲi̯]. Since [i] has been defined as an allophone of /i/, this combination may be regarded phonemically as /ui/ (see above).

[uĩ] is found in *buaidh* (130) [b₁uĩ₁i̯]. The rounding of [i̯] is presumably influenced by the preceding [u], although this is not the case with the other diphthongs beginning in [u].

[uɨ̯] is found in *sluagh* (775, 776) [sl̩₁uɨ̯₁ʎ].

[uə] is found in *buailidh* (131) [b₁uə₁l̩₁ʎ̩].

Since [i̯ ɨ̯] have been defined as variants within the /ə/ phoneme, these last three combinations may be regarded phonemically as variants of /uə/.

[uâ] is found in *fuaghail* (442) [f₁uâ₁l̩₁̩].⁴⁷³ Since [â] has been defined as a variant within the /a/ phoneme, this combination may be regarded phonemically as /ua/ (see above).

⁴⁷³ The final [l̩] suggests that the form recorded is in fact the verbal noun *fuaghal*.

Diphthongs beginning with [o]

The only diphthong beginning with [o] in the Colonsay data set is [ou], which is found in the words *toll* (857) [t₁ou₁˘] and *donn* (329). In the case of [d₁ou₁n˘], this form appears as an alternative to [d₁o^on˘] (328, 329). Although the latter reading is given precedence in the *SGDS* results, the form [d₁ou₁n˘] accords better with the general pattern of transcription of this dialect; the sequence [o^o], with a (half-) long vowel followed by a superscript, raised version of the same vowel, is not replicated anywhere else in the data.

On the other hand, if the existence of the /l^w/ phoneme, and the rounded allophone [n^w] within the /n^v/ phoneme, is accepted (see pp. 75-76), these two words should then be transcribed [to₁^w : don^w] respectively (phonemically /tol^w : don^v/). The use of the diphthong [ou] thus becomes superfluous, in the same way as [au εu] (see above).

Diphthongs beginning with [ɔ]

There are two diphthongs beginning with [ɔ] in the Colonsay results, both of which are attested only once:

[ɔi] is found in the comparative form *nas doimhne* (326) [nas d₁ɔi₁ jɪ].⁴⁷⁴

[ɔi] is found in *boc goibhre* (490) [b₁oxg₁ g₁ɔi₁r].⁴⁷⁵

Since [ɔ] has been defined as a variant of /ɔ/, and [ɪ] as an allophone of /i/, both these combinations may be interpreted phonemically as /ɔi/.

⁴⁷⁴ Headword is *domhain*: *doimhne*.

⁴⁷⁵ Headword is *gobhar*: *boc goibhre*. The genitive form is not used in contemporary spoken Gaelic on Colonsay.

Diphthongs beginning with [u]

The only diphthong with a form of [u] as its first component to appear in the Colonsay data set is [uɪ], which is found in the comparative form *na's rìghne* (707) [nas rɪuɪɲi].⁴⁷⁶ Since [u] has been defined as a variant of the allophone [y̥] within the /y/ phoneme, and [ɪ] as an allophone of /i/, this combination may be regarded phonemically as /yi/ (see above).

Summary table

On the basis of this analysis, the 57 varieties of diphthongs appearing in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay have been condensed to give the following 11 'phonemic' combinations:

ia iə iu
ei eo
ai
yi
ua ui uə
ɔi

⁴⁷⁶ Headword is *rìghinn*: *na's rìghne*. Cf. positive form *rìghinn* (706) [rɪy̥ɪɲi], with footnote: perhaps [rɪy̥ɪɲi]?

3. NON-SEGMENTAL (PROSODIC) FEATURES

No description, however detailed, of the segmental phonemes and their actual realisation in a particular dialect is sufficient in itself to convey a sense of what makes that dialect distinctive. There are, in addition, a number of phonological features which have a bearing on the characteristic pronunciation of the dialect, which cannot be identified as segments in their own right, and whose effects often extend over more than one phonetic segment.

These include the standard ‘suprasegmental’ features – stress, duration and tone – as identified by Lehiste (1970).⁴⁷⁷ These operate on the segmental string to give a characteristic rhythm and ‘melody’ to utterances. It is this, as much as lexical choices or the specific realisation of individual segments, that gives ‘local colour’ to the different varieties of a language. Even when the words used are those of the standard language, differences in the way these suprasegmental features are deployed will lead to the perception of a ‘regional accent’. Scottish Standard English, with its characteristic intonation patterns, and generally shorter vowels than Standard Southern English, is a good example of this.

In the case of Gaelic, there are a number of other characteristic features that are also difficult to categorise in purely segmental terms. These include preaspiration, epenthesis and, in many southern dialects, glottalisation. These have already been referred to in the analysis of segmental phonemes, but I shall show that these features are in fact closely linked to factors such as stress, duration and tone, and therefore fall to be described here, along with the more conventional suprasegmental features. For this reason I have chosen to use the term ‘non-segmental’ to describe all these processes operating on the segmental string.

⁴⁷⁷ The terms used by different authors vary. Lehiste (1970: 1-2) initially refers to ‘pitch, stress and quantity’ (in that order), but in her own analysis goes on to use the umbrella term ‘tonal features’ to cover the distinct categories of pitch, tone and intonation (1970: 54).

I have also included nasalisation and voicing/devoicing under this heading. These too are features which, at any rate as found in this dialect, are difficult to analyse in purely segmental terms. In other languages they do lend themselves to segmental treatment: French, for example, has its characteristic nasal vowel phonemes, while final devoiced consonants are a regular allophonic feature of standard German.

I intend to demonstrate that most, if not all, of these features fulfil a *prosodic* function in this dialect, because they serve, in one way or another, to increase the *prominence* of key elements within a phrase or sentence. In general these will be words or syllables which carry particular semantic significance, and will be the least predictable elements within a given utterance.

Cathair Ó Dochartaigh (1981) brings a number of these features together as examples of what he calls ‘vowel strengthening’, whereby a vowel may be given added prominence within an utterance. Ó Dochartaigh concentrates mainly on vowel lengthening and diphthongisation, which are less significant for the dialect under discussion here, but he also includes epenthesis, and to a limited extent preaspiration. Although he does not consider glottalisation in this connection, I have argued in my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 46) that glottalisation, in those dialects where it occurs, fulfils a similar ‘vowel-strengthening’ function. I have further argued that the concept of ‘vowel strengthening’ can be extended to cover *syllables*, and not just their core vowels; as a result, a syllable may be ‘strengthened’ – implying, among other things, an increase in its length – while retaining a short vowel at its nucleus. Or, as MacAulay (1992: 233) puts it, ‘length is a syllable feature rather than one simply of the nucleus.’ In this chapter I also intend to demonstrate that these prosodic features tend to have a bearing on one another, and are therefore to be seen as inter-related.

By adopting a prosodic approach to these features, the number of segmental phonemes identified in this dialect can be kept within manageable limits. I have already discussed the issue of voiced stops, mainly resulting from the nasal mutation; if voicing were to be regarded as an integral feature of the segmental string, a separate series of voiced stop phonemes would have to be posited, and suitable symbols devised to differentiate these from the unvoiced lenis stops represented here as /b d g/. Similarly, unless glottalisation is accepted as a non-segmental feature, a separate series of glottalised phonemes will be required, merely in order to take account of the fact that glottalisation is *absent* in epenthetic clusters (see pp. 61-66).

Stress

Key to any notion of relative prominence within an utterance is the perception of stress. According to Ladd (2008: 49), ‘probably no topic in the general area of intonation and suprasegmentals has posed such a puzzle as stress’. Despite being a familiar feature of most languages, and essential for the perception of *metre*, stress is difficult to pin down in purely phonetic terms, or to relate to a single acoustic parameter. Peaks in the waveform, and in the intensity contour of the spectrogram, can give an indication of where the stressed syllables are. But other acoustic factors are at work also. Stressed syllables may be pronounced with greater clarity, and will often be lengthened in some way (while in some instances retaining a short vowel). Often it is the intonation pattern of an utterance that provides the best clues to where the stress is being placed, although the position of the pitch accent may not necessarily coincide with a peak or trough in the pitch contour. The combination of all these factors gives a language, or a dialect, its characteristic rhythm.

Stress is most easily described at the level of the individual word. In citation forms, where a word contains more than one syllable, one of those syllables will usually be consistently stressed; this is called *lexical stress*. In Gaelic, lexical stress is normally on the first syllable (except in compound words), whereas in English, the stress may occur on different syllables, in some cases marking different grammatical categories. Thus in English we find the homographs: *perMIT* (verb) v. *PERmit* (noun), *conTENT* (adjective) v. *CONtent* (noun), etc.

Stress also operates at the level of the phrase or sentence, where it is used to highlight particular words or syllables on the basis of their semantic importance. Unlike lexical stress, the way in which phrasal or sentence stress operates is not prescribed, and subtle changes in stress patterns within an utterance, especially when combined with changes in intonation, can signal different shades of meaning. Lexical stress may actually be neutralised within a longer utterance, if the word concerned is not itself phrasally stressed. Phrasal or sentence stress is thus seen to be a feature of the way the utterance as a whole is organised phonologically:

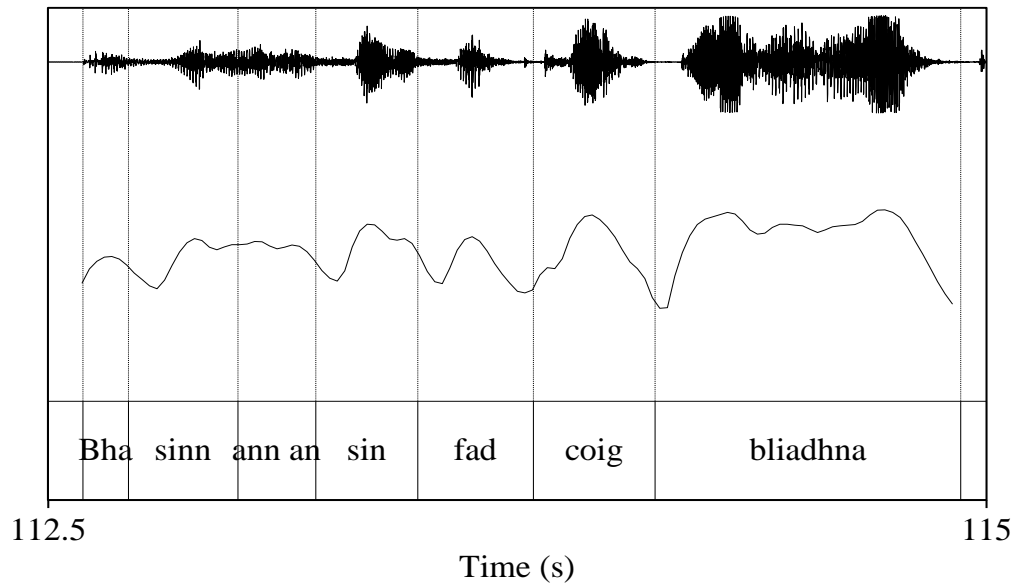
The prominence pattern of an utterance reflects the organisation of the syllables into a hierarchical metrical structure. This structure specifies abstract relations of prominence or strength between syllables, and between larger constituents such as words and phrases.

(Ladd 2008: 61).

The symbols for primary and secondary stress [' ,] are conventionally used in IPA segmental transcription, although they do not themselves represent segments. In practice this usually indicates lexical stress (in citation forms), rather than the stress pattern of the utterance as a whole, which is better represented by a system such as *ToBI* (see p. 244). As a matter of editorial policy, the *SGDS* does not mark lexical stress when it occurs on the first syllable of a word, since this is the normal pattern in Gaelic pronunciation (Vol. I: 119). It should be noted, however, that in compound words, the stress generally falls on the *qualifying* element in the compound: *bogha-frois* [b̥o'fr̥ɔʃ], *taigh-seinnse* [tə'ʃ̪ei̯n̪ʃi̯], but *meanbh-chuileagan* ['m̩ən̩xu̯l'a̯ɡ̩m̩].

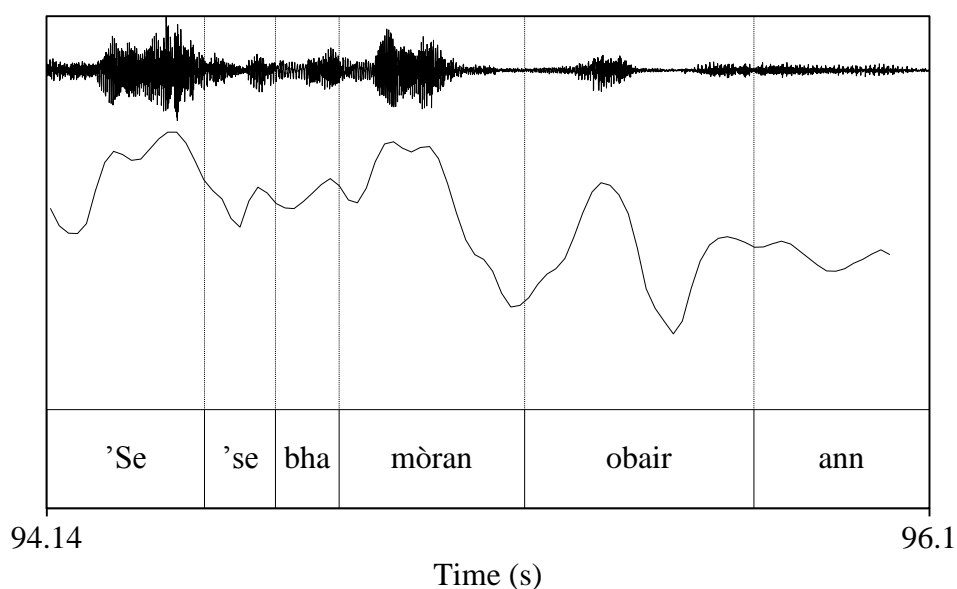
Within a phrase or sentence, stress can vary widely according to the speaker's intention, but will tend to be placed on an element which provides new information, or the answer to a question, or is in some way less predictable. In general, this principle accords with the Smooth Signal Redundancy Hypothesis (Aylett 2000; Aylett and Turk 2004), as discussed in my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 46-51). According to this hypothesis, added prominence is routinely given to less predictable elements within an utterance; this usually means increasing the duration of the syllable concerned, but may also involve greater intensity, more distinct articulation, and a change of pitch. These, as we have seen, are key elements in the marking of stress. The cumulation of several such markers in a single syllable constitutes the *acoustic redundancy* referred to in the title of the hypothesis. As we have seen, however, it is just such a cumulation of elements that results in the perception of stress, so the term *redundancy* in this context is used in a technical sense, and should not be read as implying that some of these elements are superfluous.

These observations are borne out by waveform analysis. In the sentence *Bha sinn ann an sin fad còig bliadhna* (We were there for *five years*), the peaks in the waveform become progressively higher, while the intensity contour, although fairly level, shows a sustained rise, with increasingly high peaks on *sinn*, *sin*, *còig*, and finally a sustained plateau on both syllables of *bliadhna*.



Waveform and intensity contour for
Bha sinn ann an sin fad còig bliadhna
 (Flora Macneill)

By contrast, where the main stress occurs earlier in the sentence, there is a falling pattern, as seen in the sentence *'S è, 's e bha mòran obair ann*, with the primary stress on the initial *'S è*, followed by a secondary stress on *mòran* ('Yes, there was a lot of work'). Here the intensity contour shows a declining series of peaks: on the first *'s è*, *mòran*, the first syllable of *obair*, and *ann* respectively.



Waveform and intensity contour for

'S è, 's e bha mòran obair ann

(John Clark)

It will be apparent that the way in which stress operates in the Colonsay dialect does not differ substantially from other varieties of Gaelic (Cf. Gillies 2009: 248-9). Stress is nevertheless significant for the study of this dialect because of the way it interacts with, and conditions, other prosodic features. Glottalisation, for example, usually occurs following a short, stressed vowel, as does preaspiration in its most clearly articulated form (see pp. 277-280). Long vowels, in principle, are found only in stressed syllables. And because stress patterns can be identified in terms of pitch as well as intensity, stress is an important component in the intonation patterns of this dialect.

Duration

Long and short vowels

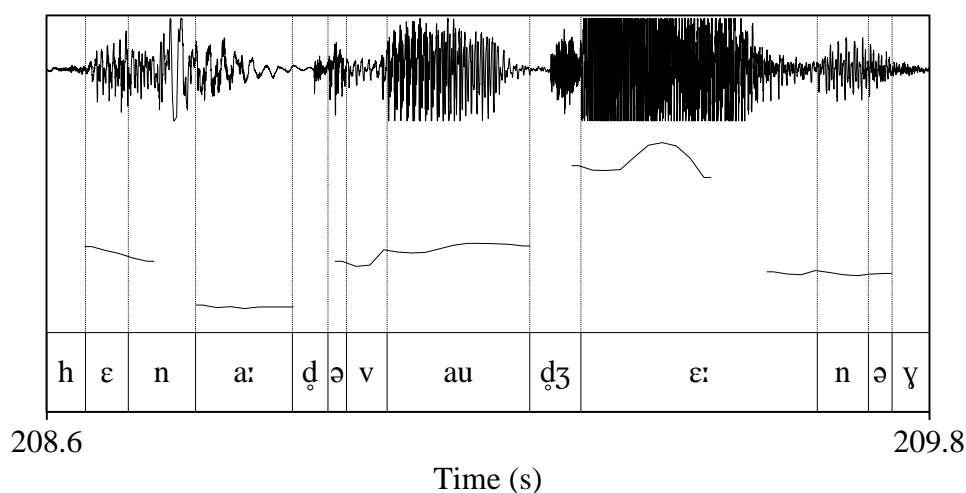
Duration as a feature of vowel sounds has already been considered in the context of segmental phonemes. Apart from /ə/, all vowels in Colonsay Gaelic may be either long or short in stressed syllables, and length may indicate a semantic difference: *bata* [b̪aḥd̪ə] ‘walking-stick’ v. *bàta* [b̪aːḥd̪ə] ‘boat’.⁴⁷⁸ Vowels in unstressed syllables are generally pronounced short, even in phrasally unstressed contexts where the citation form has a long vowel, e.g. *thànaig e dhachaidh* [hənɪq’ a ‘ɣaxɪç].

Although the symbols [ː] do not themselves represent segments, they are conventionally used in IPA phonetic and phonemic transcription to indicate lengthening of the preceding segment, in the same way as stress markers. The *SGDS* results as a whole allow for no fewer than six degrees of vowel length to be indicated, ranging from ‘markedly short’ to ‘markedly long’ (Vol. I: 113), but in practice, the results for Colonsay consistently use only the single length marker [ː] (‘half-long’). The fact that the transcription uses this symbol rather than the full length marker [ːː] is presumably intended to show that in this dialect, vowels are not lengthened as much as in other varieties of Gaelic. The *SGDS* results, of course, show citation forms; in continuous speech, as we shall see, vowels may be lengthened or shortened at will in response to prosodic constraints.

Although it is possible to measure duration by means of a spectrogram, absolute measurements are of limited value, since much will depend on prosodic factors: emphasis, position in the utterance, speed of delivery, etc. The speaker’s own speech habits, or idiolect, may also play a part: archive recordings suggest that Annabella MacNeill, the informant for Point 57, had a rather rapid, ‘clipped’ way of speaking, and this may well have influenced the fieldworker’s perception, and the decision to show Colonsay vowels as ‘half-long’ rather than ‘long’ (SSS Archives, audio recordings: SA1953.120-124).

⁴⁷⁸ The *SGDS* results show [b̪aːd̪ə] (81, 82), but as discussed elsewhere (see p. 279), some degree of preaspiration is present with long vowels also.

In my own recording, Mary Ann MacAllister gives high prominence to a long [ɛ:] sound in the sentence *Shin a'ad a bha thu dèanadh* [hɛn ,aːd̪ a va u 'd̪z'ɛ:nəɣ] 'That's just what you did'.⁴⁷⁹ The duration of the vowel segment here is 0.319 seconds, with a marked diminution in intensity in the last third of the segment. The vowel [aː] in *a'ad*, by contrast, with secondary stress in the sentence, has a duration of only 0.130 seconds, i.e. little more than a third.



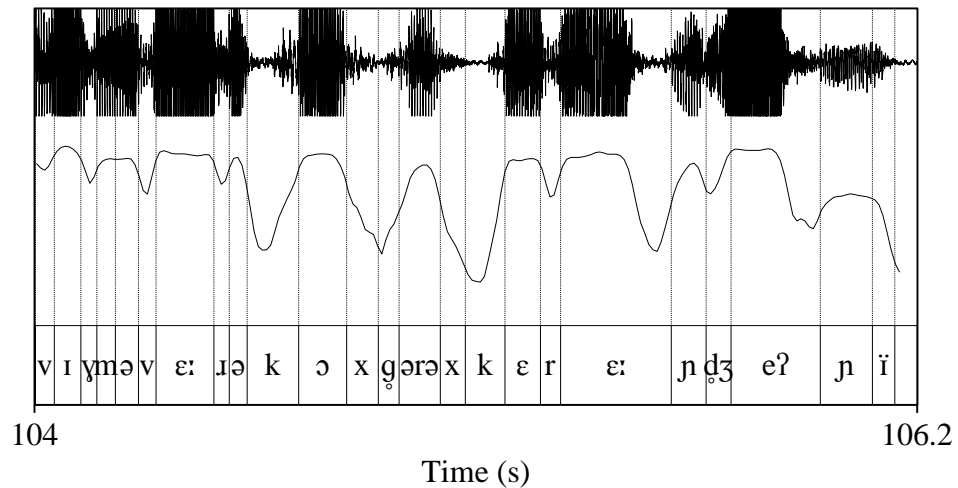
Waveform and pitch contour for *Shin a'ad a bha thu dèanadh*.

(Mary Ann MacAllister)

In the sentence *Bhiodh mo mhàthair a' còcaireachd air an teine* [vɪɣ mə vɛːɪ ə ,kɔːxgəɪɪxg ɛɪ əɲ 'd̪z'eːɲi], the same speaker has stressed 'short' [e] in *teine* lasting 0.231 seconds in all, although the latter half of the vowel segment is progressively affected by glottalisation, again with marked loss of intensity, so that the fully vocalised portion is only about 0.13 seconds. By contrast, the phonologically 'long' vowel [ɔː] in *còcaireachd*, with secondary stress, has a duration of only 0.124 seconds.

⁴⁷⁹ She is talking about having to walk to school as a child in the 1940s.

It is clear, therefore, that in natural speech, vowel length can be extremely variable, and that the listener's perception of a vowel as 'long' or 'short' is more important than precise measurement of its duration. Laver (1994: 436) differentiates in this connection between 'phonetic duration' and 'phonological length', reserving the term 'duration' for the quantifiable physical property, while 'length' is a phonological abstraction.



Waveform and intensity contour for
*Bhiodh mo mhàthair a' còcaireachd air [eh...] an teine*⁴⁸⁰
 (Mary Ann MacAllister)

The example of *teine* illustrates the way in which a long *syllable* may contain a short *vowel*, the extra duration being achieved either by glottalisation, as in the case of *teine*, or by means of preaspiration, as in *bata*. The difference depends on whether the following consonant is lenis or fortis. The precise mechanism of how this operates will be considered in the following sections on glottalisation and preaspiration respectively, but what is important to note here is that duration may be a property of syllables, and not just individual segments. This means that particular

⁴⁸⁰ The speaker introduced a long audible hesitation [ε:] between *air* and *an teine*. Note that the peaks of intensity in both these recordings are 'clipped' because the recording instrument was incorrectly set, due to my inexperience in working with the equipment.

syllables in an utterance may be lengthened, and thus given added prominence, without obliterating the distinction between long and short *vowels*, which may be phonemically significant. That distinction is largely obscured in unstressed syllables, where added prominence is not an issue.

Lengthening of consonants

In addition to lengthening of vowels, lengthening of sonorant *consonants* is also found to a limited extent in this dialect. The *SGDS* results record this in the case of the nasals [m] and [ŋ]: *àm* (33) [ɛmː], *fang* (394) [fɛŋːg] (see above – pp. 194, 196); and also [n : ɲ] in situations involving word-internal voicing: *sunndach* (817) [sʉnːdʌx], *cinnteach* (184) [k'ɲd'z'əx], and [l' : ʎ] in *fillte* [fiːl'ɟ'z'i] (423), *thill* (844) [hɪːʎ]. I have suggested (pp. 75-77) that the ‘rounded and velarised’ sonorants which I write as [lʷ nʷ] are also pronounced long in this dialect, when they appear in final position: *ball* [bʌlʷː], *ceann* [k' ɛŋʷː]. The *SGDS* interprets these as diphthongs: [bʌu] (75) and [k' ɛõŋ] (163-165) respectively.

In all these cases, lengthening of a consonant occurs only following a short vowel. As in the case of vowels, it also occurs only in a stressed syllable, and as such, fulfils a ‘vowel-strengthening’ function, as discussed earlier.

Tone

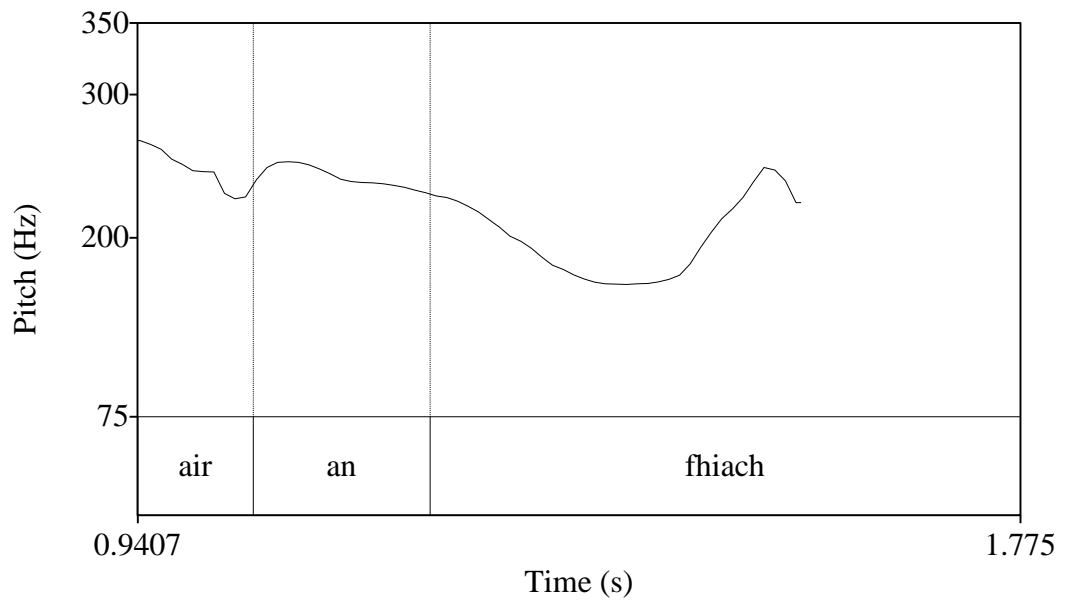
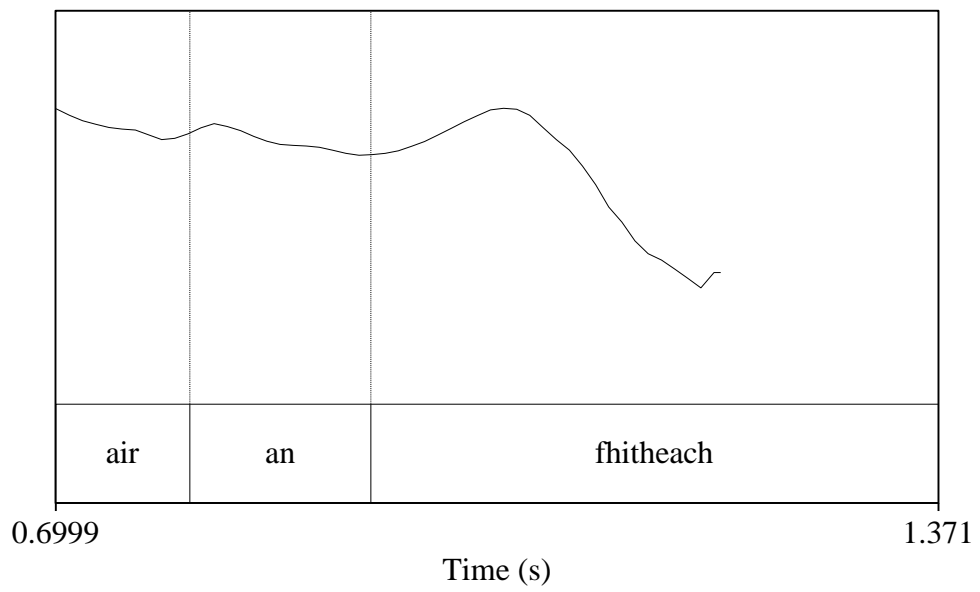
The phonological property of tone is quantified in terms of acoustic pitch. Just as stress and duration give a language its characteristic rhythm, so tone, expressed as a pattern of rising and falling pitch movements, provides an utterance with a characteristic ‘tune’, which can convey subtle shifts of meaning and emphasis. Differences in the handling of tone are one of the most prominent markers for identifying local accents and dialects: in English, one may think of the characteristic intonation pattern of ‘Geordie’ or Welsh varieties, or the difference between a Glasgow and an Edinburgh accent. These differences can be very localised, and serve to differentiate the speech patterns of neighbouring villages, or islands. At an even more localised level, they are one of the factors that characterise the speech patterns of individuals, enabling us to identify different people’s voices.

In many languages, of which Chinese (in its various forms) is the best-known example, *lexical tone* is an integral part of the phonemic structure of the language, and the same segmental string, articulated with different tones, may have completely different meanings. European languages generally do not have lexical tone as such, but some, particularly in the northern parts of Europe, exhibit *pitch accent*, whereby a difference in pitch pattern affecting otherwise identical words may convey a semantic difference. The best-known example of such a language is Swedish.

Elmar Ternes has done valuable work on pitch-accent languages in general (Ternes 1980), and in particular has identified the occurrence of pitch-accent in some varieties of Scottish Gaelic. In the 2006 edition of *The Phonemic Analysis of Scottish Gaelic*, he includes an additional chapter entitled ‘Scottish Gaelic: a Pitch-Accent Language’ (pp. 129-145). Such a claim goes too far as a classification of Scottish Gaelic as a whole, although it does appear to hold good for Lewis and northern mainland dialects such as Applecross, where differences in pitch patterns clearly do have lexical implications. Thus minimal pairs such as *fitheach / fiach* or *bogha / bò* are distinguished by having a falling tone (after an initial rise) on the first word in each pair (Tone 1), while the second (Tone 2) has a rising tone in Lewis, and a ‘wavy contour’ (falling-rising-falling) in Applecross (Ternes 2006: 146).

In the light of these findings, Ternes is led to re-interpret his own earlier work on the Applecross dialect (2006:132, 140; cf. 81-102). Instead of three categories of length, he now identifies tonal differences which correspond to those found on Lewis, although the actual pitch contours are subtly different in the two localities. It should, however, be noted that Oftedal, in his earlier work on the dialect of Leurbost, takes the opposite view, rejecting an interpretation based on tonal distinctions in favour of one based on ‘the extent of the syllable’ (1956: 27).

A recent study by Morag Brown, based on her own original fieldwork conducted in Ness, has further developed the work of Ternes by examining the way in which the two tones (which she calls Accent 1 and Accent 2) are expressed differently in the intonation patterns for different sentence types (Brown 2009). The difference is most marked in the intonation pattern for a question expecting a yes/no answer: *A bheil thu smaoineachadh air an fhitheach/air an fhiach?*



Differing pitch contours for *air an fhitheach* (top) and *air an fhiach* (bottom), with yes/no question intonation, as recorded from speaker in Ness (Lewis) by Morag Brown. (Source: Brown 2009)

Ternes justifies his assertion that Scottish Gaelic as a whole is ‘a pitch-accent language’ by pointing out that in the more southerly dialects of Gaelic, essentially those of Argyll, the same distinction is achieved by means of glottalisation. In my own recent MSc dissertation, I examine this claim, taking Colonsay as an example of an Argyll dialect, and conclude that there is indeed a close and convincing parallel between the occurrence of Tone 1 and Tone 2 in Applecross, and the presence or absence of glottalisation in Colonsay Gaelic (Scouller 2010: 11-14).

Lehiste (1970: 89-90) had previously identified a similar (possibly identical) feature which she calls ‘laryngealization’ [*sic*]; this is associated with tonal distinctions in such diverse languages as Danish, Vietnamese and Latvian.

The precise ways in which glottalisation is manifested in this dialect will be dealt with in the next section.

The way in which tone operates across an utterance as a whole, rather than just at the level of the individual word, had until recently not received much scholarly attention in a Gaelic context (Gillies 2009: 250). Despite his rejection of lexical tone as an interpretation of the Leurboost data, Oftedal (1956) does devote a single page (36-37) to a study of ‘Intonation’, but only offers two examples, one a statement and one a question, with a very impressionistic representation of the intonation patterns in each case. MacAulay (1979) offers what he himself calls ‘a preliminary study of tones’, based on his own native dialect of Bernera (Lewis). Again, the representation of the tone contour is essentially impressionistic, is not based on any acoustic measurements, and does not reference any existing work on intonation in other languages, even to the extent that such information was available in 1979.⁴⁸¹ He does deserve credit, nonetheless, for recognising and highlighting the importance of tone in the study of Scottish Gaelic. Recent work by Claire Nance (2013) has compared intonation patterns in the speech of young Gaelic speakers in Glasgow with those of two groups (younger/older speakers) in Lewis.

⁴⁸¹ The first two chapters of *Intonational Phonology* (Ladd 2008: 3-84) give a detailed account of the history of research in this field, especially the IPO (Instituut voor Perceptie Onderzoek) approach and the contrasting ‘British tradition’.

Variations of tone (in the narrow sense, excluding glottalisation) do of course play a significant part in the phonology of Colonsay Gaelic, but these operate as *intonation* patterns at the level of the phrase or sentence, rather than individual words. In this respect this dialect is no different from many other varieties of Gaelic, or indeed from most other European languages. The rest of this section will deal with the way in which these variations can be represented and analysed phonologically.

Representation of tone

Pitch movements can be read directly from the spectrogram, producing a curve similar to the intensity curve already used to illustrate stress patterns. The acoustic parameter used is the fundamental frequency (f_0). However, the raw data thus obtained may be difficult to read, and will in most cases require interpretation. Phoneticians have therefore developed a system known as ToBI (Tones and Break Indices), based largely on original work by Janet Pierrehumbert (1980), to record significant pitch movements in terms of high (H) and low (L) pitch accents, phrase accents, boundary tones, and also the strength of the breaks between words. Here we are concerned only with pitch accents, phrase accents and boundary tones. By concentrating on those pitch features that are *significant* in the context of the utterance as a whole, the developers of ToBI have applied a *phonological* approach to the analysis of intonational data, analogous to the identification of phonemes to mark significant differences in speech sounds.

It will be immediately apparent that in a ToBI context, ‘pitch accent’ is used in a different sense from the way it is used by Ternes, and elsewhere in this thesis. In ToBI, ‘pitch accent’ denotes a dominant high or low tone on a particular syllable within an utterance, whereas, as we have just seen, ‘pitch-accent’ (usually hyphenated) is used by Ternes and others as a classification of the way certain languages use different tones to indicate lexical differences (Ternes 1980; 2006: 129-133).

ToBI was originally designed to be used in analysing spoken English, and was not intended to be immediately transferable to other languages. The relevant web page of Ohio State University (now withdrawn) previously contained a disclaimer, warning against generalisation:

ToBI is **not** an International Phonetic Alphabet for prosody. Because intonation and prosodic organization differ from language to language, and often from dialect to dialect within a language, there are many different ToBI systems, each one specific to a language variety and the community of researchers working on that language variety. (Ohio State University, 1999)

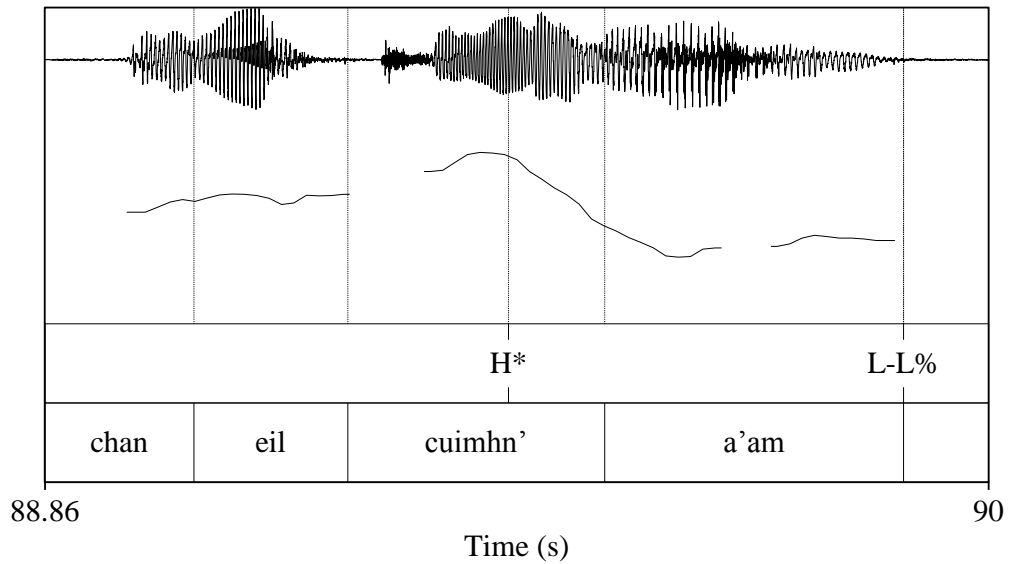
Nonetheless, research has now moved on, and ToBI has proved its value as a means of analysing intonation and prosody across a wide range of languages and dialects. Differing language-specific systems have been devised where appropriate, including one entitled GlaToBI, which is used to analyse Glasgow speech (Mayo *et al.* 1997). What follows is a modest attempt to apply ToBI principles to the Colonsay variety of Scottish Gaelic.

In the ToBI system, pitch accents are marked with an asterisk, either high (H*) or low (L*) relative to other elements in the utterance, and in relation to the speaker's natural range. The combinations L*+H and L+H* indicate rising pitch accents, with the low or high element dominating respectively. The combination H*+L, while not commonly found in English ToBI labelling, is used in one of the examples below to indicate a falling pitch accent. Other possible combinations of H and L may be used as appropriate.

Phrase accents (at the end of an intonational phrase) are marked with a hyphen (H-, L-), and boundary tones (at the end of the utterance or sentence) with a percent symbol (H%, L%). Because the end of the utterance normally occurs at a phrase boundary, combinations such as L-L%, H-H%, etc. are usually found at the end of tokens. A high boundary tone (H%) does not necessarily mean that there is any perceptible rise in tone at the end of the utterance, but rather that the phrase tone (be it high or low) is sustained, and not allowed to drop as it does with a L% boundary tone.

In cases where a high pitch accent is 'downstepped' relative to the preceding pitch accent, an exclamation mark is used (!H*) to indicate that while it is lower in absolute terms, the pitch accent is still high in relation to what follows.

In Colonsay Gaelic, simple declaratory statements have a high pitch accent followed by a low phrase accent and low boundary tone, much as in English. For example, *Chan eil cuimhn' a'am* 'I can't remember'.

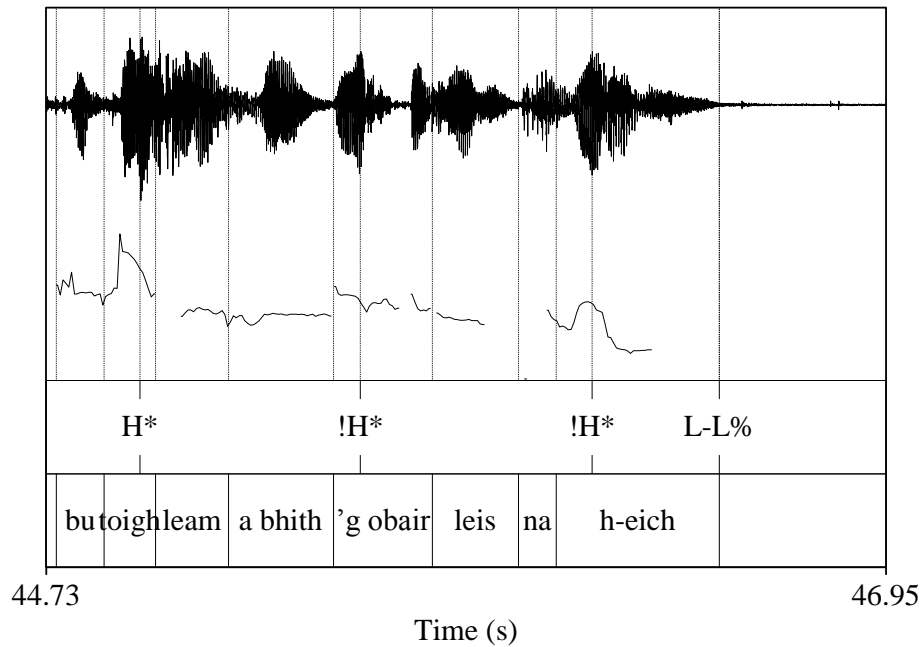


Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

Chan eil cuimhn' a'am

(Eleanor McNeill)

More complex utterances may have a succession of pitch accents, each one slightly lower than the one before, giving a falling contour. Following the approach suggested by Ladd (2008: 97-99), I analyse this here as ‘downstepping’, using the representation !H*, although other interpretations are possible.

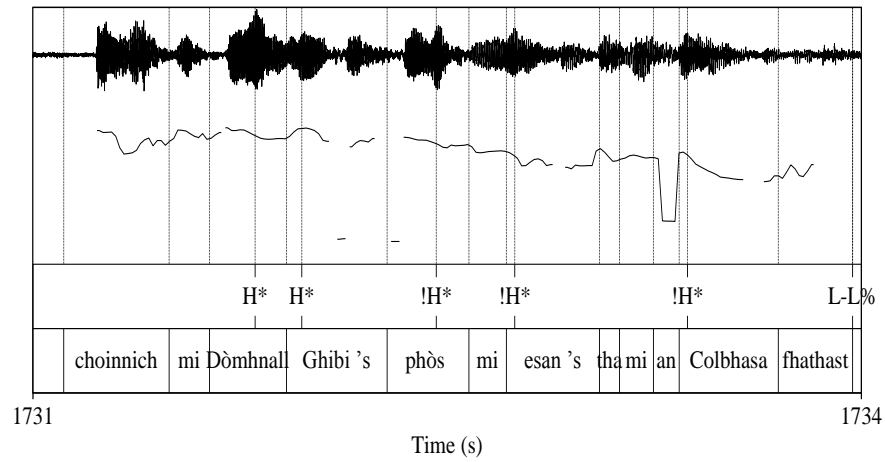


Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

Bu toigh leam a bhith ag obair leis na h-eich

(Jessie McNeill)

In a longer example (delivered in one breath), the speaker places strong and equal emphasis on the two elements of her husband's name (*Dòmhnall Ghibi*), but then downsteps the subsequent pitch accents:

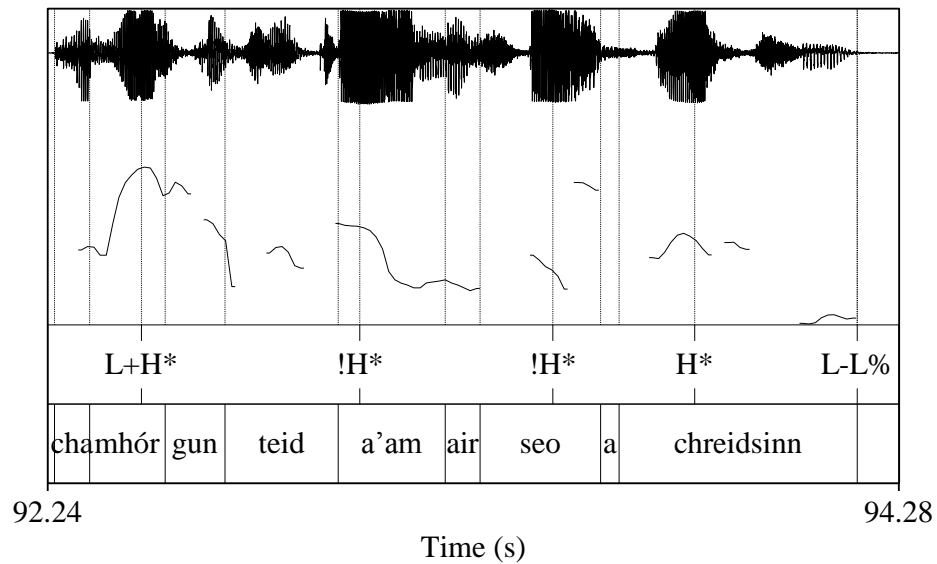


Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

*Choinnich mi Dòmhnall Ghibi, 's phòs mi esan, 's tha mi an Colbhasa fhathast.*⁴⁸²
 (Margaret McNeill)

⁴⁸² The sudden drop in pitch on *an* is a tracking error caused by the way the creaky phonation is recorded in the spectrogram, and should be ignored. The same applies to the apparent rise on *fhathast*, which is due to the speaker's voice 'tailing off' at the end of the sentence.

In other cases, the downstepping pattern may be interrupted to give prominence to an element towards the end of the sentence, as in *Cha mhòr gun tèid a'am air seo a chreidsinn* 'I can hardly believe this'.⁴⁸³ The resulting H* pitch accent on *chreidsinn* is not as high as the initial L+H*, but is still high relative to what immediately precedes it, and this is sufficient to lend prominence to this syllable:

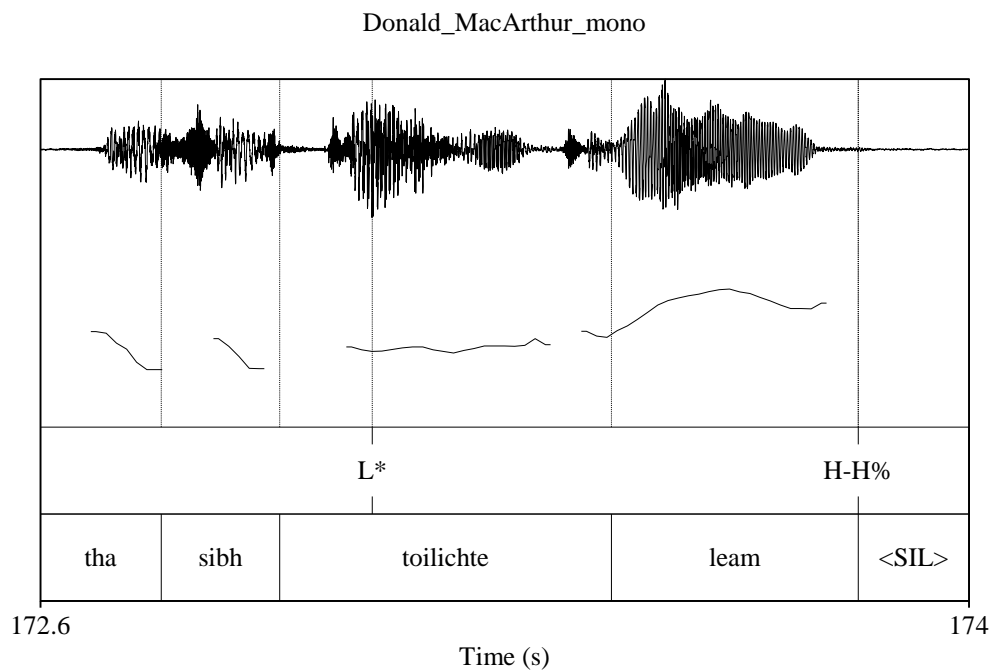


**Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for
Cha mhòr gun tèid a'am air seo a chreidsinn.
 (Eleanor McNeill)**

⁴⁸³ That she had not heard a word of Gaelic before coming to Colonsay as a child.

A characteristic intonation pattern in Colonsay speech, conversely, involves a *low* pitch accent on a prominent syllable, usually the penultimate, followed by a high phrase tone and high (i.e. sustained) boundary tone. In English this pattern is associated with a yes/no question, possibly with an element of surprise, e.g. ‘Did he *say* that?’, but in Colonsay Gaelic it tends to be used either where the phrase or sentence is in some way preparatory for what follows, or is stating something which may be already known.

In the following example, the speaker is describing how he went to get medical assistance for a workmate, and was given the sack as a result. In this instance the sequence is *Tha sibh toilichte leam ... Dè an cron a rinn mi?* ‘You’re pleased with me ... What harm have I done?’ Here the first statement forms the premise to the question, implying unfairness.

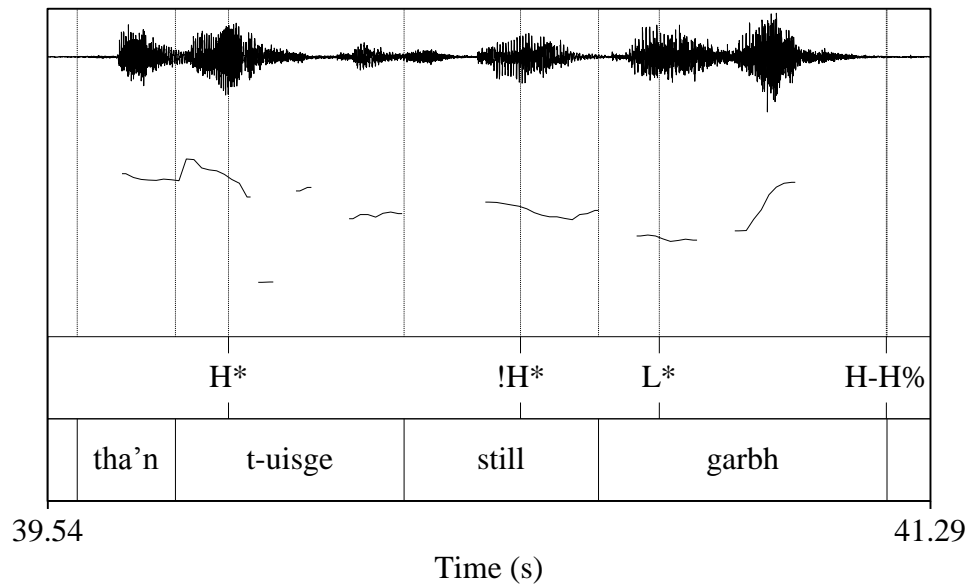


Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

Tha sibh toilichte leam.

(Donald MacArthur)

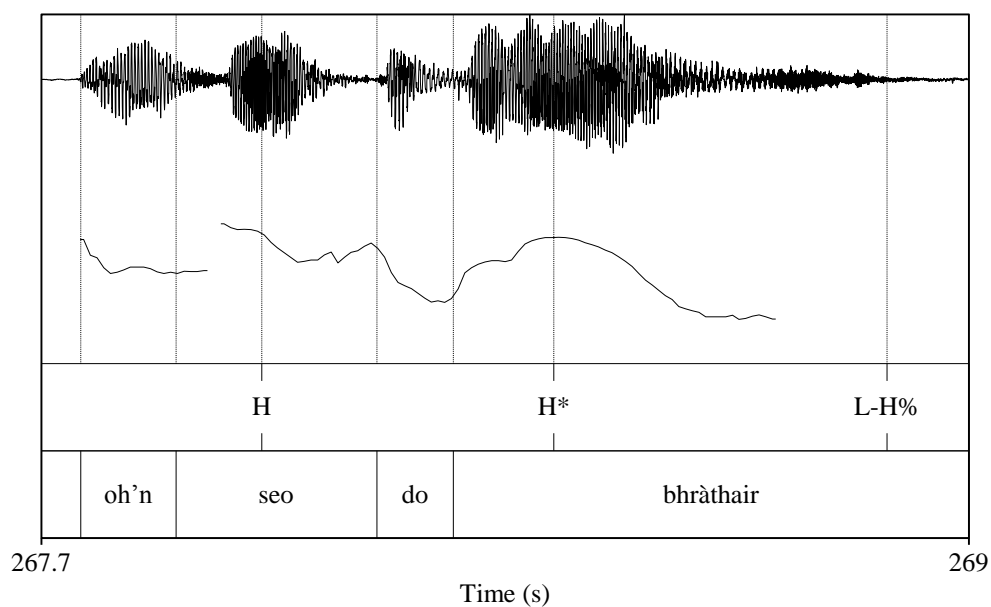
In the example *Tha'n t-uisge still garbh* (the rain is still fierce)⁴⁸⁴ the speaker is commenting on something that others will have noticed, and the implication of the tone pattern is: 'As you know...':



**Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for
Tha'n t-uisge still garbh.
(Mary O'Mahoney)**

⁴⁸⁴ For the use of *still*, see p. 364.

A Gaelic yes/no question need not have a generally rising tone, as is the case in a number of other languages. The example of *Oh, an seo do bhràthair?* ‘Oh, is this your brother?’ shows a low phrase tone, falling from a high pitch accent on *bhràthair*, which is then sustained to the end of the question. As explained above, this is shown as a high boundary tone:

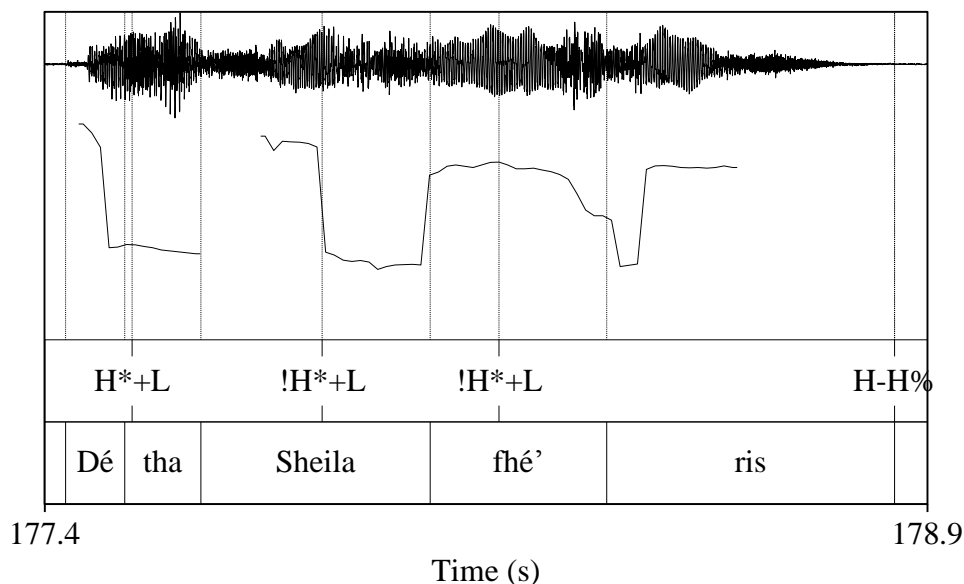


Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

Oh, an seo do bhràthair?

(Donald MacArthur)

On the other hand, a question seeking information, *Dè tha Sheila fhè' ris?* 'What is Sheila [herself] up to?', shows a curious downstepping pattern, with deep falls after each downstepped pitch accent, and a high level tone at the end. I have chosen the sequence H*+L to represent this form of pitch accent, with H-H% to represent the sustained high phrase tone and boundary tone:



Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

Dè tha Sheila fhè' ris?

(Mary O'Mahoney)

It will be clear from this summary that, although the Colonsay dialect does not make use of lexical tone in the same way as more northerly dialects such as Lewis and Applecross, pitch movements do play a part in differentiating different types of utterance, and in conveying quite subtle shades of meaning. The difference between a declaratory statement, with low phrase accent and boundary tone, and a question, with sustained phrase accent giving a high boundary tone, is perhaps the most significant distinction, but as we have seen, a number of other permutations are possible, including the phenomenon of downstepping in longer utterances. It would, however, be a mistake to try and read too specific a meaning into the use of different intonational patterns: much depends on the speaker's facility with language,

customary speech patterns and mood. In some cases, the same kind of intonational pattern can convey a different impression in different languages, or dialects. Failure to understand this may result in misunderstanding if, for example, a tone pattern which in one variety of a language is used to signal annoyance is used in another to imply merely that information is already known.

Glottalisation

Glottalisation, which occurs in hiatus and also accompanying certain consonants, is a distinctive feature of many Argyll dialects. As well as Colonsay, it is found consistently in Islay, Jura⁴⁸⁵ and Gigha. According to the *SGDS* results it is also recorded, in its most developed form, in Easdale, two locations in Arran, and one location in Cowal. It is present to a lesser extent in other mainland dialects of Argyll, as well as in the Small Isles.

Glottalisation in hiatus has a wider geographical distribution than it has in conjunction with consonants; even as far north as Barra (Points 27-30), the *SGDS* results use the ‘pipe’ symbol [|] in hiatus, to indicate what Borgstrøm (1937) refers to as ‘broken tension’: *gobha* (487) [gɔ|o : ɔ|ə].⁴⁸⁶

My MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010) dealt extensively with the subject of ‘Glottalisation in the Gaelic Dialect of Colonsay’. My conclusion then was that glottalisation, in the form of a glottalised interval affecting the vowel, and usually extending into the following consonant, occurs in the Colonsay dialect in the following phonetic environments:

1. In *hiatus*, where two vowels follow one another without forming a diphthong, or where two identical short vowels follow one another without coalescing into a single long vowel. Examples: *bogha* (117) [b̥ɔ̥ʔɔ̥], *ceidhe* [k'eʔe].
2. Intervocally before a sonorant consonant, following a short vowel. Examples: *baile* (65) [b̥a'ɫ̥ i̯], *aran* (52) [a'raŋ̥].

⁴⁸⁵ Although the *SGDS* shows glottalisation to be present only to a limited degree in the south of Jura, and not at all in the north of that island, this is contradicted by the work of Jones (2006, 2009a, 2009b), who shows glottalisation occurring there in essentially the same phonetic environments as in Colonsay.

⁴⁸⁶ For an explanation, see *SGDS*, Vol. I: 121.

3. Intervocally accompanying an unaspirated (lenis) stop following a short vowel. Examples: *obair* [oβ̥iːr], *cadal* [kaɖal̥], *nas fhaide* [nas 'aɖ'z'i].

On the other hand, glottalisation does not occur in the following cases:

1. After a long vowel or diphthong. Examples: *An t-Òban* [n doːβ̥an], *chuala* [x̥[ua]l̥'a].
2. Before an epenthetic cluster. Examples: *gorm* (497) [g̊oːrəm], *falbh* [fəl̥əv].

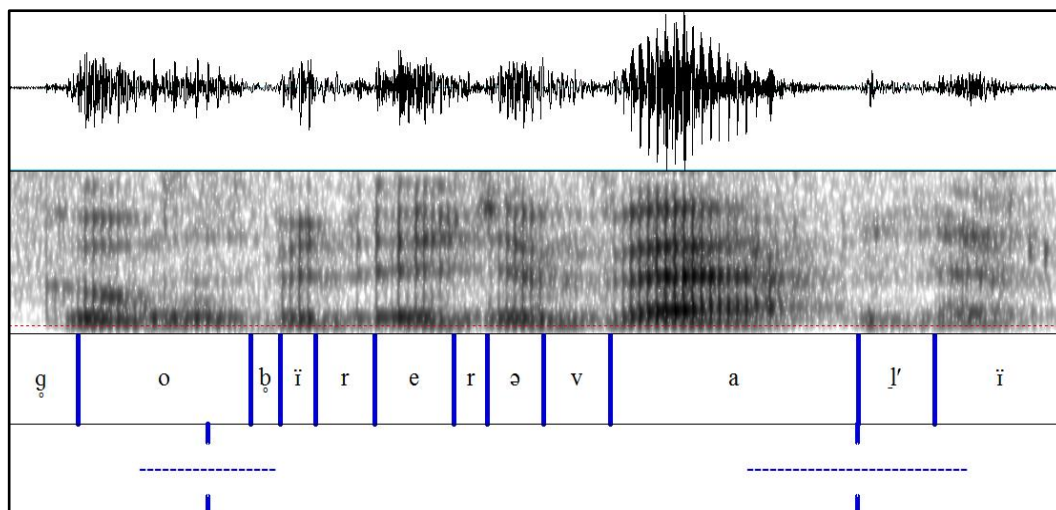
In unstressed syllables, glottalisation is generally absent. Examples: *bogha-frois* [β̥o'frɔʃ], *obair-làimh* [oβ̥iːr'l̥'ɛːv]. (Scouller 2010: 54-55)

These findings have been largely borne out by a more detailed study of the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, and by further fieldwork. The one additional point to be made is that glottalisation has also been found to occur intervocally accompanying the voiced fricatives [v ɣ]: *abhainn* (2-3) [a'vɥ̥n̥], *labhairt* (539) [l̥'a'vəs't̥ʃ̥],⁴⁸⁷ *fiodhan* (427) [fi'ɣaŋ]. In his work on Jura, Jones (2006: 196; 2009a: 73) also reports glottalisation accompanying these fricatives, although he gives no examples in the case of [ɣ].

It will be clear from this summary that glottalisation, as found in Colonsay, is essentially an intervocalic feature, occurring between two short vowels, either where they follow one another directly, as in the case of hiatus; or where they are separated by a single phonetic consonant, which may be a sonorant, a lenis stop, a voiced fricative, or an affricate in the case of /dʒ/ (which as the palatalised form of the lenis stop /d/ is treated as a single consonant).

⁴⁸⁷ Headword is *labhair*: *labhairt*.

Glottalisation, which appears in the spectrogram as a disturbed pattern of voicing, with consequent drops in the intensity and pitch contours, typically begins about halfway through the preceding vowel segment, and continues through any intervening consonant and into the following vowel:



Waveform, spectrogram and glottalisation tier for

Ag obair air a' bhaile

(Flora Macneill)

Although in Chapter 2, for the purposes of phonemic analysis, glottalisation was interpreted as allophonic in the case of lenis stops (pp. 130-137), it is clearly seen here to be a suprasegmental feature *par excellence*, affecting a number of consecutive segments. The term *glottal stop* is often used to describe the phenomenon – and is so used by Jones in his description of the same feature in Jura Gaelic – but this is not strictly accurate as a description of how this feature operates in the Colonsay dialect. Spectrographic analysis suggests that in Colonsay there is rarely a complete stop – as found, for example in a Glasgow or Cockney pronunciation of *city* [sɪʔɪ : sɪʔi]. Rather there is what could best be described as a *glottalised interval*, superimposed on the segmental string. Describing the corresponding feature (‘broken tension’) in Skye Gaelic, Borgstrøm observes, ‘I never heard a complete glottal catch’ (1941: 32).

Only in the case of hiatus, where there is no intervening consonant, can a case be made for describing this feature as a glottal *stop*. Reflecting this distinction, the *SGDS* results consistently use the symbol [ʔ] in conjunction with consonants (sometimes superimposed on the consonant symbol), while the full glottal stop symbol [ʔ] is shown in hiatus: *baile* (65) [b̥aʔl̥ ɪ̥]; *cladach* (192) [kl̥`aɖ̥ʌx]; but *gobha* (487) [gɔʔo].⁴⁸⁸

Even in hiatus, however, the effect is often more akin to ‘creaky voice’ than to a true glottal stop. This is particularly the case in those instances where the glottalised vowel is ‘echoed’ or ‘copied’: *gobha* (487) [gɔʔo], *thubhairt* (1) [huʔoʃtʔsʔ].⁴⁸⁹ The ‘echoing’ of the glottalised vowel by an identical vowel or its ‘lax’ equivalent in such cases is a characteristic feature of Colonsay pronunciation, although also found elsewhere. In certain other dialects, notably those of the Outer Hebrides, such vowel copying is associated with epenthesis rather than glottalisation (see below).

Where glottalisation occurs between *different* vowels, the effect is to produce an abrupt shift from one vowel to the next, rather than a glide between the two, as occurs in a diphthong. Examples of this in the *SGDS* results include *bleaghan* (109) [b̥l̥'eʔoŋ],⁴⁹⁰ *buidhe* (135) [b̥uʔi], *piuthar* (679) [piʔoʔr] and *roimhe* (714) [ɾoʔi].⁴⁹¹ In many cases the resulting pronunciation is quite different from that found in many other varieties of Gaelic. Cf. Point 9 (Gravir, Lewis): [b̥l̥o-ən : b̥oʔje : p̥hju-ər : r̥ẽ-ẽ].

A minimal pair is demonstrated, inadvertently, in the *SGDS* in the entry for *fiù* (433), where the forms [fi̥iö̥jx] (= *fiach*) and [fiʔʌx : fiʔʌx] (= *fitheach*) are given, the latter in a footnote.⁴⁹² Further minimal pairs could include the base form/verbal noun contrasts *laigh/laighe* (547) [l̥`aᵝ : l̥`aʔi] and *suidh/suidhe* (811) [s̥yᵝ : s̥yʔi].⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁸ This use of the diacritic [ʔ] to indicate glottalisation does not correspond to current IPA practice, where it is used for ‘ejectives’. For this reason, I prefer to use the symbol /ʔ/ in my phonemic transcriptions. This is not explicitly sanctioned in IPA usage either, although [ʕ] is approved for ‘pharyngealised’ (IPA 2015).

⁴⁸⁹ Headword is *abair*: *thubhairt*.

⁴⁹⁰ Headword is *bleagh*: *bleaghan*. Approved spelling is now *bleoghan*.

⁴⁹¹ Headword is *roimh*: *roimhe*. This pair would be transcribed [ɾoᵝ : ɾoʔi].

⁴⁹² This minimal pair is examined by Brown (2009: 45-52) and in my own MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 20-21; Figs 5 and 6). Ternes uses *fitheach* and *fiadh* to illustrate the same point (2006: 135).

⁴⁹³ In both cases, only the base form is given in the *SGDS* results. Although I have followed *SGDS* conventions in transcribing these examples, I would maintain that the use of [ʔ] suggests too strong a degree of glottalisation.

Glottalisation of sonorants

In this dialect, all sonorants are glottalised when they occur intervocalically after a short, stressed vowel: *eile* (373) [e'ɪ̰ ɪ̰], *coille* (223-225) [kʲ'ɪ̰ ʎ̰], *talamh* (826) [ta'ɪ̰ ə̰]; *anail* (40) [ɛ'nal'̰], *bainne* (68) [b̰a'ɲ̰ɪ̰], *ceannaich* (168) [k'ɛ'n'ɪ̰ç]; *amadan* (29) [ɛ'məðə̰ŋ̰];⁴⁹⁴ *dorus* (342) [d̰ɔ'r̰ ɪ̰s̰d̰], *barrannan* (80) [b̰a'r̰ən'ə̰ŋ̰].⁴⁹⁵

There is, however, one major exception to this rule. In an epenthetic cluster, involving a sonorant and another consonant, separated by an epenthetic vowel, there is no glottalisation: *ainm* (17, 18) [ɛɲɪm̰], *balbh* (73) [b̰al'ə̰ɲ̰]. This is the case even where the epenthesis is historical, as in the name of the island, *Colbhasa* [kɔɪ'asa]; in such cases the historical epenthesis will usually be reflected, anachronistically, in the spelling. The question of epenthesis will be considered in more detail in the next section.

Because this different treatment of glottalisation in epenthetic syllables cannot be reliably predicted from the synchronic phonetic environment, glottalised forms of sonorants cannot simply be regarded as *allophones* of the corresponding sonorant phonemes. A strictly segmental analysis would therefore require a separate series of glottalised phonemes to be specified, thus doubling the number of sonorant phonemes. That, however, would be like taking a phonological sledgehammer to an epenthetic nut.

If, on the other hand, glottalisation is regarded as a non-segmental or suprasegmental feature, there is no need to account for it as part of the segmental string, or to postulate a parallel series of glottalised phonemes. Economy can be achieved in phonemic transcription by using a prosodic marker /ʔ/ to identify the glottalised forms, while the unmarked forms are defined as non-glottalised. This usage is analogous to the use of the length marker /:/ or stress marker /' / in segmental transcription, even though neither of them represents a segment as such. Thus, for example, *mairidh* would be transcribed phonemically as /ma²riç/, and *marbhaidh* as /mariç/.

⁴⁹⁴ Headword is *Alasdair*.

⁴⁹⁵ Headword is *barran*.

Glottalisation of lenis stops

The lenis stops /b d g/, together with the palatalised forms /dʒ/ and /gʲ/, are also glottalised when they occur intervocalically following a short, stressed vowel: *tobar* (851, 852) [toᵇᵇ̚ə̯r̥], *cladach* (192) [kl̥ˈaᵇᵇ̚l̥x̥], *cogadh* (218) [koᵇᵇ̚ə̯y̥], *idir* (513,514) [iᵇᵇ̚z̥ʲi̯r̥], *slige* (774) [sl̥iᵇᵇ̚i̯]. In such cases the issue of epenthesis does not arise; there is therefore no need even to consider having a separate series of glottalised stop phonemes, and the glottalised forms in this case may conveniently be regarded as allophones of the respective unglottalised phonemes, as they have been, in the respective phonemic definitions in Chapter 2. It should, nevertheless, be emphasised that this allophonic interpretation of the data provided in the *SGDS* is adopted purely for the purposes of phonemic analysis, and is not intended to mask the fact that, as explained here, glottalisation is essentially a *prosodic* feature affecting the immediate phonetic environment of the stop concerned, and not just the stop itself.

Glottalisation of voiced fricatives

The voiced fricatives /v ɣ/ are also glottalised when they occur intervocalically following a short, stressed vowel: *abhainn* (2, 3) [aʲv̥i̯n̥], *sabhal* (726) [saʲv̥ə̯l̥]; *fiodhan* (427) [fiʲɣ̥ə̯n̥].⁴⁹⁶ We have already seen that glottalisation is absent in epenthesis, where a sonorant is followed by a voiced fricative: *balbh* (73) [ᵇalʲə̯v̥], *dearbh* (303) [ᵇz̥ʲe̯ri̯v̥], *mo sheanmhair* (749) [m̥o h̥e̯n̥i̯v̥a̯r̥];⁴⁹⁷ this is true even in cases of so-called ‘historical’ epenthesis, where an original voiced fricative has become elided, leaving only the (unglottalised) sonorant: *Aonghas* (50) [j̥n̥y̯s̥], *mharbhadh* (602) [v̥a̯r̥y̯].⁴⁹⁸ Glottalisation also does not occur in the somewhat unusual epenthetic treatment in this dialect of the combination *mhr*, where the sonorant follows the voiced fricative: *geamhradh* (469) [g̥ʲe̯v̥i̯r̥i̯y̯], *samhradh* (736) [se̯v̥i̯r̥i̯y̯], or in the even more unusual combination *mhs* in the analogous form *damhsadh* [ᵇe̯v̥ə̯s̯ə̯y̯].⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁶ This last word is the only recorded instance of glottalised /ɣ/ in the *SGDS* results.

⁴⁹⁷ Headword is *do sheanmhair*.

⁴⁹⁸ Headword is *marbh*: *mharbhadh*.

⁴⁹⁹ The combination *bhr* in *labhraidh* (538) [l̥ˈaʲv̥ri̯ç̥] is shown with a vestigial vowel after a glottalised [v]. The form in this instance is perhaps influenced by the base form *labhair* [l̥ˈaʲvi̯r̥]. Headword is *labhair*: *labhraidh*.

As in the case of sonorants, a prosodic marker /ʔ/ can be used in phonemic transcription. Thus we would write /aʔvɪŋ : saʔvəlʲ : fɪʔɣan/ but /balʲəv : varay : sɛvərəy : dɛvəsəy/. This is entirely in line with the practice adopted for other prosodic features, such as stress and duration.

Glottalisation in sandhi

In my previous dissertation (Scouller 2010: 25-26) I concluded, somewhat tentatively, that there was no evidence of glottalisation after stressed final vowels in the absence of a following vowel in words such as *math*, but ‘actually something else’, which I suggested might be a form of final devoicing. Although the *SGDS* results agree with me in not marking glottalisation in such words (*math* (603) [mɛ], *teth* (839) [tʲfɛ̃], *guth* (506) [ɣu]), the present phonological analysis has led me to accept that glottalisation is at least notionally present in such cases. This is evidenced in *sandhi* examples: *'s math (a) dh'fhaoidte* (397) [ˌsmɛʔɛ 'ɣø̃ˈɟ'z' i],⁵⁰⁰ *math thu fhèin!* [mɛʔv 'heː]), even though glottalisation may not be realised phonetically where there is no following vowel. The reasons for this revised interpretation are explained below, under **Some insights from syllable theory** (pp. 291-296).

⁵⁰⁰ Headword is *faod*: *math dh'fhaoidte*. The more usual Colonsay expression is *cha lughaide* [xa 'ɫ'ɣ'ɟ'z' i].

Epenthesis

Epenthesis, or *svarabhakti* as it has traditionally been known, is a well-known feature of Scottish Gaelic pronunciation. In the spoken language, it involves the regular insertion of an ‘extra’ vowel into certain consonant clusters, although this vowel is rarely, if ever, indicated in the spelling. Thus the word *balbh* will be pronounced approximately /bal^vav/ or /bal^vəv/ in most Gaelic dialects.

The phenomenon is by no means restricted to Gaelic. Apart from Sanskrit, which gave us the term *svarabhakti*, it is a well-known feature of Lowland Scottish speech in words such as *film* [fɪl^vəm] and *girl* [gɪrəl^v]. It also occurs in varieties of Dutch, for example in the words *elf* [ɛləf] ‘eleven’, *melk* [mɛlək] ‘milk’ (Cook 1995: 134).

In Scottish Gaelic, epenthesis occurs only in certain clearly defined phonetic environments. It is found only following a short vowel, when a sonorant consonant is followed by a lenis stop or fricative, or when a non-labial sonorant is followed by [m] or vice versa. In southern Argyll dialects, including Colonsay, it is also found when the voiced fricative [v] is followed by a sonorant: *samhradh* (736) [səv̥ɪr̥ɪy̆], *geamhradh* (469) [q̥ɛv̥ɪr̥ɪy̆].⁵⁰¹ Epenthesis does *not* generally occur, however, when the following consonant is *homorganic*, i.e. a dental or alveolar consonant in the case of *l, r, n*, or a labial in the case of *m*.⁵⁰² Nor does it occur before the fortis stops [p t k]; here we find *preaspiration*, which is generally realised as devoicing of the sonorant. Preaspiration will be discussed separately.

Scholars disagree, however, about the phonological interpretation of the epenthetic vowel. Opinion has in the past been divided over

- (a) whether it is to be regarded as forming the nucleus of a separate syllable;
- (b) if so, to which syllable the preceding sonorant is to be allocated;
- (c) the phonetic quality of the epenthetic vowel.

⁵⁰¹ Other dialects have a diphthong in such cases, e.g. Point 13 (Leverburgh) [s̥[ãũ]r̥ɪy̆] : q̥[ãũ]r̥ɪy̆].

⁵⁰² Orthographic conventions are used here because of the notoriously complicated phonetic realisation of laterals, nasals and vibrants in Gaelic (see pp. 72-89). A group of dialects in Central Perthshire (Points 191-193, 198-200, 206) show a vocalised form [ŋ] in *càrn* (154), *dorn* (339, 340), suggesting a form of epenthesis in a homorganic environment (but see Ó Murchú’s interpretation below).

The answers to these questions depend largely on which dialect is being examined, making it difficult to generalise for Scottish Gaelic as a whole. Irish, by contrast, shows a fairly consistent pattern: there, epenthesis creates an additional unstressed syllable, vocalised phonemically as /ə/, with the allophone [i] occurring in a palatalised environment (Ní Chiosáin 1995: 2-4; cf. 1999: 559-561). This additional syllable is no different, in phonological terms, from any other unstressed syllable. This relatively uncomplicated ‘Irish’ model is similar to the form of epenthesis which predominates in Argyll, where the epenthetic vowel is phonemically /ə/; save that, in those Argyll dialects (including Colonsay) that exhibit glottalisation, the *absence* of glottalisation in epenthetic environments creates an additional complication.

In the rest of the Gaelic-speaking area, including the more northerly Hebridean dialects spoken by most native speakers today, the situation is somewhat different. There the epenthetic vowel (V₂) is a ‘copy’ or ‘echo’ of the preceding vowel (V₁); the ‘copying’ may in some cases be limited to certain features only, and its specific realisation may be influenced by the surrounding consonants. It will be recalled that this same phenomenon, vowel copying or ‘echoing’, is associated with *glottalisation* in Argyll dialects, in words such as *gobha* (487) [g^oʔo] (see p. 258). More remarkably, the epenthetic vowel is not generally regarded, in these northerly dialects, as forming the nucleus of a separate syllable; this observation is borne out by the fact that, when singing such syllables, almost invariably the V₁CV₂ combination is sung on a single note (Borgstrøm 1937: 77; Oftedal 1956: 29). That this should be done, spontaneously and unconsciously, by native Gaelic singers suggests that the phenomenon is indeed deeply rooted in the structure of the language.

Before moving on to examine the nature of epenthesis in the Colonsay dialect, it will be helpful to review briefly how scholars have, historically, dealt with the question of epenthesis, as it affects different dialects.

Previous studies of epenthesis in Scottish Gaelic dialects

Historically, the issue of epenthesis in Scottish Gaelic has been looked at in terms of syllable structure. The whole question of syllabification in Gaelic has been the subject of a lively debate ever since Borgstrøm appeared to suggest that the syllable pattern VC (vowel-consonant) was predominant in Scottish Gaelic, based on his study of the Barra dialect (1937: 74-78). This caused great excitement among linguists, since until then it had been held as axiomatic that CV was the universal pattern in all languages. The resulting debate is well documented by Anna Bosch (1998), who summarises the positions of the main participants. In fact Borgstrøm's position is much less categorical than is often assumed: VC, while a possible interpretation of the data in cases of 'broken tension' (Borgstrøm's term) is not the only possible paradigm identified by him in Barra, as subsequent discussion has tended to imply; he himself specifically refers to 'two types of syllabic division', depending on whether the words in question exhibit 'broken' or 'unbroken tension' (1937: 77; 148-150). Borgstrøm himself admits, however, that 'the phonological interpretation of these facts is still doubtful'.

Borgstrøm, in his study of the Barra dialect, provides the first systematic account of epenthesis as it occurs in Scottish Gaelic (1937: 126-130). He asserts that 'svarabhakti vowels' occur where sonorants (which he lists) are followed by 'certain consonants', which he defines as follows:

The second part of the original consonant group can be an originally voiced occlusive (b, d, g), voiced or voiceless spirants (lenited b, m, ch [*sic*], g), the sibilant s and m (non-lenited), l, r (lenited in all my examples). A svarabhakti vowel is never developed in groups of homorganic consonants (rd, rn, etc.) and never when the second part of the original group was a voiceless occlusive (p, t, c). (p. 127)

Allowing for differences in the terms used, this is essentially the same definition as set out above.

Borgstrøm goes on to observe:

Words with svarabhakti are characterized by the syllabic division with unbroken tension ... and are thus as a rule clearly distinguished from other words, which have broken tension. Only after a long vowel in the first syllable no such distinction is seen, since all words with long vowels have unbroken tension. (*ibid.*)

As we have seen, ‘broken tension’ is Borgstrøm’s expression for the Barra manifestation of what in other dialects appears as glottalisation (Argyll) or falling tone (Lewis). He is thus the first to identify a complementary relationship between epenthesis and glottalisation. For Borgstrøm, the question of syllable division is of fundamental importance: in epenthetic syllables, he maintains that the division is V.CV as in *orm* (*a-ram*), whereas in non-epenthetic examples it is VC.V as in *aran* (*ar-an*).⁵⁰³

On the quality of the epenthetic vowel, Borgstrøm states that in Barra ‘the svarabhakti vowels are usually full, clear vowels; mostly the vowel of the first syllable is repeated in the svarabhakti syllable. Only between *m* and *l'* or *r* does the reduced vowel *ə* occur as svarabhakti’ (*ibid.*). This is clearly very different from the situation in Argyll, where /ə/ is the norm.

Borgstrøm’s account of epenthesis in the Barra dialect has come to be widely accepted among linguists (especially those with no first-hand knowledge of Gaelic) as the definitive paradigm of how epenthesis operates in Scottish Gaelic as a whole. G.N. Clements, for example, in his article on ‘Syllabification and epenthesis in the Barra dialect of Scottish Gaelic’ (1986), relies entirely on Borgstrøm’s data. Clements’ purpose is to show that the surface representation of epenthesis (more specifically, the quality of the epenthetic vowel) is subject to definable rules, and hence entirely predictable, but in the process, Borgstrøm’s data is submitted to a rigorous autosegmental analysis (Clements 1986: 328).

⁵⁰³ Borgstrøm further states that ‘in Ireland the syllable division is *a-rán*’. This view of syllable division has been questioned by more recent scholarship (see below).

Further work on epenthesis as found in Barra was carried out more recently by Bosch and de Jong (1997). Unlike Clements, Bosch conducted her own fieldwork in Barra, and does not rely on Borgstrøm's findings. Her study uses instrumental techniques to measure the duration and fundamental frequency (F_0) of vowels, and to compare the length of V_1 and V_2 for both epenthetic and non-epenthetic vowels. The results show clearly that in Barra, epenthetic vowels are systematically longer than their non-epenthetic counterparts. They also display the full range of vowel phonemes for this dialect, whereas unstressed syllables contain a reduced inventory of vowels. Taken together, these measurements show that in Barra Gaelic the epenthetic vowel V_2 , where it occurs, is stressed at least as much as the preceding V_1 . Again, this is very different from the pattern found in Argyll.

The 'Barra' model, as found on the West Coast and throughout the Hebrides from Mull northwards, has continued to exercise the minds of linguists, including the distinguished phonetician Peter Ladefoged, who includes a section on 'Gaelic syllable structure' in a collaborative paper on 'Phonetic Structures of Scottish Gaelic' (Ladefoged *et al.* 1998: 29-33).⁵⁰⁴ Once again, the authors rely heavily on Borgstrøm's findings. On the question of epenthesis, they state the problem succinctly: 'It is often hard to say how many syllables there are in a word'. Recalling that 'syllabicity is a phonological property, an organizing principle, and may not be a phonetically observable feature',⁵⁰⁵ Ladefoged and his collaborators prefer to regard epenthetic words such as *balg* as *monosyllables*, with 'something akin to a consonantal interlude' (p. 29) rather than a syllable division. In other words, the VCV combination is treated in phonological terms as a single vocalic unit, rather like a diphthong.

⁵⁰⁴ The contributors include Alice Turk, Kevin Hind and St John Skilton, all of Edinburgh University.

⁵⁰⁵ This is in apparent contradiction to Oftedal's statement that 'the syllable is not in itself a phonemic or prosodic entity' (Oftedal 1956: 25). However, Oftedal may simply have meant that the syllable is not 'a phonetically observable feature', and can only be deduced from prosodic features of an utterance, and from a mental interpretation of the speech sounds heard. He goes on to define what he terms the *phonemic syllable*.

By thus identifying syllabicity, and hence epenthesis, as ‘an organising principle’ which may not be observable in strictly phonetic terms, Ladefoged *et al.* open the door to an approach whereby epenthesis is seen as a non-segmental feature, which cannot be accommodated comfortably in a strictly phonetic (i.e. segmental) account of how a language or dialect is spoken. A similar approach forms the basis of the present analysis.

A similar pattern of epenthesis to that in Barra was observed by other scholars in north-western Gaelic dialects. Oftedal (1956: 140-143) notes that in Leurbost, the epenthetic vowel (V_2) is ‘regularly a repetition’ of the preceding vowel (V_1) (with some allophonic variation), and hence the complicated mechanism of surface representations as described by Clements does not occur.⁵⁰⁶ Ternes in Applecross (2006: 83-84) and Wentworth in Gairloch (2005: 595-598) report similar findings.

The situation on the east coast is (or was) apparently quite different. In Easter Ross, Watson (1974: 43) observes:

In this dialect of N.E. Ross-shire, svarabhakti is not the phonological phenomenon it is in Wester Ross and Skye. [...] I have, moreover, discovered no awareness amongst the native speakers that, for example, any apparently disyllabic words are felt to contain only a single syllable.

According to Dorian (1978: 57), the same holds true for East Sutherland Gaelic (ESG):

Svarabhakti can be said to exist in ESG only from the historical point of view, not from the synchronic. There are no length or intonation differences between vowels which are historically svarabhakti vowels and other unstressed vowels.

⁵⁰⁶ Norval Smith, based on Oftedal’s data, interprets this as meaning that the epenthetic vowel is always ‘an *exact copy*’ of the preceding vowel, which is not quite what Oftedal found (Smith 1999: 584, emphasis original).

It appears that these East Coast dialects, now largely extinct, show closer affinities in this regard with the situation in Argyll (and in Ireland) than do the surviving dialects in the North and West.

Finally, in East Perthshire, Ó Murchú identifies what he terms ‘a half-long voiced consonantal glide’, which he represents as [ṇ ɫ̣ ḷ ṛ]: *gainmheach* [gʲɛṇˠx], *dealg* [jɑɫ̣g], *tilg* [čiḷgʲ], *dorcha* [dɔṛˠx]. This does not appear to result in an additional syllable, although ‘a brief voiced release may intervene between the consonantal glide and following consonant coda’ (Ó Murchú 1989: 92-96). This model is different again from that found in the North and West, or in Argyll.

The ‘Argyll’ model

Scholarly comment on the ‘Argyll’ model of epenthesis is comparatively scarce, and tends to be ancillary to the consideration of other features, such as glottalisation.

Holmer, in his pioneering work *Studies in Argyllshire Gaelic* (1938), based mainly on the dialect of Islay, has a section entitled ‘Svarabhakti’⁵⁰⁷ (pp. 32-34) in which he contrasts the situation in Argyll with that found in Skye. He notes that ‘in Argyllshire Gaelic the phenomenon of svarabhakti is a little different’, in that the epenthetic vowel is [ə] or [i], and behaves like other unstressed vowels, whereas in Skye it generally involves a repetition of the preceding vowel, with the stress appearing to fall on the epenthetic vowel – the same pattern as has been already observed in respect of Barra and Lewis. More significantly for the present discussion, he notes that ‘the distinction between an original monosyllabic and disyllabic pronunciation is often determined by the absence of the [glottal] stop’ (p.34).

George Jones, writing specifically about glottalisation in the Jura dialect, refers in passing to the issue of ‘svarabhakti’, noting significantly that *absence of glottalisation* is the only audible way of recognising historical epenthesis in present-day pronunciation (Jones 2009b: 6). In his PhD thesis he deals at greater length with the occurrence of ‘svarabhakti’ (2009a: 79-80; 83). In both cases he cites *mairidh* [maʔriç] and *marbhaidh* [mariç] as a rare example of a minimal pair in which absence of glottalisation is a pointer to ‘historical’ epenthesis.⁵⁰⁸ This minimal pair has also been tested on Colonsay, with the same result: *mairidh* is pronounced with glottalisation [maʔriç], *marbhaidh* without [mariç].⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁷ Holmer places the Sanskrit word in quotation marks in his section heading.

⁵⁰⁸ It is questionable whether ‘historical’ is the right word to use in this instance, since the base form *marbh* is very much in use – anything but *marbh*, in fact – and what we have here is a derived grammatical form.

⁵⁰⁹ Interview with Jessie McNeill, April 2014.

Anna Bosch, in an abstract of an unpublished paper found on the internet, also points out the importance of glottalisation as a marker for epenthesis in Argyll dialects:

Interestingly, the dialects of Gigha and Islay do not share the prosodic or featural patterns of svarabhakti that the [northern] Hebridean dialects demonstrate; if we ignore the glottalization facts, it would appear that these dialects of Gaelic do not distinguish svarabhakti words at all. However, I argue that it is precisely the presence or absence of glottalization which now takes on this distinguishing role. (undated:1)

The comparative lack of scholarly interest may simply reflect the fact that epenthesis, as found in Argyll, is seen as a relatively straightforward, and hence rather uninteresting phonological feature, compared with the complexity of its manifestations further north. Nonetheless, the relationship between epenthesis and glottalisation, in particular, is deserving of further attention, particularly as it relates to other prosodic features such as preaspiration.

Before turning to the handling of epenthesis in the Colonsay dialect, it should be noted that Elmar Ternes, in the 2006 addition to his *Phonemic Analysis* (Ternes 2006: 129-145), adopts a fundamentally different approach. He concludes that Scottish Gaelic is a pitch-accent language, and that both epenthesis and glottalisation (where it occurs) are manifestations of contrasting tones. On this analysis, arguments about syllabification, and possibly historical epenthesis, are superseded by a recognition that these surface phenomena are simply the outworking of tonal contrasts, as they affect individual words.

Epenthesis in Colonsay Gaelic

As might be expected, epenthesis in Colonsay Gaelic follows the ‘Argyll’ model, and in particular illustrates the complementary relationship with glottalisation. The epenthetic vowel is phonemically /ə/. The allophonic realisation of this phoneme in different phonetic environments is described at pp. 122-126.

We have already seen that sonorants in the Colonsay dialect are regularly glottalised when they occur intervocalically after a short, stressed vowel, but that in an epenthetic cluster, involving a sonorant and another consonant, glottalisation does not occur: *ainm* (17,18) [ɛɲɪm̩], *balbh* (73) [b̥alʰəɲ], *dealg* (301) [d̥ʰz'alʰəɲ], *thilgeadh* (843) [hɪlɪqʰəɲ], *garbh* (462) [qarɪɲ]. This is the case even where the epenthesis is ‘historical’, and the absence of glottalisation is the only evidence for it in present-day pronunciation; this is seen in the name of the island (as traditionally spelt) *Colbhasa* [kɔlʰasa],⁵¹⁰ in words such as *arbhar* (54) [araɲ], *soirbheas* (791) [sɔras]. It is also found in derived forms of verbs which show epenthesis in the base form: *falbhaidh* (390) [fɔlʰaɲ] from *falbh* [fɔlʰəɲ]; *mharbhadh* (602) [varay] from *marbh* (600) [marɪɲ]. In all these instances the ‘historical’ epenthesis is reflected in the present-day spelling; this, however, is not the case for the local placenames *Orasa* [ɔrasa], *Scalasaig* [sqalʰəsɪqʰ], *Uragaig* [urəɲɪqʰ], which are all pronounced without glottalisation, although spelt with a single consonant.⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰ Many islanders favour the spelling *Colasa*, which is used (against my own advice) in the name of the annual music festival *Ceòl Cholasa*. This spelling would, however, suggest the pronunciation *[kɔʰasa], with glottalisation of [ʰ], which is not the case.

⁵¹¹ All three names are of Norse origin, from **Orfiris-ey*, **Skál-hús-vík* and **Urða-vík* respectively (Loder 1935: xxx, 441 fn 2, 448 fn 2). In each case, it appears that a medial consonant cluster in Old Norse has become assimilated in Gaelic to an epenthetic combination, and thence to a non-glottalised sonorant.

An alternative hypothesis would be that glottalisation was already established in this dialect before the Norsemen arrived, and was not applied to new Norse names, any more than it is to English borrowings in our own time. This is, however, counter-indicated by the placename *Sgibinis* [skiʰbɪnɪʃ], from Norse *Skipa-nes*, where intervocalic [b] is glottalised.

In examining the phonetic environments in which epenthesis occurs in this dialect, and to supplement the evidence of the *SGDS*, I was able to record one of my informants, the late Mary Ann MacAllister (see pp. 84-89), saying a number of words where epenthesis might be expected.⁵¹² Where no *SGDS* headword reference is given in the following paragraphs, the word was supplied by Mary Ann.

Sonorant + lenis stop

An epenthetic vowel is found in cases where a lateral or vibrant (orthographic *l* or *r*) following a short vowel is followed by a non-homorganic lenis stop: *Albainn* [al`əb̥iŋ],⁵¹³ *thilgeadh* (843) [hiliq`əy],⁵¹⁴ *urball* (371) [uriɓə̀],⁵¹⁵ *lorg* [l`orəq],⁵¹⁶ *airgead* (21, 22) [ariq`iɔ].⁵¹⁷ I have been unable to find an example of /ʎ/ followed by a lenis stop. In none of these examples was glottalisation noted.

No examples of epenthesis involving homorganic clusters were detected in any of the material. Where [r] occurs before a dental stop, we find the insertion of a fricative: *àrd* [à`ɾ̥ʎ], *bòrd* [ɓə`ɾ̥ʎ].⁵¹⁸

Sonorant + fortis stop

In the case of fortis stops, there is no epenthetic vowel. Instead, we find preaspiration of the stop. This will be dealt with in the next section.

⁵¹² Unfortunately the original recording was lost when my computer was stolen in March 2010; my transcript, however, survived in hard copy.

⁵¹³ Spontaneously given in this form by Mary Ann.

⁵¹⁴ Headword is *tilg*: *thilgeadh*.

⁵¹⁵ Headword is *earball*.

⁵¹⁶ According to Mary Ann, used only with the meaning ‘footprint, trace’ in Colonsay (see p. 353).

⁵¹⁷ Headword is spelt *airgiòd*.

⁵¹⁸ Forms transcribed from Mary Ann’s pronunciation. See discussion at pp. 84-89. The *SGDS* gives *àrd* (55, 56) [a`sq̥ / a`sq̥ : à`sq̥ / à`sq̥]; *bòrd* does not appear as a headword in the *SGDS*.

Sonorant + sonorant

Epenthesis is found where two non-homorganic sonorants follow one another. In practice, since other sonorants are all treated as dentals, these combinations will always contain the phone [m]: *calman* [kal`əmən̩], *gorm* (497, 498) [gɔ̀rəm : gɔ̀rīm], *ainm* (17, 18) [ɛɲīm̩], *anmoch* [ɛnəmɔx], *imleachadh* (517) [imil`əxəɣ],⁵¹⁹ *iomradh* (527) [imira]. Once again, there is no glottalisation in any of these examples; the words *iomradh* (527) [imira] and *imire* (516) [i`mɪrɪ] provide a near-minimal pair in which the first contains an epenthetic vowel, while the second consists of three non-epenthetic syllables, with resulting glottalisation.

When the sonorants are homorganic, there is compensatory lengthening: *càrn* [ka`r̩n], *dòrn* [ɔ̀ɔ̀r̩n̩].⁵²⁰ (Cf. Ó Dochartaigh 1981: 219-231; Gillies 2009: 243). The preposition/pronoun combination *oirnn* [ɔ̀.ɲ̩], shows lengthening when stressed.

Sonorant + fricative

When a sonorant is followed by a fricative, epenthesis occurs in the same circumstances as with sonorant + lenis stop: *falbh* [fɔ̀l`əv], *garbh* (462) [gariɣ], *Donnchadh* (330, 331) [ɔ̀nɔ̀xəɣ], *dorcha* (332) [ɔ̀ɔ̀rəxə], and with palatalisation, *nas doirche* (333, 334) [nəs ɔ̀riçɪ], *aimsir* (14) [ɛmɪf`iɣ]. The near-minimal pair *falbh/falamh* illustrates the difference between an epenthetic vowel in the case of *falbh* [fɔ̀l`əv], and a full syllable (with corresponding glottalisation) in the case of *falamh* (389) [fa`ləɣ].⁵²¹

⁵¹⁹ Headword is *imlich*.

⁵²⁰ Forms transcribed from Mary Ann's pronunciation. *SGDS* forms are: *càrn* (154) [ka`ɲ̩ / ka`ɲ̩̩], *dorn* (339, 340) [ɔ̀ɔ̀ɲ̩ / ɔ̀ɔ̀ɲ̩̩]. Note that in the latter case, the *SGDS* headword is spelt without a grave accent.

⁵²¹ Exceptionally, the quality of the [l] in *falamh* is not specified in the *SGDS* results. It should be [l̩]: [fa`l̩əɣ].

Once again, no epenthesis is found in homorganic examples; indeed, the sonorant tends to become assimilated to the following fricative, particularly when palatalised: *bainnse* (76) [b_hɛ̃ɪɪ̃f̃ɪ̃],⁵²² *soillse* (789, 790) [s_hʲĩɪ̃f̃ɪ̃ : s_hʲĩɪ̃l̃ʲf̃ɪ̃],⁵²³ but note *rallsa* (685) [ra^ul̃ʲws̃ĩ].⁵²⁴ An interesting case is *ionnsaidh* (530) [ĩɲʲs̃ʲĩç] and its homophone *ionnsaich* (529), in which the ‘nasal’ sonorant *nn* is articulated as [r], as in *cnoc*. No epenthesis occurs, because the cluster is homorganic, and in any case the preceding vocalic segment is a diphthong.

Fricative + sonorant

As has already been noted, a particular feature of Colonsay Gaelic, which it shares with Islay, Gigha and southern Jura (*SGDS*, Vol. V: 122-123, Vol. IV: 34-35; *Grann* 2000: 56-57; Jones 2009a: 100; 2009b: 8), is the pronunciation of the words *samhradh* (736) [sɛṽr̃ĩɲ̃], *geamhradh* (469) [gʲɛṽr̃ĩɲ̃] with an epenthetic vowel, where other dialects have a diphthong. In Arran and Kintyre these words are recorded with [v], but without the epenthetic vowel (Holmer 1957: 25, 36, 43-44; 1981: 17, 19, 25, 37). A further example of epenthesis occurring between a fricative and a sonorant occurs in the genitive form *oidhche Shamhna* (734) [ĩɲ̃ĩçɪ heṽnə].⁵²⁵

Even more remarkable is the Colonsay pronunciation of *dannsadh* as [d̥ɛṽəsəɲ̃] (also found in Islay and Jura), which appears to show epenthesis occurring between two fricatives. This may be a case of assimilation (of a longstanding loanword) by analogy with *samhradh*, *geamhradh*. (See *Grann* 2000: 56-57.) This suggests that the underlying lexical form is *damhsadh*. The verbal form *damhais* [d̥ɛṽɪɪ̃] is also used, without glottalisation of [v], as would normally be expected. This suggests that *damhais* is a back-formation from *damhsadh*. *Grann* reports forms with [v] occurring not only in Islay, but also in southern Jura and (citing the work of Holmer) in Arran, Kintyre, Rathlin and the Glens of Antrim (*Grann* 2000: 56-57).

⁵²² Headword is *banais*: *bainnse*.

⁵²³ Headword is *soillsich*.

⁵²⁴ Headword is *ràcan*.

⁵²⁵ Headword is *Samhainn*.

Phonological assessment of epenthesis

The phonetic facts regarding epenthesis, and its manifestation in different dialects, are not in dispute. Scholars differ on the question of how these facts can be accommodated within a phonemic framework – if indeed they can be.

Essentially, two models have been proposed to deal with the problem of epenthesis within a segmental approach:

1. Marking syllable divisions, as practised by Borgstrøm in his early work on Barra.

2. Putting epenthetic sequences between dropped square brackets: [g_loro_m], etc.

This is the solution adopted by the *SGDS* for narrow phonetic transcriptions of certain dialects, but is not applicable to the phonetic reality as found in more southerly dialects.

A further possibility is hinted at by Gillies (2009: 244-245), who highlights the importance of *tone* in the phonemic interpretation of epenthesis:

Although this type of syllable is clearly disyllabic in phonetic terms, it is associated with the same held or rising tone as is found in monosyllables with long vowels. This, together with the perception of native speakers that svarabhakti words are monosyllabic, has led to its interpretation as phonemically monosyllabic. ... Note, however, that this treatment is not universal in Scottish Gaelic: epenthesis of a fixed /ə/ with normal tone is found in some of the southerly dialects.

Gillies appears to rule out any account of epenthesis which embraces all varieties of Scottish Gaelic. However, if one accepts Ternes's definition, whereby the notion of 'tone' encompasses the form of glottalisation found in southerly dialects (2006: 137-139), and where 'held or rising tone' (Tone 2, in Ternes's classification) corresponds to 'absence of glottalisation' in those dialects, it will be seen that Gillies's statement holds true despite the apparent difference in treatment between north and south, and hence by extension highlights the complementary relationship between epenthesis and glottalisation.

Considerations of ‘tone’ (in this broad sense, including glottalisation) lead us away from a strictly phonetic approach, and into the realm of suprasegmental or non-segmental features. I would argue that, as in the case of glottalisation, adopting a non-segmental approach to the question of epenthesis offers a more workable solution than trying to force this problematic feature of Gaelic phonology into the ill-fitting straitjacket of a segmental representation. In practice, this reinforces the view that in this dialect, glottalisation of consonants, where it occurs, should be marked in *phonemic* transcription with the non-segmental marker /ʔ/,⁵²⁶ while epenthetic combinations appear as a straightforward succession of segmental phonemes. This adequately reflects the audible facts, without attempting to explain complex phonological processes in a phonemic transcription.

In the final part of this chapter (see below) I refer to other ways in which current work in theoretical linguistics, and in particular Syllable Theory, has sought to cast light on the issue of epenthesis as it occurs in Scottish Gaelic, and as it relates to other prosodic features.

⁵²⁶ [ʔ] in the phonetic transcription adopted by the *SGDS*.

Preaspiration

Preaspiration is a well-known feature of Scottish Gaelic pronunciation, and is also found in Icelandic and Faroese, as well as some varieties of Norwegian and Swedish. This has led to speculation that it might have been brought into Gaelic as a result of Norse influence (Borgstrøm 1974; Oftedal 1994), although this has recently been disputed by Pavel Iosad (2015: 48-49), among others.⁵²⁷ It occurs only before the fortis stops /p t k/, the fortis affricate /tʃ/ and the fortis palatal stop /kʲ/, and essentially involves the insertion of a devoiced segment or glottal fricative [h] between a preceding short vowel and the stop. The precise phonetic form it takes differs from one dialect to another. In Lewis, it involves a fairly brief devoicing of the last part of the preceding vowel, usually transcribed as [ʰp ʰt ʰk]; in other dialects there is a more pronounced glottal fricative [h], which is usually realised as [x] before a velar stop. In some dialects, particularly in the central mainland and northern Argyll, [x] is also found before dental and labial stops (Iosad, Ramsammy and Honeybone 2015).

Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh has written an impressively detailed account of the variations that exist between different dialects in the way in which preaspiration is realised, based on the *SGDS* results (Ó Maolalaigh 2010). He identifies seven types of preaspiration patterns, labelled A to G, each of which is subject to minor variations in specific localities. Colonsay (along with all the other islands from Harris to Islay, plus part of the west coast of the mainland facing Skye) fits into Type C, where the basic pattern is [hp ht xk], i.e. a glottal fricative before dental and labial stops, but a velar fricative before a velar stop. Because there is a slight variation to this definition in the case of palatalised stops following the high front vowel [i] (see below), Colonsay is categorised as C_[var].

⁵²⁷ Cf. Ó Baoill (1980: 81) for an account of the earlier debate on this subject.

In the Colonsay results, the *SGDS* consistently uses the transcription [h̥ h̥ x̥g] following a ‘broad’ vowel. Preaspiration thus becomes the essential marker distinguishing a fortis stop from a lenis one in medial or final position, following a stressed short vowel. After the high front vowel [i], where a following stop is palatalised, the transcription is [ç̥ ç̥d̥z̥ ç̥g̥]: *suipeir* (815) [siç̥pḁr̥], *litir* (578) [liç̥d̥z̥i̥r̥], *tric* (868) [triç̥g̥]; this indicates a very strong form of preaspiration, involving the palatal fricative [ç̥], before orthographic *p* and *t*, in addition to *c* where it would be expected.

The palatal fricative is also found before [g̥] following other phonetic vowels: *creic* (252) [kreç̥g̥], *cnuic* (215) [krüç̥g̥].⁵²⁸ (see p. 155). Although it is not clear from the *SGDS* results, [ç̥] does not appear to be found with orthographic *p* or *t* following vowels other than [i]. In cases where a dental stop (or affricate) follows a rounded vowel, the symbol for a rounded labial fricative [ɸ̥] is found: *cat* (158, 159) [kʏɸ̥d̥ : kʏɸ̥d̥] and its plural *cait* (160) [kʏɸ̥t̥ʃ̥],⁵²⁹ and also *tuiteam* (874) [tuɸ̥d̥z̥ə̃m̥].⁵³⁰ This reflects the fact that preaspiration involves devoicing part of the preceding vowel segment, with lip-rounding retained.

Where a fortis stop is preceded by a sonorant, preaspiration takes different forms. In the case of laterals and vibrants (*l* and *r*, in orthographic terms), the sonorant is *devoiced* before a labial or velar stop: *corp* (243) [kɔ̃r̥ɸ̥], *oidheirp* (671) [ʏ̃r̥ɸ̥]; *olc* (673, 674) [ɔ̃l̥g̥], *smuilceach* (778) [smuɔ̃l̥ç̥g̥ə̃x̥]; *adharc* (7) [ʏ̃r̥ɸ̥g̥], *coirce* (233, 234) [kɔ̃r̥ç̥i̥]. Note, however, that *amharc* (36), which is the normal word for ‘looking’ in this dialect, is usually metathesised as [ɛ̃r̥ə̃x̥g̥] by Colonsay speakers, and not pronounced *[ɛ̃r̥v̥ə̃r̥g̥] as shown in the *SGDS*.⁵³¹

⁵²⁸ Headword is *cnoc*: *cnuic*.

⁵²⁹ Headword is *cat*: *cait*.

⁵³⁰ Headword is *tuit*: *tuiteam*.

⁵³¹ The form [q̥ɛ̃r̥ə̃x̥g̥], with some variation in vowels, is recorded in Islay (Points 53-56). See also Ó Maolaláigh (2010: 370).

In the case of dental stops, a more complicated picture is seen. Laterals are devoiced: *allt* (30-32) [ʰaʋ]ᵏᵗ : [ʰaʋ]ᵏᵗ],⁵³² *falt* (392) [fa]ᵏᵗ : fa]ᵏᵗ], while vibrants are not only devoiced, but acquire a fricative articulation, as has already been seen: *mart* (113) [mɛʂ'ᵏᵗ],⁵³³ *ceart* (174, 175) [k'aʂᵏᵗ], etc.

When the sonorant in question is a nasal, the reverse process takes place: the sonorant is lengthened, and the following stop is *voiced*. Voicing/devoicing will be considered in the next section.

In other environments, i.e. in unstressed medial or final position, or after a long vowel or diphthong, the *SGDS* analysis implies that the lenis/fortis distinction is neutralised. Thus *bàta* (81, 82) [b̩aːᵏᵗ] could equally well be spelt **bàda*. I have found that in some cases a weak form of preaspiration is also heard following a long vowel: [b̩aːʰᵏᵗ]. This analysis is borne out by Dónall Ó Baoill, who observes:

Preaspiration after long vowels has developed along similar lines as those described above in the case of short vowels. However, in general it can be said that preaspiration is 'lighter' after long vowels. (1980: 84)

The evidence, however, is not strong enough to conclude that this is a regular feature of this dialect.

Like glottalisation (see above), preaspiration was analysed in Chapter 2, for the purposes of phonemic analysis, as *allophonic* in the case of fortis stops (pp. 138-145). A segmental transcription, as adopted by the *SGDS*, would also lend itself to a bisegmental interpretation, with /h/ functioning as a phoneme in its own right, with allophones [ç ʰ] as appropriate. The latter interpretation, while perfectly viable, is not the approach adopted here.

⁵³² For reasons stated (pp. 75-77), I would prefer the transcription [a]ᵏᵗ].

⁵³³ Headword is *bó*.

There is, however, a strong case to be made for regarding preaspiration, like glottalisation and epenthesis, as a non-segmental feature operating on the segmental string. Just as glottalisation of lenis consonants has the effect of lengthening the syllable – hence giving it added prominence – while retaining a short vowel, the same effect is achieved in the case of fortis consonants by means of preaspiration. The process is not, strictly speaking, *suprasegmental*, since in most instances it occurs between two discrete segments (and may itself be legitimately interpreted as a segment), but in terms of its phonological function it fits the pattern of ‘vowel strengthening’, identified by Ó Dochartaigh (1981), in the same way as glottalisation, lengthening and, arguably, epenthesis. The effect in all cases is to increase the prominence of particular syllables within an utterance.⁵³⁴

⁵³⁴ For a quantitative approach to preaspiration, examining its occurrence in Irish and Icelandic, as well as Scottish Gaelic, see Ní Chasaide and Ó Dochartaigh (1984).

Nasalisation

Nasalisation in Gaelic may affect vowels or consonants. In both cases, the inherent nasality of the consonants [m n nʲ ɲ ɳ] is extended to adjacent segments, resulting in nasalised vowels and voiced consonants. It is thus seen to be a *suprasegmental* feature.

In a note on the LSS questionnaire, Jackson observes: ‘E[ric] H[amp] notes there seems to be no phonemic nasalisation, and that it is allophonic in contact with nasals’ (LSS: 1). I agree with Hamp that nasalisation is not phonemic in this dialect, but while it may be allophonic in the case of consonants, where its realisation is predictable, I would question whether this is true for nasalisation of vowels, in view of the large number of examples where a vowel in contact with a nasal consonant is not nasalised. Rather I would maintain that it is *prosodic* in such cases.

Nasalisation of vowels

Nasalisation of vowels is not a common feature of Colonsay Gaelic. Only 23 headwords out of 895 in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay show this feature. Four of these are duplicates of other headwords, sometimes with a slightly different phonetic transcription, while others are morphological variants (inflected forms) of the same word. Ignoring duplicates, but including morphological variants, gives 19 entries in the *SGDS* results with nasalised vowels.

In every case, the vowel concerned is found in immediate proximity to a ‘coronal/dental’ nasal consonant [n nʲ]; in the overwhelming majority of cases (14 out of 19), the adjacent consonant is [nʲ]. Just over half the instances recorded (11) involve the vowel [ɛ̃]; and in 7 of these cases [ɛ̃] is found in the diphthong combination [ɛ̃ö], as transcribed in the *SGDS* system. These include the following monosyllabic words ending in the orthographic sequence *-ann*: *ceann* (163-165) [kʲɛ̃öɲʲ], *clann* (196) [klʲɛ̃öɲʲ], *crann* (245) [krʲɛ̃öɲʲ], *gleann* (477, 478) [glʲɛ̃öɲʲ], *sannt* (737) [sɪɛ̃öɲʲ]; as well as the disyllabic plural form *beanntan* (91)

[bʲi̯ẽũj̥n`d̥əŋ]⁵³⁵ and the compound form *seann-té* (747) [ʃi̯ẽũj̥ŋ d̥z'e],⁵³⁶ both of which have [i̯ẽũ] in the stressed syllable. It will be recalled that I have chosen to interpret these sequences phonetically as [ẽnʷ], i.e. with a lengthened ‘rounded and velarised’ sonorant rather than a diphthong, and phonemically as /ɛnʷ/. (See p. 76). Nasalisation is universally found in such cases, and may be regarded as allophonic. It is noteworthy that Colonsay speakers, when giving added emphasis to such words (e.g. when repeating them for the sake of clarity), will often emphasise the nasality of the vowel segment: *cha robh e idir ann* [xa ro a id'z'ir 'i̯ẽũj̥n] ‘he wasn’t even *there*’.

It will be recalled that orthographic *a* is normally realised as [ɛ] in the presence of a nasal consonant in this dialect, as in other Argyll dialects, notably Islay. This explains the absence of any forms in *[ã], and helps to explain the preponderance of examples with nasalised [ẽ]. It is likely that the synchronic forms in [ɛ] reflect a historical process of ‘nasalisation’, which has affected the quality of the vowel, but has not resulted in phonetically nasalised vowels in the present-day dialect.

The other nasalised vowels attested are:

[ũ] in *a-nunn* (45) [nũn`]⁵³⁷

[ỹ] in *naoi* (650) [n`ĩỹi̯], *naomh* (651) [n`ỹ·y̯], *naoimh* (652) [n`ĩỹi̯y̯]⁵³⁸

[ĩ] in the diphthongs above; also in *nighean* (664) [n<ĩ̯?ĩ̯ŋ]; *snìomh* (785, 786)

[sɲ<ĩ̯·y̯ : sɲĩ̯·y̯], *shnìomh* (787) [nĩ̯·y̯].⁵³⁹ But note the parallel forms *do nighean* (665) [dò ni?ĩ̯ŋ], *snìomh* (784) [sɲ<(<)i̯·y̯], without nasalisation.

With the exception of the ‘echoing’ vowel [ĩ] in the glottalised form [n<ĩ̯?ĩ̯ŋ], where the nasalisation is carried forward from the principal vowel, all other instances of nasalised vowels occur in stressed syllables.

⁵³⁵ Headword is *beann*: *beanntan*.

⁵³⁶ Headword is *sean*: *seann-té*.

⁵³⁷ Headword is *a-null*, *a-nunn*.

⁵³⁸ Headword is *naomh*: *naoimh*.

⁵³⁹ Headword is *snìomh* : *shnìomh* i.

There are, however, numerous examples in the *SGDS* results where a vowel in a stressed syllable, in proximity to a nasal consonant, is not shown as nasalised: *nàdur* (646) [n`ε·d̥ər], *nead* (653) [nɛd̥], *bainne* (68) [b̥a`n̥i], *cainnt* (142) [k̥ɛiɲd̥'z'], to mention but a few. Apart from the 'rounded and velarised' context, therefore, nasalisation of vowels appears to be an optional variant, rather than a universal feature of the phonology of this dialect, and can be used prosodically to reinforce the perception of stress in syllables containing a nasal consonant.

Nasalisation of vowels in the Colonsay dialect is therefore defined as allophonic in the case of [ε] in a stressed syllable before the 'rounded and velarised' nasal [n^w] (in *SGDS*, diphthong + n`), and is otherwise to be regarded as yet another non-segmental feature (nasality spreading from the consonant segment to an adjacent vowel) which serves to give added prominence to certain syllables in an utterance.

Voicing of consonants

Voicing of otherwise unvoiced consonants occurs in this dialect in two contexts:

1. As a result of the nasal mutation, after ‘nasalising particles’ (see below), including notably the definite article in the form *an* or *am*;
2. Word-internally, following a homorganic nasal consonant in the coda of the previous syllable, in words such as *teampull* (834, 835) [tʰɛmˈbʲə̀], *cinnteach* (184, 185) [kʰɪnˈdʲzʲəx], *sunndach* (817) [sʰʉnˈdʲɒx].

The nasal mutation

This mutation is commonly referred to as ‘eclipsis’ in Irish, and in historical Celtic (Goidelic) linguistics. In more recent studies referring specifically to Scottish Gaelic, it has come to be called ‘nasalisation’ (Ó Maolalaigh 1996; Clement 1994: 98; Gillies 2009: 251-252). However, as we have just seen, this term is used in the present study to include the occurrence of nasalised *vowels* in the presence of a nasal consonant. Since this seems a perfectly legitimate use of the term, when seen in a wider phonetic context, I have chosen to use it in that broader sense, and to refer to initial nasalisation of *consonants* (specifically stops)⁵⁴⁰ as ‘the nasal mutation’.

The nasal mutation in Scottish Gaelic, although realised differently in different dialects (see below), differs significantly from ‘eclipsis’ as found in Irish. (See Gillies 2009: 251-252). Clement observes: ‘Nowhere is the phonetic manifestation of nasalization [*sic*] of stops quite like the Irish eclipsis, yet there seems to be no dialect that is completely unaffected by it’ (1994: 98). Ó Maolalaigh (1996) gives a cogent (although, in his own estimation, still ‘embryonic’)⁵⁴¹ account of how the historical development of this mutation from its origins in Old Irish may have come to follow a different course in Scottish Gaelic, compared with Modern Irish.

⁵⁴⁰ Clement (1994: 98) notes that in some mainland dialects (now extinct) nasalisation of fricatives [f s ʃ] was also found.

⁵⁴¹ See p.168, fn. 1.

In Scottish Gaelic this mutation occurs in a limited set of morphophonemic contexts, always following a nasal consonant in a preceding word which is a ‘nasalising particle’ (Clement 1994: 98; Ó Maolalaigh 1996). This category includes, most significantly, the definite article in the form *an/am*, *nan/nam*, or combined with a preceding preposition in forms such as *don*, *mun*. The word *an/am* when used as a possessive adjective (= ‘their’), an interrogative particle, a relative particle/pronoun, or as an abbreviated form of *ann an*, likewise produces this mutation, as does *nan/nam* when used with the meaning ‘if’. *An* as a prefix in words such as *an-diugh*, *am-bliadhna* similarly results in voicing. The prepositions *ann an* and *gun* also function as ‘nasalising particles’.

An alternative reading of the situation in Scottish Gaelic would be that the nasal mutation occurs after *all* particles (clitics) ending in a nasal consonant, and can be seen as an allophonic feature of the phonetic word in such cases. This hypothesis, which is broadly that advanced by Ó Maolalaigh (1996), has the double advantage of divorcing the development of the nasal mutation in Scottish Gaelic from that of eclipsis in Irish, and of eliminating the apparent arbitrariness of the set of ‘nasalising particles’. It also brings the nasal mutation into line with other instances where voicing occurs after a nasal consonant, e.g. ‘word-internal voicing’ (see below).

Broadly speaking, the mutation takes two forms, in different areas: in the ‘Lewis’ variety (also found in north-western districts of the mainland), a lenis stop /b d g/ is ‘eclipsed’ to become the corresponding homorganic nasal /m n ŋ/, while a fortis stop /p t k/ retains its aspiration, giving the forms [mh nh ŋh], which are such a characteristic feature of Lewis pronunciation. Elsewhere, the lenis stops are voiced, while the fortes either merge with the lenes to become [b d g], or retain their aspiration to give the forms [b^h d^h g^h] or [bh dh gh].⁵⁴² A much more nuanced geographical analysis of the nasal mutation in all its forms, as evidenced by the LSS data, is provided by Bosch and Scobbie (2009).

⁵⁴² Clement (1994: 98) identifies three forms of nasal mutation, treating the realisation of fortes as [b d g] (in Sutherland) and [bh dh gh] as separate categories.

In Colonsay, the effects of the nasal mutation are somewhat different. Examples in the *SGDS* are scarce, but the LSS notes have proved helpful. Lenis stops, which are normally marked as unvoiced [b̥ d̥ g̥] in this dialect are voiced: *am bòrd* [m bɔːr̥d̥], *an duine* [n duːn̥i], *an gobhar* [ŋ goʔɔ̯r̥].⁵⁴³ Fortis stops, on the other hand, are realised as the corresponding lenis stop, but are unvoiced, and retain their post-aspiration, giving the forms [b̥h̥ d̥h̥ ɡ̥h̥]: *am poll* [m b̥h̥|oʊl̥],⁵⁴⁴ *an t-uisge* (890) [ən d̥huʃg̥'í], *man cuairt* (267) [maŋ ɡ̥h̥|uʃt̥'s̥'].⁵⁴⁵ Contrary to what might be thought, an aspirated lenis is not the same sound as the corresponding fortis – justifying the use of ‘fortis/lenis’ terminology, rather than ‘aspirated/unaspirated’.

Although not examined by either Ó Maolalaigh or Clement,⁵⁴⁶ the nasal mutation also affects the palatalised stops /dʒ ɡʲ tʃ kʲ/. In Colonsay, the pattern is similar to that seen with non-palatalised stops. Lenes are simply voiced: *an-dé* (41) [nd̥'z'èː], *an geamhradh* [ŋ' ɡ'ɛv̥r̥iː]. In the case of the fortes, it appears that the corresponding lenis is used, possibly with post-aspiration, although the LSS notes suggest some degree of free variation in the forms actually used: *an ceòl* is shown as [ŋ' ɡ'hɔːl̥], whereas *an teine* appears as [n t'f̥eːn̥i], with no mutation (LSS: 36).⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴³ For partial voicing in initial position, see p. 289-290.

⁵⁴⁴ This example found in LSS.

⁵⁴⁵ Grand [Grant] (1987: 61) reports the same situation in Islay.

⁵⁴⁶ Ó Maolalaigh himself admits this deficiency (p. 169, fn. 3).

⁵⁴⁷ My own informant Mary Ann MacAllister very clearly says *air an teine* [ɛr ən d'z'ɛːn̥i].

Word-internal voicing

Voicing of stops is also found within words of more than one syllable, when the stop is preceded by a homorganic nasal. Like the nasal mutation, this is an example of how a particular feature – in this case voicing – may spread to more than one segment. In general, the distinction between lenis and fortis stops is neutralised, both becoming voiced lenes. Sometimes only the spelling or the etymology will determine whether the stop was originally lenis or fortis. Thus we find the following:

Labials: *teampull* (834, 835) [tʲɛmˈbəl̪ˠ], *iompachadh* (526) [imˈbəxəɣ]⁵⁴⁸
trombaid (873) [tromˈbaɟʲ], *combanach* (240) [kɔˈmˈbənəx]⁵⁴⁹

Dentals: *cunntas* (289) [kunˈdəs], *aontachadh* (51) [yˈnˈdəxəɣ]⁵⁵⁰
sunndach (817) [sʉnˈdʌx], *beanntan* (91) [b̥ʲɛ̃ʉːnˈdəɲ]⁵⁵¹

Velars: *pongail* (683) [poŋˈgʌl̪ˠ]⁵⁵²

Palatalised: *cinnteach* (184) [kʲiːnˈdʲzʲəx]⁵⁵³, *cluinntinn* (208) [kl̪ˠ[ui]ɲdʲzʲiːɲ]⁵⁵⁴,
muinntir (638) [m̪[ui]ɲdʲzʲiːɲ]

There are no instances of word-internal voicing involving the palatal stops /kʲ gʲ/ (phonetic [kʲ gʲ]) in the Colonsay data set.

⁵⁴⁸ Headword is *iompaich*.

⁵⁴⁹ Headword is *combach*.

⁵⁵⁰ Headword is *aontaich*: *aontachadh*.

⁵⁵¹ Headword is *beann*: *beanntan*.

⁵⁵² Headword is *puncail*.

⁵⁵³ Headword 185 has [kʲiːnˈdʲzʲəx], without voicing.

⁵⁵⁴ Headword is *cluinn*: *cluinntinn*.

An interesting anomaly is that ‘plain’ [n], unlike velarised [n̠] and the other nasals, is *not* followed by a voiced stop. Thus we find *ciontach* (187) [k'ü̠ntəx],⁵⁵⁵ *fantail* (412) [fə̠ntaɪ'].⁵⁵⁶ Only *reusanta* (700) [ɾi̠ʃsə̠ndə], in the *SGDS* results, has [d] following plain [n]. Conversely, *bainntreach* (77) [b̠i̠ɛɪɪ̠n̠d̠z'irəx]⁵⁵⁷ and an alternative version of *cinnteach* (185) [k'i̠n̠d̠z'əx] have unvoiced [d̠z'] following the nasal [n̠].

In nearly all instances, the sonorant is found to be lengthened after a short vowel, but not after a long vowel or a diphthong: *teampull* (834, 835) [t'fɛm̠bə̠], *sunndach* (817) [s̠n̠d̠x], but *aontachadh* (51) [y̠n̠d̠xə̠], *muinntir* (638) [m̠ui̠n̠d̠z'ir̠]. Exceptions are *tionndadh* (847) [t'f̠y̠n̠d̠ə̠],⁵⁵⁸ *contraigh* (242) [kə̠n̠dra̠ç], both of which could very well be re-analysed with long [n̠],⁵⁵⁹ and *iongantach* (528) [i̠ʔ̠n̠d̠x],⁵⁶⁰ where short [n̠] follows a long *syllable* (with a glottalised interval at its core).

This is a further illustration of the ‘vowel-strengthening’ tendency observed in this dialect, whereby prominence is given to a syllable by lengthening it, without necessarily lengthening the vowel at its core. This feature, like the others discussed in this chapter, is thus seen to fulfil a *prosodic* function.

⁵⁵⁵ Headword is *cionta*.

⁵⁵⁶ Headword is *feith*: *feitheamh*.

⁵⁵⁷ Headword is *banntrach*.

⁵⁵⁸ Headword is *tionndaidh*: *tionndadh*.

⁵⁵⁹ The approved spelling for the latter word is now *contraigh*, suggesting lengthening.

⁵⁶⁰ Headword is *iongnadh*.

Devoicing

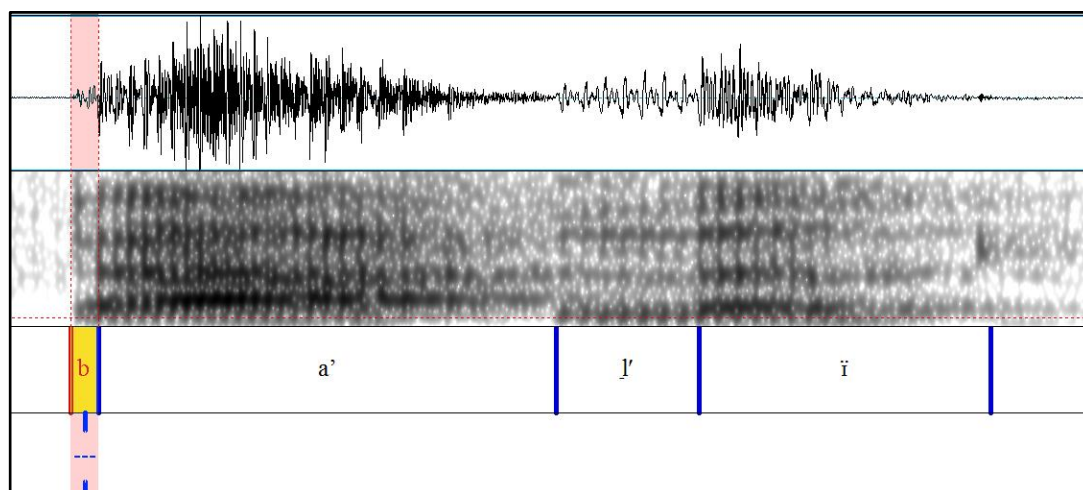
Devoicing of otherwise voiced consonants occurs in three contexts:

1. Lenis stops /b d g/ are consistently shown as devoiced [b̥ d̥ g̥];
2. Voiced consonants in word-final position are frequently shown as devoiced;
3. Preaspiration of a sonorant before a fortis stop is expressed as devoicing.

Lenis stops

As has been made clear in the previous chapter, the lenis stops /b d g/ are consistently realised as the unvoiced stops [b̥ d̥ g̥] in this dialect. This is in line with the treatment of these stops in the overwhelming majority of Scottish Gaelic dialects. Gillies notes a difference in treatment in initial position: ‘The devoicing of historical /b d g/ is positionally determined; generally it is partial in initial position and complete in internal and final positions.’ (2009: 234)

This statement appears to be borne out by spectrographic evidence. Although it is not very apparent, careful analysis of the voicing bar (and waveform) in Flora Macneill’s rendering of *baile* shows momentary partial voicing of [b] (two cycles), following the period of labial closure, before the full voicing of the vowel [a]:



Waveform and spectrogram for *baile*.

(Flora Macneill)

Since it is difficult to indicate ‘partial devoicing’ using the system of transcription adopted, or to quantify the degree of voicing heard, it may be sufficient to state that in Colonsay, as in many other varieties of Gaelic, lenis stops in initial position are partially devoiced, and are fully devoiced in medial and final position.

Final devoicing

Devoicing of a final consonant is a feature of many languages, including German, Dutch, Russian and Czech. There is a natural tendency for articulation to weaken towards the end of an utterance, as the strength of the airflow diminishes, but not all languages make a distinct phonological feature of this. Some varieties of English (not the majority of Scottish varieties) show devoicing before a following unvoiced consonant, as in *head cold* [hɛɫ̥ kɔʊl̥d], *job-seeker* [dʒɔb̥ si:kə], but devoicing at the end of a word is not normally a feature of English pronunciation – except sometimes when it is spoken by native speakers of Gaelic (or German).

Since the lenis stops [b̥ d̥ g̥] are normally devoiced in this dialect, final devoicing is seen mainly in the case of sonorants and voiced fricatives. As noted in the review of phonemes, it is by no means a universal feature, but a highly volatile variant which may be partly influenced by the nature of the following sound (in sandhi).

Preaspiration of sonorants

This form of devoicing has been discussed under **Preaspiration** (see p. 278).

Some insights from syllable theory

It has been pointed out throughout this chapter that many, if not all, of these non-segmental features are inter-related, and in the case of glottalisation, epenthesis and preaspiration, are found in complementary distribution. It is worth considering why this should be so, and how any underlying phonological explanation operates. Such a ‘holistic’ approach to non-segmental features would serve to emphasise the *unity* and *consistency* of the prosodic structure in a particular dialect, rather than merely offering a list of seemingly disparate items. I have already alluded to Ó Dochartaigh’s idea of ‘vowel strengthening’ (Ó Dochartaigh 1981), and to the way in which, in the light of more recent research, this concept can be extended to syllables. In this final section, I examine some of the ways in which recent studies of Gaelic based on syllable theory may shed light on this move towards a unifying principle in Gaelic prosody.

Norval Smith (1999) carried out a study of Gaelic syllable structure, based mainly on a re-examination of Oftedal’s Leurbost data, although he also refers to Holmer’s findings in Islay (Holmer 1938). In particular, Smith makes a link between epenthesis and the occurrence of glottalisation (marked as a glottal stop [ʔ]) in the latter dialect. Since Holmer’s Islay examples are paralleled in the Colonsay data, Smith’s findings are of great relevance to the present study. Smith points out that in Holmer’s transcription the glottal stop functions as a distinguishing marker between ‘svarabhakti’ and ‘non-svarabhakti’ words, e.g.:

Svarabhakti		Non-svarabhakti	
arəm	<i>arm</i>	aʔran	<i>aran</i>
bəlagəm	<i>bolgam</i>	baʔlax	<i>balach</i>
donaxəʏ	<i>Donnachadh</i>	duʔnjə	<i>duine</i>

(Smith 1999: 588)

More than this, in Holmer's examples [ʔ] supplies a coda to monosyllables such as *teth* [t'eʔ], *math* [mɛʔ], and to the first (stressed) syllable in disyllabic words characterised by hiatus: *gobhar* [goʔur], *bodha* [boʔu], *buidhe* [buʔi], thus producing closed syllables containing a short vowel. As has already been observed, the corresponding feature in Colonsay pronunciation is more akin to a 'glottalised interval' than a glottal stop, and in my MSc dissertation I rejected the idea that monosyllables ending in a short vowel, and not followed by another vowel in the next word, clearly exhibit glottalisation, preferring to regard this as an example of final devoicing (Scouller 2010: 25-26). If Smith's analysis of Holmer's data is to be accepted, this assessment will have to be revised, in the sense that glottalisation must be held to be present at least *phonologically* in such cases, even if it is not always detectable as a surface feature.

In an interesting choice of words, Smith goes on to observe that 'the svarabhakti cases do not require this therapy' (p.589), and concludes that they must therefore be considered as already involving closed syllables. The closure, in Smith's rather ingenious analysis, is provided by a 'recursive' syllable, i.e. a syllable within a syllable. Although nearly all his examples are drawn from the Leurbost data, he does cite the case of *tioram/tiorma* (positive v. comparative) from Holmer's data, analysing these as [tʰjuʔ] [rəm] and [tʰju [rə]] [mə] respectively. The first syllable in *tioram* is thus 'closed' by the glottal stop [ʔ], and in *tiorma* by the recursive syllable [rə], which being unstressed, does not itself require to be closed (nor does the final syllable [mə]) (Smith 1999: 603).

Smith's analysis is taken up in a recent paper by Pavel Iosad (2015), which further strengthens the case for adopting what I have called a 'holistic' approach to prosodic features; in particular, he recognises epenthesis and glottalisation as complementary processes. Iosad's main purpose is to show that these features, and in particular the 'pitch-accent' suggested by Ternes, are the result of autonomous processes operating within the language, and not, as has been suggested (Borgstrøm 1974; Oftedal 1994; Ternes 1980; 2006: 141-143), the result of prolonged contact with Norse. Against this it may be argued that some present-day Scandinavian languages do exhibit pitch-

accent and, in the case of Danish, glottalisation. (Any further consideration of Scandinavian languages would, however, be beyond the scope of the present study.) In pursuit of this aim, Iosad submits Smith’s findings to a fairly rigorous re-appraisal, rejecting Smith’s ‘recursive’ solution to the problem of epenthesis on the grounds that ‘this elaborate structure is not needed, because the svarabhakti vowel is simply not manipulated by the phonology’ (p. 33). Without going any further into the details of that argument, what is of more interest for our purposes is that Iosad includes a section on ‘Glottal stop insertion’ (pp. 34-38), based on Smith’s observations and on Holmer’s findings from Islay.⁵⁶¹

Iosad’s analysis is based on attributing a number of *morae* to syllables, depending on their ‘weight’. Although this approach is not adopted generally in the present study, his findings are not incompatible with what has been described here in terms of ‘prominence’ of stressed syllables. A stressed or ‘heavy’ syllable, in Iosad’s scheme, will normally contain two morae (indicated in transcription as μ). In cases involving a diphthong or long vowel, there is no glottal stop insertion:⁵⁶²

[^htrɑ μ i μ] tràigh

[^hk^hliu: μ μ] cliù

[^hpjɔ: μ μ] beò⁵⁶³

⁵⁶¹ It is gratifying to see Holmer – ‘that much-maligned student of Gaelic dialects’ (Smith 1999: 588) – being taken seriously by present-day theoretical linguists. Ternes (2006: 3) describes his findings as ‘well-nigh worthless’.

⁵⁶² Iosad’s transcription is retained throughout this section.

⁵⁶³ It should be noted that in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, these three examples are analysed somewhat differently: *tràigh* (861) is shown with a long vowel, and a semi-vowel in coda [tra:̥i̯], while the other two are shown with diphthongs [k^hl̥i̯u] (201), [b̥ɛo] (96). This variation in treatment does not invalidate Iosad’s point.

Glottal stop insertion is found in what Iosad terms ‘subminimal monosyllables’:

[^htʰje_μʔ_μ] *teth*
[^hmɛ_μʔ_μ] *math*
[^hkru_μʔ_μ] *gruth*⁵⁶⁴

Glottal stop insertion is also found in polysyllables:

[^hpɑ_μʔ_μlax] *balach* (not * [^hpɑ_μlax])
[^hko_μʔ_μur] *gobhar*

Crucially, however, glottal stop insertion is not found before sonorants when these are followed by svarabhakti vowels:

[^hmarəv] *marbh* (not * [^hmaʔrəv])

According to Iosad,

This is explained if the correct surface representation in [this instance] is [^hma_μr_μv], with a moraic coda consonant obviating the need for glottal stop insertion. Thus, glottal stop insertion can be viewed as a device to provide a light stressed syllable with a mora.

He goes on to suggest that the pair *bogha* / *bó*, for which Ternes gives the Tíree forms [^hpoʔo : ^hpo:] (Colonsay [ʔoʔo : ʔo]), can be explained by assuming the former to be ‘lexically disyllabic’. However, as Iosad graciously adds, ‘alternative analyses of these data are possible’.

⁵⁶⁴ As discussed above (p. 261), the actual realisation of these words in Colonsay does not show final glottalisation, except in sandhi before a following vowel. *SGDS* transcribes the first two as [tʰʲè] (839), [mɛ] (603), with no indication of a glottal coda. *Gruth* is not included in the *SGDS*, but would be transcribed as [gʰru].

Iosad emphasises that ‘glottal stop insertion’ is phonological, and that the glottal stop forms a coda, and supplies an extra mora, to a syllable which would otherwise be ‘light’. This corresponds to my own findings that glottalisation occurs after a short vowel in a stressed syllable, and is a phonological process operating on the segmental string, and giving added prominence to syllables containing a short vowel.⁵⁶⁵

Complementarity of prosodic features

The main conclusion to be drawn from this study of the non-segmental features of Colonsay Gaelic is that (with the exception of devoicing, and possibly nasalisation) they all serve the same phonological purpose.⁵⁶⁶

The classic suprasegmental features of stress, duration and tone are supplemented in this dialect (among others) by the processes of glottalisation, epenthesis and preaspiration. These occur in complementary distribution, in different phonetic environments, in each case giving added prominence to certain syllables within an utterance, while retaining a short vowel segment at the nucleus of the syllable. Increased *duration* of the syllable as a result contributes to the perception of *stress*, while glottalisation and epenthesis, in particular, have been interpreted as manifestations of the broader concept of *tone*.

Glottalisation, as has been shown, gives added weight to an otherwise ‘light’ syllable containing a short vowel. Preaspiration fulfils a similar function, in cases where the following consonant is fortis. In the case of epenthesis, whether one accepts Smith’s idea of ‘recursiveness’ or not, it is the epenthetic ‘syllable’, or vocalised segment,⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁵ William Gillies has pointed out (in comments on a previous draft of this chapter) that loanwords from English/Scots into Gaelic often acquire an extra syllable. Thus we find disyllabic forms of English monosyllables, either with internal modification, as in *paidhir* ‘pair’ (cf. Scots pronunciation [peːər]) or with an added final [ə], as in *drama* ‘dram’. This is a further illustration of a strategy for adding weight to a short syllable.

⁵⁶⁶ This ‘inter-relatedness’ of prosodic features was the theme of a presentation I made at *Teangeolaíocht na Gaeilge XV*, Maynooth University, 10-11 April 2015 (Scouller 2015).

⁵⁶⁷ As discussed above, epenthetic combinations are not necessarily to be treated as forming a separate syllable.

that bolsters the preceding short vowel. The result is perceived as a stress pattern, which in turn is characterised by particular tone contours. In this way the different non-segmental features are seen to interact with one another in a unified prosodic system.

Devoicing and nasalisation (particularly the nasal mutation of consonants) do not really fit into this unified pattern, but are included here as non-segmental features of this dialect. Yet, as we have seen, nasalisation of vowel segments is also used to give added prominence to syllables, in those limited environments in which it occurs.

Ó Dochartaigh's 1981 paper on 'vowel strengthening' was limited to certain features of Gaelic vowels, but can be seen as having sown the seed for a more wide-ranging analysis of Gaelic prosody, involving the strengthening of *syllables* rather than just their core vowels.

4. MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX

Scottish Gaelic dialect studies tend to concentrate on phonological and lexical features. Differences in pronunciation, and the use of unusual words, are the features that are likely to strike even the most casual observer, when listening to an unfamiliar dialect. The phonological characteristics of the Colonsay dialect have been systematically examined in the preceding two chapters, and Chapter 5 will examine some of the lexical features that characterise this dialect.

But there may also be morphological and syntactical elements, where usage in the dialect differs from that of the standard language. In the case of Gaelic, where there is no single generally accepted ‘standard’ variety, this may be taken to mean the norms of the more frequently-used varieties, such as Lewis and Skye, which have been well described by scholars such as Oftedal (1956) and Borgstrøm (1940, 1941). Or the reference baseline may be sought in the forms and paradigms set out in formal grammars of the language. Calder’s groundbreaking work in the 1920s (Calder 1972) has long been regarded as a classic in this field, but is now very dated. For a more up-to-date account, we now have the recently published (and amusingly titled) *Geàrr-ghràmar na Gàidhlig*, by Richard Cox (2017), as well as the concise summary contained in the appendices to Mark’s *Gaelic-English Dictionary* (Mark 2004: 623-736), and textbooks for the use of learners, e.g. *Teach Yourself Gaelic* (Robertson and Taylor 1993), *Scottish Gaelic in Twelve Weeks* (Ó Maolalaigh and MacAonghuis 2010). A more analytical study is provided by Gillies (2009). Many of these works of reference are highly conservative in the forms they use, being largely based upon the *written* language as it has become established over the last 150 years or so, rather than the reality of contemporary spoken Gaelic. The result is that native speakers often find learners’ Gaelic excessively formal, and can sometimes be made to feel embarrassed at their own lack of education in the finer points of Gaelic grammar.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁸ When attempting to learn Gaelic on Colonsay in the 1970s, I was frequently told that my own ‘textbook’ Gaelic forms would be ‘the right way’ to say things, even though they clearly did not correspond to many of the forms I was hearing in everyday Colonsay speech.

William Lamb (2008) has done Scottish Gaelic a great service, not only by exploring the issue of how different registers are used in various types of spoken and written Gaelic, but also by including a voluminous appendix (pp. 197-298), containing a *descriptive* rather than *prescriptive* grammar of contemporary Gaelic as it is currently spoken by native speakers.⁵⁶⁹

A dialect study such as this must, by its very nature, adopt a descriptive approach. Since the aim is to provide a record of how Gaelic has actually been spoken by Colonsay people in the early years of the 21st century, there is very little point in stating what the ‘correct’ form should be, although forms found in other varieties may be cited for purposes of comparison.

It is also worth noting that, of Lamb’s eight categories of spoken and written discourse (2008: 21), only one (conversation) is really relevant to the present study. None of the remaining Gaelic speakers on Colonsay habitually read in Gaelic. Nor would any of them normally think of writing in Gaelic, since their education was conducted almost entirely in English, and even basic spelling rules can be something of a mystery to them. Traditional narrative is no longer practised. Nevertheless, it is clear from the work of Donald MacNeill (Scouller 1998) and Barbara Satchel (Law 2013), as well as older works collected by Alasdair MacAllister, and as yet unpublished (see Chapter 1, p. 26), that previous generations of Gaelic speakers, including some who were still alive within the last twenty-five years, were not only literate in their own language, but able to write creatively in it. This was presumably due to their having been taught some Gaelic in the course of their education, and the fact that Gaelic was still widely spoken within the community. But for practical purposes, English has long since supplanted the use of Gaelic as the language of written communication and of ‘official’ discourse, and has, in effect, supplied the formal and written registers for Colonsay Gaelic speakers over the last hundred years.

⁵⁶⁹ Based mainly on the dialect of North Uist.

This chapter has proved difficult to research. Many of my primary informants, sadly, were no longer alive by the time I came to investigate this aspect of the dialect, and while I had made recordings, the opportunity to go back and ask more focussed questions about forms used, in order to elicit complete paradigms, was no longer available. Moreover, those informants I was still able to rely on were often unsure about precise forms, with the result that I was sometimes given conflicting information by different people, and in some cases by the same people at different times. Frustrating though this may be for the academic researcher, it reflects the reality of spoken language, especially in an environment of language shift. Few people, unless they are natural linguists, have much idea of the grammar of their own mother tongue; they know what ‘sounds right’, and may well criticise other speakers’ use of language, but would be hard put to identify what *rules* of morphology or syntax are being infringed.⁵⁷⁰ This is particularly true of people who have never been taught the grammar of their own language, or if they have, were taught ‘textbook’ forms, which may not correspond to actual usage in their own locality. When put on the spot about whether a particular form is ‘right’ or not, they are likely to become confused, and retreat into vagueness, or at best half-remembered notions of grammatical correctness, perhaps influenced by the questioner’s own usage, which may be perceived as ‘superior’. At the same time, strongly divergent dialectal forms, although of immense interest to a researcher, may strike them as uncouth, and ‘not the way *we* say it’.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁷⁰ Comment by Netta Titterton: ‘It’s something you don’t think about, and if you’re made to think about it, it disappears’. Conversation recorded 19 September 2016.

⁵⁷¹ Based on conversations with Niall Brown, 10 July 2017; Netta Titterton (various dates).

There is, therefore, a degree of fluidity in the morphological and syntactical protocols identified for this dialect, with significant variation among individual speakers. Nancy Dorian (2010) has written at length on the subject of variation between speakers, and in the speech of individual speakers, in the fishing villages of East Sutherland:

Not only did fluent elderly Gaelic speakers not necessarily agree among themselves about grammatical structures, even within the bounds of a single village, but they also showed a good deal of variation on various other items, grammatical or lexical, within their own individual usage. In all of the villages intra-speaker variation was as conspicuous as inter-speaker variation.

(Dorian 2010: 16-17)

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that Colonsay Gaelic, for all its distinctive qualities, forms part of the broad continuum of Scottish Gaelic dialects, and in its morphology and syntax shares a wide area of common ground with forms found elsewhere in the *Gàidhealtachd*. This chapter will concentrate on identifying those features where, *on the whole*, Colonsay usage has been found to differ from accepted norms, as found in other, more widely-used varieties of Gaelic. This is different from the approach adopted in the phonological chapters of this study, where the published results of the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland*, although reflecting the speech of only one Colonsay informant, at a particular point in time, were taken as representative of the speech community as a whole, and an attempt made to identify broad general characteristics of Colonsay pronunciation (either particular phonemes or cross-cutting prosodic features such as glottalisation).

Findings of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland

The Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Gaelic), of which the *SGDS* is at present the tangible result (Vol. I: 25-47), also contained questions designed to elicit details of morphophonological and morphological usage in the various localities. The same informant, Annabella MacNeill (see p. 18), was also interrogated about morphological forms. In a note on the data supplied by the fieldworker, Eric Hamp (EH), Jackson observes: ‘EH notes that [MacNeill] is fairly conservative’, citing in particular the form *na bó duinne* (LSS: 38). This conservatism is most apparent in the declension of nouns and adjectives, where she produces what is almost (but not quite) a ‘textbook’ paradigm of agreement for case, gender and number. The notable exception is the dative case, where she consistently uses (lenited) nominative forms: *leis a’ chas bheag, don bhean, leis an t-sùil ghlas*. This suggests that when Annabella MacNeill was learning Gaelic grammar, in the 1880s, dative forms had already fallen out of use in Colonsay speech. A delightful note records that the informant ‘remembers [*mhnaoi*] once used by an old man to her grandmother’.

Genitive forms are generally given in full: *taigh an duine bhig, ceann na circe bige*; although there are some exceptions: *na cathair bhige, an t-sùil ghlas* (for *na sùla glaise*). In the paradigm of *bò*, where the form *na bà* is marked ‘not used’, and the form *na boine* added, Jackson comments: ‘I take it this means that [MacNeill] knew of but did not use *na bà*, and that she remembered *na boine*, rather than actually gave it as a natural response to “of the cow”’ (LSS: 39).

In other areas of morphology, notably prepositional pronouns and irregular verbs (see below) the forms elicited are much more closely in line with my own more recent findings.

Two points need to be made in the light of this evidence. The first is that there has, in all Gaelic dialects, been a gradual erosion of morphological forms, as will be illustrated below. My informant Niall Brown (b. 1953) expressed the view that some of the old people he had known in his youth, who were born around 1900 and before, spoke a ‘richer’ form of Gaelic, with a wider vocabulary and more differentiated morphological forms.⁵⁷² Annabella MacNeill (b. 1876) falls into that category.

The second point is that Annabella MacNeill knew she was being interviewed for the Linguistic Survey of Scotland, and may well have been careful to use what she knew to be correct grammatical forms when answering questions. Her occasional lapses, particularly in the use of genitive forms, tend to reinforce this impression. Whether she would have used the same conservative morphological structures ‘as a natural response’ in everyday speech is open to question. The ‘observer effect’ is less marked in her responses to the phonology section; despite the occasional ‘literary’ form being offered, I have been able to check the entries in the *SGDS* results with present-day native speakers,⁵⁷³ and in nearly all cases, to verify that the pronunciation recorded is the same as theirs. One may conclude that Annabella MacNeill spoke with a Colonsay accent, but was familiar with the rules of Gaelic grammar.

⁵⁷² Conversation, 29 August 2017. He particularly mentioned Neil Darroch, who was the informant in Colonsay for Grand (2000).

⁵⁷³ Some recently deceased. See List of Informants.

MORPHOLOGY

Verbs

Regular verbs

For the most part, regular verbs in this dialect use the same forms, and observe the same rules, as in other varieties of Gaelic. In the future tense, endings in *-aidh/-idh* are pronounced [iç]⁵⁷⁴ when used in isolation (e.g. in answer to a question) or before a vowel, and may be pronounced [iç], [i] or [ə] before a consonant: *togaidh* [toç̥iç]; *togaidh e* [toç̥iç a]; *togaidh mi* [toç̥iç mi : toç̥i mi : toç̥ə mi]. The relative form of the future, ending in *-(e)as*, is used in the same way as in the ‘standard’ language: *ma thogas mi, a chuireas tu*, etc.

In the conditional tense, synthetic 1st person singular forms ending in *-ainn/-inn* (*thogainn, shuidhinn*) are used more frequently than analytic forms in *-adh/-eadh + mi* (*thogadh mi, shuidheadh mi*); whereas in the 1st person plural, analytic forms are preferred: *thogadh sinn, shuidheadh sinn*. Synthetic forms such as *thogamaid, shuidheamaid* are recognised,⁵⁷⁵ and are consistently used (in writing) by Satchel; in one case, she uses both analytic and synthetic forms in the same sentence: *Dh’fhàisgeadh sinn an sàl às agus dh’fhàgamaid e a thiormachadh air na creagan* (Law 2013: 60).⁵⁷⁶ As in most varieties of Gaelic, the synthetic forms are used as the 1st person plural imperative: *togamaid* ‘let us lift’, *suidheamaid* ‘let’s sit down’, etc.

A variation from the usual pattern occurs in the case of verbs ending in *-ich*, e.g. *cuidich* ‘help’. In most varieties of Gaelic, the future and conditional tenses are formed by adding the endings *-idh, -inn, -eadh* directly to the base form, whereas in the case of a verbal noun ending in *-adh*, the ending of the base form is altered to *-(e)ach*, and pronounced [ʌx] rather than [iç]. This gives the future and conditional

⁵⁷⁴ This is in accordance with the usual treatment of *-idh/-igh* endings in this dialect (see pp. 70-71).

⁵⁷⁵ Niall Brown (conversation, 29 August 2017) suggested synthetic forms would have been used more by his father’s generation (i.e. those born c. 1920).

⁵⁷⁶ She is referring to the children pretending to make butter with green algae.

forms *cuidichidh*, *chuidichinn*, *chuidicheadh*, but the verbal noun is *cuideachadh*. In Colonsay Gaelic, by contrast, the ending of the base form is altered to *-(e)ach* [Λx] in all cases, and the orthography of the tense ending altered in consequence, giving the forms *cuideachaidh*, *chuideachainn*, *chuideachadh*, while the verbal noun remains *cuideachadh*.

This feature is illustrated in the *SGDS* results by the headwords *cuairtich*: *cuairtichidh* (268) (future) and *cuairtich*: *chuairticheadh* (269) (conditional), where the Colonsay forms are given as [k₁uΛjʃ'ḍ₁Λxɪɕ] and [x₁uΛjʃ'ḍ₁ΛxΛɣ] respectively, suggesting the spellings *cuartachaidh*, *chuartachadh*.⁵⁷⁷ According to the *SGDS*, future forms with unpalatalised [x] in the stem are found only in Colonsay, Jura, Islay, Gigha, one location in Arran and two locations in Kintyre,⁵⁷⁸ making this very much a South Argyll feature (cf. Jones 2009a: 164-165, where it is presented as part of a wider phenomenon involving 'broadening' of polysyllabic verb stems). Forms with [x] in the conditional (but not the future) are sporadically found in other locations in Argyll,⁵⁷⁹ although the scattered nature of these entries suggests that in some cases, there may have been confusion, in the minds of the informants, with the verbal noun *cuairteachadh* (*SGDS*, Vol. III: 84-87).

The preterite is generally formed in Gaelic by leniting an initial consonant (where possible), or prefixing *dh*' to an initial vowel or (lenited) *f*. This is also the practice in Colonsay. The dependent form inserts a particle *do* before the lenited verb: *cha do ghabh mi* 'I did not take', *cha do thill e* 'he did not return'. In the case of preterite forms in *dh*', the result is reduplication: *cha do dh'òl mi* 'I did not drink', *cha do dh'fhalbh iad* 'they did not leave'. In Islay and Jura, reduplication is avoided, resulting in forms such as *cha d'òl mi*, *cha d'fhalbh iad* (Grannd 2000: 51-52 and Map 68). Non-reduplicated forms are found in Colonsay, although reduplicated forms are more common. Jones (2009a: 165) suggests that usage in Jura is similarly mixed, but with a preference for non-reduplicated forms.

⁵⁷⁷ Results with unpalatalised [d] or [t] in the stem, suggesting the form *cuartaich*, rather than *cuairtich*, occur quite widely in Gaelic dialects, but this is not the main point under discussion here.

⁵⁷⁸ Points 34 (Pirnmill), 36 (Carradale) and 41 (Clachan) respectively.

⁵⁷⁹ Points 43 (Achachoish, Knapdale), 82 (Ardtun, Ross of Mull) and 90 (Kinlochmoidart) respectively. Kinlochmoidart lies just outside the historical county of Argyll.

Irregular verbs

Compared with other Indo-European languages, Gaelic has remarkably few irregular verbs (10 in total, not counting *bi* 'be', and the copula *is*), but as is the case in most languages, they include some of the most commonly used verbs. In some cases the irregularity is very striking, with different tenses derived from completely different verbal stems. In the Colonsay dialect, some forms of irregular verbs differ from the standard paradigms. This particularly affects the preterite, and in some cases the conditional.

Cluinn – ‘hear’

Preterite: **chualaig/chuala**

(*dep.*) **cualaig/cuala**

A striking feature of Colonsay speech is the occurrence of forms ending in *-aig* [ɪgʰ] in the preterite of this verb, and also of *faic* (see below). These forms, which have probably arisen by analogy with *thàinig*, *ràinig*, *chunnaic*, are heard when the verb is used absolutely (e.g. in answer to a question) or when followed by a vowel. Before a consonant, the form used may be either *chualaig* or *chuala*, the latter being regarded elsewhere as the standard form of the preterite.

Thus we find the following paradigm:

<i>chualaig/chuala mi</i>	<i>chualaig/chuala sinn</i>
<i>chualaig thu/chuala tu</i>	<i>chualaig/chuala sibh</i>
<i>chualaig e</i>	<i>chualaig iad</i>
<i>chualaig i</i>	

The dependent forms follow the same pattern: *an cualaig/cuala mi*, *an cualaig e*, etc.

It should be noted that, in the 2nd person singular, *chualaig* is followed by the form *thu* [u], which in phonetic terms is a vowel, while *cuala* takes the form *tu*, as it does in most varieties. This pattern will be replicated with other verbs (see below).

The answer to the question *an cuala tu an naidheachd?* ‘did you hear the news?’ will normally be either *chualaig* ‘yes’ (I heard it) or *cha chualaig* ‘no’ (I didn’t hear it). On the other hand, ‘neither did I’ may be expressed as either *cha chualaig no mise*, or *cha chuala no mise*, because *no* begins with a consonant.

Other tenses, and the verbal noun, are regular: *cluinnidh* (207),⁵⁸⁰ *chluinneadh*, *cluinntinn* (208).⁵⁸¹

⁵⁸⁰ Headword is *cluinn*: *cluinnidh*.

⁵⁸¹ Headword is *cluinn*: *cluinntinn*.

Faic – ‘see’

Preterite: **theannaig/theanna**

(*dep.*) **feacaig/feaca**

It should be noted that, in Colonsay, the preterite of this verb is normally realised as *theannaig* [hɛ'n`ɪg']⁵⁸² when followed by a vowel, or used in isolation, and either *theannaig* or *theanna* [hɛ'n`ə] before a consonant. The *SGDS* results list the headword *faic: chunnaic* (383) with the entry for Colonsay given as [xu'n`ɪg' : hɛ'nɪg']; the latter form is shown with a ‘plain’ medial [n], whereas my own investigations suggest that it is in fact velarised [n`]. A footnote correctly states that the form *chunnaic* [xu'n`ɪg'] is considered ‘literary’.⁵⁸³ It is, nonetheless, readily understood and recognised as the ‘correct’ form, and might be used where the situation was felt to warrant it.

The full paradigm is as follows:

<i>theannaig/theanna mi</i>	<i>theannaig/theanna sinn</i>
<i>theannaig thu/theanna tu</i>	<i>theannaig/theanna sibh</i>
<i>theannaig e</i>	<i>theannaig iad</i>
<i>theannaig i</i>	

The corresponding dependent forms *feacaig/feaca* [fɛxɔɪg' : fɛxɔə], are acoustically similar to the conditional *faiceadh* [fɛçɔ'əy]. The paradigm for the interrogative is as follows:

(<i>am</i>) <i>feacaig/feaca mi?</i>	(<i>am</i>) <i>feacaig/feaca sinn?</i>
(<i>am</i>) <i>feacaig thu/ (am) feaca tu?</i>	(<i>am</i>) <i>feacaig/feaca sibh?</i>
(<i>am</i>) <i>feacaig e?</i>	(<i>am</i>) <i>feacaig iad?</i>
(<i>am</i>) <i>feacaig i?</i>	

⁵⁸² This spelling is my own attempt at representing the Colonsay pronunciation.

⁵⁸³ As one of my Colonsay informants put it, ‘it sounds like other people’s Gaelic’. Preterite forms with [ɛ] are found only in Colonsay and in Islay (*SGDS*, Points 53-57).

As in most varieties of Gaelic, the interrogative particle *an/am* is usually omitted in normal speech when the meaning is sufficiently clear. In the 2nd person singular, *(am) feaca tu?* is the form most frequently heard.

In a similar way to *chualaig*, the answer to the question *(am) feaca tu Alasdair?* ‘did you see Alastair?’ will normally be either *theannaig* [hɛˈn`ɪg] ‘yes’ (I saw him) or *chan fheacaig* [xa `nɛxɪg] ‘no’ (I didn’t see him). The reply ‘neither did I’ will be expressed in this case as *chan fheaca no mise* or, less commonly, *chan fheacaig no mise*.

Other tenses, and the verbal noun, have standard forms: *chì (faic)*, *chìtheadh (faiceadh)*, *faicinn*.

Thig – ‘come’

Preterite: *thànaig, thàna*

(*dep.*) **dànaig, dàna**

In terms of pronunciation, it should be noted that in these preterite forms, the quality of the main vowel is [ɛː] rather than [aː]. Cf. *SGDS thig: thàinig* (841) [hɛːnɪɡʷ]. This is in line with the tendency observed elsewhere in this dialect, whereby [a] is regularly (but not universally) ‘raised’ to [ɛ] in the presence of a nasal consonant (see pp. 50-51).⁵⁸⁴ Furthermore, as in most varieties of Gaelic, medial *n* in this case is not palatalised (i.e. it is realised as [n], not *[ɲ]).⁵⁸⁵

As a result, there may be very little difference, acoustically, between *thànaig/thàna* [hɛːnɪɡʷ : hɛːnə] ‘came’ and *theannaig/theanna* [hɛːn`ɪɡʷ : hɛːn`ə] ‘saw’. The differences lie in (1) the length of the vowel when stressed (with glottalisation occurring after the stressed short vowel in *theannaig*), and (2) the quality of the medial consonant: plain [n] v. velarised [n`]. In a phrasally unstressed environment, where length and glottalisation are both absent, the distinction between *theannaig* and *thànaig* can be almost neutralised, and the sense determined mainly by the semantic context.

The morphological point to be made in relation to this verb is that the preterite forms *thànaig/thàna* follow the same pattern as has been observed in the case of *chualaig/chuala* and *chunnaic/chunna* (*theannaig/theanna*). Like these verbs, *thànaig* may also lose its final consonant when used before another consonant: [hɛːnə mi]. This is not unusual in many varieties of Gaelic, but the interesting point is that here it can be seen as part of a pattern involving other irregular verbs.

⁵⁸⁴ Because this is such a widespread feature in the dialect, I have not altered the spelling to reflect it.

⁵⁸⁵ This *has* been reflected in the spelling. The *SGDS* results (Vol. V: 332-335) show that forms with palatalisation are found only in Arran, Gigha and Kintyre (and a few isolated locations elsewhere), which leads one to wonder why *thàinig* and not *thànaig* has become the accepted spelling (*GOC*, p. 32).

Thus we find the following paradigm:

thànaig/thàna mi *thànaig/thàna sinn*

thànaig thu/thàna tu *thànaig/thàna sibh*

thànaig e *thànaig iad*

thànaig i

Other tenses, and the verbal noun, have standard forms: *thig (tig)*, *thigeadh (tigidh)*, *tighinn*.

Ruig – ‘reach, arrive’

Preterite: **ràinig, ràna**

(*dep.*) **do ràinig, do ràna**

The preterite of *ruig* follows the same pattern as *thig*. Once again, the quality of the main vowel is [ɛː] rather than [aː], and medial *n* is not palatalised ([n] not *[ɲ]): [rɛːnɪɡː : rɛːnə]. As with the other verbs we have examined, *ràinig* may also lose its final consonant when used before another consonant: [rɛːnə mi]. Again, this is not unusual in Gaelic, but can be seen here as part of an emerging pattern involving other irregular verbs.

Thus we find the following paradigm:

<i>ràinig/ràna mi</i>	<i>ràinig/ràna sinn</i>
<i>ràinig thu/ràna tu</i>	<i>ràinig/ràna sibh</i>
<i>ràinig e</i>	<i>ràinig iad</i>
<i>ràinig i</i>	

Other tenses of *ruig* are regular: *ruigidh* (723), *ma ruigeas*; *ruiginn*, *ruigeadh*, etc.

The verbal noun has the unusual form *ruigeil* [rʉ̥gʲiːlʲ].

Rach – ‘go’

Preterite: chaidh

(*dep.*) **daidh**

As the *SGDS* results correctly state, the preterite of *rach* (*chaidh*) (687) is pronounced [xaʔiç : xaç] in Colonsay speech, depending on whether it is stressed or unstressed. This reflects the usual realisation of final *-idh/-igh* as [iç] in this dialect (see p. 70). The dependent form, however, is not *deach* or *deachaidh*, as found elsewhere, but *daidh* [ðaʔiç : ðaç]: *cha daidh mi ann* [xa 'ðaʔiç mi ẽõn`] ‘I didn’t go there’, (*an daidh e dhachaigh?* [ðaç a 'ɣaxiç] ‘did he go home?’⁵⁸⁶

It should be further noted that the conditional form of *rach*, in this dialect, is normally either *rachainn/rachadh* or *thèidinn/thèideadh*. The form *dheighinn/dheigheadh*, which is prevalent in some varieties, is not found. The dependent form is normally *tèidinn/tèideadh*. Cf. Satchel: *mun tèideadh iad a chadal* ‘before they went to bed’ (Law 2013: 52).⁵⁸⁷

Forms of *rach* are commonly used in this dialect, as in others, to form passive constructions: *chaidh a leagail* ‘he (it) was knocked down’, and in the expression *thèid agam air* for ‘I can’: *cha tèid agam air tighinn a-màireach* ‘I can’t come tomorrow’ (see p. 351).

The future tense, and the verbal noun, have standard forms: *thèid (tèid), dol*.

The regular verb *falbh* is often substituted for *rach* in this dialect, especially in the imperative: *falbh dhachaigh!* [fəl`ə 'ɣaxiç] ‘go home!’⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁶ These forms, as pronounced in Colonsay, could equally well be spelt *chathaich, dathaich*.

⁵⁸⁷ Accent inserted on *tèideadh*.

⁵⁸⁸ A common instruction to a dog, in the days when Colonsay dogs spoke Gaelic.

Dèan – ‘do, make’

In terms of pronunciation, this verb is realised in Colonsay as [dʲzʲɛːn], rather than *[dʲzʲiaɪn], as found further north, where original long ē has been ‘broken’ to form a diphthong (Jackson 1968; see p. 99).

The preterite of this verb may be either *rinn* or *dhèan*. No semantic distinction could be observed between the two; it seems to be a matter of personal preference. The form *dhèan* is also found in Islay (Holmer 1938: 102) and in Jura, alongside *rinn* (Jones 2009a: 179).

In the future, the form may be either *nì mi* or *dèanaidh mi*. Again, there appears to be no difference in meaning. The negative in either case is *cha dhèan mi*.

The verbal noun has the form *dèanadh* [dʲzʲɛːnəɣ], rather than the ‘textbook’ form *dèanamh*.

Abair – ‘say’

The usual future tense of this verb, in Scottish Gaelic, is *their*, with *abair* as the (regular) dependent form. In Colonsay the forms heard are *theiridh* and *abairidh* (or *abraidh*). The dependent form is *abair*. Thus the question *an abair thu sin ann an Colbhasa?* ‘do you say that in Colonsay?’ elicited the response *abairidh* [aḃ̥əriç]. *Theiridh mi* is frequently used, e.g. when giving a cautious answer to a question: *theiridh mi gu bheil* ‘I’d say it is’.

The forms *theirinn/theireadh* and *dh’abairinn/dh’abaireadh* are found in the conditional.

The preterite forms of this verb are similar to ‘standard’ Gaelic: *thubhairt* (1) [huʔʊʂ’tʂ’],⁵⁸⁹ dependent form *dubhairt* [duʔʊʂ’tʂ’]. As usual, the glottalisation typical of this dialect is lost when the forms are not stressed: *thuir* [huʂ’tʂ’], *duirt* [duʂ’tʂ’].

The verbal noun has the standard form *ràdh*, but is sometimes heard as *gràdh*, which is a back-formation from the progressive aspect construction *ag ràdh: dè bha mi dol a ghràdh?*

⁵⁸⁹ Headword is *abair*: *thubhairt*.

Faigh – ‘get’

The base form of this verb, and the dependent form of the future tense, *faigh*, is pronounced [fɛ] in Colonsay. Glottalisation appears in *sandhi* before a following vowel: *gum faigh thu* [gʊm fɛʔ u].

The future tense of this verb, usually written as *gheibh* (385),⁵⁹⁰ illustrates a major division between dialects of Scottish Gaelic. A study of the *SGDS* results shows that across a large swathe of the area where Gaelic is still widely spoken (the Outer Hebrides from Harris to Barra, Skye, Tiree and Mull), it is realised as *gheibh* [iɛv] (with some phonetic variation). In the rest of the *Gàidhealtachd* (including Lewis, the remainder of Argyll, and most mainland dialects), it is realised as *gheobh* [iɔ] (*SGDS*, Vol. III: 318-321). In Colonsay the pronunciation is [iɔ]. Consequentially, the conditional forms are *gheobhainn*, *gheobhadh tu*, etc. [iɔʔɪŋ : iɔʔəɣ tʊ].

The preterite of this verb has the standard form *fhuair* (*d’fhuair*).

The verbal noun has the form *faotainn* [fʏːɔɪŋ], rather than *faighinn*, which is often found elsewhere.

The remaining irregular verbs, **beir** ‘bear’ and **thoir** ‘give’ show no variation from standard Scottish Gaelic forms. The imperative form *thoir* is usually realised as [fɔɪ] when unstressed: *thoir dhomh do làmh* [fɔɪ ˈɣɔː ɔɔ ˈlːɛːɣ] ‘give me your hand’.

⁵⁹⁰ Headword is *faigh*: *gheibh*. Headword 386 covers the same ground, but illustrates a different point.

Definite article

The definite article is key to understanding the opposition between *definite* and *indefinite* nouns in Gaelic, and will therefore be discussed first, before moving on to the study of nouns.

There is no indefinite article in Gaelic; indefinite nouns are characterised by the absence of the definite article. Proper names may also lack an article, but are considered definite.

The morphology of the definite article (base form *an*) in Scottish Gaelic is extremely complex, being determined by a number of variables, including number, case, gender and the nature of the sounds preceding and following. Before an unlenited labial consonant (*b, f, m, p*), the form is *am*. In most varieties the definite article in the form *an* or *am* causes voicing of a following consonant (see pp. 284-285). In certain contexts *an* is reduced to *a'*, with lenition of a following consonant. In other (clearly specified) contexts, where the following word begins with a vowel or *s*, a *t-* may be prefixed to the following word, giving the form *an t-*. In all these instances, Colonsay follows 'standard' Scottish Gaelic usage. In colloquial speech the article is often dropped, especially where its presence is signalled by voicing or lenition: *an duine a bha mi a' bruidhinn ris* [du'ɲi va mi bɾyʔiɲ riʃ].

The article *an* may also be attached to a preceding preposition ending in a vowel: *don, ron, mun*, etc. In many varieties of Gaelic, there is either reduplication of the article, or a schwa [ə] is heard: *dhan an taigh, on a' bhaile*. This is not the case in Colonsay Gaelic, where the form *dhan*, in any case, does not occur. The forms used are *don taigh, on bhaile*, etc.

The distinctive feminine singular genitive form of the article, *na* (with *h-* prefixed to a following vowel), is found in this dialect in placenames and set expressions (*Tobar na Caillich, fad na h-oidhche* 'all night'), but is no longer in active use in ordinary speech, where the form found is the same as the nominative: *dorasd an eaglais* 'the church door', *mullach a' bheinn* 'the top of the hill'. Jones (2009a: 139) makes the same observation with regard to the Jura dialect.

In the plural, *na* (with *h-* prefixed to a following vowel) is the form encountered throughout the paradigm. The distinctive genitive plural form *nan* is found before a vowel in placenames (*Creag nan Ubhal*, *Fang nan Each*), and occasionally in normal speech in expressions such as *muinntir nan eileanan* ‘the people of the islands’, but the nominative form *na h-* is more common, especially in a non-possessive context : *a’ faicinn na h-eileanan*, *ag ithe na h-ùbhlan*.⁵⁹¹ Before consonants, the form *na* is used for all cases of the definite article in the plural, including the genitive, and only the position of the noun (and its form, in some instances) indicates that it is to be understood as being in the genitive.⁵⁹² *Nam*, which is the regular form found before a labial consonant, is therefore not generally found in Colonsay speech, except possibly in some set expressions such as *Tìr nam Beann*.⁵⁹³ Nor is there usually any voicing (nasal mutation) of an initial consonant after the genitive plural article, as occurs in many other dialects.

⁵⁹¹ Lamb (2008: 209) reports the same increasing use of nominative forms in all cases, with *na h-* used instead of *nan/nam* before a vowel.

⁵⁹² This explains the confusion that attaches to certain Colonsay placenames, notably the house names *Cnoc na Fàd*, *Cnoc na Ban*, and *Col na Tarrann* (Colnatarun); the second element, in all three cases, is a genitive plural, although the spelling of the article reflects local pronunciation. Loder (1935: 417, 418, 420) gives *Cnoc nam Fàd*, *Cnoc nam Ban* and *Corr na Tarrunn* [*sic*] respectively.

⁵⁹³ The forms *nan*, *nam* are, however, found with the meaning ‘in their’ (< *ann an*, *ann am*): *tha iad nan suidhe*, *bha iad nam bàird*.

Nouns

Noun morphology in Gaelic varies according to whether the noun in question is *definite* or *indefinite*. Definite nouns are either proper names, e.g. of persons or places, or are preceded by the definite article. Indefinite nouns, on the whole, do not reference a *specific* object, individual, place, etc.

Noun morphology also takes account of the following variables:

1. *Number*: singular, dual, plural
2. *Gender*: masculine, feminine
3. *Case*: nominative,⁵⁹⁴ genitive, dative, vocative

Genitive and dative case marking

In traditional Gaelic grammars, strict rules govern the formation of the genitive and dative cases of nouns (and accompanying adjectives). The way in which these rules are deployed is highly complex, with many subtle variations affecting different categories of nouns, and even individual words in some instances. This results in some degree of redundancy, as the same variables may be marked by more than one morphological feature.

In most present-day varieties of Gaelic, this complex set of rules is considerably attenuated in day-to-day speech, a trend which was already noted by Oftedal in Lewis in 1956 (1956: 202). As Lamb observes, ‘A levelling of morphological contrasts is occurring in the language due both to internal trends towards simplification and the pervasive influence of English. The effects can appear erratic at times’ (2008: 205).⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁴ The nominative case includes all instances of what, in other languages, would be called the accusative.

⁵⁹⁵ Attempting to make sense of the somewhat inconsistent data he was receiving, Hamp in his field notes observes: ‘There are either two cases, attributive and non-attributive, or else there are many complex optional allomorphs’ (LSS: 38). It is not clear what he means, in this instance, by ‘attributive’ and ‘non-attributive’.

Whether the influence of English is specifically to blame for this situation is open to question; the same ‘internal trends’ towards morphological simplification are observed in other European languages, and may be a feature of language-contact situations in general. Modern English has largely abandoned any morphological marking for case in nouns, although its direct ancestor Anglo-Saxon (Old English) had inflected forms for four cases: nominative, accusative, genitive and dative (Blakeley 1964: 17-18). The only survivor of this system in nouns is the *-s* ending in the genitive (using the apostrophe in written English to mark distinctions which are not made in the spoken language). The same four cases are still to be found in modern German, although the system of noun endings is considerably scaled down, compared with the corresponding forms in Old High German, and much more reliance is placed on forms of the definite article and on adjective endings to determine case. Latin, as is well known, has six cases, but most modern languages derived from Latin have abandoned this complex arrangement in favour of using prepositions to indicate semantic relationships – derivatives of Latin *de* for the genitive and *ad* for the dative. So although ‘the pervasive influence of English’, and the fact that all Gaelic speakers nowadays spend much of their time communicating in English, is certainly a factor in the way Gaelic morphology is developing, it may in fact only be reinforcing, and perhaps hastening, a process of simplification which would have taken place anyway.

In Gaelic the dative is, in practice, a prepositional case. It is found after most (though not all) simple prepositions, but not on its own with the meaning ‘to, for’, as in some other Indo-European languages (e.g. German, Latin, Russian). Compound prepositions, usually incorporating an original noun element, are normally followed by the genitive.

In Colonsay Gaelic, the use of case markers has been greatly reduced. Differences are observed according to whether the noun is definite or indefinite, and also between masculine and feminine nouns.

Masculine singular nouns

In the case of masculine definite nouns, the genitive singular is *maximally* marked by initial lenition and final palatalisation, with internal vowel modification (*Ablaut*) where appropriate. Not all consonants can be lenited and/or palatalised, and words may begin or end in a vowel, so the paradigm is often defective in individual cases. There are also a number of irregular nouns, which do not fit the overall pattern.

In Colonsay Gaelic, initial lenition and final palatalisation are found together in the genitive of proper names, e.g. *crodh Sheumais* ‘Seumas’s cattle’, *bean Choinnich* ‘Kenneth’s wife’. In the case of singular nouns preceded by the definite article, a distinction is made between contexts where there is a clear sense of possession or relationship, where English would use the ending -’s (e.g. *piuthar a’ bhalaich* ‘the boy’s sister’), and those contexts where the use of the genitive is dictated by syntactical considerations, e.g. after a verbal noun or a compound preposition. Thus we find *bleoghan a’ chrodh* ‘milking the cows’, *gearradh an fheur* ‘cutting the grass’ (for standard *bleoghan a’ chruidh*, *gearradh an fheòir*). These examples show a consciousness of the need for a genitive construction (or something of the sort) after the verbal noun (*bleoghan*, *gearradh*) but indicate this only by initial lenition, and not final palatalisation.

As in other varieties of Gaelic, the dative singular of masculine nouns is generally unmarked in the case of proper names: *tha e ag obair le Seumas* ‘he is working with Seumas’. In some cases the choice of preposition dictates that the initial consonant be lenited: *bhoineadh i do Cholbhasa* ‘she belonged to (i.e. came from) Colonsay’. With the definite article, initial lenition is the rule, but a final consonant is unaffected: *leis a’ chù* ‘with the dog’, *air a’ chladach* ‘on the shore’. This is the standard pattern in Scottish Gaelic.

With indefinite nouns, case marking may be entirely absent. The same informant who referred to *bleoghan a’ chrodh* also spoke of *mòran crodh ’s caoraich* ‘a lot of cattle and sheep’ and *mòran peantadh* ‘a lot of painting’, using nominative forms where the genitive would normally be expected, but without any semantic ambiguity resulting from this choice. The marking of semantic relationships has become positional rather than morphological: a noun placed after another noun (or equivalent

expression) is assumed to qualify the first element, irrespective of surface form. In passing, it may be noted that this is the opposite of what typically occurs in English, where the qualifying element in such combinations is placed *first*: ‘house keys’, ‘bus lane’.⁵⁹⁶ It appears that, in this instance, what is taking place is an internally generated development (akin to the positioning of adjectives in the respective languages) rather than any obvious influence of English.

In some instances, a prepositional construction may be preferred: *tha gu leòr a Ghàidhlig aige* ‘he has (i.e. knows) a lot of Gaelic’.⁵⁹⁷ The periphrastic genitive using *aig* is a familiar feature of Scottish Gaelic, and is common in this dialect: *an càr aig Alasdair* ‘Alastair’s car’, *an duin’ agam* ‘my husband’.

Compound nouns generally retain genitive marking in the ‘qualifying’ element, e.g. *bàt’-aiseig* ‘ferry-boat’, *taigh-solaisd* ‘lighthouse’ (for the form with intrusive *d*, see p. 160).

Feminine singular nouns

In ‘textbook’ Gaelic morphology, the genitive singular of feminine nouns is most frequently marked by the endings *-e* and *-ach*, the latter occurring principally in certain words ending in *-r* and *-l*.⁵⁹⁸ In Colonsay Gaelic these endings are generally absent: *an taigh-sgoil*, *deireadh an litir*. In answer to a question that had used the form *mòran obrach*, one informant spontaneously responded with *mòran obair*.⁵⁹⁹ Barbara Satchel, in her articles originally published in *Gairm*, occasionally uses the ending *-eadh*, as in *bonnach mineadh* (Law 2013: 54),⁶⁰⁰ but this usage does not

⁵⁹⁶ Alternative constructions using *of* are available in English, but often sound stilted.

⁵⁹⁷ In this instance, *a* is an abbreviation of *de*. The lenition of *Ghàidhlig* is due to the influence of this preposition, and is not inherently a marker of the dative case.

⁵⁹⁸ The ending *-a* is also found, in so-called ‘third declension’ feminine nouns, e.g. *fuil* > *fala* (Calder 1972: 91).

⁵⁹⁹ Donald ‘Garvard’ MacNeill, in an interview with the BBC (c. 1983) used the form *meadhan na Fadhlach* ‘the middle of The Strand’, but Donald was highly literate in Gaelic, and no doubt conscious that he was being broadcast to a wider audience. *Meadhan an Fhadhail* would be the more usual Colonsay construction.

⁶⁰⁰ In the collection *Dileab Cholbhasach* (Law 2013), Satchel’s use of *-eadh* for final *-e* has been largely edited out by her publishers. For example, *chun na sgoileadh* (*Gairm*, 167: 269) appears as *chun na sgoile* in the book (Law 2013: 52). It is possible that other divergent morphological features were similarly ‘standardised’ before the earlier publication in *Gairm*.

appear to be replicated in spoken Colonsay Gaelic. The likely explanation is that Satchel's written Gaelic was influenced by her years of residence in Skye, where genitive forms in *-eadh* are commonly found.⁶⁰¹

Final palatalisation is not generally found with feminine nouns: *ceann mo chorràg* 'the end of my finger'. With proper names, initial lenition is the norm in spoken Colonsay Gaelic: *taigh Mhòrag*. The evidence of placenames is mixed: we find *Geodha Mòraig*, but *Cille Chatriona*, *Cille Mhoire* (Loder 1935: 428, 416).

The distinctive feminine form of the dative, with palatalisation of a final consonant and internal vowel changes, is not actively used in this dialect, and is found only in set expressions such as *air chois*, *air sgèith*, *ra theinidh*.⁶⁰² Otherwise, the form in use is identical to the nominative: *leis a' bhean*,⁶⁰³ *ris a' chlann*. In a few instances, an original dative form has become the nominative: this has happened generally in Scottish Gaelic, in words such as *beinn* (< *beann*), but *gaoth* is pronounced [gʲˠç] (*gaoith*) in this dialect.

Dual number

Gaelic retains a vestigial form of the dual number, which in most Indo-European languages has been superseded by the plural, but is found, notably, in Classical Greek and in some Slavonic languages. In Colonsay Gaelic the number *dà* is followed by a lenited form of the singular: *dà chas*, *dà bhròg*, but the internal vowel modifications found elsewhere (*dà chois*, *dà bhròig*, etc.) are not found.

⁶⁰¹ Law 2013: 28-33. I am grateful to Dr Will Lamb for the information about *-eadh* endings.

⁶⁰² The form *r'a theinidh* [*sic*] 'on fire' (pronounced *theinich*) is cited as a Colonsay form by Henderson (1903: 510), along with *às a leinidh* 'out of his shirt', i.e. bare-chested.

⁶⁰³ Likewise, the genitive form *mnà* is not used: *bràthair mo bhean*.

Plural nouns

In Scottish Gaelic, the plural of nouns is formed in several different ways. Final palatalisation, sometimes involving internal vowel modification, is particularly common with masculine nouns. Most feminine (and many masculine) nouns add *-an* or *-ean*, depending on the orthographic context; in many cases, these endings will be amplified by the addition of a further syllable: *-aichean*, *-achan*, *-annan*. In some instances, the amplification of the plural ending is compensated by syncope of the noun stem: *màthair*: *màthraichean*; *fadhail*: *fadhlaichean*. There are also a number of irregular plural forms.

In the overwhelming majority of instances, Colonsay Gaelic uses the same endings in the plural as other varieties of Scottish Gaelic. With disyllabic plural endings, however, there is a tendency to use straightforward monosyllabic endings: *bàtan* for *bàtaichean*, *àitean* for *àiteachan*, *litirean* for *litrichean*, etc. The SGDS results record one instance of this: *abhainnean* (4) [a'vɪn̪n̪] for *aibhnichean*⁶⁰⁴ (cf. Jones 2009a: 131).

This tendency may possibly underlie the English form of the placename Machrins. According to some of its recent inhabitants, the name of this farm in Gaelic is *Na Machraichean*, with a regular plural ending in *-aichean*.⁶⁰⁵ Loder's list of placenames, however, (compiled by Murdoch McNeill) gives the form *Machairean* (Loder 1935: 434), and this form is used by a number of Colonsay residents. It also appears in the poem 'Murchadh Ruadh (Am Posta)' by Fòlaidie McNeill (Scouller 1998: 43). On this basis, it appears that the anglicised form of the name is a reduplicative plural, with the English plural ending *-s* superimposed on an alternative (local) Gaelic plural *Machairean*, giving 'Machrins'.

Masculine nouns ending in *-adh* (*-eadh*) generally form their plural in *-aidhean* (*-idhean*), which in this dialect is pronounced [iç̪n̪], making these endings phonetically identical with those in *-(a)aichean*: *monaidhean* [mɔ'niç̪n̪] 'mountains', *seallaidhean* [ʃɛ'l'iç̪n̪] 'views'.

⁶⁰⁴ Headword is *abhainn*: *aibhneachan*.

⁶⁰⁵ Interview with Jessie McNeill and her sister Mary O'Mahoney, 3 November 2011.

Words that are recognised as English borrowings generally retain their English plural termination in *-s*: *cars*, *cottages*, *tourists*, etc. Colonsay speakers often find the habit, common elsewhere, of attaching the plural ending *-aichean* to English words rather amusing.⁶⁰⁶

Indefinite nouns in the genitive plural generally show initial lenition, even where this would normally be blocked following a homorganic consonant: *barrachd dhaoine*, *mòran dhaoine*. Monosyllabic genitive plurals are commonly found, and are not restricted to masculine nouns: the area of trees opposite the Hotel, now used as the Hotel car park, is known as *Garradh na Craobh* (for the form of the definite article, see above). Despite the existence of placenames such as *Cnoc na Ban*, *Eilean na Ban*,⁶⁰⁷ the form *mnathan* is now generally used for all cases of the plural of *bean* ‘woman, wife’: *obair na mnathan*.⁶⁰⁸ This suggests that some simplification has taken place in current usage, while the placenames preserve an earlier form.

The historical dative plural in *-aibh*, found in older Gaelic literature, is uncommon in modern Scottish Gaelic, and occurs only in set phrases in this dialect.

Vocative case

The vocative singular in Colonsay follows the same pattern as in other dialects: lenition of an initial consonant, following the vocative particle *a*, and in the case of masculine nouns, palatalisation of a final consonant. In the plural, however, forms in *-a* or *-aibh* (the latter derived from the dative plural) are no longer used. My informant Jessie McNeill told me that she would say *a bhalaich* in both singular and plural,⁶⁰⁹ although Niall Brown remembers *a bhalachaibh* being used by the older generation in the 1950s and 60s.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁶ Conversation with Netta Titterton, 19 September 2016. Nevertheless, Donald MacArthur uses the forms *vanaichean* ‘vans’, *pòlaichean* ‘poles’ (interview recorded 30 June 2010).

⁶⁰⁷ To avoid confusion, the Colonsay form of the definite article is shown (see above). Loder (1935: 417, 424) lists these locations as *Cnoc nam Ban*, *Eilean nam Ban*.

⁶⁰⁸ *Bean* tends to mean ‘wife’, rather than ‘woman’ in this dialect; *boireannach* is the preferred word for ‘woman’.

⁶⁰⁹ Interview, 14 April 2014.

⁶¹⁰ Conversation, 29 August 2017.

Adjectives

Traditional Gaelic grammars present a complicated paradigm of adjectival forms. Although predicative adjectives are indeclinable (*tha an cat dubh, tha a' chaile bòidheach*), the forms of attributive adjectives closely parallel those of the nouns they qualify in number, gender, case and definiteness. While these forms are still prevalent in formal written Gaelic, in the spoken language the degree of complexity has been greatly reduced, in recognition of the considerable redundancy involved in using the same inflections as the accompanying nouns, which in many instances have themselves undergone morphological simplification (see above). Lamb (2008: 211-212) provides useful tables, indicating the forms encountered in contemporary written Gaelic, and the 'reduced' forms common in everyday speech. The fact that the same process of simplification is found to be taking place in such an apparently isolated speech community as Colonsay, and in North Uist (where Lamb conducted most of his fieldwork) demonstrates how pervasive these changes are in modern spoken Gaelic.

Plural marking

In common with many contemporary varieties of Gaelic, the Colonsay dialect has largely abandoned the plural ending *-a* (*-e*) for monosyllabic adjectives, although initial lenition is still the norm following a palatalised plural ending in the noun: *coin mhath, caoraich mharbh*. If a plural noun has a non-palatalised ending, any qualifying adjective usually has the same form as the nominative singular: *taighean mòr, lèintean geal*.

Case marking

Despite the existence of placenames such as *Gàradh na Bèiste Duibhe*, *Geodha na Mnà Mairbhe*, *Tràigh a' Mhill Bhàin* (Loder 1935: 427, 428, 447; accents added), the only active case marker for adjectives in spoken Colonsay Gaelic is now initial lenition. This is found in the oblique cases of the masculine singular *with the definite article*, and throughout the feminine singular. Final palatalisation is not found, for example, in the genitive singular or feminine dative singular. The forms generally found, with some degree of individual variation, are as follows:

<i>fear bochd</i>	<i>am fear bochd</i>
<i>mac fear bochd</i>	<i>mac an fhear bhochd</i>
<i>le fear bochd</i>	<i>leis an fhear bhochd</i>
<i>bean bhochd</i>	<i>a' bhean bhochd</i>
<i>mac bean bhochd</i>	<i>mac a' bhean bhochd</i>
<i>le bean bhochd</i>	<i>leis a' bhean bhochd</i>

Comparative and superlative

Considering the simplification that has taken place in the morphology of the attributive adjective, and in the occurrence of internal modification as it affects noun forms, this dialect has preserved a surprisingly wide range of variation when it comes to the comparative/ superlative forms of adjectives.⁶¹¹ Not including the common (completely irregular) forms *nas fheàrr* [na 'fɛ:r] 'better' and *nas miosa* [nas 'misə : nas 'mesə] 'worse', no fewer than 13 forms are listed in the *SGDS* results:⁶¹²

⁶¹¹ Strictly speaking, the term 'superlative' is not entirely accurate in Gaelic grammar, but for all practical purposes, forms in *nas* and *as* have come to be used as equivalent to the comparative and superlative, respectively, in English.

⁶¹² The *SGDS* results consistently use the spelling *na*'s. This is now considered obsolete, and has been changed to *nas* in the following table, in accordance with *GOC* rules.

<i>beag</i>	<i>nas lugha</i>	(85)	nas ɫ̪ːy̯y̯	smaller ⁶¹³
<i>blàth</i>	<i>nas blàithe</i>	(108)	nàs ɸl̪ˈaːçĩ	warmer
<i>bodhar</i>	<i>nas buidhre</i>	(115)	nas ɸɹuĩɹĩ	more deaf
<i>domhainn</i>	<i>nas doimhne</i>	(326)	nas ɸɹɔɪɹĩ	deeper ⁶¹⁴
<i>dorcha</i>	<i>nas duirche</i>	(334)	nəs ɸuriçĩ	darker
<i>fliuch</i>	<i>nas fliche</i>	(435)	nəs fl̪ˈiɹçĩ	wetter ⁶¹⁵
<i>ìseal</i>	<i>nas ìsle</i>	(533)	nas iːʃĩ	lower ⁶¹⁶
<i>lom</i>	<i>nas luime</i>	(583)	nəs ɫ̪ˈuĩːmĩ	barer ⁶¹⁷
<i>luath</i>	<i>nas luaithe</i>	(587)	nas ɫ̪ˈɹuajĩ	faster ⁶¹⁸
<i>mór</i>	<i>nas motha</i>	(630)	nas mɔʔɔ	bigger ⁶¹⁹
<i>rìghinn</i>	<i>nas rìghne</i>	(707)	nas ɹɹĩɹĩ	tougher
<i>sean</i>	<i>nas sine</i>	(746)	na ʃĩˈɹ̪ːĩ	older
<i>teth</i>	<i>nas teotha</i>	(840)	nàʃ ˈt̪ʃoʔo	hotter ⁶²⁰

Phonetic issues aside, it seems that the Colonsay dialect generally has the same comparative/superlative forms of adjectives as other Scottish Gaelic dialects.

⁶¹³ Headword is *beag*: *lugha*.

⁶¹⁴ Headword is *domhainn*: *doimhne*.

⁶¹⁵ Note the vestigial influence of the positive form in the combination [ɹɹ].

⁶¹⁶ Headword is *ìosal*: *ìsle*.

⁶¹⁷ Headword is *lom*: *luime*.

⁶¹⁸ Headword is *luath*: *luaithe*.

⁶¹⁹ Headword is *mór*: *motha*.

⁶²⁰ Headword is *teth*: *teotha*. The form [nàʃ ˈt̪ʃeʔe] is also found (Conversation with Niall Brown, 29 August 2017).

Pronouns

Colonsay uses the same set of pronouns that are commonly used throughout the Gaelic-speaking area: *mi, thu (tu), e, i; sinn, sibh, iad*, with the corresponding emphatic forms *mise, thusa (tusa), esan, ise; sinne, sibhse, iadsan*.

In terms of pronunciation, it should be noted that *e*, when unstressed, is pronounced [a], while the emphatic form *esan* is [eʃaŋ], with [e] rather than [ɛ]. *Iad* is usually pronounced [aɟ : əɟ], while the emphatic form *iadsan* is [a : ɟsəŋ]. In common with most of Argyll, the emphatic form *sibhse* is pronounced [ʃi:vʃi : ʃi:ʃi], as is the case further north.

Although either *e* or *i* may be used to translate the English neuter pronoun ‘it’, depending on the gender of the underlying noun, there is a tendency to use *e* for inanimate objects, irrespective of grammatical gender: *Chan eil mòran ann a bhruidhneas e (Gàidhlig)* ‘There are not many who speak it (Gaelic)’. This is undoubtedly due to English influence. (Cf. Dorian 2010: 72).

Prepositional pronouns

A characteristic feature of the Goidelic languages is the way in which prepositions and pronouns are combined to produce inflected forms. There are a number of such preposition/pronoun combinations where the Colonsay forms differ from those encountered elsewhere. These differences are most apparent in the 3rd person plural of certain prepositions, where Colonsay Gaelic has a strong ending in *-cha*. Thus we find the forms *dhiucha, riucha, leocha* [ɟuxa : rɟuɟxa : ɟ'ɛoɟxa] for *dhiubh, riù* (or *riutha*), *leò* (or *leotha*). The standard response to the New Year greeting *Bliadhna Mhath Ùr* on Colonsay is *Mar sin dhuit fhè', 's mòran dhiucha* ‘the same to you, and many of them’. The forms of the 3rd person singular feminine also show differences in some instances.

In researching these words, it has been striking to find that present-day speakers of Colonsay Gaelic seem quite unsure about some of the forms used in the 3rd person, especially in the feminine singular. For this reason, some of the forms listed below represent a ‘best guess’ as to the form used, supplemented as appropriate with material from the morphological section of the Language Survey of Scotland.

As with the irregular verbs, it will be useful, in some instances, to set out the paradigms of the main combining prepositions, highlighting the points where Colonsay usage differs from ‘standard’ Gaelic. In most cases, these differences will be found in the 3rd person (singular and plural) forms. Where the paradigm corresponds to ‘standard’ usage, it will not be given in full.

In the interests of economy, any points to be made about the prepositions themselves will be made here also, rather than listing them again separately.

aig – ‘at’

In the paradigm of *aig*, the medial *g* is often not heard, except when deliberately enunciated. Instead the glottal stop [ʔ] is used in stressed position, while monosyllabic forms are found in unstressed position, as they are in many other varieties of Gaelic. In the set phrase *gu robh math agad/agaibh* [kəro' mɛʔ aɡəʔ / aɡɪv] ‘thank you’ (see p. 346), medial *g* is, however, generally pronounced.

The full paradigm is as follows:

<i>agam</i>	[aɡəʔm : aʔam : am]	<i>againn</i>	[aɡɪʔn : aʔɪʔn : {aɪɪn}]
<i>agad</i>	[aɡəʔɔ : aʔaɔ : aɔ]	<i>agaibh</i>	[aɡɪv : aʔɪv : {aɪv}]
<i>aige</i>	[ɛɡʰi : ɛɡʰ]	<i>aca</i>	[axɔa : axɔ]
<i>aice</i>	[ɛçɔʰi : ɛçɔʰ]		

air – ‘on’

The only point to be noted in relation to *air* is the pronunciation of the 3rd person fem. sg. form *oirre* (20) as [uʰʀə], contrasting with 3rd person pl. *orra* [ɔʰʀə].⁶²¹ The singular form may be reduced to [uʀ] in an unstressed environment.

⁶²¹ *SGDS* (headword (20) *air: oirre*) gives the forms [uʀə / uʰʀə], [ɔʀə / ɔʰʀə], without glottalisation. Glottalisation is absent in an unstressed environment (see p. 256). For the phonetic representation of *r*, see p. 79.

ann – ‘in’

Phonetically, *ann* is articulated as [ɛ̃ñ], in keeping with the ‘raising’ of [a] to [ɛ] in this dialect (see p. 50). The form used with the definite article, *anns an*, is generally pronounced [as ən], making it a homophone of *às an* (see below). No semantic ambiguity appears to result.

The pronominal forms are heard as *aonnam*, *aonnad* [y'n`am : y'n`aɟ], etc. It is clear from the *Survey* (*SGDS*, Vol. II: 84-85) that this pronunciation (transcribed as [ỹñəm] in the *SGDS*),⁶²² is unique among Scottish Gaelic dialects. A pronunciation with [u] or [ʊ] is fairly widespread, although not found on the immediately neighbouring islands of Islay and Jura.⁶²³ The full paradigm is as follows:

<i>aonnam</i>	[y'n`am]	<i>aonnainn</i>	[y'n`ɪn]
<i>aonnad</i>	[y'n`aɟ]	<i>aonnaibh</i>	[y'n`iv]
<i>ann</i>	[ɛ̃ñ]	<i>aonnta</i>	[yn`ɔə]
<i>innte</i>	[i:n`ɟz'ɪ]		

às – ‘from, out of’

The form *às*, normally used before the definite article, is also used with proper names, when they begin with a vowel: *às Ìle* ‘from Islay’, *às Èirinn* ‘from Ireland’.

The pronominal forms *asam*, *asad*, etc. are exactly as in ‘standard’ Gaelic.

⁶²² See phonological discussion, pp. 53-54.

⁶²³ Points 51-56.

bho/o – ‘from’

The forms *bho/o* are used fairly interchangeably throughout the Gaelic-speaking area, and Colonsay is no exception. However, forms based on *bho* seem to be preferred in the case of prepositional pronouns, and these are given here. The morphology is the same for forms based on *o*, save that the initial *bh-* is omitted: *uam*, *uat*, etc.

This was one of the instances where there appeared to be uncertainty about the 3rd person forms, despite this being a very common preposition. The following paradigm is, however, confirmed by the LSS findings (p. 42):

<i>bhuam</i>	[v ₁ ua ₁ m]	<i>bhuainn</i>	[v ₁ ua ₁ ɲ]
<i>bhuat</i>	[v ₁ uĩ ₁ tʃ]	<i>bhuaibh</i>	[v ₁ uĩ ₁ iʏ]
<i>bhuaith</i>	[v ₁ ua ₁ ĩ]	<i>bhuacha</i>	[v ₁ ua ₁ xə]
<i>bhuaiche</i>	[v ₁ uĩ ₁ çĩ]		

de – ‘of, off’

As in a number of other varieties, this preposition is easily confused with *do*, being pronounced [d̥ə] rather than *[d̥ʰzʰɛ]. Like *do*, it can be reduced to *a*: *gu leòr a Ghàidhlig* ‘plenty (of) Gaelic’. The pronominal forms are, however, clearly differentiated, the only potentially ambiguous form being the fem. sg. *dhith* [ji], which is phonetically identical to *dhi* ‘to her’.

As noted above, the 3rd person plural form is *dhiucha*. Otherwise the paradigm of *de* is regular.

do – ‘to’

As noted above, some confusion is possible between this preposition and *de*. When unstressed, *do*, like *de*, can be realised as [d̥ə], *a* [a] or even [ə], rather than [d̥ɔ].

Before a vowel, it usually has the form *a dh*: *tha mi a' dol a dh'Orasa* ‘I am going to Oronsay’. When combined with pronouns, however, the resulting forms are quite different, with the exception of *dhi/dhith* (see above under *de*).

The only morphological point to be noted in relation to this preposition is the typically Argyll form *dhuit* [ɣuɸtʰ] in the 2nd person singular, where more northerly varieties would have *dhut*. Otherwise the paradigm of *do* is regular.

fo – ‘under’

The 1st and 2nd person forms of this preposition present no problems: *fodham*, *fodhad*; *fodhainn*, *fodhaibh*.

In the 3rd person masc. sg., the form elicited was, unsurprisingly, *fodha* [foʔo], realised with typical Colonsay glottalisation and ‘echoing’ of the vowel. Satchel, in the original version of her essay ‘Làithean m’ Òige anns a’ Ghlasaird’ (Satchel 1995: 120), uses the form *fòidhe* [foʔi].⁶²⁴ The LSS notes (p. 43) also give [foʔi], but I have been unable to elicit this form from present-day informants. It may be that the ‘standard’ form *fodha* has gained ground in the sixty years since the *Survey* was conducted. Jones lists the corresponding Jura forms as *foidhe* [foʔi foʔo fo:].

For the fem. sg., the form *fòithe* [fɔ·çĩ] was offered rather tentatively. The ‘standard’ form *foipe* [f_[oi]ɸə] was not spontaneously offered, although it is the form shown in the LSS (p. 43). I was able to elicit *fodhpa* for the plural, although the LSS has *fodhcha* [fo·xə], which fits the general pattern of 3rd person pl. endings in this dialect.

⁶²⁴ This was corrected to *fodha* in the edition published by Acair (Law 2013: 60).

mu – ‘about, around’

I was unable to elicit pronominal forms for this pronoun, which appears to be used mainly in the compound forms *mun cuairt* (in a spatial context), or the divergent form *mu dhèidhneamh* [mə ʝeːɲiv] with a figurative meaning (= ‘concerning’). As in other varieties, *mu thimcheall*, or more idiomatically *timcheall air*, is used in both senses. The LSS notes (p. 44) do not offer any compound forms for *mu*.

Jones (2009a: 201-202) reports exactly the same situation in Jura.

ri – ‘to’

As noted above, the 3rd person plural form is *riucha*. Otherwise the paradigm of *ri* is regular, although with the vowel [u] rather than [i] or [iu] as in some dialects.

ro – ‘before, in front of’

As in many other instances, 1st and 2nd person forms are regular, as is the 3rd person masc. sg. The fem. sg. was tentatively given as *roithe* (LSS (p. 45) has the regular form *roimhpe*), and the 3rd person plural as either *rocha* or the regular *romhpa*. This gives the following paradigm:

<i>romham</i>	[rɔʔəm]	<i>romhainn</i>	[rɔʔɪɲ]
<i>romhad</i>	[rɔʔəd]	<i>romhaibh</i>	[rɔʔɪv]
<i>roimhe</i> (714)	[rɔʔi]	<i>rocha/romhpa</i>	[rɔxə : rɔhɸə]
<i>roithe, roimhpe</i>	[rɔçī : R[ɔi]ʰɸə]		⁶²⁵

Niall Brown suggested that forms with initial *f* are also found: [frɔʔəm : frɔʔəd], etc. This is an interesting observation, as it would align with other cases where there is ambiguity over initial *r/fr*, e.g. *roithneach/froithneach*,⁶²⁶ *radharc/fradharc*.

tro – ‘through’

The LSS found that the pronominal forms of *tro* are phonetically identical to those of *ro*: *thromham* [rɔʔəm], *thromhad* [rɔʔəd], etc. This accords with my own findings.

Netta Titterton suggested that the 3rd person pl. form *thromhpa* [rɔhɸə] was used more in a figurative sense – going through photographs, etc., whereas *throcha* [rɔxə] was used for physical movement: *choisich mi throcha* ‘I walked through them (e.g. gardens)’.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁵ Second form transcribed from LSS (p. 45).

⁶²⁶ *SGDS* headword (692): *raithneach*.

⁶²⁷ Conversation, 11 August 2017.

SYNTAX

John MacInnes has expressed the view that there are no significant syntactic differences to be observed among Scottish Gaelic dialects.

Over the whole area, syntactical variation is minimal. [...] In contrast to Irish, for example, Scottish Gaelic is remarkably uniform.

(MacInnes 2006: 110-11)⁶²⁸

It is certainly true that very few syntactic variations have been found in the Colonsay material, and none of those identified is peculiar to this dialect. Those that have been identified are listed here.

Perfect and pluperfect tenses formed with *an dèidh*

A familiar feature of Scottish Gaelic is the formation of a periphrastic perfect tense using the preposition *air*, which is used here to mean ‘after’.⁶²⁹ Colonsay speakers, on the whole, do not use *air* in this way; like speakers of some other dialects, they use either the preterite, or a construction with *an dèidh*, to express the sense of the English perfect. The preterite is heard, e.g. in *thill thu dhachaidh* ‘you’ve come [back] home’ (to someone returning from holiday), *dh’ith mi mo dhìnnear* ‘I’ve had my dinner’. In both cases, the remark relates to a recent event, with continuing relevance in the present, where English would normally use the perfect. *An dèidh* is often heard when referring to something that has just happened: *tha mi an dèidh innse dhuit* ‘I’ve (just) told you’. By extension, the pluperfect is expressed using *an dèidh* with the preterite *bha*.

⁶²⁸ I am indebted to Professor Wilson McLeod for drawing my attention to this quotation.

⁶²⁹ Cf. the (literary) English use of ‘on’ or ‘upon’: ‘**U**pon leaving the house, he met someone coming the other way; **o**n closer examination, it turned out to be his neighbour’.

The use of *air* to form the perfect can cause confusion to Colonsay Gaelic speakers. In one instance, the informant misunderstood my (slightly clumsy) construction in *Bhiodh mòran daoine ann a bh'air a bhith anns a' Riasg Bhuidhe* 'There would be a lot of people who *had been* in Riskbuie', and responded with *Cha robh, bha iad an dèidh tighinn don Ghlasaird* 'No, they had come to Glassard', thinking I meant 'people who *were still living* in Riskbuie'.⁶³⁰ Yet the same informant used the expression *air atharrachadh* 'changed' twice in the course of the interview, indicating that *air* may be used with a passive meaning, but not to express the active perfect/pluperfect. It also occurs in set expressions, e.g. *air falbh* 'away', *air chall* 'lost'.

Relative clauses involving prepositions

There are two ways of handling relative clauses involving prepositions in Scottish Gaelic (Adger and Ramchand 2006). The more formal construction is preposition + dependent verb:

An duine ris an robh mi a' bruidhinn

Alternatively, the preposition can be placed at the end of the clause, as is common in English ('the man I was talking to'):

An duine a bha mi a' bruidhinn ris

My informant Flora Macneill seemed certain that the latter construction is the one generally favoured in Colonsay. Flora herself, nevertheless, used the expression *an taigh anns a bheil mi a-nis* in an interview, although it is possible that in this instance she was influenced by the construction *far a bheil mi*. My impression is that Colonsay speakers would be more likely to say *an taigh a tha mi a' fantail ann a-nis* (or *far a bheil mi a' fantail*), although it has become difficult to verify such things, given the very small number of native speakers on the island.

⁶³⁰ The original eight houses in Glassard (*A' Ghlasaird*), on the east side of Colonsay, were built in 1920-22 to re-house the inhabitants of the fishing hamlet of Riskbuie (*Riasg Buidhe*), about half a mile to the north.

Directional v. locational adverbs of place

Like many other languages, Gaelic makes a distinction, in the case of certain very common adverbs of place, between *directional* forms, involving movement, and *locational* forms, where the subject is assumed to be stationary. Thus ‘I am going out’ would be rendered as *tha mi a’ dol a-mach*, whereas ‘he is sitting outside’ would be *tha e na shuidhe a-muigh*. ‘I came in’ would be *thàinig mi a-steach*, whereas ‘I am staying in’ is *tha mi a’ fuireach a-staigh*.

In Colonsay Gaelic this distinction is not made with these adverbs. ‘Out’ is always *a-mach* (34) [mɛx], and ‘in’ is always *a-staigh* [(ə) sɔ̃ʲiː : (ə) sɔ̃ʲ]. *A-muigh* (38, 39) is not used;⁶³¹ *a-steach* is readily understood, but not commonly used. It is perhaps noteworthy that this is an ‘asymmetric’ correspondence, in that *a-mach* is used in the ‘standard’ language for direction, whereas *a-staigh* is used for location.

As well as distinguishing motion from location, the words for ‘over, across’ present different forms according to whether motion is perceived as being towards or away from the speaker; or if the speaker is the subject, to or from his/her present location. Motion towards the speaker is expressed by *a-nall* [(ə) n̩ʲaɔ̃ʲɪ̃], whereas motion away from the speaker is expressed by *a-nunn* (45) [(ə) ñ̩n̩ʲ]. The corresponding locational forms are *thall* (over there) and *a-bhos* (over here). These distinctions were neatly expressed by my informant Flora Macneill, when describing how she and her husband took over the running of Oronsay Farm from her mother and brother: *Bha iadsan thall man daidh sinn a-nunn, ’s sin thànaig iadsan a-nall [...]* *do Bhaile Raomainn Mòr* ‘They were over there before we went over, and then they came over (here) to Balerominmore’ (Interview, 23 May 2009).

⁶³¹ Footnote to headword 38 (*a-muigh*) states ‘word rarely used’. In my experience, it is never used by Colonsay speakers.

As in most varieties of Gaelic, the concepts ‘here’ and ‘there’ are expressed by *an seo* [ə 'ʃɔ] and *an sin* [ə ʃɛŋ] respectively, which are often reduced to *seo* and *sin*. *Sin* or *sineach* (*seanach*) [ʃɛ'ɲɪx] is also used with the temporal meaning ‘then’: *sineach thànaig tractors a-staigh* ‘then tractors came in’.⁶³² In this sense, it is used in preference to *an uair sin*. Emphasis can also be marked by the forms *ann an seo*, *ann an sin*.

For a more distant prospect, *an siud* is used for both direction and location as in the ‘standard’ language. *Ann an siud* is also used.

⁶³² Interview with Jessie McNeill, 26 May 2009. She is talking about developments in agriculture over the course of her lifetime.

Clefts: *'s ann* and *'s e*

These constructions, both incorporating the copula *is* (*is ann*, *is e*), are very commonly used in Gaelic to indicate *clefts*, where a particular element of an utterance is ‘highlighted’ (given extra prominence) by being brought forward in the sentence to initial position (Lamb 2008: 73-77; 267-269). As is well known, Gaelic word order requires the verb to be placed first in the sentence, but the use of the copula in *'s ann* / *'s e* enables another word or phrase to be placed ahead of the main verb, which can then be ‘relegated’ to a relative clause, while still observing the verb-subject-object (VSO) sequence. It is thus a highly versatile device, enabling degrees of emphasis to be accommodated within what would otherwise be quite a rigid word order.

In traditional Gaelic grammar, the distinction between the two forms is that *'s e* is used to reference a noun phrase (or a dependent clause), while *'s ann* introduces another type of element, e.g. an adverbial or prepositional construction:

'S e Dòmhnall a rinn sin.

'S e gu robh mi ag obair a dh'fhàg cho sgìth mi.

'S ann an-dè a ràinig sinn.

'S ann anns a' bhaile mhòr a bha e fuireach.

In Colonsay Gaelic this distinction is not rigidly observed, and *'s e* is found with all types of sentence elements in cleft constructions. In response to the sentence *Chan ann an seo a rugadh 's a thogadh tu*, ‘this is not where you were born and brought up’, both Mary Ann MacAllister and John Clark, in separate interviews, responded with *Chan è*.⁶³³ *'S ann* appears to be favoured in phrases using the preposition *ann*, which may then be reduced to *an*: *'s ann an Colbhasa a rugadh e* ‘he was born in Colonsay’. Otherwise *'s e* is generally preferred: *'s e a-màireach a tha i a' tighinn* ‘it’s tomorrow she is coming’. Jones (2009a: 153-154) reports similar usage in Jura, although he suggests the use of *'s e* in such constructions may be regarded there as more of an Islay feature.

⁶³³ The question related to the precise location on the island. Both were born and brought up on Colonsay.

Formal and informal forms of second person pronoun

In Gaelic, as in many European languages (but not in standard English), a distinction is generally made between the second person pronouns used to address intimates (family members, friends, children, animals, etc.) and those used to address strangers, or people who are regarded as superiors. In line with the practice in other languages such as French (*tu/vous*), the singular form *thu* is used when addressing intimates, while the plural form *sibh* is considered more appropriate where a degree of respect is called for. Very often the distinction is based on age: in many varieties of Gaelic, *sibh* is used when addressing one's elders, *thu* when speaking to contemporaries or those younger than oneself. The precise modalities of who may be addressed as *thu* vary from one locality to another, and can be a source of social awkwardness when they are incorrectly handled.

In Colonsay, by contrast, *thu* and *sibh* are used – as in Irish, and some other Scottish dialects – purely to indicate singular and plural: *thu* is the normal form of address to an individual, whatever his or her age or social status. To some extent this reflects the sociodynamics of a small, isolated community, where most people, especially if they are Gaelic speakers, live on terms of close social intimacy – although the same could be claimed for the many Gaelic-speaking communities where the distinction is observed. The reality of life on Colonsay means that strangers will be addressed in English, in the first instance, but if they turn out to be Gaelic speakers, *thu* will be used. Colonsay speakers are aware of the use of *sibh* in 'polite' register elsewhere, but to a Colonsay ear it sounds excessively formal and unnatural.

Holmer (1957: 123) notes that in Arran, 'the forms *tu*, *thu* were once common words of address to a single person, but are gradually giving way to *sibh*'.⁶³⁴ Since Gaelic itself has given way to English in Arran since the time of Holmer's fieldwork (1938), this trend cannot be further verified. Ó Baoill (1978: 176), citing Holmer, suggests that the practice 'has spread recently to the southern islands from further north', and notes that it is 'generally absent' in Irish. Whatever the truth of these claims may be, the practice is generally absent in Colonsay also.

⁶³⁴ Italics added.

That the use of *thu* to a superior is a long-established practice in Colonsay is illustrated by the account of I.M. Moffatt-Pender, a noted Gaelic enthusiast of the early 20th century, who visited the island in 1924 and was surprised to be addressed as *thu* (*tu*) by the man who came to collect his luggage.

Air ball mhothaich mi rud àraidh – b’e “*tu*” a thuir Murchadh rium,
a’ sealltuinn gu soilleir dhomh gur e sin dòigh-bhruidhne anns an
eilean so – (gidheadh, tha iad ag innseadh dhomh gu bheil iad dìreach
cho modhail ri an coimhearsnaich, ged nach cleachd iad “*sibh*”!)

(Moffatt-Pender 1924: 32, spelling and punctuation original.)

There is some slight evidence that in Colonsay, *sibh* may have been used as a mark of respect in still earlier generations. In the 1970s, some Colonsay residents born around the time of the First World War recalled being taught to address older relatives (e.g. grandparents) as *sibh*, but insisted that this usage had not been current in their own adult lifetime.⁶³⁵ None of my more recent informants could remember using *sibh* in this way.

Summary of findings

In contrast to the view expressed by MacInnes (see above), Adger and Ramchand (2006: 191) conclude that ‘syntactic dialectal variation in Scottish Gaelic is an important feature of the language [which] has gone largely unstudied’. While this may well be true, the relatively small number of instances in which Colonsay usage can be shown to differ from more ‘standard’ varieties reinforces the view that syntactic and morphological features are a less prominent marker of difference than phonological and lexical features. That is not to say that they are undeserving of close study.

⁶³⁵ Conversations with Katie Brown and her sister Morag Titterton, c.1975.

While it is difficult to draw general conclusions from such a diverse collection of highly specific data, it can be seen that Colonsay, despite its relative isolation from other varieties of Gaelic, participates in the general erosion of morphological forms that is taking place within the language, particularly in relation to case marking for nouns and adjectives (and the definite article as appropriate). Differing morphological forms of irregular verbs are also a significant feature, particularly affecting the preterite, and to some extent the future and conditional tenses. In the area of prepositional pronouns, variant forms are found especially for the 3rd person sg. feminine, and the 3rd person plural.

In the case of syntactic features, the use of *an dèidh*, in preference to *air*, as a marker of the perfect tense (recent past, continuing significance) is noteworthy, as is the tendency to use *'s e* in preference to *'s ann* for non-nominal clefts. The Colonsay use of *thu/sibh* merely to indicate singular/plural, and not any form of distinction based on age or social status, is of interest from a sociolinguistic point of view.

Many of the morphological and syntactic features identified in Colonsay are shared across a broader swathe of Argyll dialects, in particular the neighbouring islands of Jura and Islay. Given sufficient data, it might be possible to draw morphological and syntactic 'isoglosses' across the area covered by the *SGDS*. That, however, would take us well beyond the scope of the present study.

5. LEXICAL FEATURES

Differences in the realisation of speech sounds, and points of grammatical usage, are by no means the only features which serve to distinguish the dialects of a language from one another. Differences in vocabulary, and in the way words are used, can be every bit as important in determining the unique characteristics of how the language is expressed in a particular locality (Grann 1995-96: 52). This chapter does not set out to give a comprehensive account of all words that are used, or might have been used in the past, by Gaelic speakers living on Colonsay. To a very great extent, Colonsay speakers use the common vocabulary of Scottish Gaelic. Where phonological, morphological or syntactic differences exist, these have been examined in the relevant chapters. The purpose of this final chapter is, rather, to examine the ways in which certain words and expressions used by Colonsay speakers differ from those found in other Gaelic dialects; or if not entirely different, are at least used in a different way, and with a different semantic reference.

Together with the phonological differences already analysed, this can sometimes make it difficult for Colonsay speakers to understand speakers from other areas of the *Gàidhealtachd*, and vice versa. One informant even went so far as to suggest that it was easier for speakers of Colonsay Gaelic to understand spoken Irish than the Lewis dialect.⁶³⁶

Unfamiliar dialects meant that, in the past, Gaelic radio broadcasting on BBC Radio Scotland, and later on *Radio nan Gàidheal*, was largely ignored by Colonsay listeners. The advent of regular television programmes, with the benefit of visual cues and, in some cases, English subtitles, has proved more popular, especially since the establishment of BBC Alba in 2008, and this has undoubtedly led to greater exposure to, and acceptance of, other varieties of Scottish Gaelic.

⁶³⁶ Interview with Netta Titterton, 20 June 2011.

Parallels with Irish

While the view that Colonsay speakers find it easier to understand Irish than the Lewis dialect may be something of an exaggeration, it is true that a handful of expressions very commonly used on Colonsay (and elsewhere in Argyll, notably in Islay) are reminiscent of Irish, rather than more standard Scottish Gaelic forms. These include the most formal way of expressing thanks, *gu robh math agad/agaibh* [kɔro 'mɛ? aɡəð / aɡiv].⁶³⁷ More colloquial alternatives are *taing dhuit/dhuibh*, or more colloquially still *ta* or even *thanks*. Neither *mòran taing* nor *tapadh leat/leibh*, which are the standard formulae for expressing thanks in most other varieties of Gaelic, is commonly used on Colonsay; indeed, the latter expression is regarded there as a very odd way to say ‘thank you’.

Other lexical items which bear a superficial resemblance to Irish forms include *cosmhail ri* [kɔsɪl' ri],⁶³⁸ which is used in preference to *coltach ri* meaning ‘like, similar to’. *Coltach* is used to mean ‘likely’, ‘probable’, and the noun *coltas* [kɔl'tas] is used to mean ‘appearance’, especially in the expression *a rèir coltais* ‘apparently’ (‘seemingly’, in Colonsay English). *Maidinn* [mɛd'z'ijɪn], rather than *madainn*, is the word for ‘morning’, giving the expressions *maidinn mhath* [mɛd'z'ijɪn 'vɛ] ‘good morning’, and *an-diugh sa mhaidinn* ‘this morning’. *Deifir*, rather than *cabhag*, is used for ‘hurry’. The pronunciation of *nas miosa* ‘worse’ as *nas measa* [nəs 'mesə] by some, though not all Colonsay speakers,⁶³⁹ is also reminiscent of Irish, as is the form *bainntreach* (77) [bʲɛɪɲd'z'irəx] for *banntrach* ‘widow’.

⁶³⁷ The pronunciation of the first syllable as [kɔ], rather than *[gɔ] is also attested by Jones in Jura. Jones thinks this may represent ‘a fossilised by-form of *gu*’ or ‘a reinterpretation of the phrase in the minds of speakers, perhaps involving the word *cothrom* or *comharradh*’ (Jones 2009a: 248). Re-analysing the phrase as *cothrom math agad* would make phonological sense in terms of the Colonsay data – but Colonsay speakers, when asked, interpret it as meaning ‘may good be with you’. Jones further notes that the same pronunciation was obtained by Wentworth (1996: 191) for Wester Ross, albeit with a slight difference in usage.

⁶³⁸ Spelt *cosail* in accounts of other Argyll dialects (Grannd 2000, Jones 2009a, Edwards 2007).

⁶³⁹ Interview with Donald MacArthur, 30 June 2010. Niall Brown (in conversation, 10 July 2017) insisted that *nas miosa* was the form most commonly used.

Both Ó Baoill (1978, 2000) and Grand (Grant) (2004) have drawn attention to the area of overlap, in lexical terms, that exists between ‘Irish’ as spoken in the north of Ireland and ‘Gaelic’ as spoken in the southern part of the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*, notably in Argyll. In Ó Baoill (1978) the main focus is on typically Scottish features which are also found in northern varieties of Irish, but in Sections 1-6A (pp. 1-72) he adopts the opposite approach, and lists features which are common to Ireland and some southern dialects of Scottish Gaelic, but are not found further north. In the absence (to date) of any serious study of the Colonsay dialect, no direct comparison is drawn between Ulster and Colonsay forms, except where the latter are occasionally mentioned in the literature, but a few cross-comparisons can be made with other southern dialects.

For example, the use of *bròdail*, rather than *pròiseil*, as the word for ‘proud’ (p. 12), is attested in Colonsay, for example in a poem by Donald MacNeill (Scouller 1998: 19), although the word most commonly used is *moiteil*, which carries a positive connotation: *bidh sinn moiteil asad* ‘we’ll be proud of you’. The word *ladhar* is used for ‘toe’ (pp. 45-46), although *òrdag* is also used, meaning specifically ‘big toe’. Further examples cited by Ó Baoill and attested in Colonsay include *crotach*, rather than *guilbneach*, for ‘curlew’ (pp. 37-38), *dreòlan* [d̪r̪eol̪ˠə̃n̪], rather than *dreathan* (*donn*), for ‘wren’ (p. 39),⁶⁴⁰ *gart* meaning ‘standing corn’ (pp. 196-197) (also ‘field’, as in the placename *Gart a’ Ghobhainn*), and the admittedly rather obscure word *tarraing-air-èiginn* for ‘heath rush’ (pp. 49-50; cf. Loder 1935: 368).⁶⁴¹ But the degree of identifiable overlap is really quite limited, and the fact that a handful of words, in nearly contiguous dialects, should show some similarity, is not in itself particularly surprising.

On the other hand, the word used for ‘(joiner’s) hammer’ in Colonsay is *òrd*, as throughout most of the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*, rather than *geannaire*, which is found in Islay and Kintyre, or *casar* (cf. Irish *casúr*), which is recorded in Arran (p. 13; cf. Holmer 1957: 2). The distribution of *òrd*, *geannaire* and *casar* in Argyll and

⁶⁴⁰ Grand (2000) discusses the distribution of *ladhar/òrdag* (pp. 22-23 and Map 20), *bròdail* (pp. 41-42 and Map 54) and *dreòlan/dreathan* (p. 25 and Map 25).

⁶⁴¹ The translation is ‘rough grass’ in Ó Baoill’s heading; ‘heath-rush’ is shown as the entry for Colonsay (citing Dwelly, who identifies it as a Colonsay form).

Arran dialects is shown in Grannd (2000: 41 and Map 53). The informant I questioned about this in Colonsay seemed unfamiliar with either *geannaire* or *casar*, but volunteered *meal* [mɛl'] for 'sledgehammer'. There is an English word 'mell', meaning 'heavy hammer, sledgehammer', but whether this is the origin of the Gaelic word, or is itself derived from a Celtic original, is difficult to determine.

Grannd (2004) goes so far as to postulate the existence of a 'North Channel dialect' covering southern Argyll (Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Gigha, Kintyre and Arran) and the northern extremity of Co. Antrim, including Rathlin. He identifies a number of 'features' that are common to all these dialects (11 in this particular article, although he refers in passing (p. 94) to a list of 89 features, which form the basis of his 2000 publication). Of the 11 listed by him in 2004, all but one are found in Colonsay as well as Islay.⁶⁴² Nevertheless, Grannd's data, as presented, is not sufficient in itself to demonstrate that Argyll and Antrim constitute a single dialect area. A similar hypothesis, suggested by Ó Cuív as far back as 1951 (1951: 48-49), had previously been examined by Ó Baoill (2000) who, while accepting that there would have been a measure of mutual comprehension among the dialects concerned, concluded that 'to say that we have therefore proved the existence of the single Gaelic continuum as long as the language survived in the 'interface' area would be dangerous because the evidence is in reality so meagre' (pp. 131-132).

As far as Colonsay is concerned, it must be recognised that, for the most part, the lexis used in day-to-day speech has much more in common with other varieties of Scottish Gaelic than with any forms of Irish.

⁶⁴² The exception is Feature 4: Treatment of Old Irish *ig* (pp. 77-78), where Colonsay follows the general pattern of Scottish Gaelic in pronouncing final *-ich* as [iç], but agrees with Islay in also pronouncing final *-idh*, *-igh* as [iç] (See pp. 70-71; cf. Grannd 2000: 59). For a full examination of this issue, see Ó Maolalaigh (2000).

Preferential choices

It is important to realise that, in many cases, the difference between Colonsay forms and those used in other parts of the *Gàidhealtachd* is a matter of preferential usage, rather than a binary choice. Words used elsewhere will often be recognised as forming part of the wider Gaelic lexicon, but may not be actively used in local speech. Comments such as ‘That’s what they say in Islay’ are commonplace. Conversely, many expressions which are commonly used in Colonsay speech are known in other varieties of Gaelic, but with a more restricted reference compared to their use on Colonsay. For example, the word *gasta* is universally used in Colonsay, and in the rest of Argyll, as a mark of approval (‘fine’, ‘great’). The standard response to the greeting *Ciamar a tha thu?* is *Tha (mi) gasta*, while *tha sin gasta* is a normal way of expressing satisfaction with just about anything. In other varieties of Gaelic the word is less commonly encountered; it is found in expressions such as *duine gasta* ‘a fine (decent) man’, but would not normally be used as a ‘catch-all’ term of approval.

A parallel situation can be found in English: the Scottish/Irish use of ‘grand’, or the Lancashire expression ‘champion’, as a general mark of approval, tends to strike a speaker of Standard Southern English (SSE) as quaint, or even odd. The words themselves form part of the SSE vocabulary, but have a more restricted range of application.

Similarly, *bitheanta* is a perfectly normal Gaelic word, meaning ‘frequent’ or ‘common’. As such, its area of semantic reference overlaps with that of *tric*. But *tric* is the more frequently used expression for ‘often’, with *bitheanta* or *gu bitheanta* available as a synonym. In the Colonsay dialect, (*gu*) *bitheanta* [bʲiçĩndə] is a commonly used word meaning ‘often’, found alongside *tric*. Similarly, the expression for ‘usually’ in Colonsay tends to be *am bitheantas*, rather than *mar is trice*.

Other examples may be given. The word (*a*) *cheana*, meaning ‘already’, is known and used in most varieties of Gaelic, but the more commonly used expression in most cases is *mu thràth*, or as it is often rendered, *mar thà*. In Colonsay, *cheana* [çɛ'nə] is the normal word for ‘already’, with *mu thràth/mar thà* much less commonly used.

The opposing concepts of ‘easy’ and ‘difficult’ are neatly expressed by the pair *soirbh/doirbh* [sɔri(y) : dɔri(y)] rather than *furasda/duilich*, although the latter words are known and readily understood. In the comparative, *nas doirbhe* [nas 'dɔrivĩ] is used for ‘more difficult’, but ‘easier’ is usually expressed as *nas fhasa*. The word *duilich* (357) [dɔ'ɫ'ɪç] (note the quality of the vowel: [o]) is generally used only with the meaning ‘sorry’. *Tha mi duilich (doilich)* is the standard formula for expressing condolences, as well as a general apology.⁶⁴³

The pair *diofar/deifir* presents an interesting contrast. In most varieties of Gaelic, these forms are regarded as synonymous; *diofar* is considered to be the more correct spelling, as sanctioned by *GOC*, while the spelling *deifir* is considered obsolete.⁶⁴⁴ In Colonsay, the two are distinguished. *Diofar* [dɪvɔɹ] expresses the idea of ‘difference’, and is clearly influenced by the English word ‘differ’ (note the presence of hard [d] in onset): *cha dèan e diofar* ‘it doesn’t matter’. By contrast, *deifir* [d'z'efɪɹ], with a different vowel, and palatalised onset, expresses the idea of ‘haste, hurry’: *a bheil deifir ort?* ‘are you in a hurry?’ The same distinction is maintained in Jura (Jones 2009a: 251-252), and in Irish: *difear/deifir*. The word *cabhag* [kafag] is also known, but is not normally used to mean ‘hurry’; its principal use, even in Colonsay English, is to refer to a gaggle of seagulls feeding on a shoal of mackerel, or a patch of discarded offal, offshore.

On the subject of speed, the meaning ‘fast, quick’ is more frequently conveyed by *clis*, rather than *luath*, in Colonsay Gaelic, although *luath* is also used.

The adjective *deas* (304) [d'z'es], as well as meaning ‘right’ (as opposed to left), or ‘south’, is also the normal word for ‘ready’ in this dialect, and as such is used in preference to *deiseil* or *ullamh*. Some of my informants used *deiseil*, but only when prompted; *ullamh* appeared to be unknown to them. Grandd reports *deas* as the only word used for ‘ready’ in Islay, and shows that it is used in this sense over almost the whole of Argyll, apart from Cowal and one informant in Luing (Grandd 2000: 12-13 and Map 4). The meaning ‘finished’, which is expressed by *deas* in some dialects, is

⁶⁴³ Colonsay people are aware that *duilich*, not *doilich*, is the pronunciation elsewhere, and will sometimes use the form [dɔ'ɫ'ɪç] when speaking to non-locals.

⁶⁴⁴ *GOC* has only *diofar*, while Dwelly includes only *deifir*.

conveyed by *rèidh* (698, 699) [re:] in Colonsay Gaelic. Again, Grannd shows that the same holds true for Islay and the rest of southern Argyll (Grannd 2000: 23 and Map 21). Despite some similarity in semantic reference, *rèidh* is never used to mean ‘ready’ in Colonsay, as it is in Irish: *a bheil thu rèidh?* always means ‘have you finished?’

Just as the Inuit peoples notoriously (or allegedly) have a large number of words for ‘snow’, so Gaelic possesses many words for ‘sea’. In Colonsay, the most commonly used term is *fairge* (388) [fariɡʷi],⁶⁴⁵ which in some other varieties implies ‘rough sea’ (Grannd 2000: 20). *Muir*, probably the most common word for ‘sea’ in Gaelic generally, is also used, as is *cuan*, referring particularly to the open Atlantic off the west coast of Colonsay.⁶⁴⁶ *Sàil* is also used, though less commonly.

The word used for ‘language’ is *cainnt* (142) [kʲɛiɲɔʷzʲ], rather than *cànan*: *a’ chainnt a’ ainn fhè*’ [ə xʲɛiɲɔʷzʲ [aɪɲ ‘he:] ‘our own language’ (i.e. Gaelic).

Elsewhere, *cainnt* has the closely related meaning ‘speech’. *Cànan* is known on Colonsay, but has a more literary ‘feel’ to it.

By far the most usual way of saying ‘I want’ in Colonsay is *tha* [...] *a dhìth orm* [ha [...] ə ‘ji: orəm], which elsewhere has the meaning ‘I need’ or ‘I am lacking’: *dè tha a dhìth ort?* ‘what do you want?’; *tha a dhìth orm a dhol ann* ‘I want to go there’. But again, it is a matter of preference: *tha mi ag iarraidh* is also used.

The sense of ‘I can’ is most commonly expressed as *thèid agam air*. In other dialects, this expression has a somewhat stronger meaning: ‘I can manage to’. The meaning ‘I could’ (either past or conditional) is normally rendered as *rachadh agam air*; the preterite form *chaidh agam air* implies ‘I managed to do it (despite difficulty)’. The standard Gaelic expression *’s urrainn dhomh* is also very commonly used. Contrary to the statement by Grannd (2000: 27 and Map 27), the typically Islay forms *mandaidh mi/cha mhand mi* are not found in Colonsay.

⁶⁴⁵ Spelt *fairrge* in *SGDS*.

⁶⁴⁶ *Iain a’ Chuain*, held to be the progenitor of most of the McNeills on Colonsay, was so named because he was reputed to have been born in an open boat sailing from Barra to Colonsay (Loder 1935: 59).

The channel in The Strand, named on the OS map (and by Loder 1935: 406) as *Abhainn a’ Chùirn* is more likely to be *Abhainn a’ Chuain*, since it flows westwards towards the open ocean.

In most Gaelic dialects, *fan* is used with the meaning ‘stay, remain’, while *fuirich* may be used with this meaning, but also means ‘live, reside’. In Colonsay Gaelic, *fuirich* is little used, and *fan* [fɛŋ] (verbal noun *fantail* [fɛŋtal̪])⁶⁴⁷ is used in all senses: *tha mi a’ fantail ann an Colbhasa* ‘I live on Colonsay’. (Cf. the use of ‘stay’, meaning ‘have one’s permanent residence’, in Scottish English: ‘Do you stay in Glasgow?’).

The verb *coimhid* is widely used in Scottish Gaelic with the meaning ‘look, watch’. In Colonsay, although *coimhid* is also known (mainly in the sense of ‘observe’), the word normally used is *amhairc* [ɛ’rɪçq̃], with verbal noun *amharc* [ɛ’rɪxq̃]: *Bha mi ag amharc air a’ bhàta a’ tighinn a-staigh* ‘I was watching the boat coming in’. (Note that metathesis has occurred in the way these forms are realised).⁶⁴⁸ The word *amhairc* is of course quite commonly found in other dialects, and in the literary and Biblical language, but outside Argyll it is not usually found as the standard word for ‘look’. The verb *seall* (vn *sealltainn*) [ʃ[ɛʊ]l̪, ʃ[ɛʊ]l̪`tɪŋ] is in common use as a synonym, as it is in other varieties.⁶⁴⁹ With the meaning ‘show’, however, *seall* is less commonly used; the preferred construction is *leig fhaicinn (do)*, which is also found in other dialects.

The verb *ùisnich* (or *ùisinich*) [uːʃniç : uːʃniç] tends to be found for ‘use’ rather than *cleachd*, although *cleachdte ri* is standard for ‘used to, accustomed to’. As in most forms of Gaelic, the past habitual sense of ‘used to’ is conveyed either by *b’ àbhaist*, or by the conditional tense: *bhithinn ag obair don Oighreachd* ‘I used to work for the Estate’.

Causation is commonly expressed in Gaelic using the construction *a chionn ’s gu* followed by the dependent form, or more straightforwardly by *oir*. In Colonsay, by far the commonest way of expressing ‘because’ is *chionn* [çon̪] followed by the positive (i.e. non-dependent) form of the verb: *Chaidh sinn air ais do dh’Orasa*,

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. headword 412 (*feith: feitheamh*).

⁶⁴⁸ Metathesis must have intervened *after* the raising of [a] to [ɛ] before (now silent) *mh*. The accompanying glottalisation has either been retained from an earlier form *[ɛ’vəŋq̃], or re-introduced before the sonorant [r].

The *SGDS* results for Colonsay give [q̃ɛ’vəŋq̃] for *ag amharc* (36), although metathesised forms are recorded in Islay, Jura, and across a broad swathe of mainland Argyll, from Tarbert to Benderloch (*SGDS*, Vol.II:72).

⁶⁴⁹ The English word *watch* (vn *watchadh*) is also commonly used in a Gaelic context.

chionn bha mo mhàthair is mo bhràthair [...] a' fàgail Orasa 'We went back to Oronsay, because my mother and brother [...] were leaving Oronsay'.⁶⁵⁰ (See Lamb 2008: 259). A *chionn 's gu* may be used for greater emphasis, but sounds more formal; *air sgàth 's gu* is also found. I do not recall hearing anyone on Colonsay use *oir* in normal speech.

'When' as a conjunction is regularly rendered as *mar a* [marə : mərə]: *mar a bha mis' as a' sgoil* 'when I was at school'. The form *nuair a* is known and accepted (e.g. in the line of a popular song: *nuair a bha mi ann an Ìle*), and might be used in situations calling for particular emphasis and/or formality, but *mar a* is the normal everyday expression.

Substitutionary choices

On the other hand, certain words are used on Colonsay *to the exclusion of* equivalent terms used elsewhere. The veracity of this claim has been tested by the rough-and-ready method of trying alternative forms on native Colonsay speakers, to see if they are recognised. Of course, the fact that a given speaker does not recognise a particular word, on a particular occasion, is no guarantee that the word in question is not, or has not been, used by other speakers at other times. O'Rahilly sounds a word of caution in this regard:

It is easy enough to say that a particular word is in use today in a particular area; but to say that such and such a word is *not* in use in a particular district may be risky, in view of the fact that the vocabulary of most districts has as yet been imperfectly explored. (O'Rahilly 1988: 244)

In most varieties of Gaelic, the verb *lorg* can mean both 'to seek' and 'to find'. In Colonsay Gaelic, by contrast, *lorg* is not used as a verb, but only as a noun, with the meaning 'footprint',⁶⁵¹ or more figuratively 'trace': *fhuair mi lorg air* 'I traced him'.

⁶⁵⁰ Flora Macneill, interview recorded 23 May 2009.

⁶⁵¹ In this sense, it is found in the placename *Lorg an Fhomhair* (Loder 1935: 11 and Plate XVII).

The sense of ‘looking for’ something is usually conveyed by *rùraich* (vn *rùrach*) [ru:rɪç : ru:rʌx], which elsewhere has the narrower meaning ‘grope for, search for’: *tha mi a’ rùrach spàin* ‘I’m looking for a spoon’.⁶⁵² The expression used for ‘finding’ something is *amais air* (vn *amas*) [ɛ’mɪʃ : ɛ’məs]: *an do dh’amais thu air?* ‘have you found it?’ As in other dialects, *faigh* can also be used: *fhuair mi fon bhòrd e* ‘I found it under the table’.

The verb for ‘to feel’, in most varieties of Gaelic, is *fairich*, but in Colonsay, as in much of Argyll, the word used is *mothaich* (vn *mothachainn*) [moʔɪç : moʔoxɪɲ], which elsewhere has the meaning ‘notice, be aware of’: *a bheil thu mothachainn an fhuachd?* ‘are you feeling cold?’; *tha mi a’ mothachainn nas fhèarr a-nis* ‘I’m feeling better now’ (Cf. Grannd 2000: 18 and Map 13).

The verb *fàs*, in most varieties of Gaelic, has the primary meaning ‘grow’, and by extension means ‘become’. In Colonsay Gaelic, the meaning ‘grow’, whether predicated of plants or human beings, is conveyed by *cinn* (vn *cinntinn*) [k’iɲ : k’iɲ·d’z’iɲ], while *fàs* is used primarily to mean ‘become’: *tha ròs a’ cinntinn as a’ ghàrradh* ‘there is a rose growing in the garden’; *tha am patach sin a’ cinntinn gu luath* ‘that child is growing quickly’; *dh’fhàs e dorcha* ‘it became dark’. *Fàs* is found in the expression *tha e a’ fàs orm* ‘he’s growing on me’ (i.e. ‘I’m becoming used to him’). The sense of *fàs* as a noun (‘growth’) is conveyed by *cinneas* [k’i’ɲəs].

A notable feature of the Colonsay dialect is the form *drùin* (vn *drùnadh*) [dru:ɲ : dru:nəɲ] for ‘close, shut’, which is also the form found in Islay. This appears to be a conflation of two forms: *dùin*, which is the word most commonly used in Gaelic, and *druid*, which is recorded in Kintyre and Arran (Grannd 2000: 34 and Map 41). On the other hand, *drùin* may reflect an independent development – an intermediate form, rather than a conflation.

⁶⁵² Holmer (1938: 205) asserts that *rùraich* is ‘a word peculiar to Islay’. Presumably he means with the general sense of ‘look for’, since it is quite commonly used elsewhere to mean ‘search’. In any case, he is wrong in his assertion: in addition to its prevalence in Colonsay, Jones (2009a: 268) reports the same usage in Jura.

The word *sguir* ‘stop, cease’ is not used in Colonsay, where the word used, in all cases, is *stad*.⁶⁵³

In common with much of Argyll, the word used for ‘barking’ (of a dog) is *tabhann* [tafan`], rather than *comhartaich* (Grannd 2000: 17-18 and Map 12).

The word *falt*, for ‘hair’, is understood on Colonsay, but the word actively used is *gruag* [gʷr[ua]q]. Although the *SGDS* results for *falt* (392) show versions of *gruag* from a number of locations, notably in South Uist, Arran and Islay, the entry for Colonsay shows only [fal`d̪ : fal`t]. Both *gruag* and *falt* refer to the mass of hair on the head; a single hair is *ribeag* [riβaq], which appears, as a phonetic correlate, in the *SGDS* entry for *rib* (703) ‘ensnare’.

The normal way of saying ‘maybe, perhaps’ in Colonsay is not *is dòcha*, but *cha lughaide* [xa `l̪yːd̪z̪i]: *cha lughaide gum faic mi e a-màireach* ‘maybe I’ll see him tomorrow’. Jones reports *cha lughaide* as the expression used in Jura (2009a: 245); Grannd (2000: 60; 1987:30) gives the phonetic form [ha l̪ö:tʃə] for Islay, but mistakenly interprets it as a reflex of *math dh’fhaodte*. The latter expression is used in Colonsay (397) [ˌsmɛʔe `y̆d̪z̪i], but with a more definite emphasis: *is math dh’fhaodte gun dubhairt e sin* ‘he may well have said that’.

Where *is dòcha* is used, it is usually with the original meaning ‘probably, hopefully’: *is dòcha gun tig e a-màireach* ‘he’ll probably come tomorrow’. The noun *dòchas* is used for ‘hope’, but *tha mi’n dòchas* sounds rather a formal way of saying ‘I hope’; *tha fiughar orm*, or more idiomatically, *bidh fiughar orm* (since it refers to a future expectation) is the preferred form. In other varieties *tha fiughar orm (ri)* means ‘I am looking forward (to)’, rather than ‘I hope’.

Sometimes the wrong choice of word can cause misunderstanding or even offence. Words for ‘dying’ are a notoriously sensitive area in different Gaelic dialects. In Colonsay, as in many other parts of the *Gàidhealtachd*, the verb *bàsaich* is applied only to animals, and is considered offensive if used of humans. The word for ‘die’ in a human context is *siubhail* [ʃiʔu] (literally ‘to travel’, i.e. ‘to pass on’): *shiubhail e*

⁶⁵³ Conversation with Niall Brown, 10 July 2017.

an-uiridh ‘he died last year’. *Siubhail* is also used in a non-figurative sense, meaning ‘walk’: *siubhal a’ chladaich* ‘walking the shoreline, beachcombing’ (see Alexander 2017: 67-68). The loanword *travel* [trɛvəl] is also used, with its verbal noun *traveladh* [trɛvəl’əɣ] thoroughly assimilated to the South Argyll phonetic environment, as if spelt **tramhladh* (cf. *samhradh*, *damhsadh*).⁶⁵⁴

Expressions of time

The English word ‘time’ can be translated into Gaelic in many different ways. Time as a quantifiable substance is most frequently expressed by *ùine*.⁶⁵⁵ A particular point in time, an occasion, is expressed as *àm* (33) [ɛm]: *aig aon àm* ‘at one time’; *tha an t-àm ann dhuit a bhith falbh dhachaigh* ‘it’s time you were going home’. *Àm* can also denote a recurring point in time, such as ‘time of year’: *àm na Nollaig* ‘Christmas time’; *àm breith nan uan* ‘lambing time’. Colonsay usage, in this respect, does not differ greatly from that of other Gaelic dialects, although the pronunciation does.

An indefinite point in time is expressed as *uair*: *gach uair a chì mi thu* ‘every time I see you’. In Colonsay, this sense can also be expressed with the word *troth* [tro]: *a h-uile troth a thigeadh e* ‘every time he came’. It is possible that *troth* derives from *tràth* ‘season, time’. Jones records *tròth* (with long ò), used in the same sense, in Jura (2009a: 274).

As in other dialects, *uair* can be used to denote ‘once’, as in *uair no dithist* ‘once or twice’ (see below). It is also used with its primary meaning ‘hour’, where other varieties would further specify this meaning as *uair an uaireadair*, *uair a thìde*.⁶⁵⁶ (The words *tìde*, *tìm* are not found in Colonsay).⁶⁵⁷ As in other varieties of Gaelic, *uair* also means ‘one o’clock’, while other hours are expressed as *dà uair*, *trì uairean*, etc. *Dà uair dheug* ‘twelve o’clock’ is pronounced [ɖaː reːg].

⁶⁵⁴ I have resisted the spelling **treabhail/treabhaladh* (cf. *treabhailear* in Murchison 1988: xxix) because this would imply glottalisation of [v], which is not the case. Jones transcribes the same word as *trabhaileadh* [trɛʔvələɣ] (with glottalisation) in his Jura extracts.

⁶⁵⁵ A standard Colonsay greeting, to returning natives or regular visitors, is *Dè’n ùine a th’agad?* ‘How long are you here for?’

⁶⁵⁶ *Uair an uaireadair* might be used in case of ambiguity, to specify what sense of *uair* is intended.

⁶⁵⁷ *An tìde* is, of course, phonetically identical to *an t-sìde*, meaning ‘the weather’.

The word for ‘now’, *a-nis*, is generally pronounced [(ə) 'nɛʃ], although [(ə) 'niʃ] is also heard, and is felt to be more ‘correct’. The word most frequently heard for ‘at present, just now’ is *an ceartuair* [ɲ 'q'har̥d̥d̥əɾ̥]. This is used in preference to *an dràsta*, which is, however, readily understood by Colonsay speakers. ‘Soon’ is expressed as *gun dàil* [ɡun 'd̥a:l̥]; *a dh'aithghearr* is not used.

Numerals

The cardinal numerals *aon*, *dà*, *trì*, etc. are used in this dialect in much the same way as in other varieties of Gaelic. The form *sè*, not **sia*, is used for ‘six’, reflecting the fact that ‘original long ē’ is generally not ‘broken’ in this dialect (Jackson 1968; see p. 99). For the same reason, *deug* (308) ‘teen’ is pronounced [d̥'z'ɛ̃ːɡ], not *[d̥'z'[ia]ɡ]. As is usual in Gaelic, the particle *a* is used when counting: *a h-aon*, *a dhà*, *a trì*, etc. (Cox 2011).

Ordinal numerals, likewise, are the same as in other varieties: *a' chiad*,⁶⁵⁸ *dàrna*, *treas*, etc. *Ceathramh*, in addition to meaning ‘fourth’, is used for ‘quarter’ in all senses, including telling the time, where other varieties would use *cairteal*: *ceathramh gu trì* ‘quarter to three’. This reflects widespread usage in Argyll.

Collective numerals are scarcely used. Only *dithist* ‘two’ occurs in this dialect,⁶⁵⁹ and it can be used for either persons or objects, whereas in most Gaelic dialects it is used only of persons. *Uair no dithist* is the way of saying ‘once or twice’. The remaining collective numerals *triùir*, *ceathrar*, etc. are not found – despite the fact that *ceathrar* (176) appears in the *SGDS* results. As in other Argyll (and Perthshire) dialects, the cardinal form (*a*) *h-aon* (49) [h̥ỹːŋ] is used for ‘one’ where certain other dialects would use *aonan* or simply *aon* (for details, see Cox 2011). ‘One’ in a negative or interrogative context is generally expressed by *gin*: *cha robh gin air fhàgail* ‘there was not one (none) left’; *a bheil gin agad?* ‘have you got one?’. *Gin* is also used in the expression *a h-uile gin aca/dhiucha* ‘every one of them’.

⁶⁵⁸ *A' chiad*, or as he spells it, *a' cheud* (cf. *SGDS* headword *ceud* (182) [ç[iə]d̥]) is the only one of Jackson’s eight key words to be ‘broken’ in this dialect (Jackson 1968: 66, 70).

⁶⁵⁹ Holmer reports the same usage in Kintyre (1981: 87).

Intensifiers

The use of intensifiers in this dialect shows some interesting divergences from standard Gaelic practice. The most commonly used word for ‘very’ is *fiadhaich* [fiʔiç], as in *fiadhaich math* ‘very good’. An alternative, with a positive connotation, is *anabarrach* [ɛˈnəbərɒx], while in a negative context, *garbh* [gərɒv] may be used: *Chan eil mi garbh cinnteach* ‘I’m not very sure’.⁶⁶⁰ For a stronger degree of intensity, *fuasach* (*fuathasach*) [fuaʃsɒx] or *uamharra* [uaɪvərɒ] ‘terribly’ may be used: *bha sin fuasach doirbh* ‘that was terribly difficult’, *tha mi uamharra sgìth* ‘I’m awfully tired’. *Uabhasach* tends not to be used as a modifier, but as an adjective in its own right, meaning ‘terrible’. The ultimate degree of intensity is conveyed by *diabhlaidh* [dʲzʲiaɪlʲi]: *tha i diabhlaidh fuar* ‘it’s hellish (lit. devilish) cold’.

Glè, which is used elsewhere for ‘very’, has the attenuated meaning ‘quite’ in Colonsay. Thus *glè mhath* [glɛˈvɛ] means, not ‘very good’, but merely ‘quite good’.⁶⁶¹ Cf. English ‘that’s all very well (but)’.

The sense of ‘too’ as an intensifier is conveyed by *mòs* (from *mò* ‘s ‘greater than’): *mòs anmoch* ‘too late’ [mɔˈs ˈɛnəmɒx]. *Tuillidh is* [tuliç əs] is also commonly used. *Ro* in this sense is understood, but not actively used. ‘Too much’ is expressed by *tuillidh ’s a chòir* [tuliç sə ˈxɔːɾ]; the word *cus* is unknown in Colonsay. ‘Nothing’ (or indeed ‘anything’) is usually expressed as *mìr* [miːɾ], rather than *dad* or *càil*: *cha robh mìr ann* ‘there was nothing there’; *a bheil mìr air fhàgail?* ‘is there anything left?’

As in other dialects, the sense of ‘a bit’, modifying an adjective, is conveyed by *car/caran* or *rud beag*: *tha sin car neònach* ‘that’s a bit strange’; *tha mi rud beag sgìth* ‘I’m a little tired’.

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Mary Ann MacAllister, 27 August 2009.

⁶⁶¹ Niall Brown (interview, 7 December 2016), having used the expression *glè bheag*, felt compelled to gloss it (in English) by saying ‘*Glè* meaning “very”, more than “a wee bit”, like in Colonsay’. He also told me that the old ‘aunties’ in Colonsay, when told about new-fangled mainland ways, would respond, unimpressed, with *Oh? Tha sin glè ghasda* (‘Oh? that’s quite nice’).

The influence of English

All varieties of Gaelic make copious use of English expressions, although in more formal registers, such as sermons and written prose, a conscious effort is usually made to avoid the more obvious borrowings (Lamb 2008: 143-145).

Throughout the development of prose writings in the 19th and 20th centuries there is considerable evidence of resistance to borrowing in ‘serious’ writing [...] and it certainly obscures the extent to which borrowing has developed in the spoken language during that time. (Macaulay 1982: 210).

In ordinary conversation among native Gaelic speakers, no such effort is normally made, nor is there generally felt to be any need for it.⁶⁶² Nowadays, virtually all Gaelic speakers are equally fluent in English, in most cases will have been educated through the medium of English,⁶⁶³ and generally receive almost all their information (other than purely local or family news) from English sources. This means that for many concepts, especially those relating to technical or scientific subjects, but also including sport and politics, the English word is regarded as the appropriate term to use, and there is no perceived need to translate it into Gaelic merely for purposes of communication. That said, many Gaelic speakers are acutely aware that this practice represents an impoverishment of their language, and may, in more reflective mood, seek to find a more idiomatic way of expressing such concepts in Gaelic (Dorian 2010: 96-98).⁶⁶⁴

Non-Gaelic speakers are quick to point to the use of English loanwords, for example in news broadcasts, as evidence of the perceived inability of the language to express modern or complicated concepts. Such broadcasts, although primarily intended for Gaelic speakers, are of course readily available to a wider audience, and words such

⁶⁶² Attitudes towards borrowing naturally vary from person to person, and from one speech community to another.

⁶⁶³ Although Gaelic-medium education has made great advances in the past 20 years, it is still not available on Colonsay, and was not even thought of when the present generation of Gaelic speakers there were at school.

⁶⁶⁴ As expressed to me by the late Katie Brown (*Ceitidh Cholla*), ‘We can usually find a way of saying it’. (Personal conversation, c.1973)

as *helicopter*, *computer* or indeed *Brexit* tend to leap out as recognisable items amid a mass of otherwise unintelligible discourse. Such dismissive reactions on the part of monoglot English speakers fail to appreciate that (1) native Gaelic speakers find such occasional use of English terms quite unremarkable, and (2) all languages throughout history have borrowed heavily from other languages, with English being a prime example.⁶⁶⁵ The words *Helikopter*, *Computer* and *Brexit* are just as likely to feature in a news bulletin in German (and *mutatis mutandis* in many other languages) without anyone seriously suggesting that the German language is incapable of expressing modern or complicated concepts.

Gaelic speakers on Colonsay, as in other parts of the *Gàidhealtachd*, are adept at ‘code-switching’ between Gaelic and English (Cram 1986: 126-127). Within the local community, *diglossia* is the norm: certain situations will call for the use of English, whereas Gaelic will normally be used in other contexts. As the numbers of Gaelic speakers decline, its use is increasingly confined to the home environment, and even there it can be used only with a few individuals. As in most parts of the Highlands, it has long been considered the height of rudeness to converse in Gaelic when non-Gaelic speakers are present; if a monoglot English speaker joins the company, conversation will automatically shift from Gaelic to English. It goes without saying that this deeply-ingrained expression of native courtesy has helped to hasten the decline of the language.

Even in the context of a Gaelic conversation, speakers are quite likely to switch to English and back again, perhaps to express a concept for which no Gaelic equivalent is readily available, or because a particular phrase in English is felt to convey the right nuance of meaning. Often the conversation will then continue in the other language for a few sentences before switching back again. This is a common enough phenomenon in cases where the participants in a conversation are thoroughly

⁶⁶⁵ Attempts have of course been made, by institutions such as the *Académie Française*, to eliminate foreign borrowings, but in practice these have been largely unsuccessful. Only Icelandic, among European languages, has consistently produced native equivalents for most innovative concepts (Bandle *et al* (eds) 2002: 1560).

bilingual, whatever the languages concerned may be.⁶⁶⁶ In two recent papers, Smith-Christmas (2013, 2014) analyses the (largely subconscious) motivation underlying code-switching, and in particular how it may be used as a means of taking a particular ‘stance’ in a conversation, rather than just supplying expressions for which no Gaelic equivalent can be found.

Commercial operations such as the shop, post office and hotel must originally have been regarded as ‘foreign imports’ in a society traditionally dependent on estate work, farming and crofting. It is therefore not surprising that these continue to be referred to using English words. Colonsay speakers are familiar with the word *bùth*, and will use it when making an effort to use genuine Gaelic words,⁶⁶⁷ but the preferred expression is *siop* [ʃɔhɔ], complete with preaspiration to show how fully it has been integrated into the Gaelic phonological system. *Oifis a’ Phuist* may at one time have appeared on the sign outside Colonsay Post Office, but local Gaelic speakers invariably say *Tha mi dol don Phost Office* [ha mi ‘dɔl` dɔn fo’sdɔfis] with lenited *p*, and the stress firmly on the second syllable of *Post Office*. Similarly they will say *Bha mi as a’ Hotel* [va mi as ə ho’tɛl’], although the word *taigh-òsta* is known. On the other hand, *taigh-seinns*’ [tə’ʃɛɪɲʃ] (from obsolete English ‘change-house’), is – or was – used for ‘the pub’;⁶⁶⁸ perhaps it was seen as less of an alien imposition, despite being an integral part of the hotel itself. *Bàr* is also commonly used.

A kettle, in its modern guise, must at one time have been an innovation on the island, which is perhaps why the word used is *ceatal* [k’ɛhdəl’], rather than the native-born *coire*, which is found in other dialects. Again, the phonetic realisation has been assimilated to the Gaelic phonological system, with initial palatalisation and medial preaspiration, suggesting that the borrowing dates from a period when Gaelic was the near-universal medium of communication on the island, and English was spoken using Gaelic speech sounds. Grand (2000:15 and Map 8), citing a Colonsay

⁶⁶⁶ This is borne out by my own experience of working as a conference interpreter, where conversations with colleagues would regularly move backwards and forwards between languages.

⁶⁶⁷ Interview with Flora Macneill, 23 May 2009: ‘... don bhùth, ach ’se *siop* a tha sinne ag ràdh an seo.’ *Bùth* derives from English ‘booth’, but is now firmly naturalised in Gaelic. Loder’s list of placenames includes *Bùth Beag*, translated as ‘little hut’ (Loder 1935: 413).

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with John Clark, 27 May 2009.

informant among others,⁶⁶⁹ shows that *ceatal* is the normal word for ‘kettle’ throughout Argyll, apart from a handful of locations in Mid-Argyll. Against this, *SGDS* (235-237) shows [kò’rì : kə’rī] for Colonsay, but forms of *ceatal* in other parts of Argyll (and Perthshire). This reflects the fact that *coire* is used in Colonsay, as elsewhere, to mean ‘cauldron’ (and by extension, a ‘corrie’ i.e. a rounded hollow on a hillside),⁶⁷⁰ but not as the normal word for ‘kettle’. The same distinction is found in Irish, between *coire* ‘cauldron, pot’ and *citeal* ‘kettle’ (Ó Baoill 1978: 76).

Although Colonsay has experienced three full centuries of non-native land ownership, first under the McNeills and then the Strathconas, the concept of a *laird* [l̪’ɛːɹd] is evidently still sufficiently ‘foreign’ to be rendered in its English (Scots) form. In this case, however, there is no phonetic assimilation: *r* is realised as a slightly retroflex approximant, rather than with accompanying frication, as in *àrd* [aːr̥d̪],⁶⁷¹ and there is no final devoicing of [d]. The word *uachdaran* is also used, but less frequently. The Estate, on the other hand, which still dominates economic life on the island to a considerable extent, is always known as *an Oighreachd* [n̪ ɹiːɹʌxg̪].

Other English borrowings appear to be fairly random. The verb *play* [pleː] is frequently used, alongside *cluich*: *an robh thu playadh golf?* ‘Were you playing golf?’ *Spell* [sʰɛl̪] is generally preferred to *litrìch*: *bìdh iad a’ spelladh Colbhasa le bh ann* ‘they spell *Colbhasa* with a *bh* in it’.⁶⁷² One of the most basic human emotions, *anger* [aŋgər], is expressed using an English word, without phonetic adjustment, but assimilated to the syntax of a Gaelic masculine noun: *thànaig an t-anger air* ‘he became angry’; *tha sin a’ cur anger orm* ‘that makes me angry’.⁶⁷³ The word for ‘job’ may be *obair*, but is just as likely to be expressed as *job* [d̪’z’ɔ̃b̪], perhaps in an attempt to reflect the distinction in English between ‘job’ and ‘work’.

⁶⁶⁹ Neil Darroch, who lived in *An t-Sràid Cham* (Squint Street), Scalasaig. See McPhee 1972: 81-84.

⁶⁷⁰ As in other varieties, *coire* [kʷ’rì] means ‘fault, blame’.

⁶⁷¹ *SGDS* (55, 56) gives the transcription [aːs̪ / aːs̪d̪], but for reasons already stated (pp. 84, 87), I prefer to transcribe this and similar words using [r̥d̪].

⁶⁷² Dougie MacGilvary (BBC interview, 9 December 1998), referring to the long-standing controversy among locals over the spelling of *Colbhasa/Colasa*.

⁶⁷³ Professor William Gillies suggested there might be some crossover with *àmghar*.

Sometimes a word which is no longer commonly used in English becomes 'fossilised' in Gaelic. This is the case for *droil* [drɔ̃l'], from English 'droll', which in English is now reserved for a particular type of humour, but in Colonsay Gaelic is used with the more generalised meaning 'funny' (either 'amusing' or 'odd'), alongside the native form *èibhinn*. The expression *tha e gam chur droil* means 'it's driving me crazy'.

Discourse markers

Discourse markers such as *well* and *so* introducing sentences or clauses are now so universally naturalised in day-to-day Gaelic speech that few Gaelic speakers would even recognise them as non-native terms. Similarly, words such as *aye* and *right* are frequently used, especially in a conversational context, to indicate assent. In Colonsay Gaelic, a number of other expressions are likewise used quite naturally in ordinary discourse without necessarily being regarded as ‘foreign imports’. These include *all right* and the ubiquitous *OK*, which are both encountered very frequently in Gaelic conversation, although *ceart gu leòr* is also frequently used. On the other hand, the common discourse markers *you see* and *you know* are only rarely heard in their English forms, *fhaic thu* [ɛçg'ʊ]⁶⁷⁴ and *fhios a'ad* [isaɔ] being much more common. (See Smith-Christmas (2016) for a detailed analysis of the use of Gaelic/English discourse markers.)

In similar vein, *really* [r̥iə̃l̥'i : ri'l'i] is used to highlight or qualify a statement, often with strong emphasis: *chan eil really* [xa ne'l̥' r̥iə̃l̥'i] ‘not really’. The equivalent native expression *da-rìribh* [ɔ̃a 'ri-r̥iɻ] is also used.

More surprising is the frequent use of *still* [sɔ̃ɔ̃l̥'], where the Gaelic synonym *fhathast* is readily available: *tha'n t-uisge still garbh* ‘the rain is still fierce’.⁶⁷⁵ *Fhathast* is also found with the same meaning, and is invariably used with a negative or interrogative construction, where English would use ‘yet’: *cha do stad e fhathast* ‘it hasn't stopped yet’. It may be that the use of *still* is an attempt by bilingual speakers to introduce the ‘still/yet’ distinction found in English, when speaking Gaelic.

⁶⁷⁴ Jones (2009a: 176) gives *fhaic thu* as the imperative form of *faic*.

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with Jessie McNeill and Mary O'Mahoney, 11 November 2011.

Personal names

Until the 1980s, MacNeill (various spellings) and MacAllister were the commonest surnames on Colonsay. Bearers of these names, and others, were therefore more likely to be referred to by a nickname or to-name in all but the most formal circumstances. Such naming strategies are common in most Gaelic-speaking communities in Scotland, especially in areas where, for historical reasons, certain surnames are dominant.

Many of these local designations persist to this day, in spite of the shift from Gaelic to English as the day-to-day language of the island. They fall into a number of categories.

A common naming technique was to identify a child by the name of his/her father, and in some cases grandfather. Thus Mary Rutherford (1947-1992), the daughter of Calum MacAllister, who in turn was the son of Coll MacAllister, was known as *Màiri Chaluim Cholla*;⁶⁷⁶ for similar reasons, my grandmother Mary Scouller (née MacNeill) was known in her early years as *Màiri Chaluim Alasdair*. Donald, son of Gilbert McNeill, was known as *Dòmhnall Ghibi* (and in English as ‘Donald Gibbie’). Duncan, son of Sandy MacAllister, is known as *Donnchadh Shandaidh* ‘Duncan Sandy’. Occasionally a child might be called by the name of his/her mother, as in the case of *Alasdair Annie* (Alasdair McNeill).⁶⁷⁷

Another frequent naming strategy was to identify a person by the name of his or her farm or croft. This was particularly useful at a time when about half the farms on the island were tenanted by members of the same extended family of MacNeills. Donald MacNeill (1924-1995), the tenant of Garvard Farm, was known as *Dòmhnall a’ Gharbhaird* ‘Donald Garvard’.⁶⁷⁸ His brother-in-law Andrew Macneill (1916-1997), who farmed on Oronsay, was *Anndra Orasa* ‘Andrew Oronsay’.⁶⁷⁹ Their cousin Alasdair (1933-2001), who farmed at Machrins, was *Alasdair na Machraichean*. It is

⁶⁷⁶ A fact recorded in *The Guinness Book of Names*. (Dunkling 1974: 116, quoting McPhee 1972: 57-58)

⁶⁷⁷ Many visitors to Colonsay know *Alister Annie’s* [*sic*] as the name of a cottage in Kilchattan, without realising that it commemorates a living person.

⁶⁷⁸ See Scouller 1998: 7. The older generation tended to call him *Domhnall Orasa*, after the island where he was born and brought up.

⁶⁷⁹ In later life, however, they tended to be called ‘D.A.’ and ‘A.S.’ respectively.

worth noting, from a linguistic point of view, that these nicknames illustrate the Colonsay forms of the genitive case, which in many instances is the same as the nominative (see pp. 318-322). Other family members are also commonly referred to by the toponym, even when they have long since left the family home: *Seònaid na Machraichean* ‘Jessie Machrins’, *Ceit a’ Gharbhaird* ‘Kate Garvard’.

Calling people after the name of their croft was less common, but the Martin family, who worked the croft of Gortain (*An Goirtean*), in Upper Kilchattan in the first half of the twentieth century, were known as *Màiri Ghoirtean*, *Niall a’ Ghoirtean*, etc. A crofter of a younger generation, who died young, Iain MacKinnon (1947-1984), is still fondly remembered as ‘Seaview’, the name of his croft in Lower Kilchattan.

Adjectives, as might be expected, feature in the nicknames or to-names by which people are known. At one time, hair colour seems to have been an important determinant: two McNeill brothers, born around the turn of the nineteenth century, were known as *Calum Ruadh* ‘red-haired Malcolm’ and *Donnchadh Bàn* ‘fair-haired Duncan’ respectively. What is more unexpected is that the to-name *Bàn* persisted into the next generation, although it is not known whether all *Donnchadh*’s children were in fact fair-haired. Other physical features might be used: Peter Macneill, the father of ‘Andrew Oronsay’ (see above) was known as *Para Caol* ‘thin Peter’, to distinguish him from his kinsman *Para Mòr* ‘big Peter’. In more recent times, the same cognomen *Para Mòr* ‘Big Peter’ was used to designate the piermaster Peter McAllister (1930-1990), mainly on account of his heavy build, but also in recognition of his leading role in the community (Alexander 2017: 15-16).

On the other hand, the adjective *beag* does not necessarily reflect small stature, but is applied in situations where a child is given the same name as a parent, corresponding to the use of ‘junior’ in English. This naming convention is maintained in English forms of names, using the word ‘wee’. Thus *Màiri Chaluum Cholla* (see above) was also known, especially in adult life, as *Màiri Bheag* ‘wee Mary’, because her mother was also Mary; Angus McFadyen, the son of the one-time postmaster *Aonghas am Post* ‘Angus the Post’ is known as *Aonghas Beag* ‘wee Angus’, and his nephew Donald MacAllister as ‘wee Donald’, for the same reason, although neither of them

is particularly short. As an example of how nicknames can persist, Donald MacNeill, the son of 'Donald Garvard' (see above) was referred to in early childhood as 'peedie Donald' by a nurse from Orkney ('peedie' being the Orcadian word for 'small'); now in his sixties, and around six feet tall, he is still universally known on the island as 'Pedie'.

Lexical comparisons with other Argyll island dialects

The lexical features described here place Colonsay in the context of southern Argyll dialects. Many of them are shared with neighbouring islands, especially Islay and Jura. It will therefore be useful to situate Colonsay in its wider context by setting out a comparative table showing corresponding forms for Islay, Jura and, more distantly, Tiree. This comparison is based principally on the findings of Jones (Jura), Grannd (Islay), Holmer (Islay) and Boyd (Tiree), supplemented as appropriate with entries from the relevant *SGDS* results.

Where a number is shown in round brackets () the entry is copied from the *SGDS* results. In the case of Islay, Point 55 (Bowmore) has been chosen as the point of reference, being the most central location on the island. In the case of Jura, Point 52 (Craighouse) has been chosen.

Entries marked (H) are copied from Holmer (1938).

Entries in *italics* for Jura and Tiree are copied from Grannd (2000), and have not been independently verified.

Colonsay	Jura	Islay	Tiree	English	Comments
abair	abair	abair	abair	<i>say</i>	Not <i>*can</i>
amharc [ɛʔrɑxg]/ sealltainn	amharc [ɛʔrɑxg]	amharc [ɛrɑxk] (SGDS: [gɛʔrɑxg])	sealltainn	<i>looking</i>	Grandd does not show glottalisation in Islay transcription
an ceartuir	an ceartair/ an dràsda	an ceartair		<i>just now</i>	
an creutair!	an Crìosdaidh bochd!			<i>poor thing!</i>	
bainntreach	baintreach/ banntreach	[bɛɲ< d'z'irɑx] (77)	bainnteach	<i>widow</i>	
ceatal	ceatail	ceatal	ceatal	<i>kettle</i>	
ceathramh	ceathramh	ceathramh	ceathramh	<i>quarter (hour)</i>	Not <i>*cairteal</i>
ceidhe	ceidhe	ceidhe (H)	ceidhe	<i>pier</i>	Not <i>*cidhe</i>
cha lughaide	cha lughaide	[ha ʔð:tʃə]; cha lughaide (H)		<i>perhaps, maybe</i>	Grandd (2000: 60) interprets Islay form as <i>math dh'fhaoidte</i> .
chan fheacaig	nach fhacaig	chan fhaca (H)	chan fhacaig	<i>did not see</i>	Alone or before vowel
chualaig	chualaig	cha chuala (H)	chualaig	<i>heard</i>	Alone or before vowel
ciamar [t'ɛ'mər]	deamar	dè mar	dè mar	<i>how?</i>	
clis (luath)	luath	clis		<i>quick</i>	
cneasda	cneasda	cneasda (H)		<i>pleasant</i>	
cnò [kruʔu]	cnumha	[kruʔə] (212)	[krɔ:] (212)	<i>nut</i>	

Collainn	Collainn	Collainn/Callainn (143)	[ko'ɫ̪ɪŋ] (143)	<i>New Year's Eve</i>	
copan	copan	cupan/copan (290)	[kuɸbə] (290)	<i>cup</i>	
cosmhail	cosail	cosail	<i>coltach</i>	<i>like, similar</i>	
cost	cost			<i>wear away</i>	
creic (reic)	creic/reic	creic/reic (252, 696/697)		<i>sell</i>	SGDS Point 55 (Bowmore) does not show <i>reic</i> . Other Islay locations do.
crùban	crùban	crùban	crùban	<i>edible crab</i>	
damhsadh	damhsadh	damhsadh		<i>dancing</i>	Pronounced [dɛvəsəɣ]
dèanadh	[d̪'z'ɛ'nəɣ] (302)	[d̪'z'ɛ'nəɣ] (302)	dèanadh	<i>doing, making</i>	
deas	deas	deas	deas	<i>ready</i>	
deifir	deifir	deifir	<i>cabhag</i>	<i>hurry</i>	
Didaoirn	Didaoirne	Di-Daoin (H)		<i>Thursday</i>	
diofar [d̪ɪfər̪]	diofar [d̪ɪfər̪]	differ [tɔfər̪] (H)		<i>difference</i>	
dithist	dithist	dithisd (H)	dithist	<i>two, a pair</i>	
doirbh	doirbh	doirbh	<i>duilich</i>	<i>difficult</i>	
dorasd		dorus(d) (H)	dorast	<i>door</i>	
droil	droil	droll (H)	droll*	<i>funny, odd</i>	
drùin	druid/drùin	drùin	<i>dùin</i>	<i>close, shut</i>	
eigheanntach	eidheantach	eigheanntach	deigheannach	<i>ice</i>	
fantail	<i>fantail</i>	fantail	fantail	<i>staying, living</i>	

faoileann	faolain [<i>sic</i>]	faoileann/faoileag (H)	faoileann	<i>seagull</i>	
faotainn	faotainn	faotainn (H)	faotainn	<i>getting</i>	
fiadhaich	fiadhaich	fiadhaich (H)		<i>very, terribly</i>	
figheadair/ damhan-allaidh	damhan-allaidh	damhan allaidh (H)	figheadair	<i>spider</i>	
fiughair	fiughair		fiughair	<i>hope</i>	
foidhe	fòidhe	fodha/foidh (H)	fòidhe	<i>under him/it</i>	
fòithe	fòithe	foipe (H)		<i>under her/it</i>	
folbh	folbh/falbh	falbh [fələv] (H)	folbh	<i>leave, go away</i>	Usually spelt <i>falbh</i>
fua(tha)sach	fuathasach	fuathasach		<i>terribly, awfully</i>	
gaoith	gaoith	gaoth/gaoith (H)		<i>wind</i>	
gasta	gasta	gasda (H)		<i>fine, great</i>	
glaodhaich	glaodhaich	glaodhach/ -aich	glaodhaich	<i>call</i>	
gruag	falt/gruag	gruag	[fal̩ˈt̪] (392)	<i>hair</i>	
gun dàil			gun dàil	<i>soon</i>	
ladhar (òrdag)	ladhar	ladhar	<i>òrdag</i>	<i>toe</i>	<i>Òrdag</i> means 'big toe' in Colonsay.
làmh ri	làmh ri	làmh ri (H)	làmh ri	<i>beside</i>	
leac [l̪ˈx̪g]	sleac [sl̪ˈx̪g]		lioc	<i>flat stone</i>	
leamsa [l̪ˈɛm̪sə]	leamsa [l̪ɛm̪sə]		leam[ə]sa	<i>with me</i>	
leathrach	leathrach			<i>leather</i>	
maidinn	madainn/maidinn	maidinn	<i>madainn</i>	<i>morning</i>	
manadh	manadh	manadh	<i>tamhasg</i>	<i>ghost</i>	
mar a	ona	mar a	mar a	<i>when (conj.)</i>	

mìomhail	mìomhail			<i>badly behaved</i>	From <i>mì-mhodhail</i>
mìr	mìr (stuth)	stuth		<i>anything, nothing</i>	
mughairne	mughairn	mughairle (46)	aobrann (46)	<i>ankle</i>	Point 55 (Bowmore) has no entry. Other Islay locations have forms of <i>mughairle</i> .
olann	olann	olann	clòimh (203)	<i>wool</i>	<i>cloimh</i> = 'down' in Colonsay
òrd	<i>òrd</i>	geannaire	<i>òrd</i>	<i>hammer</i>	
patach	patach			<i>child</i>	
piocach	pioca(i)ch	piocach (H)	piocach	<i>saithe</i>	
putan	<i>putan</i>	cneap	<i>butan</i>	<i>button</i>	
rallsa	[ral` sə] (685)	[r` al` sə] (685)	ràsal	<i>rake</i>	
rèidh	<i>rèidh</i>	rèidh	ullamh	<i>finished</i>	
riumsa [ruməsə]	riumsa [ruməsə]		rium[ə]sa	<i>to me</i>	
rùraich	rùraich	rùraich (H)	siubhail	<i>look for</i>	
sìde	uair	aimsir (H)		<i>weather</i>	
siubhail	siubhail	siubhail	siubhail	<i>die</i>	Used only of humans
soirbh	soirbh	soirbh	<i>furasda</i>	<i>easy</i>	
solas(d)	solast	solus(t) (H)	solast	<i>light</i>	
sràid	sràid			<i>a walk</i>	
steirneal		stearnal (H)	stèarnal	<i>tern</i>	
tabaid	tabaid	tabaid	tabaid	<i>a fight</i>	From <i>an t-sabaid</i>

thèid agam air/ is urrain dhomh	is urrainn dhomh (mandaidh mi)	mandaidh mi		<i>I can</i>	
toiridh-trèan	tarbh-treun			<i>corncrake</i>	
troth	tròth			<i>time, occasion</i>	
truinnsear	flat [flɛht]	flat [flaht]	<i>flat</i>	<i>saucer</i>	<i>Truinnsear normally = 'plate'</i>
uamharra	uamharra(idh)			<i>terribly, awfully</i>	
ùis(i)nich	ùisnich		uisnich	<i>use</i>	
urball	urball	[urɪbʊəl̩] (371)	[[urɪ]bʊəl̩] (371)	<i>tail</i>	

CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to describe the particular form of Gaelic which, until the last quarter of the 20th century, was the local vernacular spoken by most people on Colonsay. In Chapter 1, I have outlined the social and demographic changes that have taken place in the last forty years, leading to a situation in which Gaelic is now spoken by only a handful of people on the island.

In Chapter 2, I have examined the phonological structure of the dialect, highlighting those features where Colonsay pronunciation differs from that of other varieties of Gaelic. This has enabled me to set out the phonemic system of this particular dialect, and to list the phonemes individually, along with their allophones and variant forms, where appropriate.

Among the more notable phonological features identified are the following:

- ‘unbroken’ long [ɛː] in words such as *feur*, *sè* (for *sia*), *dèanadh* (Jackson 1968);
- the ‘raising’ of [a] to [ɛ] in contact with a nasal consonant, as in *math*, *àm*, *fantail*;
- ‘fronting’ and ‘rounding’ of unrounded back vowels [ɯ ɤ] to give a single phoneme /y/, realised across the range [y ʏ ø];
- the articulation of final *-idh/-igh* as [iç];
- a single vibrant phoneme /r/ where other varieties distinguish /r/ and /r'/;
- no palatalisation or ‘j-glide’ after labial consonants.

Many of these features are also present, to a greater or lesser extent, in the Gaelic spoken in neighbouring districts. Colonsay therefore sits firmly in the context of South Argyll dialects. This term, which appears to have been first used by Jones,⁶⁸⁰ includes the dialects of Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Gigha, and Kintyre, as well as Arran (which does not form part of the historical county of Argyll). Following the work of

⁶⁸⁰ Jones 2006 (in Gaelic: *ceann a deas Earra Ghàidheal*); 2009a (in English).

Holmer (1938, 1957, 1981), Grand (2000) and Jones (2009a), the completion of the present study means that we now have monographs for all the dialects concerned – with the exception of Gigha, which was covered by Holmer (1938), but has not been the subject of a specific study.

One area where Colonsay speech patterns differ from those of neighbouring dialects is in the treatment of final unpalatalised *-nn* and *-ll*, in words such as *ceann*, *donn*, *ball*. Here, Islay and Jura varieties, in particular, are characterised by monophthong vowel articulation, followed by a lengthened sonorant. This is different from the situation in more northerly varieties, where a diphthong [aʊ : ɛʊ : oʊ] is followed by an unlengthened sonorant. I have argued (p. 77) that Colonsay forms a transition zone, in which the vowels in question are short monophthongs, but the following sonorants are rounded as well as velarised. This puts me at odds with the findings of the *SGDS*, where these sounds are interpreted, more conventionally, as diphthongs, with the rounding affecting the vowel segments rather than the following sonorants. My analysis has led me to posit a separate ‘rounded and velarised’ lateral phoneme /l^w/ in this dialect. The corresponding dental phone [n^w], on the other hand, can be defined, on positional grounds, as an allophone of the /n^v/ phoneme.

In Chapter 3, I have examined a number of non-segmental features in the phonology of this dialect, including not only the classic suprasegmental features (stress, duration, tone), but also others, such as preaspiration, epenthesis and glottalisation, which are more characteristic of Scottish Gaelic pronunciation in general.

Glottalisation, in particular, is a prominent feature of the Colonsay dialect (Scouller 2010), as well as a number of other Argyll varieties, and has been shown to fulfil a similar function to the use of *tone* in dialects such as those of Lewis and Applecross (Ternes 2006: 129-145). The pattern of epenthesis in Argyll dialects is also different from that found in more northerly varieties. I argue that most, if not all, of these non-segmental features can be shown to be inter-related, in the sense that they interact with one another to give added prominence to certain syllables within an utterance, thus fulfilling a prosodic function. Some recent insights from syllable theory appear to support this contention.

Chapter 4 has dealt with issues of morphology and syntax, noting especially those areas where usage in this dialect differs from that generally encountered in Scottish Gaelic. The differences are most marked in the paradigms of some irregular verbs, and of prepositional pronouns. Colonsay also seems to share in a general erosion of morphological distinctions in Gaelic, particularly affecting noun and adjective agreement for case, gender and number. Syntactic differences are, on the whole, less significant, and none have been identified as being specific to the Colonsay dialect.

Chapter 5 has reviewed the lexis of Colonsay Gaelic, identifying words where usage in this dialect is different from that in other varieties. In most cases the words themselves are not unique to this variety, but are used with a different semantic reference. A considerable overlap, in lexical terms, exists with forms used in neighbouring dialects. These include:

- forms reminiscent of Irish, such as the phrase *gu robh math agad* for ‘thank you’, and the forms *maidinn* ‘morning’, *cosmhail* ‘like, similar’;
- the preferential use of words such as *gasta* ‘fine, great’, *deas* ‘ready’, *amhairc* ‘look, watch’;
- the exclusive use of expressions such as *tuillidh ’s a chòir* ‘too much’ (for *cus*), *coimhearsnach* ‘neighbour’ (for *nàbaidh*), *gruag* ‘hair’ (for *falt*).

Some of these correlations across dialects are illustrated in a comparative table.

Although this thesis concentrates on the Colonsay dialect, and does not set out to be a comparative study, it is hoped that my findings for Colonsay will assist future research into South Argyll dialects, all of which, with the exception of Islay, are now moribund if not actually extinct.

Sunset over Colonsay

When I began my detailed study of Colonsay Gaelic, in 2008, I did not realise that I would be writing its obituary. In the nine years of my research, 8 out of 14 fluent speakers living on the island have died, and one has moved away. What was, within living memory, a vibrant Gaelic-speaking community has become almost entirely English-speaking. Nonetheless, Gaelic continues to occupy a place in the native culture of the island: in placenames, in remembered songs, and in the folk memory of how things were, not many decades ago.

The sun is setting on the Gaelic of Colonsay, although the light has not yet entirely disappeared. With its departure comes a sense of loss, of a glory just slipping below the horizon. The colour that once infused every feature of the landscape has faded, and the distinctive sound that once characterised the Colonsay community has been all but drowned out. It is my hope that this thesis will stand, like the monument to Lord Colonsay on the hill overlooking Scalasaig, as a memorial to the way people on Colonsay once spoke.

GLOSSARY

Where a number is shown in round brackets (), this refers to a headword in the *SGDS* results.

a-mach (34) [mɛx] out, outside (motion or position). *A-muigh* (38, 39) is not used.⁶⁸¹

a-nall [(ə) n̪aʊ̯ɫ̪] over, across. Used of motion towards the speaker. *Thàinig iadsan a-nall* ‘they came over (to this side)’. Cf. **a-nunn**.

a-nis [(ə) nɛʃ] now. Note vowel [ɛ], and unpalatalised [n]. Emphatic forms **a-neist**, **a-neiste**.

a-nunn (45) [(ə) n̪ʉn̪] over, across. Used of motion away from the speaker. *Chaidh sinn a-nunn do dh’Orasa* ‘we went over to Oronsay’. Cf. **a-nall**.

a-staigh [(ə) sɔ̯ɪi : (ə) sɔ̯ɪ] in, inside, indoors (motion or position). *A-steach* is recognised, but not commonly used.

abair [aβ̪iː] say. The standard word for ‘say’. *Can* is not used.

air uairean [er̪ ˈuaɪr̪ɪn] sometimes. The normal way of saying ‘sometimes’.

amais [ɛˈm̪iʃ] *vn* **amas** [ɛˈm̪əs] (**air**) find. *Lorg* not used in this sense.

amhairc [ɛˈr̪içg̪] *vn* **amharc** (36) [ɛˈr̪ɔ̯xg̪] (**air**) look at. *Coimhid* is not used.

an ceartuair [ɲ ˈg̪h̪aɪ̯ɔ̯ɪ] at present, just now. Used in preference to *an dràsda*.

baile (65, 66) [β̪aˈl̪i] *pl* **bailtean** (67) [β̪aɫ̪ˈt̪ʃiɲ] 1. farm. *Ag obair air a’ bhaile* ‘working on the farm’. 2. village, town. Refers to any human settlement, of whatever size. Cf. Scots *fermtoun*.

balach (70) [β̪aˈl̪əx]⁶⁸² boy, lad. A *bhalaich* is very commonly heard as a friendly form of address to males, of whatever age. Cf. **eudail**.

⁶⁸¹ Footnote to headword 38 (*a-muigh*) states ‘word rarely used’.

⁶⁸² *SGDS* gives the form [β̪aɫ̪ˈəx], without glottalisation (see p. 1).

bainntreach (77) [bʲɛɪɲɔ̃zʲɪrəx]⁶⁸³ widow. The form **banntreach* is not found in this dialect.

bàsaich [bʲaːsɪç] die. Used only of animals; for human beings, *siubhail* is used.

bigean [bʲiçʲəɲ] *pl* **bigeanan** [bʲiçʲəɲɪ] small bird (e.g. garden birds). *Eun* [ɛːn] refers to larger species, e.g. seabirds.

biorach (239) [bʲiːrʌx] 1. (*noun*) heifer. 2. (*adj.*) pointed.

bitheanta [bʲiçʲɪɲɔ̃] frequent, often. Used in preference to *tric*. **Am bitheantas** [m bʲiçʲɪɲɔ̃s] usually, generally. *Mar is trice* not commonly used.

bochd [bʲɔxɔ̃] poor. *Gu bochd* is the standard expression for ‘unwell’ (cf. English ‘poorly’). Jones (2009a: 241) reports the same usage in Jura. Similarly, **bochdainn** [bʲɔxɔ̃ɲ] can mean either ‘poverty’, or ‘illness’. *Tinn/tinneas* also used.

boin [bʲɔɲ] *vn* **bontainn** [bʲɔɲtɪɲ] 1. belong. 2. touch. Argyll form of *buin*.

cabhag [kafag] a flock of seagulls feeding on a shoal of mackerel. In the sense of ‘hurry’, **deifir** (q.v.) is more frequently used.

caile [kaːlʲi] girl

cainnt (142) [kʲɛɪɲɔ̃zʲ] language, speech. Used in preference to *cànan*.

car-a-mhil [karəˈviɫʲ] somersault; reversal. *Chaidh sin car-a-mhil orra* ‘that rebounded on them’, ‘the tables were turned’. *Car-a-mhulteach* also used for ‘somersault’.

cèardaman [kʲɛːrʲdəmaɲ] dung beetle. The subject of a humorous poem by Donald A. MacNeill (Scouller 1998: 34-37).

ceatal (cf. 235-237) [kʲɛhɔ̃ɫʲ] kettle. English borrowing.

ceathramh [kʲɛrə(ɥ)] 1. fourth. 2. quarter. *Ceathramh gu trì* ‘quarter to three’. *Cairteal* not used.

⁶⁸³ Headword is *banntreach*.

ceidhe [k'eʔe] pier. Note vowel [e] (and vowel 'echoing', with glottalisation).

cha lughaide [xa 'l'y·d'z'ĩ] maybe, perhaps

chaidh (687) [xaʔiç : xaç] went. Preterite of **rach**.

cheana [çɛ'nə] already. Used in preference to *mar thà* (*mu thràth*).

chionn [çʊn`] because. Used in preference to *oir*, or the more complicated construction *a chionn 's gu*. Followed by simple (not dependent) form of verb.

cinn [k'ĩn] *vn* **cinntinn** [k'ĩnd'z'ĩn] grow. *Fàs* only used with meaning 'become'.

clis [kl'ij] fast, quick. *Luath* also used.

closach [kl`ɔsʌx] carcase (especially sheep carcase lying on the hill). Used in the friendly greeting *Ciamar a tha do chlosach an-diugh?* 'How's your old body today?'

cneasda [krɛsɔə] kind, nice. Used negatively of unpleasant things, e.g. weather: *chan eil e cneasda* 'it's not nice'.

coimhearsnach (642) [kɔʔiʃ'nʌx] neighbour. *Nàbaidh* is never used in Colonsay.

còir (232) [kɔ:ĩ] *noun* right. *Tha còir agad* you should, you ought to. *Bu chòir dhuit* also used.

Collainn (143) [kɔ'l'ĩn]⁶⁸⁴ New Year's Eve, Hogmanay. Forms such as *Callainn*, *Cullaig* not found.

copan (290) [kohɔn] a cup. Used for 'a cup of tea': *An gabh thu copan?* Used in this sense by Colonsay speakers, even in English: 'Will you have a *copan*?' *Cupan*, *cupa* not used.⁶⁸⁵

cosmhail (ri) [kɔsĩ'l'] similar (to), like. *Coltach* is used with the meaning 'likely'; also in the expression *dè ris a tha e coltach?* 'what is it like?'

⁶⁸⁴ Headword is *Calluinn*.

⁶⁸⁵ *SGDS* (290) gives forms [kuhɔn / kohɔn]; footnote states 'first form literary?' The LSS notes (p. 8) reveal that the informant knew the form *cupan* from the 23rd Psalm.

cost [kɔsɔ] wear away

creic (252) [kreɔgʲ] sell. Used in preference to *reic* (696, 697) [reɔgʲ], although *reic* is also found. Probably a back-formation from *ag reic*.

crotach [krɔhɔʌx] curlew. *Guilbneach* not used.

crùban [kruʰbʌŋ] m. edible crab, brown crab. The form *crùbag* f. is not found. *Partan* is used for other species of crab (e.g. velvet crab).

curs [kuɔs] rough. Often used of weather: *tha i curs an-diugh*. From Scots *coorse*, English ‘coarse’.

damhais [dʰɛvɪʃ], *vn* **damhsadh** [dʰɛvəsəɣ] dance. The forms *danns*, *dannsadh* *[dʰɛðjɪn` s : dʰɛðjɪn` səɣ] are not found (see p. 274).

dè rud? [dʰz'e rəɔ] what? Emphatic form of *dè?* Very commonly used.

deas (304) [dʰz'es] 1. right (as opposed to left). 2. south. 3. ready. Used in preference to *deiseil*. (Cf. Grannd 2000: 12-13 and Map 4).

deifir [dʰz'efiɾ] hurry. *A bheil deifir ort?* ‘are you in a hurry?’ Distinguished from **diofar** (q.v.).

Didaoirn [dʰz'i' dʰy rɪ] Thursday. Colonsay form of *Diardaoin*.

Didòmhnach [dʰz'i' dʰɔ niç] Sunday. *Sàbaid* used only to mean ‘sabbath’. *An Dòmhnach* also used: *an Dòmhnach bha sin* ‘that Sunday’.

diofar [dʰv fəɾ] (Note hard [d] in onset) difference. *Cha dean e diofar* ‘it doesn’t matter’. *Cha robh diofar dè thachradh* ‘no matter what’. Distinguished from **deifir** (q.v.).

dìth [dʰz'i'] lack, want. *Tha sin a dhìth orm*. ‘I want that.’ *Tha mi ag iarraidh sin* also used.

dithist [dʰz'iʔɪtʰʃ] two, a pair. Used of persons or objects. *Uair no dithist* ‘once or twice’, ‘occasionally’. *Cupall* also used. Other collective numerals (*triùir*, *ceathrar*, etc.) are not generally used.

doilich (357) [d̥o'ɫ̪iç] sorry. Note vowel [o]. Not used to mean 'difficult'. See

doirbh.

doirbh [d̥o'ri(y)] *comp nas doirbhe* [nas 'd̥o'rivi] difficult, hard. In this sense, used in preference to *doilich* (q.v.)

droll [dr̥oɫ'] funny, odd. From English *droll*, but with wider reference. Synonym of *èibhinn*.

drùin [druːn] *vn drùnadh* [druːnəɣ] close, shut. Forms with intrusive *r* also found in Islay, Jura, Gigha. Cf. Grannd (2000), p.34 and Map 41.

eigheanntach [eʔən`dax] ice. Also found in Islay, Jura (Grannd 2000: 40-41 and Map 52).

èildear [eːʎd̥'z'əɾ] elder (in church). *Foirfeach* also used.

udail [eːd̥al'] (my) dear. Used as standard form of address by men to women and girls, and by women to either sex. Cf. **balach**.

fairge (388)⁶⁸⁶ [fariɣ'i] sea. The most usual word for 'sea'. *Muir, cuan, sàil* also used.

falbh (390)⁶⁸⁷ [fɔɫ`əv] go away, leave. Note Argyll pronunciation, with vowel [ɔ] rather than [a].

fan [fɛn] *vn fantail* [fɛntal']⁶⁸⁸ stay, remain, live (reside). Used in preference to *fuirich*. Cf. Scottish English 'Where do you stay?'

faileann [fyːɫ'an`] seagull. *Faoileag* is found elsewhere.

fhèin [heː] self. Note that final [n] is not pronounced.

fiadhaich (419) [fiʔiç]⁶⁸⁹ 1. wild. 2. very. The commonest way of saying 'very'.

⁶⁸⁶ Spelt *fairrge* in *SGDS*.

⁶⁸⁷ Headword is *falbh*: *falbhaidh*, and the form given is the future *falbhaidh* [fɔɫ`aç].

⁶⁸⁸ Cf. headword 412 (*feith*: *feitheamh*).

⁶⁸⁹ *SGDS* gives the transcription [fiʔiç], with the symbol '=' to indicate [*sic*]. My own perception is that when stressed, there is a glottal stop in the middle of this word, which disappears when the word is unstressed.

fiughair [fiʔuɾ] hope, expectation. *Tha/bidh fiughair orm* ‘I hope’. *Tha mi ’n dòchas* less commonly used, sounds rather stilted.

fo [fɔ] under, below. *Cha robh mìr fodhainn (ach)* ‘We had no choice (but); there was nothing for it (but)’.

foirfeach [fɔɾifəx] elder (in church). *Èildear* also used.

fuasach/fuathasach [fuaɪsax] terribly, awfully (modifying an adjective). Synonym *uamharra* (q.v.). Used in preference to *uamhasach* in this context, although *uamhasach* is used as an adjective in its own right, ‘terrible’.

gaoith (459, 460) [gɔɪˈç] wind. An original dative form used as nominative (cf. *beinn*). Forms with final [ç] also found in Islay (Points 53-56).

gasta [gasɬə] fine, great

giobarsaich [giɔ̃ərsiç] weed(s)

glè (476) [glɛː] quite, fairly. *Tha sin glè ghasda*. ‘That’s quite nice.’ Does not mean ‘very’.

gruag [gʷrɪuaɪg] hair. Used in preference to *falt*.⁶⁹⁰ Refers to the mass of hair on the head; **riobag** (703) [riɔ̃ag] (q.v.) is used for a single hair.

grund [grun˘d] ground. Used alongside *fearann*, *talamh*.

gu robh math agad [kɔrɔˈmɛʔ aɔ̃ɬ] thank you. Also used in Islay (and in Ireland). Cf. Jura pronunciation [kɔrɔˈmɛʔad] (Jones 2009a: 248). *Tapadh leat* never used.

gun dàil [gun ɬaːlˈ] soon. *A dh’aithghearr* not used.

ladhar [lˈɪʔɪr] toe. *Òrdag* used to mean ‘big toe’.

leathrach [lɛˈɾax] leather. A genitive form used as nominative.

leig fhaicinn [lɛgˈ ɛçgˈiɲ] show. *Leig fhaicinn dhomh* ‘show me’. Used in preference to *seall* with this meaning.

⁶⁹⁰ *SGDS* does show *falt* (392) [fal˘ɬ / fal˘t].

maidinn [mæd̪ˈzʲiŋ] morning. Cf. Irish. Also found in Islay, Jura. Jones (2009a: 262) suggests this may be an Islay, rather than a Jura form.

manadh [mɛˈnəɣ] *pl* **manaidhean** [mɛˈniçm] ghost. *Tannasg*, *taibhse* not used.

mar a [marə : mərə] 1. as. 2. when. Overwhelmingly used in preference to (or as an unstressed form of) *nuair a*.

mìr [miːr̥] anything, (with *cha*) nothing.

monadh [mɔˈnəɣ] mountain. Used only of high mountains, principally on the mainland. Not found in any recorded Colonsay placenames. Synonym *beinn* can be used for any size of hill or mountain: *Beinn Orasa* ‘Ben Oronsay’ (93m), *na Beanntan Diùrach* ‘the Paps of Jura’ (734-785m). The sense of ‘moorland’ (‘the hill’, in crofting parlance) is expressed as *mòinteach* [mɔːŋd̪ˈzʲʌx].

mòs [mɔːs] too. *Mòs tràth* ‘too early’. **Tuillidh is** also used (cf. **tuillidh ’s a chòir**). *Rò* not commonly used.

mothaich [moʔiç] *vn* **mothachainn** [moʔoxiŋ] feel. *A bheil thu mothachainn an fhuachd?* ‘Are you feeling cold?’ Used in preference to *faireachdainn*.

mu dhèidhneabh [mə ʲeːŋiʋ] about, concerning. Colonsay form of *mu dhèidhinn*.

mughairne [muʔʊr̥ni] ankle. *Aobrann* not known. *SGDS* has *caol na coise* (46) [kʲɪˈl̥ nə kɔʃə].⁶⁹¹ Jones gives *mughairn* as the Jura form (2009a: 264).

olann [ɔˈl̥an̥] wool. *Clòimh* means ‘down’.

patach [pahd̪ʌx] child. *Pàisde* also found.

peitean [pehd̪ˈʃaŋ] jacket, coat, outdoor garment

piocach [p̪iɔːxqʌx] saithe

play [pleː] *vn* **playadh** [pleːəɣ] play. Used in preference to *cluich*.

⁶⁹¹ Headword is *aobrann*. Flora Macneill’s comment on *caol na coise* was ‘I suppose that sounds all right’. (Interview, 30 April 2015).

pongail (683) [pɒŋˌɡaɪ̯]⁶⁹² neat, tidy. Can mean ‘tidy-minded’, as in *tha thu pongail*, used when someone starts to clear away dishes, etc.

Post Office [pɒˈsɔːfɪs] – note stress on second syllable.

rabhairt [raˈvəɪ̯tʃ] spring tide. Elsewhere *reothart*.

rallsa (685, 686) [raˈʷl̩ˌwsi̯]⁶⁹³ rake. *Ràcan* not used.

really [rɪiə̯l̩ˌi̯] – note diphthong. Used more frequently than native *da rìreabh* (59).

rèidh (698, 699) [reː] finished, completed. Not used for ‘ready’. (Cf. Grannd 2000: 23 and Map 21).

riobag (703) [riˈbɑːɡ] (a single) hair.⁶⁹⁴ Cf. **gruag**.

romhaid [rɔˈʔitʃ] the other, as in *an latha romhaid* ‘the other day’.

rùraich [ruːriːç] *vn* **rùrach** [ruːrɑːx] look for

saod [səˈd̪] state (of mind), mood. *Dè’n saod a th’ort?* ‘How are you feeling?’ (i.e. ‘What sort of mood are you in?’) Also found in Jura (Jones 2009a: 268).

sàrach [saːrɑːx] nuisance, burden. Verb *sàraich* (*vn* *sàrachadh*) commonly found elsewhere.

searbh [ʃɛrɒv] bitter. *Tha e searbh* is the standard expression for ‘it’s a pity’, used in preference to *is truagh*: *tha e searbh nach robh tuillidh ann* ‘it’s a pity there weren’t more there’. Also used to express sorrow: *Tha mi searbh a chluinntinn sin* ‘I’m sorry to hear that’.

sgeith-ròin [sq̣eˈrɔːɲ] jellyfish. Literally ‘seal’s vomit’.

sgrog [sq̣ɔːrɔːɡ] 1. bite. 2. bite (to eat), snack. *Gheibh thu sgrog*. ‘You’ll have a bite to eat’.

⁶⁹² Headword is *puncail*.

⁶⁹³ Headwords are *ràcan*, *do ràcan*

⁶⁹⁴ Headword is *rib* (ensnare).

sgùid [sguːtʃ] an overhanging rock or shallow cave, where sheep often shelter.

Several placenames: *Loch na Sgùid*, *Sgùid nam Ban Truagh*, *Sgùid Brìdeig* (see Loder 1935: 442-443). Possibly from Old Norse *skuggi* ‘shadow’.

siop [ʃɔhp] Note preaspiration. *Bùth* is recognised, but *siop* is preferred.

sìde [ʃiːdʲzʲi] weather. Often abbreviated to *sìd*. Used in preference to *aimsir*.

siubhail [ʃiʔuɪ] *vn* **siubhal** [ʃiʔuɪ] 1. walk, travel. 2. die (of human being).

smaointich [smɪɪɪndʲzʲiç] *vn* **smaointeachadh**, **smaointeach** think. Note medial ‘t’.

soirbh [sɔri(y)] easy. Used in preference to *furasda*. Comparative usually **nas fhasa**.

spell [sɸɛɪ] 1. (*noun*) Used very commonly for ‘a short space of time’. Synonym of **tacan**, **treis**. 2. (*verb*) spell. Verbal noun **spelladh** [sɸɛʲɪʲəy], with glottalisation.

sràid [sraːdʲ] 1. street. *An t-Sràid Chàm* ‘Squint Street’ (a row of houses in Scalasaig). 2. walk. *Bha mi a-mach airson sràid* ‘I was out for a walk’.

tabaid [taβitʲ] fight. Presumably a back-formation from *an t-sabaid*. Also found in Tiree and Jura.

tabhann [tafan] barking. *Comhartaich* is not used.

tacan [taxqan] a short time

thalla! [haʲɪʲə] come! (**thig!** also used). *Thalla seo* ‘come here’. Unlike some varieties of Gaelic, implies movement towards the speaker.

thèid (688) [heːdʲzʲ] Future tense of **rach** [rax] go. *Thèid agam air*, I can.

Rachadh agam air, I could. The commonest way of expressing ‘I can’ in this dialect. **’S urrainn dhomh**, **b’urrainn dhomh** also used.

toiridh-trèan [tɔiɪʲtrɛːn] corncrake

travel [trɛvɪ] travel

troth [tro] time (occurrence). *A h-uile troth* ‘every time’; *an ath-throth* ‘next time’.

truis [truʃ] *vn* **trusadh**, **truisseil** [trusəy : truʃiːl] gather (transitive or intransitive),
pick up

tuillidh [tuˈliç] more. More common than *barrachd*, and with a more positive connotation: *an gabh thu tuillidh tea?* ‘will you have some more tea?’ *Barrachd* implies ‘what is left over’, but is used in set expressions, e.g. *a bharrachd air sin* ‘besides which’. *Tuillidh is* means ‘too’, modifying an adjective (cf. **mòs**).

tuillidh ’s a chòir [tuˈliç sə ˈxɔːr] too much. *Cus* is unknown in Colonsay.

uamharra [uaɪvərə] terribly, awfully (modifying an adjective). Synonym *fuasach* (q.v.). Both used in preference to *uamhasach* in this context.

ùisnich [uˈʃniç] use. Used in preference to *cleachd*, although *cleachdte* is normal for ‘used/accustomed to’. The form **ùisnich** [uˈʃniç] is also found.

urball (371) [uriɸəɫ̪]⁶⁹⁵ tail. This form, not *earball*, used in this dialect.

⁶⁹⁵ Headword is *earball*.

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