

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk **

Càite anns a’ Bhìoball a gheibh sibh lorg air dà litir às an aibidil Ghreugaich? ’S dòcha, air a’ chiad shealladh, gu bheil a’ cheist car annasach, oir tha fios agaibh gur ann air aibidil na Laidinn a tha aibidil na Gàidhlig stèidhichte, seach tè na Grèigis, ged a bha an Tiomnadh Nuadh air eadar-theangachadh bhon t-seann Ghrèigis. Gheibhear gach litir anns an aibidil Ghàidhlig anns a’ Bhìoball, ceart gu leòr, ach am faighear litrichean aibidil na Grèigis?

Uill, gheibhear – co-dhiù dà litir – an tè aig toiseach na h-aibidil agus an tè aig an deireadh. *Alpha* agus *Omega*. Tha amharas agam gum bi mòran agaibh air an cluinntinn air bilean ministear neo sagairt. “Is mise *Alpha* agus *Omega*, an toiseach agus a’ chrìoch, tha an Tighearna ag ràdh, a tha, agus a bha, agus a tha ri teachd, an t-Uile-chumhachdach.”

Tha sin a-mach à Leabhar an Taisbeanaidh, neo airson a thiotal slàn a thoirt dha, Taisbeanadh Eòin an Diadhair, anns an ochdamh earrann dhen chiad chaibidil. Tha an dearbh theachdaireachd a’ nochdadh turas no dhà eile anns an leabhar sin. Mar eisimpleir, ann an Caibidil aon ar fhichead, earrann a sia: “Is mise *Alpha* agus *Omega*, an tùs agus a’ chrìoch: bheir mi dhasan air am bheil tart de thobar uisge na beatha gu saor.”

Cho-dhùin an fheadhainn a bha ag eadar-theangachadh a’ Bhìobaill gu Gàidhlig dìreach mar a cho-dhùin an fheadhainn a dh’eadar-theangaich gu Beurla e gun tuigeadh an sluagh dè bhathar a’ ciallachadh le *Alpha* agus *Omega*. Cha do dh’atharraich iad na samhlaidhean sin gu litrichean Gàidhlig no litrichean Laidinneach.

Tha litrichean Greugach nam inntinn an t-seachdain sa oir bha mi a’ beachdachadh air a’ Ghàidhlig a chuireamaid air *delta*, nuair a tha sin a’ ciallachadh mar a bhios abhainn uaireannan a’ briseadh aig a beul gu sreath de shruthan agus àbanan. Bidh fios agaibh gur e *delta* a’ cheathramh litir anns an aibidil Ghreugaich. Mar cheann-litir, tha cumadh triantain oirre, an dearbh chumadh a th’ air *delta* aig beul aibhne. Chì thu sin ma bhios tu ann am plèana os cionn a leithid, agus a’ coimhead sìos air.

Chan eil aibhnichean mar sin pailt air a’ Ghaidhealtachd, ach bha a leithid uaireigin air an abhainn agam fhìn – Abhainn Nis. ’S dòcha gu bheil sin doirbh a chreidsinn an-diugh, oir tha mac an duine air cruth beul na h-aibhne atharrachadh gu mòr thairis air an dà cheud bliadhna a dh’fhalbh gus am faigh luingeas a-mach ’s a-steach a Chala Inbhir Nis.

Ach tha na seann mhapaichean ga shealltainn. Ann an seachd deug, seachdad ’s a ceithir (1774) bha beul na h-aibhne air a roinn ann an ceithir sruthan. Eadar na sruthan sin, bha oitirean ann a bh’ air an còmhdachadh aig a’ mhuir-làn. Bha uair ann nuair a bha ainmean Gàidhlig orra uile, agus rachadh muinntir Inbhir Nis a-mach orra airson feusgain a

chruinneachadh nuair a bhiodh a' mhuir-tràigh ann aig àm an reothairt. Cha bu mhath leam feusgan sam bith ithe ann a sin an-diugh!

Agus bha àban neo dhà ann cuideachd. 'S e àban seann sruth far nach bi abhainn a' sruthadh tuilleadh ach a-mhàin nuair a bhios i loma-làn uisge. Bha fear ann far a bheil Sràid an Àbain, no *Abban Street*, a bha uaireigin mar phàirt dhen *delta* aig beul Abhainn Nis. Agus tha sin gam thoirt air ais don Ghàidhlig air *delta*. Dh'fhàg eadar-theangadairean a' Bhìobail *alpha* agus *omega* ann an Grèigis. 'S dòcha gum bu chòir dhuinn an aon rud a dhèanamh le *delta* agus, gu dearbh, 's e sin a th' ann anns an aon atlas a th' againn ann an Gàidhlig – air a litreachadh D-E-A-L-T-A.

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Faclan na seachdaine: aibidil na Laidinn: *the Latin alphabet*; an Tighearna: *the Lord*; an t-Uile-chumachdach: *the Almighty*; àban: *creek, backwater, old path of river flow now only flooded occasionally (the word àban appears restricted to the Inverness area)*; eadar-theangadair: *translator*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: Càite anns a' Bhìoball a gheibh sibh lorg air dà litir às an aibidil Ghreugaich?: *where in the Bible will you find two letters from the Greek alphabet?*; 's dòcha, air a' chiad shealladh, gu bheil a' cheist car annasach: *perhaps, on first sight, the question is a bit strange*; ged a bha an Tiomnadh Nuadh air eadar-theangachadh bhon t-seann Ghrèigis: *although the New Testament was translated from ancient Greek*; gheibhear gach litir anns an aibidil Ghàidhlig anns a' Bhìoball: *each (every) letter in the Gaelic alphabet is obtained in the Bible*; bheir mi dhasan air am bheil tart de thobar uisge na beatha gu saor: *I will give unto him that is thirsty freely of the water of life*; gun tuigeadh an sluagh dè bhathar a' ciallachadh: *that the people would understand what was meant*; mar cheann-litir, tha cumadh triantain oirre: *as a capital letter it has the shape of a triangle*; chì thu sin ma bhios tu ann am plèana: *you will see that if you are in a plane*; tha mac an duine air cruth beul na h-aibhne atharrachadh: *humans have changed the form of the river mouth*; bha oitirean ann a bh' air an còmhdachadh aig a' mhuir-làn: *there were shingle banks which were covered at high-tide*; airson feusgain a chruinneachadh: *to collect mussels*; nuair a bhiodh a' mhuir-tràigh ann aig àm an reothairt: *at low tide at the time of the Spring tides*

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: gus am faigh luingeas a-mach 's a-steach a Chala Inbhir Nis: *so that shipping can get in and out of Inverness Harbour. Are you comfortable with the difference between the prepositions “a”, meaning “to” and “à”, meaning “from”. The first has a more neutral sound, is not accented in the written form and causes lenition of the following noun. The second has a broader, more definite “a” sound, is accented and does not lenite the following noun eg tha mi a' tighinn à Glaschu agus a' dol a Phort Rìgh (I am coming from Glasgow and going to Portree); thàinig mi à Port Rìgh is tha mi a' dol a Ghlaschu (I came from Portree and I am going to Glasgow). Note that although the common English usage above (in the Litir) would be “in and out of”, it is generally the opposite in Gaelic – “a-mach 's a-steach” (lit. “out and in”). Because the final preposition is a-steach (“in”), we follow it with “a” rather than “à”. That is why it is Chala Inbhir Nis, with cala lenited.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: 'S e àban seann sruth far nach bi abhainn a' sruthadh tuilleadh: *an àban is an old stream (route of flow) where the river no longer flows. This is a common use of tuilleadh as an adverb with a negative verb, meaning no longer, no more eg cha dèan mi sin tuilleadh (I won't do that again).*

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