

Studies in Manx Gaelic inflection, 6. Initial mutation after *er* ‘Perfect tense’ in the Manx Bible

Max Wheeler, July 2015

The pattern of initial mutation of verbal nouns after *er* in the perfect tense construction is anomalous, in that some consonants are subject only to Lenition 1, while others may undergo either Lenition 1 or Nasalization. In the Manx Bible including the Apocrypha there are enough examples of the *er* Perfect construction to get a good perspective on the nature and scope of the variation in question in ‘Classical’ Manx.

Initial *p-*, *b-*, *m-*, and *s-*, are invariably subject to Lenition 1.<sup>1</sup>

To initial vowels, including *yee-*, *n’* is added, an outcome elsewhere characteristic of Nasalization in the inflection of verbs.<sup>2</sup>

Verbs beginning with *t-*, *çh-*, *d-*, *j-*, *k-*, *g-*, *f-* are subject to variable lenition, that is, varying between Lenition 1 and Nasalization. Or, to be more precise, *some* verbs beginning with these consonants are subject to variable lenition. Most verbs beginning with *t-*, *d-*, *k-*, or *g-*, and some with initial *çh-*, undergo Lenition 1 invariably. Some verbs with initial *f-* undergo Nasalization invariably. Where there is variation, there are, for the most part, very clear lexical preferences, for instance, *goll* strongly favours Nasalization —*er n’gholl*— (79%), whereas *goaill* strongly favours Lenition 1 —*er ghoaill*— (95%).

1. Consonants *t-* and *çh-*

The following verbs beginning with *t-* are found only with Lenition 1 in the Perfect tense *er* construction in the Bible. The figures are for the number of occurrences in the *er* construction.

<i>tannaghtyn: er hannaghtyn</i> (8)	<i>tilgey: er hilgey</i> (27)	<i>traaue: er hraaue</i> (2)
<i>tashtey: er hashtey</i> (2)	<i>toilchin: er hoilchin</i> (3)	<i>treishteil: er hreishteil</i> (4)
<i>teaymey: er heaymey</i> (1)	<i>toilleil: er hooilleil</i> (4)	<i>trial: er hrial</i> (1)
<i>thoylley: er ho(y)lley</i> (4)	<i>towse: er howse</i> (1)	<i>tummey: er hummey</i> (2)
	<i>traastey: er hraastey</i> (1)	

Table 1 is of *t*-initial verbs subject to variable initial mutation in the *er* construction, with the number of occurrences of each, and the percentage of Nasalization cases (rounded to whole

<sup>1</sup> E.g. P: *er phaagey, er phaartail, er phardooney, er phlaiynt, er phluckey, er phointeil, er phoosey, er phreacheil, er phrowal, er phuttey;*

B: *er vaarail, er vaarey, er vaghey, er vaih, er vannaghey, er vashtey, er ve, er veaghey, er ventyn, er verraghtyn, er vioghey, er vishaghey, er voandyrys, er voggysagh, er voirey, er vrah, er vrasnaghey, er vreearrey, er vriaght, er vrishey, er vriwnys, er vroie, er vroo, er vuinn, er vuirroogh;*

M: *er vainshtyragh, er varkiagh, er varroo, er veeooashlaghey, er violaghey, er volley, er vooadaghey, er vooghey;*

S: *er hagney* ‘shunned’, *er harey, er hassoo, er hauail, er heaghney* ‘grieved’, *er heebey, er heeyney, er heidey, er heiy, er heyrey, er hiaulley, er hickyraghey, er hirrey, er hirveish, er hoaral, er hoiaghey, er hoie, er hoilshaghey, er hoilshaan, er hooyl, er hoyllaghey, er huill* ‘trodden’, *er hurranse.*

<sup>2</sup> A: *er n’aarlaghey, er n’aase, er n’ansoor, er n’astyrt, er n’att;*

E: *er n’eaishtagh, er n’eam, er n’eamagh, er n’earroo, er n’ee, er n’eeasaght, er n’eebyrt, er n’eeck, er n’ëginagh, er n’eginaghey, er n’eyrt, er n’enmys, er n’etlagh;*

I: *er n’imman, er n’immeegagt, er n’injillaghey, er n’insh, er n’irree, er n’iu;*

O: *er n’oanluckey, er n’oardaghey, er n’oardrail, er n’obbal, er n’obbraghey, er n’ooillaghey, er n’ouralley,*

Y: *er n’yllagh, er n’yymyrkey, er n’yymyrt, er n’ynsaghey;*

YEE: *er n’yeeearree, er n’yeeasagh.*

numbers). While *tuittym* and *taghyrt* strongly favour Nasalization, *troggal*, *tayrn* and *treigeil* favour Lenition 1, though somewhat less strongly. *Troailt* and *trostey*, neither verb having many examples, are evenly divided between the two mutations. The strongly favoured variants are indicated in bold.

In Cregeen’s dictionary, Nasalization after *er* is indicated also for *talkal*: *er dalkal*, *tannaghtyn*: *er dannaght* ~ *er dannaghtyn*, *teaystney*: *er deaystney*, *theinniu*: *er de(i)nniu*, *tummey*: *er dummey*, *tilgey*: *er dhilgey*, *toghtey*: *er doghtey*, *toiggal*: *er doiggal*, *toilliu*: *er doilliu*, *toilchin*: *er doilchin* or *er hoilchin*.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Total	%N
<i>tuittym</i>	<b><i>er duittym</i></b>	95	<i>er huittym</i>	2	97	98
<i>taghyrt</i>	<b><i>er daghyrt</i></b>	27	<i>er haghirt</i>	1	28	96
<i>troailt</i>	<i>er droailt</i>	1	<i>er hroailt</i>	1	2	50
<i>trostey</i>	<i>er drostey</i>	2	<i>er hrostey</i>	2	4	50
<i>troggal</i>	<i>er droggal</i>	33	<b><i>er hroggal</i></b>	111	144	23
<i>tayrn</i>	<i>er dayrn</i>	6	<b><i>er hayrn</i></b>	38	44	16
<i>treigeil</i>	<i>er dreigeil</i>	8	<b><i>er hreigeil</i></b>	60	68	12
<i>toiggal</i>	<i>er doiggal</i>	1	<b><i>er hoiggal</i></b>	20	21	05

Table 1. Variation in *t*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

The following four verbs beginning with *çh-* are found only with Lenition 1 in the Perfect tense *er* construction in the Bible. The figures are for the number of occurrences in the *er* construction.

*çharbaa*: *er harbaa* (3)  
*çhea*: *er hea* (5)

*çhionney*: *er hionney* (1)  
*çhymney*: *er hymney* (1)

Table 2 is of *çh*-initial verbs subject to variable initial mutation in the *er* construction, with the number of occurrences of each, and the percentage of Nasalization cases (rounded to whole numbers). *Çheet* and *çherraghtyn* strongly favour Nasalization, while *çhaglym* and *çhebbal* strongly favour lenition 1. *Çhyrmaghey*, *çhyndaa* and *çhymsaghey* are more evenly balanced between the two mutations.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Total	%N
<i>çheet</i>	<b><i>er jeet</i></b>	633	<i>er heet</i>	3	636	100
<i>çherraghtyn</i>	<b><i>er jerraghtyn</i></b>	8	<i>er herraghtyn</i>	3	11	73
<i>çhyrmaghey</i>	<i>er jyrmaghey</i>	3	<i>er hyrmaghey</i>	3	6	50
<i>çhyndaa</i>	<i>er jyndaa</i>	39	<i>er hyndaa</i>	50	89	44
<i>çhymsaghey</i>	<i>er jymsaghey</i>	1	<i>er hysaghey</i>	2	3	33
<i>çhaglym</i>	<i>er jaglym</i>	4	<b><i>er haglym</i></b>	20	24	17
<i>çhebbal</i>	<i>er jebbal</i>	4	<b><i>er hebbal</i></b>	19	23	17

Table 2. Variation in *çh*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

Cregeen’s dictionary also gives *çhiuchey*: *er jiughey* (sic); he mentions only Nasalization forms for *çherraghtyn*, *çhysaghey* and *çhyrmaghey*.

2. Consonants *d-* and *j-*.

Verbs beginning with *d-* are subject to Lenition 1.

<i>daunsin: er ghaunsin</i> (2)	<i>dobberan: er ghobberan</i>	<i>dreamal: er ghreamal</i> (1)
<i>deayrtey: er gheayrtey</i> <sup>3</sup> (26)	(4)	<i>dunverys: er ghunverys</i>
<i>dellal: er ghellal</i> <sup>4</sup> (38)	<i>dolley: er gholley</i> (3)	(3)
<i>deyre: er gheyrey</i> (10)	<i>dooney: er ghooney</i> (2)	
	<i>doostey: er ghoostey</i> (4)	

Of the verbs beginning with initial *j-*, *jarrood* and *jeeaghyn* exclusively take Lenition 1: *er yarrood*, *er yeeaghyn*. Of the remainder in Table 3, *jannoo* and *jiooldey* strongly favour Nasalization, while *jeigh* favours Lenition 1, in 8 cases out of 13.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Tot	%N
<i>jarrood</i>		0	<i>er yarrood</i>	26	26	0
<i>jeeaghyn</i>		0	<i>er yeeaghyn</i>	41	41	0
<i>jannoo</i>	<b><i>er n'yannoo</i></b>	919	<i>er yannoo</i>	16	935	98
<i>jiooldey</i>	<i>er n'yiooldey</i>	9	<i>er yiooldey</i>	3	12	75
<i>jeigh</i>	<i>er n'yeigh</i>	5	<i>er yeigh</i>	8	13	38

Table 3. Variation in *j*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

Cregeen also mentions Lenition 1 outcomes for *juail: er yuail*, and *jummal: er yummal*. For *jannoo* he gives only *er n'yannoo*.

3. Consonants *k-* (*c-*) and *g-*

Nearly all verbs beginning with /k/ (*k-* or *c-*) undergo solely Lenition 1 in the Perfect tense *er* construction. Only five verbs (Table 4) attest any case of Nasalization in this construction, and only for *cosney: er gosney* are the numbers more than negligible.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Tot	%N
<i>creenaghey</i>	<i>er greenaghey</i>	1	<i>er chreenaghey</i>	1	2	50
<i>cosney</i>	<i>er gosney</i>	5	<i>er chosney</i>	53	58	08
<i>kionnaghey</i>	<i>er gionnaghey</i>	1	<i>er chionnaghey</i>	12	13	08
<i>cuirr</i>	<i>er guirr</i>	1	<i>er chuirr(ey)</i>	14	15	07
<i>coyrt</i>	<i>er goyrt</i>	2	<i>er choyrt</i>	645	647	00

Table 4. Variation in /k/-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

Cregeen gives Nasalization outcomes for *kiangley: er giangley*, and *kionnaghey: er gionnaghey*.

<sup>3</sup> There is one case of unmutated *er deayrtey: Dy vod ooilley yn uill chairagh hie er deayrtey er y thaloo tuittym erriu, veih fuill[l] Abel cairagh, gys fuill Zecharias* ‘That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias; *Matthew* 23.35.

<sup>4</sup> There is one exceptional case of ‘Nasalization’ of *dellal* to *n'ghellal: mastey ooilley e ainjyssee cha vel unnane dy gherjaghey ee, ta ny caarjyn eck er n'ghellal dy foalsey r'ee, t'ad er hyndaa dy ve e noidyn*. ‘among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.’ *Lamentations* 1.2. No doubt this is a hypercorrection, based on the observation that some cases of Perfect *er gh-* (though from radical *g-*) are in variation with *er n'gh-*, e.g. *er ghoaill ~ er n'ghoaill*. Though taken literally, Nasalization of initial *d-* would give *n-*, this outcome seems never to be found in Manx.

The great majority of verbs beginning with *g-* undergo exclusively Lenition 1 in the Perfect tense *er* construction, e.g. *geid: er gheid*, *gloyraghey: er ghloyraghey*, *gra: er ghra*. In the case of verbs beginning with *gi-* followed by a vowel, the mutated form is spelt either *ghi-* or *yi-*, which I take to be purely orthographic variants. Thus, for example, *gialdyn: er ghialdyn ~ er yialdyn*, *giarey: er ghiarey ~ er yiarey*, *gientyn: er ghientyn ~ er yientyn*, *giootal: er ghiootal ~ er yiootal*. The *yi-* variant is notably more frequent: 79% of cases in the Bible. Nasalization variants are found for only five verbs: *geddyn*, *gialdyn*, *gialtaghey*, *goll*, and *goaill*, and for only one of these —*goll*— is the Nasalized variant significantly more frequent (79%) than the Lenition 1 variant; see Table 5. *Goaill* has the opposite preference, with 80% Lenition 1: *er ghoaill*.<sup>5</sup> *Gialtaghey* occurs only once in the Perfect construction, with a Nasalized outcome: *er n'ghialtaghey*.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Tot	%N
<i>gialtaghey</i>	<i>er n'ghialtaghey</i>	1		0	1	100
<i>goll</i>	<b><i>er n'gholl</i></b>	252	<i>er gholl</i>	68	320	79
<i>goaill</i>	<i>er n'ghoaill</i>	68	<b><i>er ghoaill</i></b>	272	340	20
<i>gialdyn</i>	<i>er n'yialdyn</i>	3	<b><i>er yialdyn</i></b>	20	32	09
			<b><i>er ghialdyn</i></b>	9		
<i>geddyn</i>	<i>er n'gheddyn</i>	12	<b><i>er gheddyn</i></b>	208	220	05

Table 5. Variation in *g*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

In addition to its Lenition 1 variants mentioned above, *gialdyn* has an infrequent Nasalized variant, spelt *er n'yialdyn*.

#### 4. Consonant *f-*

The treatment of *f*-initial words in the Perfect tense *er* construction differs from that of the consonants mentioned previously. There are some verbs that are only found with Nasalization: *faillil: er vailleil* (9), *failley: er vailley* (7), *fendeil: er vendeil* (1), and *folmaghey: er volmaghey* (1). In several others Nasalization is predominant; see Table 6. Only *fockley magh* shows a very strong preference for Lenition 1. Observe, though, that the variant of Lenition 1 found in the case of *f-* verbs might rather be seen as Lenition 1 (*f-* → zero) *plus* Nasalization (*n'* before initial vowel).

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Tot	%N
<i>fakin</i>	<b><i>er vakin</i></b>	200	<i>er n'akin</i> <sup>6</sup>	12	212	94
<i>fosley</i>	<b><i>er vosley</i></b>	31	<i>er n'osley</i>	2	33	94
<i>fuirriaght</i>	<b><i>er vuirriaght</i></b>	6	<i>er nuirraght</i>	1	7	86
<i>feaysley</i>	<b><i>er veaysley</i></b>	5	<i>er n'eaysley</i>	1	6	83
<i>freayll(ey)</i>	<i>er vreayll(ey)</i>	42	<i>er reayll(ey)</i>	26	68	62
<i>foaddey</i>	<i>er voaddey</i>	6	<i>er n'oaddey</i>	6	12	50
<i>faagail</i>	<i>er vaagail</i>	12	<i>er n'aagail</i>	19	31	39
<i>follaghey</i>	<i>er vollaghey</i>	3	<i>er n'ollaghey</i>	6	9	33
<i>fockley</i>	<i>er vockleymagh</i>	1	<b><i>er n'ockley(magh)</i></b>	28	29	03

Table 6. Variation in *f*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

<sup>5</sup> There is one case (in the Apocrypha) where the Nasalized variant is spelt *er n'goaill*; there are also two cases of unmutated *er goaill*.

<sup>6</sup> There are 5 cases of *er akin*, that is, Lenition 1 without prevocalic *n'*, all of them in the Apocrypha.

Cregeen’s dictionary generally gives both alternatives for *f*-initial verbs. This is the case for: *faagail*, *faarkey*, *faastey*, *fakin*, *faillail*, *failley*, *fanney*, *farkeyaghey*, *feayraghey*, *feaysley*, *feddanagh*, *fendeil*, *festal*, *foaddey*, *fockley*, *follaghey*, *folmagh(ey)*, *fosley*, and *fuirraghtyn*.

For the following verbs, Cregeen gives only the Nasalization variant: *farbagh*, *fasney*, *fassaghey*, *feiyral*, *fenaghtyn*, *feyshtey*, *fliughey*, *fordrail*, *foudaghey*, and *freaylley* ~ *freilley*.

For these verbs Cregeen gives only the Lenition 1 variant: *farraght*, *foayraghey*, *fuillaghtyn*, and *fuinney*.

## Appendix.

## Cregeen F

er vaagail ~ er n'aagail  
 er vaarkey ~ er n'aarkey  
 er vaastey ~ er n'aastey  
 er vakin ~ er naikin  
 er vailleil ~ er n'ailleil  
 er vailley ~ er n'ailley  
 er vamlagh ~ er  
 n'amlaghey  
 er vanney ~ er n'anney  
 er varbagh  
 er varkiaghey ~ er  
 n'arkiaghey  
 er n'arraght  
 er vasney

er vassaghey  
 er veayraghey ~ er  
 n'eayraghey  
 er veaysley ~ er n'eaysley  
 er veddanagh ~ er  
 n'eddanagh  
 er veiyral  
 er venaghtyn  
 er vendeil ~ er n'endeil  
 er vestal ~ er n'estal  
 er veyshtey  
 er vliughey  
 er voaddey ~ er n'oaddey  
 er n'oayraghey

er vockley ~ er n'ockley  
 er vollaghey ~ er  
 n'ollaghey  
 er volmagh(ey) ~ er  
 n'olmagh(ey)  
 er vordrail  
 er vosley ~ er n'osley  
 er voudaghey  
 er vreaylley ~ er vreilley  
 er n'uillaghtyn  
 er n'uinney  
 er vuirraght(yn) ~ er  
 n'uirraghtyn

## Cregeen G:

er n'gheddyn  
 er gherrym  
 er ghiallagh(ey)  
 er ghialdyn ~ er  
 n'ghialdyn ~ er  
 yialdyn

er n'ghialtaghey  
 er ghirraghey  
 er ghiennaghtyn  
 er yiennaghtyn  
 er ghiootal  
 er ghleashaghey

er ghlenney  
 er gholl ~ er n'gholl  
 er ghrainney  
 er ghreimey  
 er ghreinnaghey