

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 **

Tha mi cinnteach gu bheil e glè fheumail uaireannan Gàidhlig a bhith agaibh nuair a tha sibh a’ leughadh leabhraichean Beurla, gu h-àraidh ma tha iad air cuspair Gaidhealach. Thàinig mi tarsainn air eisimpleir dheth sin an là eile, nuair a bha mi a’ leughadh an leabhair, *Tales and Traditions of the Lews* le Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach. Tha pìos ann mu dheidhinn fear a bha seo “who came to raise creachs in Uist.”

Chanainn nach biodh fios aig a’ chuid mhòir de dh’Albannaich, gun luaidh air luchd na Beurla ann an dùthchannan eile, gu dè bha sin a’ ciallachadh. Bhiodh iad a’ smaoinichadh riutha fhèin – “*what’s a creach, and how does it get raised?*”! Tha mi an dùil, ge-tà, gu bheil sibh fhèin ga thuigsinn. Bha Mgr Dòmhnallach a’ cleachdadh facal Gàidhlig – *creach* – agus a’ cur gnìomhair ris – *raise* – a tha na eadar-theangachadh air a’ gnìomhair Ghàidhlig – *togail*. Oir, ann an Gàidhlig, canaidh sinn gu robh cuideigin a’ togail creach – airson *he was plundering*.

Saoilidh mi gur e as coireach gun can sinn “togail creach” no “togail na creiche” gu bheil am facal a’ ciallachadh an stuth a bhiodh creachadairean a’ togail nuair a bhiodh iad a’ spùinneadh. Bhiodh iad a’ togail òr no airgead, mart no muc, is a’ falbh dhachaigh leotha. Chanadh muinntir Shrath Spè anns an t-seann aimsir gur ann a’ togail creach a bhiodh na Camshronaich gach turas a thigeadh iad tron sgìre aca. ’S ann ann an Loch Abar a bha na Camshronaich a’ còmhnaidh, ach rachadh iad tric don ear-thuath airson crodh a thoirt dhachaigh leotha, agus thilleadh iad tro Shrath Spè. ’S e an t-ainm a bh’ air an t-slighe a ghabhadh iad “Rathad nam Mèirleach”, agus ’s e sin an t-ainm a th’ air fhathast.

Agus leugh mi earrann eile ann an *Tales and Traditions of the Lews*: “*Cattle raiding, traditionally known as ‘Lifting the Cattle, Togail nam Bò, was a common custom in the Highlands for many generations.*” ’S ann ri sin a bha na Camshronaich – a’ togail nam bò, a’ togail creach.

An do mhothaich sibh gur e “raising creachs” a sgrìobh Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach, ach “lifting the cattle”, ged is e “togail” a chanas sinn ris an dà chuid ann an Gàidhlig. Tha e furasta gu leòr sin a mhìneachadh. Tha *raising cattle* agus *lifting cattle* gu math eadar-dhealaichte o chèile ann am Beurla. Agus, ma ’s e “togail nam bò” a chanas sinn airson “lifting the cattle” dè chanas sinn airson “raising the cattle”? Uill, feumaidh sinn facal eile a chleachdadh – *àrach*. Tha sinn ag àrach nam bò no ag àrach a’ chruidh.

Faodaidh sinn am facal sin a chleachdadh cuideachd airson daoine. Dh’fhaodadh sibh a ràdh gu robh cuideigin ag àrach cloinne. No, le bhith a’ cleachdadh àrach mar ainmear, gun d’ fhuair cuideigin àrach. Ann am bàrdachd is òrain, chithear sin gu tric – an dùthaich far an d’

fhuair mi m' àrach – *the land in which I was raised*. Bidh cuid agaibh eòlach air an dàn aig Màiri Mhòr nan Òran anns a bheil “Soraidh leis an àit’ far an d’ fhuair mi m’ àrach òg...”

Bu toigh leam dìreach tilleadh gu *creach* mus fhalbh mi. A bharrachd air *plunder* is *booty*, tha e cuideachd a’ ciallachadh *ruin* no *destruction*. Bidh sibh eòlach air an abairt – “O mo chreach!”. Gu litireil, tha “mo chreach” a’ ciallachadh “*my ruin!*” ach bhiodh e na bu choltaiche eadar-theangachadh mar “my goodness” no a leithid sin. Agus – mo chreach – tha an ùine air ruith orm! Feumaidh mi falbh. Mar sin leibh an-dràsta.

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Faclan na seachdaine: creachadairean: *plunderers*; a’ spùinneadh: *plundering, robbing*; Camshronaich: *Camerons*; Srath Spè: *Strathspey*; mèirleach: *robber*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: tha mi cinnteach gu bheil e glè fheumail: *I am certain it is very useful*; thàinig mi tàrsainn air eisimpleir dheth sin: *I came across an example of that*; nach biodh fios aig a’ chuid mhòir de dh’ Albannaich: *that most Scots wouldn’t know*; gun luaidh air luchd na Beurla ann an dùthchannan eile: *without mentioning English-speaking people in other countries*; tha mi an dùil, ge-tà: *I expect, however*; saoilidh mi gur e as coireach gun can sinn X: *I reckon that we say X because*; gach turas a thigeadh iad tron sgìre aca: *each time they would come through their parish*; airson crodh a thoirt dhachaigh leotha: *to take cattle home with them*; leugh mi earrann eile: *I read another part*; a chanas sinn ris an dà chuid: *which we call both*; tha sinn ag àrach a’ chruidh: *we are raising the cattle*; soraidh leis an àit’ far an d’ fhuair mi m’ àrach òg: *farewell to the place where I was raised as a child*; gu litireil, tha X a’ ciallachadh: *literally, X means*; feumaidh mi falbh: *I must go (leave)*; mar sin leibh an-dràsta: *cheerio just now*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: Bidh sibh eòlach air an abairt: *you will know the phrase*. Here is a potted guide to translating the English “know”. Fios can be used for knowledge, in terms of knowing a fact. You might say tha fios/fhios agam or tha fios/fhios agam air X when saying that you have knowledge of something. A bheil fios agad cò tha a’ fuireach an seo? (do you know who lives here?). But when dealing with recognition of something, particularly of a person or place, it is preferable to use eòlas or its adjective eòlach. A bheil thu eòlach air an duine a tha a’ fuireach an seo? (do you know the person who lives here?); a bheil eòlas agad air duine sam bith dhen teaghlach sin? (do you know any of that family?). Don’t use fios in this regard – ie avoid saying tha fios agam air an duine sin. And note the handy luchd-eòlais which means “acquaintances”. Another way of dealing with acquaintance is to use the noun aithne. Is aithne dhomh e (I know him, recognise him; an aithne dhut Màiri? (do you know Mary?); the answer to the last question would be ’s aithne (yes) or chan aithne (no). Alternatively, you may be asked an aithnich thu Màiri? using the verb aithneachadh (in some dialects it is faithneachadh ie am faithnich thu Màiri?), to which you would say aithnichidh or chan aithnich (faithnichidh or chan fhaithnich).

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Tha an ùine air ruith orm: *my time is up (lit. the time has run on me)*. Tha an uine a’ ruith orm (I don’t have much time left).

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