

## Manx Gaelic inflection, 3. Noun paradigms

In the previous sections (§1-2) I set out what we can learn from Cregeen’s Dictionary about noun plural inflection (§1) and inflected genitive case forms (§2). Here I pursue the matter of the ways in which these two inflections can combine with the basic (nominative singular) stems to form paradigms. Five basic classes of noun paradigms (‘declensions’) can be established, according to the genitive inflection: class A: genitive in *-ey*, class B: genitive in *-ee*, class C: genitive in *-agh*, class D: genitive with stem change, and class E: irregular genitive. The subclasses (A1-9, B1-6, C1-8, and D1-2) correspond to how each genitive inflection interacts with the various types of plural inflection. Most nouns that have an inflected genitive fall into one of seven relatively common patterns:

- A1: genitive in *-ey*, plural in *-yn* (plural class 1) — 72 members.
- B1: genitive in *-ee*, plural in *-yn* (plural class 1) — 30 members.
- B2: genitive in *-ee*, plural in *-(a)ghyn* (plural classes 1a1, 1a2) — 119 members
- B4: genitive in *-ee*, plural in *-eeyn* (plural class 1e1) — 23 members
- C1: genitive in *-agh*, plural in *-yn* (plural class 1) — 53 members
- D1: genitive with stem change, plural in *-yn* (plural class 1) — 14 members
- D2: genitive with stem change, plural with stem change (plural class 4) — 15 members.

Though there are 37 different paradigms in all in classes A-D, none of the subclasses other than those just mentioned has more than a dozen members, and many of them have only one member; there are some 17 unique paradigms (outside of class E, all of whose members are unique). It may be of some interest to language typologists that there are so many paradigms given that there are only three grammatical categories involved. Might there be a tendency for an inverse relationship between the number of categories and the number of paradigms?<sup>1</sup> In the tables below, endings that are lost when suffixes are added are in **bold**. Figures are given for the number of nouns (in Cregeen’s *Dictionary* for which an inflected genitive is given) falling in each subclass, and also for the number in each class where the genitive stem is irregular. The full lists of members of each class and subclass are given in §2: Genitive case.

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<sup>1</sup> English nouns with two categories —singular and plural— fall into at least 12 inflection classes, though one of them is vastly more frequent than the rest: plural in *-(e)s*: /s/ ~ /z/ ~ /ɪz/, the choice between these allomorphs being determined by the last sound of the word the suffix is attached to. Latin, with as many as 12 or 13 noun inflections, conventionally has only five declensions, though this is a convenient oversimplification.

Table 1. Paradigms of noun class A

Paradigm	Singular	Genitive	Plural	Plural class	Total (with inflected genitive)	Irreg. gen. stem
A1	<i>braag</i>	<i>braagey</i>	<i>braagyn</i>	1	69~72	20~22
A2	<i>çheer</i>	<i>çheerey</i>	<i>çheeraghyn</i>	1a2	9	4
A3a	<i>keyll</i>	<i>keylley</i>	<i>keyljyn</i>	1b	2	1 <i>mill</i>
A3b	<i>balley</i>	<i>baljey</i>	<i>baljyn</i>	1b	2	2 <i>mwyllin</i>
A4	<i>glion</i>	<i>glionney</i>	<i>glionteeyn</i>	1d2	1~2	0~1 <i>stroin</i> ~ A1
A5	<i>annym</i>	<i>anmey</i>	<i>anmeenyn</i>	1e2	1	0
A6	<i>uhllin</i>	<i>uhlley</i>	<i>uhllinyn</i>	1c2	1~2	0~1 <i>dreeym</i> ~ A1
A7	<i>beaynee</i>	<i>beayney</i>	<i>beayneeyn</i>	1e1	1	0
A8	<i>goayr</i>	<i>goayrey</i>	<i>goair</i>	3	2	0 <i>seyir</i>
A9	<i>bolg</i>	<i>bolgey</i>	<i>builg</i>	4	2~3	1 <i>corp</i> ; <i>purt</i> ~ A1
A					93	30

Noun class A contains predominantly (80%) feminine nouns. Paradigm A1 predominates; apart from that, only A2 has more than a bare handful of members. Apart from *keyll* ‘wood’, the other member of A3a is *mill* ‘honey’, gen. *molley*, pl. *miljyn* (= ‘sweets’). Class A3b differs from A3a primarily in that the nominative singular has a suffix: *ball-ey*, *mwyll-in*, though both of these have a variant stem in the genitive with *-j-* that is also seen in the plural *-jyn*. Other than *glion* in class A4 there is only *stroin* ‘nose’, gen. *stroaney*, pl. *strointeeyn*, which is alternatively in class A1 (*stroin* - *stroaney* - *stroinyn*). I have assigned *uhllin* ‘stackyard’ to class A6; it could also be interpreted as class A1: sg. *uhllin*, pl. *uhllin-yn*, with a genitive stem variant *uhll-*, but no other genitive stem variant involves omission of a syllable. The other member of A6 is *dreeym* ‘back’, gen. *drommey*, pl. *dreeymynyn*, which has an alternative of class A1 (pl. *dreeymyn*). In class A8 alongside *goayr* ‘goat’ is *seyir* ‘carpenter’, gen. *seyirey*, pl. *sieyr*. As mentioned in §2, though Cregeen gives *goayrey* as the genitive of *goayr*, the Bible translators used only *goair*, which puts *goayr* into noun class D2. In class A9, in addition to *bolg* ‘belly’, is *corp* ‘body’, gen. *kirpey* (irregular stem), pl. *kirp*; *purt* ‘port’ *-purtey* - *puirt* may alternatively be in class A1 (*purt* - *purtey* - *purtyyn*). Classes A5 and A7 each have only one member.

Table 2. Paradigms of noun class B

Paradigm	Singular	Genitive	Plural	Plural class	Total (with inflected genitive)	Irreg. gen. stem
B1a -C#	<i>kiaull</i>	<i>kiaullee</i>	<i>kiaullyn</i>	1	16	4
B1a -V#	<i>raaue</i>	<i>raauee</i>	<i>raaueyn</i>	1	10	?1 <i>aiee</i> → <i>aae</i>
B1b	<i>toshiaght</i>	<i>toshee</i>	<i>toshiaghtyn</i>	1	4	0
B2a	<i>geay</i>	<i>geayee</i>	<i>geayghyn</i>	1a1	7	
B2b	<i>geurey</i>	<i>geuree</i>	<i>geuraghyn</i>	1a2	85	0
B2c	<i>imbagh</i>	<i>imbee</i>	<i>imbaghyn</i>	1a2	27	<i>keeee</i> → <i>kee</i>
B3a	<i>cleiy</i>	<i>cleiyee</i>	<i>cleiyee</i>	2	1	
B3b	<i>moddey</i>	<i>moddee</i>	<i>moddee</i>	2	1	0
B3c	<i>kellagh</i>	<i>kellee</i>	<i>kellee</i>	2	9	
B4a	<i>bunney</i>	<i>bunnee</i>	<i>bunneeyn</i>	1e1	1	0
B4b	<i>streebagh</i>	<i>streebee</i>	<i>streebeeyn</i>	1e1	19	0
B4c	<i>shesheraight</i>	<i>sheshereee</i>	<i>sheshereeyn</i>	1e1	3	0
B5	<i>eaynin</i>	<i>eaynnee</i>	<i>eayninyn</i>	1c2	1	0
B6	<i>jeir</i>	<i>jeirree</i>	<i>jeir</i>	5	1	0
B					185	+2

Noun class B (Table 2) consists of those nouns which from their genitive in *-ee*. B1a is the subclass that forms the plural with *-yn*. In Table 2 the first row shows the pattern for B1a nouns ending in a consonant; the second row for those ending in a vowel. Class B1b consists of a few nouns ending in *-aght* where this element is lost in the genitive. Class B2 consist of nouns forming their plural with *-ghyn* (B2a, stems ending in a vowel, Plural class 1a1) or *-aghyn* (B2b and B2c, Plural class 1a2). B2b comprises the B2 nouns ending in *-ey* in the singular, while B2c comprises the B2 nouns ending in *-agh*. Classes B2b and B2c account for the majority of members of class B, and they are predominantly of masculine gender—three are feminine, and the gender of 27 is unspecified in Cregeen. Most members of B2b are verbal nouns. Class B3 consists of those nouns with genitive in *-ee* that also make their plural in *-ee*. B3a (*cleiy* ‘hedge’) has no suffix in the singular; B3b (*moddey* ‘dog’) has *-ey* in the singular that is absent in the other forms; B3c has *-agh* in the singular. Class B4 has genitive in *-ee* and plural in *-eeyn*; nearly all have *-agh* (B4b), or *-aght* (B4c) in the singular. B5 (unique class *eaynin* ‘precipice’) has *-in* in the singular and *-inyn* in the plural. Class B6 also has a unique member (*jeir* ‘tear’) with the plural identical with the singular. Two other nouns can be assigned to class B, having *-ee* in the genitive, while losing the ending of the singular: *carrick* - *carree* ‘chancel’ and *fenish* - *fenee* ‘presence’. Neither has a plural listed in Cregeen.

Table 3. Paradigms of noun class C

Paradigm	Singular	Genitive	Plural	Plural class	Total (with inflected genitive)	Irreg. gen. stem
C1	<i>magher</i>	<i>magheragh</i>	<i>magheryn</i>	1	53	
C2a	<i>çhibbyr</i>	<i>chibbyragh</i>	<i>çhibbraghyn</i>	1a2	1	
C2b	<i>garey</i>	<i>garagh</i>	<i>garaghyn</i>	1a2	7	
C2c	<i>lhiabbee</i>	<i>lhiabbagh</i>	<i>lhiabbaghyn</i>	1a2	1	
C3a	<i>moayn</i>	<i>moanagh</i>	<i>moaintyn</i>	1d1	1	
C3b	<i>bwoaillee</i>	<i>bwoaillagh</i>	<i>bwoailtçhyn</i>	1d1	2	<i>lheenannee</i>
C4	<i>keeill</i>	<i>killagh</i>	<i>kialteenyn</i>	1d3	1	1
C5a	<i>lugh</i>	<i>lughagh</i>	<i>lughee</i>	2	1	
C5b	<i>keyrrey</i>	<i>keyrragh</i>	<i>kirree</i>	2	1	
C6	<i>ark</i>	<i>arkagh</i>	<i>irk</i>	4	1	
C7	<i>maidjey</i>	<i>maidjagh</i>	<i>maidjyn</i>	1/1b	1	C7 ? = C1
C8	<i>lhiattee</i>	<i>lhiattagh</i>	<i>lhiatteeyn</i>	1e1	3	<i>cuillee,</i> <i>kairdee</i>
C					73	

Noun class C consists of those with genitive in *-agh*. Most members are in subclass C1, plural in *-yn*. Most of the other subclasses have a unique member. There is a mix of genders in class C, but all those in C ending in *-ee* in the singular are feminine. The paradigm of *maidjey* ‘stick’ is ambiguous. If we take it as displaying plural *-jyn*, its plural class is 1b; but if we see *maidj-* as the root (also in gen. *maidj-agh*) and *-yn* as the plural suffix, it belongs with that minority of plural class 1 that lose *-ey* before *-yn* in the plural, such as *guilley* - *guillyn* ‘lad’. However, none of these other plural class 1 nouns in *-ey* has an inflected genitive.

Table 4. Paradigms of noun class D

Paradigm	Singular	Genitive	Plural	Plural class	Total (with inflected genitive)
D1	<i>fouyr</i>	<i>fouyir</i>	<i>fouyryn</i>	1	14
D2	<i>boayrd</i>	<i>buid</i>	<i>buid</i>	4	15
D					29

Table 4 displays the paradigms of noun class D, whose genitives are formed by changing the stem vowel and/or the final consonant. Subclass D1 comprises those taking the plural suffix *-yn*. Class D2 comprises those with the plural identical with the genitive. All of class D2 are masculine.

Table 5. Paradigms of noun class E

Paradigm	Singular	Genitive	Plural	Plural class	Total
E	<i>aailagh</i>	<i>aail</i>	<i>aailaghyn ~ aailee</i>	1a2/2	brood
	<i>beeal</i>	<i>beealoo</i>	<i>beill</i>	4	mouth
	<i>ben</i>	<i>mreih</i>	<i>mraane</i>	5	woman
	<i>booa</i>	<i>baa</i>	<i>baa</i>	5	cow
	<i>bry</i>	<i>braghey</i>			malt
	<i>caggey</i>	<i>cah</i> (also <i>caggee</i> )	<i>caggaghyn</i>	1a2	war
	<i>Colloo</i>	<i>Kylloo ~ Keylliu</i>			(The) Calf of Man
	<i>leoie</i>	<i>leoh</i>			ashes
	<i>mark</i>	<i>markish</i>			mark
	<i>oayll</i>	<i>uyll</i>	<i>oayldyn</i>	1b	haunt
	<i>snaie</i>	<i>snaa</i>	<i>snaienyn</i>	1c1	thread
	<i>thalloo</i>	<i>thallooin</i>	<i>thallooinyn</i>	1c2	land
	<i>Thomaase</i>	<i>Thomys</i>			Thomas
	<i>traie</i>	<i>straie</i>	<i>traieyn</i>	1	shore

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Class E consists of fourteen nouns with highly irregular genitive case forms. Several of these have an irregular plural (*ben*, *booa*), or no plural mentioned in Cregeen.