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A series of short articles on Manx Gaelic grammar, idiom, vocabulary and pronunciation.

These little pieces, which I intend to produce every month, are aimed at intermediate-advanced learners of Manx Gaelic and everyone who has an interest in the quirks of the Manx language. Some of the things I will mention will be familiar to many people, some to a few people, and some perhaps will not be widely known. I hope these articles will be interesting, and please let me know if what I say is incorrect, or if I have omitted something relevant.

The trouble with *anchasley*

One word that is impossible to avoid hearing and reading in today's Manx is *anchasley* 'different'. But where does it come from? And are there better and more idiomatic ways of saying talking about 'difference'?

I have long had reservations about the word *anchasley*, and these are the reasons why:

- It doesn't occur (so far as I know) in classical, literary Manx; at any rate it is not usual.
- *an-* is not a very common prefix (though it is found in some profusion in certain texts such as Wilson's Sermons) and one would expect *neu-chasley*.
- It seems to be the opposite of *casley* as in *casley rish* 'to be like' which is in origin (I think) a verb meaning 'to resemble'; therefore it should not be used as an adjective and *an-* is not usually prefixed to verbs (except *an-choodee* Isaiah 47:2)

I think it stems from Cregeen's dictionary in the entry for *lhiettrimmys*, one of the idiomatic words for 'difference' which Cregeen dislikes for some reason. He then suggests *caghlaa*, *anchasllys* and *neuchasllys* as alternatives: *caghlaa* is attested in this meaning, and the other two are probably made up by Cregeen as suggestions, just as he suggests *jeeoilid* for 'divinity'. I suppose that *anchasllys* and *neuchasllys* would probably been comprehensible enough to Manx speakers, though since they already had nouns meaning 'difference' they were unnecessary. And while *anchasllys* might be acceptable because it has a noun ending, an adjective *anchasley* is not so good because it does not seem to have an adjective ending.

For a start, the negative of *t'eh casley rish e ayr* 'he is like his father' would not be **t'eh anchasley rish e ayr* but rather *cha nel eh casley rish e ayr*, which is the normal

way of negating verbal constructions, and even with adjectives: I think it is less marked to say *cha nel eh glen* than *t'eh neu-ghlen*. Secondly, if we wanted an adjective corresponding to *anchaslys*, would it not more naturally be something like *anchaslagh* with an adjectival ending? I tried to use this form for a while; but somehow it did not really work, because it still sounds and feels like a made-up word for a concept which is very basic and must have been within the expressive capacities of the old *Gaelgeyrn*.

Anchasley is unsatisfactory for another reason too: it is used in a variety of ways which correspond exactly to English, as if we are thinking in English and looking around for a catch-all word we can use to fill the gap that in English is covered by the word 'different'. However, just because there is a single word in English with various uses does not mean that a single dubious Manx word *anchasley* can be dragged into all the same positions; otherwise we are just mapping quasi-Manx words onto English grammar.

Since the English word 'different' is used in several different ways, it may be that we need more than one expression in Manx. This is the case in German:

verschiedene Farben - different colours (i.e. several colours, various colours)
andere Farben - different colours (i.e. other colours, particular colours that are different from colours we have just been talking about)
 diese Farben sind **anders** - these colours are different (predicative use; *anders* is a form of *anderer*, -e, -es meaning 'other')

In Manx of course we have a word for 'other' *elley*, which like the German *andere*, -s can stand in for 'different':

Ta mee gearree thie elley - I want a different house = I want another house

However, *elley* has a fairly weak meaning and can only be used in certain circumstances; you cannot for example say **ta'n thie elley* just as in English you cannot say **'the house is other'* (though you can say it in German as we have seen.)

Elley can also never be used to mean 'various' or 'several', which is what 'different' often means in English; and the unfortunate *anchasley* is often pressganged into fulfilling this role as well:

***V'eh cummal ayns thieyn anchasley fud ny cheerey - He lived in different houses throughout the country**

However, there is a good idiomatic way of expressing this, which is amply and uncontroversibly attested in the Bible and elsewhere: *caghlaaghyn*, literally 'changes'. *Caghlaaghyn* is followed by the singular (presumably as a relic of the old genitive plural, cf. *thousane dooinney* 'a thousand men'), or occasionally the partitive preposition *dy* and the (lenited) plural form. Either way the etymology is basically 'changes of houses' etc. which is the Manx way of saying 'different' or 'various' in this sense. Therefore our example sentence should be:

V'eh cummal ayns **caghlaaghyn thie** fud ny cheerey - He lived in **different houses** throughout the country

Here are some examples from the Bible:

coamrey jeh caghlaaghyn sorch - a garment of divers [different / various] sorts (Deuteronomy 22:11)

caghlaaghyn rass kione-y-cheilley - divers seeds [different seeds mixed together] (Deuteronomy 22:9)

ayns caghlaaghyn dy aghtyn - in divers manners [different / various ways] (Hebrews 1:1)

Nish ta ayn caghlaaghyn dy ghiootyn, agh y Sperryd cheddin - Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4)

dy chaghlaaghyn daah - of divers [different] colours = multicoloured

And from the Homilies:

Ta **ny caghlaaghyn keint shoh** dy loo son oyryn ymmyrchagh as onneragh lowal - all these maner of swearing [these various / different kinds of swearing], for causes necessary and honest, be lawfull (Homily 7, p. 58)

Myr shoh ren nyn Saualtagh Creest loo **caghlaaghyn keayrt** gra, “dy firrinagh, firrinagh.” - Thus did our Saviour Christ swear divers [various] times, saying, Verily, verily (Homily 7, p. 59)

I find *dy chaghlaaghyn daah* to be a very elegant and very Manx way of saying what in modern English would be ‘multicoloured’; there is no need to talk about *daahghyn anchasley* and certainly no need to go anywhere near things like *yl-daahagh!* (Except perhaps in very technical, jargonish and un-Gaelic contexts.)

Compare these Scottish examples from Dwelly’s dictionary:

air **chaochladh dreach**, in a different form; **caochladh sheòrsachan**, several kinds; ann an **caochladh àitean**, in various places

To say ‘X is different from Y’, that is, when we are talking of a clear and explicit distinction, contrast and opposition as opposed to mere variety, *anchasley* is slightly harder to exercise, because there are *caghlaaghyn aght* (different ways) to say it in Manx, and the sentence structure may differ from the English.

We can simply paraphrase, by saying ‘X is not like Y’ or ‘X is not the same as Y’, which may suffice in many cases:

Cha nel yn thie shoh myr / gollrish / casley rish yn thie shen - This house is different [not like] from that house

Eisht va mee booiagh firriny y gheddyn jeh'n chiarroo veisht **nagh row goll-rish** veg jeh'n vooijer elley - Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others [which was not like any of the others] (Daniel 7:19)

For 'they are different', Manx can say:

Cha nel ad goll ry-cheilley - They are not like each other

Cha nel ad co-laik - They are not alike

Here is an example from the Bible:

As haink kiare beishtyn mooar seose veih yn aarkey, **nagh row goll ry-cheilley** - And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another (Daniel 7:3)

Or we can say 'there is a difference between X and Y'. As already mentioned, the words, *caghlaa* (basic meaning 'change'), *lhiettrimmys* ('hindrance, obstacle'), and *lheamys* ('defect') are used. There is also a phrasal verb idiom *jannoo soiaghey eddyr X as Y*, 'to differentiate between X and Y', which is probably an extension of the meaning of *jannoo soiaghey jeh* 'to esteem, value, evaluate'. *Scansh* is also used in a similar way. There are several different spellings of *lhiettrimys*, even within the Bible.

As she Credjue ta jannoo'n **caghlaa** mooar ta eddyr dooinney as beagh [baagh] - And it is Religion that makes the great Difference between a Man and a Beast (*Fer-raauee Creestee* p. 7)

Agh y **caghlaa** mooar ta eddyr deiney mie as olk vees er ny yannoo ec laa ny briwnys, tra vees ny Kirree er nyn goyrt er laue yesh Chreest, as ny Goair er y laue chiare - But the great Difference will be made at the Day of Judgment, when the Sheep shall be set on Christ's right Hand, and the Goats on the left (*Fer-raauee Creestee* p. 31)

cre'n **lhiettrimys** mooar vees son shickyrys eddyr cronney ny crauee as ny mee-chrauee ayns y theihl ta ry-heet - how very different the portion of good and bad men is sure to be in the next world (*Sharmaneyn Wilson* p. 39)

She liorish yn Sacrament shoh t'yh, dy vel **lhiettrimys** jeant eddyr sharvaantyn Chreest as sharvaantyn yn Noid-anmey - It is by this Sacrament that the subjects of Christ are distinguished from the subjects of Satan (*Sharmaneyn Wilson* p. 144)

coontey plain as shickyjeh'n **ard lhiettrimys** ta eddyr staydyn ny crauee as ny mee-chrauee lurg yn vaase - a plain and positive account of the very different condition of good and bad men after death (*Sharmaneyn Wilson* p. 182)

As nish, ta shiu fakin dy plain, dy vel **lhiettrimys** foddey eddyr Creestee, as Creestee firrinhagh. - And now, you see plainly, that to be a Christian, and a true Christian, are two very different things (*Sharmaneyn Wilson* p. 215)

As ynsee ad my phobble dy yannoo **soiaghey** eddyr casherick as an-chasherick, as dy hoiggal y **lhiettrimmys** eddyr glen as neughlen - And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean (Ezekiel 44:23)

As cha dug eh **liettrimys** erbee eddyr adsyn as shinyn, casherickey ny creeaghyn oc liorish credjue - And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:9)

Dy jarroo cairys Yee, ta liorish credjue Yeesey Creest, dauesyn ooilley, as orroosyn ooilley ta credjal; son cha vel **liettrimys** erbee - Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference (Romans 3:22)

ta ram **lhiettrymmys** ayns y daa sheean - there's a lot of difference in the two sounds (Thomas Christian; Broderick, *Handbook of Late Spoken Manx* p. 274)

va **lhiettrymmys** mooar eddyr Gaelg Skylley Maghal as Skyll Lonan as Gaelg ny aynryn elley jeh yn Ellan - there was a great difference between Kirk Maughold and Kirk Lonan Manx and the Manx of the other parts of the Island (Thomas Christian; Broderick, *Handbook of Late Spoken Manx* p. 274)

Son cha vel veg y **soiagh** eddyr yn Hew as y Greek; son ta'n Chiarn cheddin harrish ooilley, berchagh dauesyn ooilley ta geamagh er - For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him (Romans 10:12)

Ta ny saggyrtyr eck er vrishey my leigh, as my reddyn casherick t'ad er vee-ooshlaghey: cha vel ad **er n'yannoo soiaghey erbee eddyr** casherick as neu-chasherick, chamoo **ta scansh oc eddyr** glen as neu-ghlen, as t'ad er n'ollaghey nyn sooillyn veih my ghooneyn, as ta mee er my oltoaney by-chyndagh roo - Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them (Ezekiel 22:26)

There is also the word *lheamys*, which is used in *Pargys Caillit* at lines 1648, 1683, 2810 and 3263 in Robert Thomson's edition. Thomson's note on the word is as follows:

1648 *lheamys*: both senses of the word are possible here: the 'difference' (2810) between single Adam and the paired animals; and the 'blemish' (650) that this causes to his contentment. At 1683, 3263, *ta...lheamys* can be construed as adj 'different' or as vbn 'differ'; as it is undoubtedly a noun, the latter is more probable.

There may be objections that these words have too many meanings and that we do need a special word for 'difference'. However, I think this is just the influence of English. It is perfectly possible to have, for example, *caghlaa* meaning both 'change' and 'difference', because the context makes it clear what is intended. I question whether Manx speakers would have perceived the word to have two meanings: perhaps to them it had a single meaning that is simply broader than the English meanings.

It seems that the basic sense of *caghlaa* in Manx is ‘variation’, whether across time or at a particular moment. In English, we call variation across time ‘change’ and variation at a particular moment ‘difference’; but there is no reason why a language should not use one word for both these types of variation, nor should we expect Manx to conform to the English way of dividing up ‘semantic space’.

So is there any room left for *anchasley* and *anchaslys*? From a historical point of view, there seems to be no need for them. The Manx language used to get by, and still can get by, without a catch-all equivalent of the English word ‘different’. Having said that, *anchasley* is now well-established and some will say there is no point fighting it. However, that does not mean that the traditional idioms cannot be revived and used alongside it. *Anchasley* is not ‘wrong’; just unnecessary and a bit English. The only situation where *anchasley* would, I think, be categorically wrong is when ‘different’ means ‘various’. In this case, *caghlaaghyn* is the definitive Manx idiom.

Thus in the book *Droghad ny Seihill*, instead of:

*V’ee cooinaghtyn er ny taghyrtyn **anchasley** v’er jeet urree er y gherrid (p. 34)

the author should have written:

V’ee cooinaghtyn er ny **caghlaaghyn** taghyrt v’er jeet urree er y gherrid - She was remembering the different / various things that had happened to her recently [the various happenings that had come on her]

The same author does use *caghlaaghyn* correctly on p. 62 (*caghlaaghyn keint dy leih* ‘different types of people’) and on p. 194 (*ny caghlaaghyn dy voteilyn* ‘the various bottles’), but he had evidently not yet fully weaned himself off *anchasley*, for he insists on using it profusely even where it is manifestly not necessary. He must have been thinking in English when he made the protagonist say:

ta mee anchasley rish sleih elley - I am different from other people (p. 149)

when she could just as well have said:

cha nel mee gollrish sleih elley - I am not like other people

So in conclusion I would urge people to explore the alternative ways to talk about ‘difference’ in Manx. Apart from anything else, variety can’t be a bad thing. *Anchaslys* is a legitimate Manx word—but it would most appropriate as a technical term in philosophy etc. (closer in tone and formality to ‘dissimilitude’ in English than ‘difference’); *caghlaa* etc. are good enough for everyday use.

Proverb of the Month

Caghlaa obbyr aash - Change (/variety) of work is rest

(A nice zero copula, and it has the word *caghlaa* in it of course.)