

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 rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk

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An do mhothaich sibh a-riamh cho feumail 's tha mapaichean na Gaidhealtachd do luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig? Air gach clàr-dùthcha, chì sibh ainmean-àite a tha a' sealltainn mar a tha cuid de riaghailtean-gràmair air an cur an sàs. Agus mholainn dhuibh sùil a thoirt air mapaichean bho àm gu àm is eadar-theangachadh a dhèanamh air na h-ainmean-àite.

Tha mi dìreach air greim fhaighinn air CD-ROM a tha uabhasach fhèin inntinneach. Tha e a' clàradh agus a' mìneachadh ainmean-àite sgìre na Còigich ann an Ros an Iar, gu tuath air Ulapul. Tha e a' tarraing air obair a rinn fear às an sgìre - Donaidh Friseal nach maireann – agus a chaidh a chlàradh airson Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba. Chuir feadhainn eile ris an obair aig Donaidh agus gheibhear cothrom sùil a thoirt air na mapaichean aige agus air eadar-theangachadh de na h-ainmean-àite, air an CD-ROM. Obair mhòr is obair mhath.

Ma bheir sibh sùil air cuid de na h-ainmean a nochdas air na h-Eileanan Samhraidh, chì sibh dè tha mi a' ciallachadh a thaobh gràmar. Air fear de na h-eileanan, Tanara Beag, tha àite ann a ghabhas eadar-theangachadh mar “*Frenchman's Harbour or Anchorage*”. Dè bhiodh ann ann an Gàidhlig? Uill, 's e Acarsaid a' Ghàidhlig air *anchorage*. Agus 's e Frangach a' Ghàidhlig air *Frenchman*. Mar sin, 's e a th' ann – Acarsaid an Fhrangaich.

Tha dà atharrachadh a' gabhail àite ann am Frangach – sèimheachadh aig toiseach an fhacail agus caolachadh aig an deireadh. Tha e ag atharrachadh bho Frangach anns an tuiseal ainmneach gu Fhrangaich anns an tuiseal ghinideach. Chan eil an t-ainm-àite sin ag innse dhuinn co-dhiù tha acarsaid boireann no fireann. Ach faisg air Acarsaid an Fhrangaich, tha an Acarsaid Mhòr. Agus tha sin fhèin ag innse dhuinn gur e facal boireann a th' ann. Air neo, 's e “an t-Acarsaid Mòr” a chanamaid – agus bhiodh sin ceàrr.

Tha rubha faisg air an Acarsaid Mhòir, air a bheil ainm a tha a' ciallachadh, ann am Beurla, “*the point of the big anchorage*”. Cho luath 's as urrainn dhuibh, cuiribh Gàidhlig air sin... *the point of the big anchorage*. Tha acarsaid boireann, cuimhnichibh... Rubha na h-Acarsaid ... Mòire. Rubha na h-Acarsaid Mòire. Tha sin a' cur an sàs nan riaghailtean, nach eil – gur e “na” an t-alt, no “article”, anns an tuiseal ghinideach shingilte airson ainmear boireann, agus gu bheil am buadhair, an “adjective”, air a chaolachadh, le “e” aig an deireadh. Ach chan eil e air a shèimheachadh.

Tha eilean eile ann air a bheil an t-Eilean Fada Mòr. Agus aig ceann a deas an eilein sin, tha cnoc, no meall, air a bheil am Meall Garbh, “*the rough lump-shaped hill*”. Nise, tha caolas faisg

air làimh, eadar an t-eilean seo agus Tanara Mòr, a tha a' ciallachadh "*the narrows of the rough hill*". Tha mi airson 's gun innis sibh ann an tiotan dè a' Ghàidhlig a th' air.

Anns a' chiad dol a-mach a bheil meall boireann no fireann? Uill, 's e am Meall Garbh a th' ann, is chan e a' Mheall Gharbh. Tha e fireann. Mar sin, anns an tuiseal ghinideach, bidh sinn a' sèimheachadh agus a' caolachadh an dà chuid, an t-ainmear agus am buadhair.

Caolas a' Mhill Ghairbh. Caolas a' Mhill Ghairbh. Mar a thuirt mi, tha mòran a ghabhas ionnsachadh mu ghràmar na Gàidhlig ann am mapaichean na Gaidhealtachd. An ath-sheachdain, bheir sinn sùil air cuid eile de na h-ainmean-àite a chruinnich Donaidh Friseal ann an sgìre na Còigich.

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Faclan na seachdaine: clàr-dùthcha: *map*; Donaidh Friseal nach maireann: *the late Donnie Fraser*; sgìre na Còigich: *the area of Coigach (north of Ullapool)*; na h-Eileanan Samhraidh: *the Summer Isles*; sèimheachadh: *lenition (aspiration)*; caolachadh: *slenderisation*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: mar a tha cuid de riaghailtean-gràmair air an cur an sàs: *how some grammatical rules are implemented*; tha mi dìreach air greim fhaighinn air X: *I have just got hold of X*; tha e a' tarraing air: *it draws upon*; a chaidh a chlàraidh airson Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba: *which was recorded for the School of Scottish Studies*; chuir feadhainn eile ris an obair: *some others added to the work*; chan eil e ag innse dhuinn co-dhiù tha acarsaid boireann no fireann: *it doesn't tell us whether acarsaid is feminine or masculine*; air neo 's e X a chanamaid – agus bhiodh sin ceàrr: *or we would say X – and that would be wrong*; anns an tuiseal ghinideach shingilte airson ainmear boireann: *in the genitive singular case for a feminine noun*; tha mi airson 's gun innis sibh ann an tiotan dè a' Ghàidhlig a th' air: *I want you to tell in a moment what the Gaelic is for (on) it*; anns a' chiad dol a-mach: *in the first instance*; tha mòran (ann) a ghabhas ionnsachadh: *much can be learned*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: *The Litir this week looks at some of the grammatical lessons obtained from examining place names. In particular it looks at the inflexion of the singular noun in the genitive case. Frangach, a masculine noun, changes to Fhrangaich in the genitive, showing the common lenition (the h after the F) and slenderisation (the i after the final vowel). Acarsaid, however, is a feminine noun so its inflexion is different. The article is na (as opposed to an in the above example or the very common a' with masculine nouns eg a' bhalaich, a' bhùird) and h- goes before the initial vowel. The feminine noun itself is not lenited in the genitive singular and, as acarsaid is already slender (its final vowel is an i), it cannot be further slenderised. Therefore "of the anchorage" is na h-acarsaid. The adjective mòr inflects according to the rules for a feminine singular noun – ie it is non-lenited, slenderised and usually (and certainly traditionally) has a terminal –e. So "of the anchorage" is "na h-acarsaid mòire". Here's something to try which I will answer next week. Translate the following into Gaelic: The sea-narrows of the small anchorage; the point of the big lump-shaped hill.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: gheibhear cothrom sùil a thoirt air na mapaichean aige: *an opportunity will be (can be) obtained to look at his maps ie one can look at his maps*.

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