

Gael-Talk

Learning Gaelic Year 1 Caibideil 19

Nas fheàrr a' Ghàidhlig bhriste n' a' Bheurla chliste!

Better Broken Gaelic than fluent English!

A little reminder –
We really should pay the piper
(*mòran taing* to those who have!)



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This week we will learn ...

- Sean fhacal na seachdain
- Ath-sgrudadh: How to say you want something or want to do something
- Dialogue –wanting something
- Òran na seachdain – Teann a-nall 's thoir dhomh do làmh
- Dualchas nan Gàidheil – (*Gods and Cosmology of the pre-Christian Gaels*)

Sean fhacal na seachdain

Along the lines of the grammar lesson of the week
(what you want) ...

Is e miann na lach an loch air nach bi i.

(It is the desire of the duck the lake on which she is not)



The duck's desire is the water where she's not.

Gràmar na seachdain

How to say you want something or want to do something

A way to express the idea that you want something or want to do something is to use the format we've been exploring, that is the use of the Gaelic progressive – the vernal noun *iarraidh*.

Singular:

- Tha mi ag iarraidh – I want / I am wanting
- Tha thu ag iarraidh – You want / You are wanting
- Tha e ag iarraidh – He wants / She is wanting
- Tha i ag iarraidh – She want / She is wanting

Plural:

- Tha sinn ag iarraidh – We want / We are wanting
- Tha sibh ag iarraidh – You want / You are wanting (plural, polite)
- Tha iad ag iarraidh – They want / They are wanting

Similarly, we can shift to the simple past tense “*bha*” –

Singular:

- Bha mi ag iarraidh – I wanted / I was wanting
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- Bha iad ag iarraidh – They wanted / They were wanting

In the dialogue below, we see a couple features of the form *ag iarraidh* – the verbal noun which we can translate as “wanting” – For instance, we see that we can construct sentences with *iarraidh* the same way that we use other verbal nouns. So just as we can say,

- Tha mi a' snàmh. – I am swimming.
- Tha iad a' cluich. – They are playing.
- Bha i a' leughadh. – She was reading.
- An robh thu a' seinn? – were you singing?

We can use “iarraidh” just like any other verbal noun to express the idea that we want *something*.

- Tha mi ag iarraidh. – I want / I am wanting.
- A bheil iad ag iarraidh – Do they want? / Are they wanting?
- Chan eil e ag iarraidh – He doesn’t want. / He is not wanting.

The verbal noun “iarraidh” can ‘take’ an object – that is we can express the thing we want.

- Tha e ag iarraidh **dìnnear**. – He wants dinner.
- Bha a’ chlann ag iarraidh **coimpiutair**. – They wanted a computer.

In addition to saying that we want a “thing,” we can also say we want **to do** something. One of the ways we do this is by using the infinitive *a bhith* – “to be.” Later, we’ll learn another way to communicate this idea, but for now, we’ll concentrate on this form:

- Tha mi ag iarraidh **a bhith a’ snàmh**. – I want to be swimming / I want to swim.
- Tha iad ag iarraidh **a bhith a’ cluich** ball-coise. – They want to be playing soccer / they want to play soccer.
- Tha iad ag iarraidh **a bhith ag èisteachd** ris a’ cheòl. – They want to be listening to the music / they want to listen to music.

We learn this form for a couple different reasons: One, it is the simplest way to express the idea of wanting to do something (another way requires a more complicated adjustment of the order of the words). And two, it allows us to build upon the form that we already know – the *a bhith* + form provides us with an easy transition from the **tha mi / tha e** etc. format that we have already learned. Observe how with minimal adjustment, you can shift from one to the other:

- **Tha mi a’ snàmh.** – I am swimming.
- Tha mi ag iarraidh **a bhith a’ snàmh**. – I want to be swimming / I want to swim / I want to be swimming.
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- **Tha iad ag iarraidh a bhith a’ cluich** ball-coise. – They want to be playing soccer / they want to play soccer / they want to be playing soccer.
- **Bha iad ag èisteachd** ris a’ cheòl. They are listening to the music.
- Bha iad ag iarraidh **a bhith ag èisteachd** ris a’ cheòl. – They wanted to be listening to the music / they want to listen to music / they want to be listening to music.

In this “transition” from the simpler form to the more complicated, the “a bhith” replaces the active verb – in these examples, the “tha” or the “bha.” So we can shift from saying simply that we are doing something to expressing a more complicated idea, we want to do something.

One last thing, the *a bhith* form is not as “clunky” in Gaelic as it might sound in English, so, while in English we would probably say just simply

- I want to do something.

Rather than

- I want **to be doing** something

In Gaelic, the ‘a bhith’ is quite natural.

- Tha mi ag iarraidh **a bhith** a’ dèanamh (x) ...

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Reminder:

1. The verbal noun ***ag iarraidh*** is pronounced – a' giarraidh / a geeree
2. What is a verbal noun:
 1. Similar to the +ing form of the verb (called the 'gerund')
 - a. Looking
 - b. Walking
 - c. Running
 2. However, it is not totally a "verb" –
 - a. As a 'verbal noun' – it is sometimes used as a noun
 - b. Tha an **sgrìobhadh** aige ealanta – His writing is elegant.
 - c. Tha e a' sgrìobhadh. He is writing.
 - d. BUT ... Tha e a' leaghadh – he is reading ... lit. = He is at reading. (He's at the doing of something / He's about the doing of something ...)
 - e. Tha e a' togail an taighe – he is building a house / lit. = he is at building of the house.
 - f. Tha e ga dèanamh – he is doing it / lit. = he is at its doing

Discussion – ag iarraidh

In the dialogue below, we see a couple features of the form *ag iarraidh* – the verbal noun which we can translate as “wanting” – For instance, we see that

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- **Tha iad ag iarraidh a bhith a' cluich** ball-coise. – They want to be playing soccer / they want to play soccer / they want to be playing soccer.
- **Bha iad ag èisteachd** ris a' cheòl. They are listening to the music.
- Bha iad *ag iarraidh a bhith ag èisteachd* ris a' cheòl. – They wanted to be listening to the music / they want to listen to music / they want to be listening to music.

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In Gaelic, the ‘a bhith’ is quite natural.

- Tha mi *ag iarraidh a bhith a' dèanamh* (x) ...

The predicate sentence format:

Not only can the **ag iarraidh a bhith (+)** form be used to say that you want a thing, and you want to do something, but

- the **a bhith (+)** format is the only way that we can construct a predicate sentence – that is, to say that we want to **be** something (an adjective) as in

I want to be sure	Tha mi <i>ag iarraidh a bhith cinnteach</i>
I don't want to be cold	Chan eil mi <i>ag iarraidh a bhith fuar</i>
I want to be early	Tha mi <i>ag iarraidh a bhith tràth</i>

In fact, you can see how this form translates almost directly between Gaelic and English.

Dialogue – Dè tha thu ag iarraidh?

In this dialogue, Oighrig, shopping for her family, visits the local store where a friend of hers, Murchadh, works.

Oighrig	Feasgar math, a Mhurchaidh.
Murchadh	Dè tha dol, Oighrig?
Oighrig	Chan eil mòran.
Murchadh	Tha i brèagha an diugh, nach eil?
Oighrig	Tha, gu dearbh.
Murchadh	Uill, dè tha thu ag iarraidh an diugh?
Oighrig	Tha mi ag iarraidh aran agus càise.
Murchadh	A bheil thu ag iarraidh aran donn no aran geal?
Oighrig	Aran donn. Dà lof, ma 's e do thoil e.
Murchadh	Agus dè seòrsa càise a tha thu ag iarraidh?
Oighrig	Tha mi ag iarraidh càise dearg. Leth-phunnd.
Murchadh	A bheil thu ag iarraidh ìm?
Oighrig	Chan eil an-diugh, ach tha mi ag iarraidh tì agus cofaidh.
Murchadh	Crogan mòr no crogan beag cofaidh?
Oighrig	Crogan beag agus dà phacaidh tì. A bheil uighean ùra agaibh?
Murchadh	Tha gu leòr. Leth-dusan? No dusan? No ... ?
Oighrig	Dìreach leth-dusan. O! Agus tha mi ag iarraidh buntàta cuideachd. Còig puinnd.
Murchadh	Seo ma tha – còig puinnd buntàta.
Oighrig	Tha a' chlann ag iarraidh còc agus suiteis.
Murchadh	Botal no cana còc?
Oighrig	Botal, ma 's e do thoil e. Agus na suiteis seo. Tha iad uabhasach math. Dè a' phris a tha iad?
Murchadh	Fichead sgillinn an urra. A bheil am prìs sin ceart gu leòr?
Oighrig	Tha.
Murchadh	A bheil thu ag iarraidh rud sam bith eile?
Oighrig	Chan eil. Dè tha sin uile gu lèir?
Murchadh	Seachd notaichean agus còig sgillinn deug.
Oighrig	Sin deich notaichean ma tha.
Murchadh	Mòran taing. Agus seo dà not agus ceithir fichead sgillinn 's a còig air ais.
Oighrig	Tapadh leat.
Murchadh	'S e do bheatha.
Murchadh	Uill, a bheil sin uile gu lèir?
Oighrig	O, tha!
Murchadh	Uill, dè tha thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' dèanamh dìreach na seachain?

Oighrig	Chan eil fhios 'm. Chan eil mi cinnteach dè tha a' chlann ag iarraidh a bhith a' dèanamh. Tha an t-athair 's a' mhàthair agam a' dol air falbh Disathairne, agus tha mi a' fuireach còmhla ris a' bhràthair agam agus a' phiuthar agam.
Murchadh	A bheil iad ag iarraidh a bhith a' coimhead air film? Tha film ùr aig an taigh-dealbh.
Oighrig	Chan eil. Chan eil iad ag iarraidh a' bhith a' dol dhan taigh-dealbh. Tha iad ag iarraidh a' bhith a' coimhead air an telebhisean.
Murchadh	Uill, dè seòrsa spòrs a tha iad ag iarraidh a bhith a' dèanamh? A bheil iad ag iarraidh a bhith a' cluich ball-coise?
Oighrig	Chan eil.
Murchadh	A bheil iad a bhith a' dol dhan phàirc-spòrs? Tha rolair-còrsair ùr ann, tha mi a' cluinntinn.
Oighrig	O, chan eil. Tha iad ag iarraidh a bhith a' dol chun an tràigh agus a bhith a snàmh, 's dòcha.
Murchadh	Tha sin math. Tha i blàth aig dìreadh na seachdain, tha mi a' smaoineachadh. A bheil thusa ag iarraidh a' dol dhan chèilidh còmhla rium aig an talla-bhaile Oidhche Haoine? Tha còmhlan-ciùil math ann.
Oighrig	'S dòcha.
Murchadh	Tha sin math. Tha sinn a' dannsadh an sin.
Oighrig	O, tha, gu dearbh. Tha mi ag iarraidh a bhith a' dannsadh. Uill, latha math an-dràsta.
Murchadh	Mar sin leat.

Vocabulary:

an urra	each
aran	bread
Buntàta -	potatoes
càise	cheese
Còmhla rium -	with me
còmhlan-ciùil	band
Crogan	container, / lit. 'crock, jar'
Dìreadh na seachdain -	weekend (end of the week)
Gu dearbh -	indeed / yes, indeed
ma 's e do thoil e	please, if it pleases you (not really used that much)
Oidhche Haoine	Friday night (Dihaoine = Friday)
pacaid	package, dà phacaid – two packages
pàirc-spòrs	amusement park / lit. fun park
rud sam bith	anything
rolair-còrsair	roller coaster
's dòcha.	perhaps
'S e do bheatha	you're welcome / lit. 'He (God) is your life'
seòrsa	kind, type – dè seòrsa càise / aran – what kind of cheese / bread (etc)
Sgillinn	shilling / "cents" in new decimal currency
spòrs	fun
Taigh-dealbh	movie theatre (lit. 'house of pictures')

Talla-bhaile	town hall
tràigh	beach

Eacarsaichean:

Now, let's go back to the verbal nouns that we learned in Caibideil 3 (plus some others that we have added), and construct sentences with them. Only this time, we will say that **we want** to do the actions, (or wanted to) rather than we are (or were) simply doing them. Be sure to use both the past tense and the present tense.

As examples, I've done the first couple:

Verbal noun	English	
1. a' cluich	Playing	Tha mi ag iarraidh a bhith a' cluich ball-coise.
2. a' cluinntinn	Hearing	Tha mi ag iarraidh a bhith a' cluinntinn ceòl binn. (binn = sweet, as in music)
3. a' seinn	Singing	
4. a' bàsachadh	Dying	
5. a' bàthadh	Drowning	
6. a' biadhadh	Feeding	
7. a' breabadh	Kicking	
8. a' briseadh	Breaking	
9. a' brosnachadh	Encouraging	
10. a' bruadar	Dreaming	
11. a' bruidhinn (ri)	Speaking	
12. a' bualadh	Hitting	
13. a' call -	Losing	
14. a' ceannach	Buying	
15. a' ceum	Stepping	
16. a' ceumnachadh	Graduating	
17. a' clàradh	Recording	
18. a' co-dhùnadhbh	Deciding	
19. a' coiseachd	Walking	
20. a' cur	Putting, planting, sending (as in email or letter)	
21. a' dèanamh	Doing, making	
22. a' dùnadh	Closing	
23. a' dùsgadh	Waking (up)	
24. a' faicinn	Seeing	
25. a' faighinn	Getting	
26. a' faireachdainn	Feeling	
27. a' fosgladh	Opening	
28. a' freagairt	Answering	
29. a' gabhail	Getting	
30. a' gàireachdainn	Laughing	
31. a' gluasad	Moving (not as in moving from one house to another)	
32. a' goid	Stealing	

33. a' gul	Crying	
34. a' leughadh	Reading	
35. a' leum	Jumping	
36. a' nochd	Appearing (as in, he appeared suddenly)	
37. a' pàigheadh	Paying	
38. a' pògadh	Kissing	
39. a' pòsadhbh	Marrying	
40. a' reic	Selling	
41. a' ruith	Running	
42. a' seilg	Hunting	
43. a' seòladhbh	Sailing	
44. A' sgrìobhadhbh	Writing	
45. a' smaoineachadh	Thinking	
46. a' tarraing	Drawing, pulling	
47. a' tilleadhbh	Returning	
48. a' tionndadh	Turning	
49. a' togail	Lifting	
50. a' toirt bho	Taking from	
51. a' toirt do	Giving to	
52. a' tòiseachadh	Beginning	
53. a' tuigsinn	Understanding	
54. ag amas *	Aiming	
55. ag aontachadh *	Agreeing	
56. ag atharrachadh *	Changing	
57. Ag èisteachd* (ri)	Listening (to)	
58. ag ithe *	Eating	
59. ag òl *	Drinking	
60. ag ràdh / a' ràdh **	saying	

* because of the vowel-onset verbal noun, we use **ag** instead of **a'** (both are contractions for "aig" or 'at')

** either is used

Còmhradh

Building on the exercise above let's engage in a bit of còmhradh – conversation:

Answer as completely as you are able, and respond with a question of your own. (Keep the conversation going.)

1. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' tuigsinn a' Ghàidhlig?
2. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' snàmh anns a' mhuir?
3. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' leughadh *The Grapes of Wrath*?
4. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' sgrìobhadhbh litir?
5. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' cur an litir gu a' mhàthair agad?
6. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' ruith anns an reis?
7. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' cur craobh anns a' ghàrradh agad? (plant tree in your garden)
8. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' faicinn a' ghealach ùr?
9. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith ag ithe cèic?
10. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' òl uisge-beatha?

11. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' tilleadh dhachaigh?
12. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' freagairt ceist agamsa? (ceist = question)
13. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' pògadh an leanabh? (pògadh an leanabh - kissing the baby)
14. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' seinn an òran?
15. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' seinn fidheal?
16. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' pàigheadh a' bhileag? (bileag = bill)
17. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' togail taigh ùr?
18. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' seilg tunnagan (tunnagan = ducks)
19. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' töiseachadh geum ùr? (geum ùr = new game)
20. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' biadhadh na piseagan (piseagan = kittens)
21. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith trang dìreadh na seachdain?
22. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith tràth a-màireach?
23. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith fuar no blàth?
24. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith fadalach a-nochd? (fadalach = late, as in for appointment)
25. A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith leisg? (leisg = lazy)

Faclan Ùra New Words

a-màireach	tomorrow
Bileag(an)	bill
Ceist	question
Dhachaigh	homewards, directional w/ movement
Dìreadh na seachdain	weekend
Fadalach	late (as in, for an appointment)
Gàrradh	garden (also, sometimes, wall)
Gealach	moon
Geum	game
Leanabh	baby
Leisg	lazy
Litir	letter
Piseag (a)n	kitten(s)
Tràth	early
Tunnag (an)	duck(s)

Nì cleachdadadh cinnteach -- practice makes perfect

A bheil e ag iarraidh cèic?

A bheil thu ag iarraidh ... ???



- Tha. Tha e ag iarraidh cèic.
- Chan eil. Chan eil e ag iarraidh cèic.

A bheil i ag iarraidh a bhith a' snàmh?



- Tha. Tha i ag iarraidh a bhith a' snàmh.
- Chan eil. Chan eil i ag iarraidh a bhith a' snàmh.

An robh i ag iarraidh a bhith a' dèanamh dinnear?



- Bha. Bha i ag iarraidh a bhith a' dèanamh dinnear.
- Chan robh. Chan robh i ag iarraidh a bhith a' dèanamh dinnear.

A bheil thu ag iarraidh a bhith a' fuireach ann an Dùn Èideann?



- Tha. Tha mi ag iarraidh a bhith a' fuireach ann an Dùn Èideann.
- Chan eil. Chan eil mi ag iarraidh a bhith a' fuireach ann an Dùn Èideann.

Am bi a' chàraid ag iarraidh a bhith a' dansadh aig a' chèilidh?



- Bidh. Bi a' chàraid ag iarraidh a bhith a' dansadh aig a' chèilidh
- Cha bhi. Cha bhi a' chàraid ag iarraidh a bhith a' dansadh aig a' chèilidh

A bheil na daoine a bhith a' ruith air falbh?



- Tha. Tha iad ag iarraidh a bhith a' ruith air falbh.
- Chan eil. Chan eil iad ag iarraidh a bhith a' ruith air falbh

A bheil an nighean a bhith a' breabadh ball-coise?



- Tha. Tha an nighean ag iarraidh a bhith a' breabadh ball-coise.
- Chan eil. Chan eil an nighean ag iarraidh a bhith a' breabadh ball-coise.

A bheil daoine a bhith a' bàsachadh?



- Tha. Tha daoine ag iarraidh a bhith a' bàsachadh.
- Chan eil. Chan eil daoine ag iarraidh a bhith a' bàsachadh

A bheil thu ag iarraidh tuilleadh teatha?



- Tha. Tha mi ag iarraidh tuilleadh teatha
- Chan eil. Chan eil mi ag iarraidh tuilleadh teatha

A bheil na h-eich a bhith ag òl an uisce?



- Tha. Tha na h-eich a bhith ag òl an uisce.
- Chan eil. Chan eil na h-eich a bhith ag òl an uisce.

Am bidh thu ag iarraidh a bhith ag obair ann am mèinn?



- Bidh. Bi mi ag iarraidh a bhith ag obair ann am mèinn.
- Chan bhidh. Cha bhí mi ag iarraidh a bhith ag obair ann am mèinn?

A' bheil an clann ag iarraidh a bhith a' bruidhinn?



- Tha. Tha an clann ag iarraidh a bhith a' bàsachadh.
- Chan eil. Chan eil an clann ag iarraidh a bhith a' bàsachadh

A bheil Peppermint Patty ag iarraidh a bhith a' fosgladh an dorais?



- Tha. Tha Peppermint Patty ag iarraidh a bhith a' fosgladh an dorais.
- Chan eil. Chan eil Peppermint Patty ag iarraidh a bhith a' fosgladh an dorais.

A bheil an clann a bhith a' cluich anns a' phàirc?



- Tha. Tha an clann a bhith a' cluich anns a' phàirc
- Chan eil. Chan eil an clann a bhith a' cluich anns a' phàirc?

A bheil a' chaileag ag iarraidh mathan mòr bànn mar pheata?



- Tha. Tha a' chaileag ag iarraidh mathan mòr bànn mar pheata.
- Chan eil. Chan eil a' chaileag ag iarraidh mathan mòr bànn mar pheata.

A bheil am boireannach ag iarraidh botal uisge?



- Tha. Tha am boireannach ag iarraidh botal uisge.
- Chan eil. Chan eil am boireannach ag iarraidh botal uisge

Am bidh an tidsear ag iarraidh a bhith a' teagaisg?



- Bidh. Bi an tidsear ag iarraidh a bhith a' teagaisg.
- Cha bhi. Cha bhi an tidsear ag iarraidh a bhith a' teagaisg

A bheil am poileas ag iarraidh doughnut?



- Tha. Tha am poileas ag iarraidh doughnut.
- Chan eil. Chan eil am poileas ag iarraidh doughnut.

An robh an neach-poileataigs ag iarraidh a bhith a' freagairt a' cheist?



- Bha. Bha an neach-poileataigs ag iarraidh a bhith a' freagairt a' cheist
- Cha robh. Cha robh an neach-poileataigs ag iarraidh a bhith a' freagairt a' cheist

Am bidh am maighdeann ag iarraidh a bhith a' dùsgadh tràth sa mhadainn?



- Bi. Bi am maighdeann ag iarraidh a bhith a' dùsgadh tràth sa mhadainn.
- Cha bhidh. Cha bhi am maighdeann ag iarraidh a bhith a' dùsgadh tràth sa mhadainn.

An robh am mèirleach ag iarraidh a bhith a' goid airgead?



- Bha. Bha am mèirleach ag iarraidh a bhith a' goid airgead.
- Cha robh. Cha robh am mèirleach ag iarraidh a bhith a' goid airgead.

An robh an lùth-chleasaiche ag iarraidh a bhith a' leum?



- Bha. Bha an lùth-chleasaiche ag iarraidh a bhith a' leum
- Cha robh. Cha robh an lùth-chleasaiche ag iarraidh a bhith a' leum

An robh am pàiste ag iarraidh a bhith a gal?



- Bha. Bha am pàiste ag iarraidh a bhith a gal
- Cha robh. Cha robh am pàiste ag iarraidh a bhith a gal

Am bidh an leanabh ag iarraidh bainne?



- Bidh. Bidh an leanabh ag iarraidh bainne
- Cha bhidh. Cha bhidh an leanabh ag iarraidh bainne

A bheil i ag iarraidh a bhith a' pàigheadh?



- Tha. Tha i ag iarraidh a bhith a' pàigheadh
- Chan eil. Chan eil i ag iarraidh a bhith a' pàigheadh

Am bidh an teaghlach ag iarraidh a bhith a' tilleadh dhachaigh?



- Bidh. Bi an teaghlach ag iarraidh a bhith a' tilleadh dhachaigh
- Cha bhi. Cha bhi an teaghlach ag iarraidh a bhith a' tilleadh dhachaigh

Am bidh muinntir a' bhaile ag iarraidh a bhith a' togail talla?



- Bidh. Bi muinntir a' bhaile ag iarraidh a bhith a' togail talla
- Cha bhi. Chan bhi muinntir a' bhaile ag iarraidh a bhith a' togail talla

An robh an t-each ag iarraidh a bhith a' tarraing cairt?



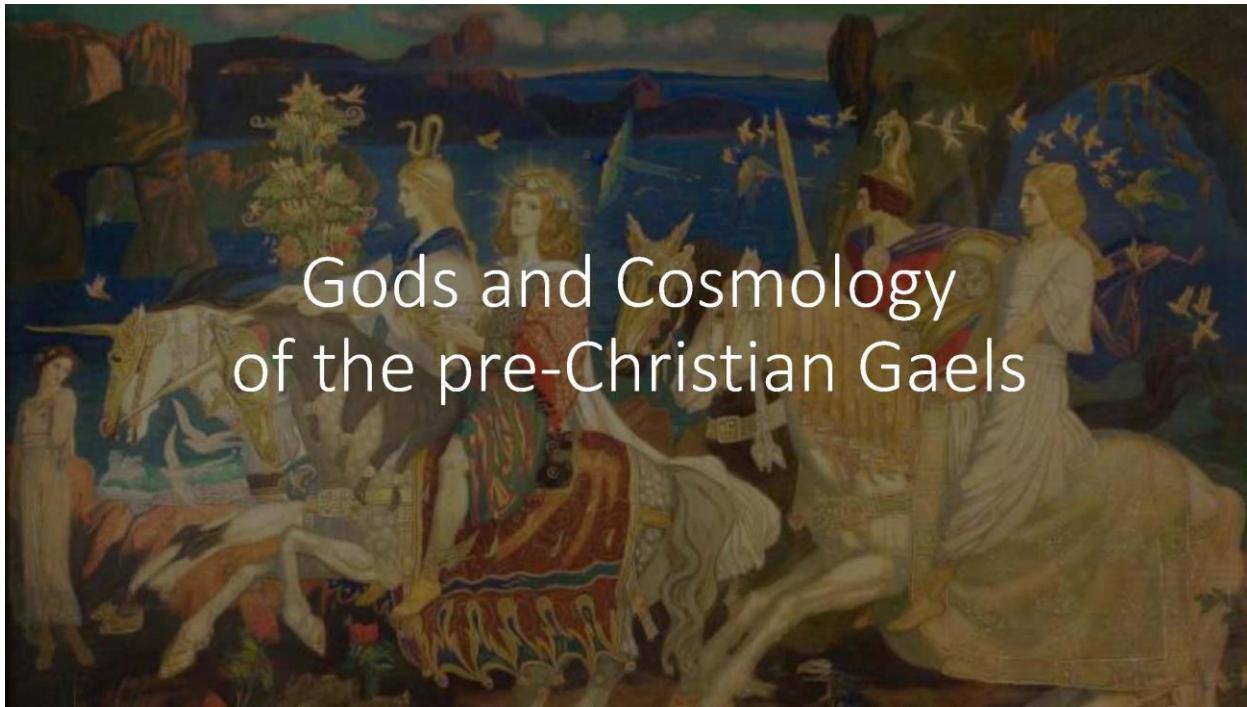
- Bha. Bha an t-each ag iarraidh a bhith a' tarraing cairt.
- Cha robh. Cha robh an t-each ag iarraidh a bhith a' tarraing cairt.

An robh an cù ag iarraidh a bhith ag èisteachd ris an rèidio?



- Bha. Bha an cù ag iarraidh a bhith ag èisteachd ris an rèidio
- Cha robh. Cha robh an cù ag iarraidh a bhith ag èisteachd ris an rèidio

Gods and Cosmology of the pre-Christian Gaels



Gods and Cosmology of the pre-Christian Gaels

Creation myth – accounts are sparse

- In the beginning, there was no time, no gods, no humans; all (that lived) lived beneath the sea – “Ir ton Thum” – land under the waves’
- primordial god, by means of a melody played by his breath, brought creation into being
- where the sea met the land, a mare was born, white and made of sea-foam. Eocha: Goddess of the Deep Waters
- Eocha ate the white berries of the mistletoe – the tears of the sea – that grew on a giant oak tree on the shore, and then gave birth to Cernunnos, the Stag God.
- from the wood of the oak tree, they created the first humans, and other animals.
- From this we can see motifs that persist in Gaelic cosmology
 - Music
 - The sea
 - the mistletoe
 - Cernunnos
 - the horse

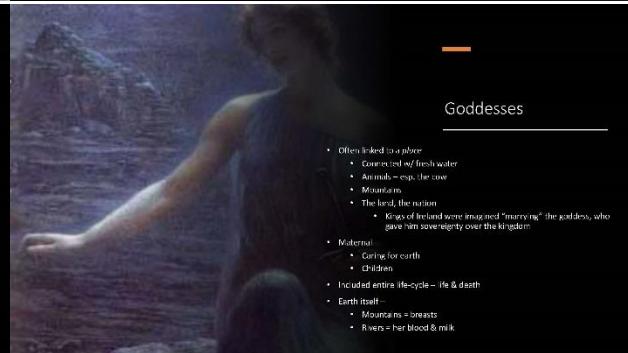
Overlap between myths of gods and “historical” (or legendary) exploits

- Some characters appear in both forms –
 - E.g., Lugh appears in both annals of the invasions of Ireland and as a “god”
- Some characters, e.g., Cuchulainn, appear only in “historical” legend (myth)



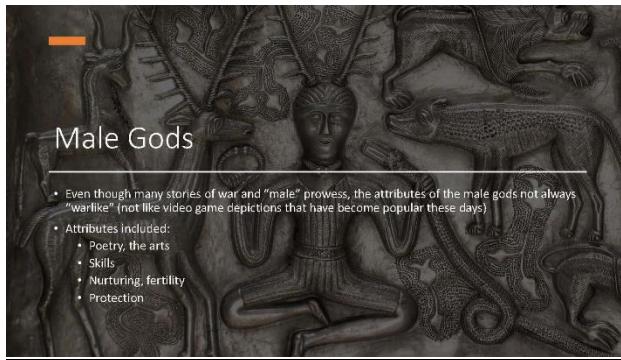
God (s)

- Celts polytheistic – many gods
- Not arranged in hierarchy
 - No ‘king’ of the gods whom everyone else had to obey (or else!)
- Male gods not ever female
 - Sometimes the reversal!
- Goddesses represented unchanging aspects of nature –
 - Mountains, rivers, fertility, arts
- Male gods – changing aspects
 - The surging sea
 - Magic
 - Vegetative & animal life



Goddesses

- Often linked to a place
 - Connected w/ fresh water
 - Animals – esp. the cow
 - Mountains
 - The land, the nation
 - Kings of Ireland were imagined “marrying” the goddess, who gave him sovereignty over the kingdom
- Maternal
 - Caring for earth
 - Children
- Included entire life-cycle – life & death
- Earth itself –
 - Mountains = breasts
 - Rivers = her blood & milk



Male Gods

- Even though many stories of war and "male" prowess, the attributes of the male gods not always "warlike" (not like video game depictions that have become popular these days)
- Attributes included:
 - Poetry, the arts
 - Skills
 - Nurturing, fertility
 - Protection



Status of Goddesses reflected in society?

- Not known exactly how emphasis of goddesses "played out" in society – did women have more rights on the ground?
- Matriarchal society? (inheritance through female line)
- Polyandry? (as in many Celtic myths)
- though time & time again in stories & legend, the rights and status of women emphasized
 - Tragedy of forced marriage (Deirdre)
 - Abuse (curse of the Ulstermen)
 - A judge broke out in spitballs when he proclaimed biased judgment against a woman (healed by female judge / druid when she corrected his judgment)
 - tradition that king "inherited" the goddesses of the land
- Women could be druid priests & judges



Brigit

- The goddess
 - Fever in many sites (is purity for goddess? Related to menstruation?):
 - Healing
 - Poetry
 - Smithing
 - Divination
 - Shrines = healing spa = a culture bringer
 - Symbol of a many things (gold, medicine)
 - Taste: Ayu = Ireland (Feil - 32)
 - Not virgin – had son to king
 - The saint
 - Many miracle stories:
 - Travelled to Devil's Den to end wife Mary in birth of Jesus
 - Hung out clothes on bushes
 - Cured blind by eyes to avoid marriage and then restored them
 - Daughters as children
 - Oil = cream, far = oak, sacred to the Druids
 - Devotion
 - Some trees of Ireland
 - Some feast day



Lugh Lamhfada (Lugh of the long arm/hand)

- Lugh = "the shining one" associated with the sun
- Later associated with St. Michael – (also the Shining' angel)
- Irish as *sormhóinch* ("skilled in all arts"). One of the Tuatha de Danann
- May be an "imported" god from continental Europe (possibly Gaul) > showed up and bargained his way into warrior council of gods
- He is the most honored and versatile of the Irish gods, and he is the divine
- Father of Cú Chulainn, the greatest hero in Irish legend
- Grandson of evil Fomorian king Balor (who attempted to conquer Ireland)
 - Prophesized that king would be killed by grandson
 - Imprisoned his daughter
 - Cian (father) snuck into tower and impregnated mother
 - 1 of triplets (3 again) – perhaps originally a trinity
- Father of Cuchulainn – after affair with daughter of king
- Gradually disappeared as powers of old gods shrunk – maybe conning on as "craftsmen leprechaun" *lebor* in Gaeltacht until he stopped lugh / "lub" – bent, stuck mouse, little mouse



Lughnasa

- August 1 – associated with Lugh
- Harvest festival – beginning of harvest season; marked by fairs & markets
- Contracts made, including marriage contracts
- Associated w/ horses ...
 - Great wild horse race on Uist In Hebrides
 - "Traigh Mhicheil,"
 - carrots baked into bread pudding – Struan
- In many places, holiday associated w/ sexual liberties (summer break!)



Dagda

- Eochaid Olathair – father of all (Eochaid, from horse col = high, great; ahor = father)
- King of Tuatha de Danann –
- The "good god" – Not morally good, but good at everything
 - Artisan
 - Saint
 - Farmer
 - Wise King
 - Warrior
 - Benevolent
- God of fertility & abundance
 - magical cauldron – never empty
 - magic (phallus) so huge it had to be dragged in cart
 - magical pigs that could be eaten and then revived
 - orchard always filled w/ fruit
- Harp of the seasons – brought the seasons in correct order



Dagda – cont.

- not handsome
 - comically appearing
 - wheeling his huge phallus, dressed in top-short tunic that exposed his privates, extreme appetites
 - Our force of fertility that could not be ignored
- led fight against invaders
- mated with black-winged Morrigan
 - she was washing clothes of those about to be killed in battle
 - Dagda overcame with desire and had sex with her
 - She was happy with encounter & agreed to support his side in battle –
- father of goddess of inspiration Brigit and god of poetry and beauty "Aonghus Óg" – poetry offspring of abundant life
- killed at another battle but lived on in otherworld – where he enjoyed abundance ...



Aonghus Óg

- Aonghas mac Og – Angus son of youth
- God of beauty & poetry
- Miraculous conception – father, Dagda, 'borrowed' mother, who was married – made sun remain still for 9 months so husband wouldn't know what was up!
- Fell in love with woman he had seen only in dream ... helped by magician to find her

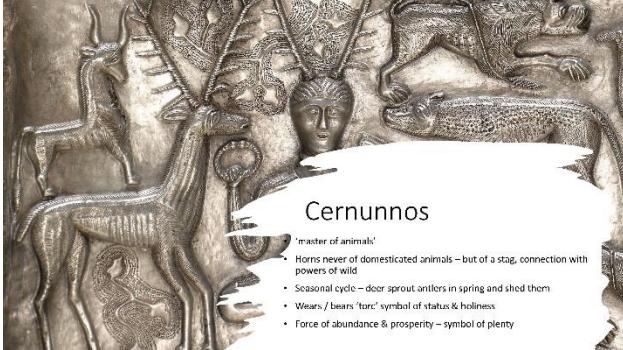
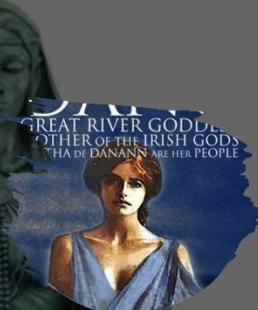
Mòrrigan

- Perhaps, *Mor Righinn* = great queen
- associated with war and fate, especially with foretelling doom, death or victory in battle;
- often appears as a crow or with crows (the scavenger of the battlefield)
- incites warriors to battle and can help to victory
- portrayed washing the bloodstained clothes of warriors fated to die
- guardian of the territory and its people
- Sometimes 3 sisters (3 again!)



Danu

- Name derived from *dán* – knowledge, fate, poetry
- Danu ancient Scythian word – “river”
- Goddess of the Tuatha de Dannan, who later became Deauna Sith (or, *Fir-faith* = fairies)
- Daughter of Daedla, the good god of abundance
- Goddess of the land's fertility
- widespread Celtic goddess:
 - Danube, central Europe
 - The Don,
 - Oineper river, Donets river, eastern Europe
 - River Dee, Scotland
 - Paps of Danu (breasts), Ireland
 - Danu – Hindu goddess of primordial waters



Cernunnos

- ‘master of animals’
- Horns never of domesticated animals – but of a stag, connection with powers of wild
- Seasonal cycle – deer sprout antlers in spring and shed them
- Wears / bears ‘torc’ symbol of status & holiness
- Force of abundance & prosperity – symbol of plenty



Tuatha de Dannan

- People (tuath) of the goddess Danu
- brought science, art, and knowledge
- Penultimate invaders of Ireland – (just before the ancestors of present Irish / Gaels) – but were ‘Gaelic’ themselves – one of their heroes was named *Moc Gréine* – Son of the Sun, in Gaelic
- Defeated race of ‘monstrous’ humans
- Controlled Ireland for 3,000 years
- Magical race
- Fought Irish – the children of Mil
 - finally treaty Tuatha took
 - misty islands
 - out to sea
 - bottom of lakes,
 - and fairy mounds – the *síthean* ... hence their name – *no síthicheon* or the *síth* (& from which English gets “banshee” – *han-síth*)
- Where they continue to live surrounded by beauty & song



Druid

- Similar to shaman – but more diverse & developed
- Monk-like, i.e., a name from word meaning “oak” (dánoch in modern Gaels) or “wise”
- fulfilled other functions: magicians (“scientists”?), poets, philosophers, lawyers, advisors, educators, & so on
- Did not write down beliefs & myths – transmitted orally through long training
- Both men and women served as druids
- Sometimes altered consciousness to forecast & advise – strained Senses to see visions
 - incantation, trance, interpretation of signs, sensory deprivation, hallucinogens (xoxos, mushrooms, mistletoe) Connected with birds & magic of words
- Romans slaughtered many druids and destroyed druidical centers

Poetry

- Today, poetry simply a format – but sacred to ancients Celts / Gaels
- Often visionary – prophetic > Linkage between druids & poets
- Poet’s word feared ... satire could sting & raise welts on person’s face or cause death
- Poet
 - Prophet
 - Seer
 - Historian
 - culture bearer – rememberer of the history & traditions



Cosmological concepts of the Gaels / Celts



Nature

- Celts love of nature
- Nature was divine itself
 - not evil or source of temptation
 - Not failed copy of paradise
 - Divinity was “in the heavens ... on earth, in the sea, in the rivers, in the meadows, in the valleys.”
- Earth was *materna*, a goddess, esp. rivers & other bodies of water
- Celts worshipped out of doors, rather than inside
- Nature not always benign but could be threatening
- But humans were seen as a part of nature, not separate from it





water

- Sacred
- Rivers, springs, lakes, wells
- Sometimes fairies live in 'land under the waves' – *tir ionn thuinne*
- (see goddess *Danu*)

West

- Direction of sunset direction of otherworld
- Destinatior of heroes in some ancient myths (e.g. Bran & the voyage to the magical Isle of Women)
- West represents wisdom & tradition
- Conincidentally, in both Ireland & Scotland, the westernmost territories are most culturally traditional



Trees

- The yew
 - Evergreen, impressive girth & age
 - Associated w/ otherworld, death, immortality
 - Found in graveyards
 - Healing chemicals, such as taxol (fights cancer)
- The oak –
 - sacred tree of druids
 - Connected w/ otherworld
 - Oak groves sites of druid rituals



The otherworld

- Not place apart
- No heaven high above or hell below
- Parallel time & place
- Veil that separated worlds thin – could be penetrated
- Portals to 'otherworld'
 - At sacred sites
 - Stone circles (Stonehenge)
 - Beltane & Samhain (Halloween)
- Take many forms
 - *Tir ionn Thuinne*,
 - *na Sidheachan* (fairy mounds),
 - *Tir nan Og* – land of the ever young = abode of the departed

Monotheism (one god) vs. polytheism (many gods)

- Monarchian
 - implicitly dualistic – whatever is not "god" becomes "not god" or evil
 - Divine outside the world; nature less holy, created by god rather than god itself
 - Masculine divinity, excludes female image of divine
- Polytheism
 - Less dualistic
 - Evil not a cosmic force not at war with god/good but part of natural cycle – perhaps less comfortable, more frightening, less understood
 - Death not opposite of life but natural part
- Celtic polytheism
 - Celtic gods located in place (not universal) – connected w/ 'land'
 - *Tuath* means both land & people
 - Rituals connected to passage of seasons
 - Perhaps a kind of monortheism > not a single divinity but a unity in nature



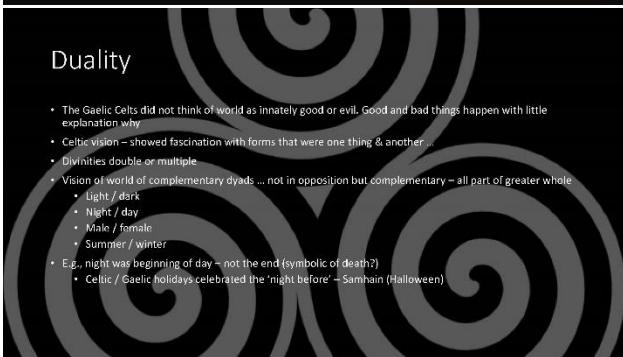
Pelagianism – early Christian philosophy that derived from Celtic roots

- Pelagius – Irish Christian, 500's a.d.
- Reflected "Celtic" view of universe and nature – the "happy heresy":
 - All creation good; and infused with divine
 - World created just as God wished
- Love all that exists
- Viewpoint Opposed by Christian church in early centuries of Christianity – Augustine & others – the world was influenced by Persian sage Muri; this Monarchian view – Augustine rejected physical & (esp.) the sexual world – hindrance to gaining salvation
- Held 'ideal' world better than 'real' world
- "world" bad, spirit good became dominant philosophy in Western Christian civilization



Duality

- The Gaelic Celts did not think of world as innately good or evil. Good and bad things happen with little explanation why
- Celtic vision – showed fascination with forms that were one thing & another ...
- Divinities double or multiple
- Vision of world of complementary dyads ... not in opposition but complementary – all part of greater whole
 - Light / dark
 - Night / day
 - Male / female
 - Summer / winter
- E.g., night was beginning of day – not the end (symbolic of death?)
- Celtic / Gaelic holidays celebrated the 'night before' – Samhain (Halloween)



Òran na seachdain

Teann a-nall 's thoir dhomh do làmh

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38MgxvVSTXk>

Sèist /	<p>Teann a-nall 's thoir dhomh do làmh, Teann a-nall 's thoir dhomh do làmh, Teann a-nall 's thoir dhomh do làmh, Is bheir mi sgrìob do dh'Uibhist leat.</p>	<p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p><i>Come, let's wander hand in hand,</i> <i>Come, let's wander hand in hand,</i> <i>Come, let's wander hand in hand,</i> <i>And take a trip to Uist with me</i></p>
	<p>Tha am feasgar ciùin 's na siantan blàth, Tha ghrian san iar mar mheall den òr, Tha an cuan mar sgàthan gorm gun sgleò, 'S bu mhòr mo mhiann bhith 'n Uibhist leat.</p>	<p><i>The evening's calm, the weather warm,</i> <i>The western sun is an orb of gold,</i> <i>The sea is a mirror, clear and blue,</i> <i>I long to be in Uist with you</i></p>
Sèist /	<p>Tha sìth air aghaidh beinn is raon, Tha fàileadh cùbhraidh thar an fhraoich, 'S tha neòinean bhòidheach fàs gach taobh, 'S bu mhòr mo mhiann bhith 'n Uibhist leat.</p>	<p><i>Chorus</i></p> <p><i>There's peace across the moors and glens</i> <i>And sweetly smell the heather bens</i> <i>Fair are the flowers, bright their hue</i> <i>I long to be in Uist with you</i></p>
Sèist /	<p>Na h-eòin a' seinn air bhàrr nan geug 'S an seillean tional mil dha fhèin Na h-uain a' mireag-ruith 's a leum 'S bu mhòr mo mhiann bhith 'n Uibhist leat.</p>	<p><i>Chorus</i></p> <p><i>The birds are singing on the tops of the branches</i> <i>And the bees gathering honey for themselves</i> <i>The sheep are playing – running and jumping</i> <i>Great is my wish to be in Uist with you</i></p>
Sèist /	<p>Tha 'n iarmailt gorm gun lorg air neul An sruthan torghan nuas bhon t-sliabh A' chuthag għlas 's gùg-gùg na beul 'S bu mhòr mo mhiann bhith 'n Uibhist leat.</p>	<p><i>Chorus</i></p> <p><i>The sky is blue without a trace of cloud</i> <i>The streams murmuring down from the mountains</i> <i>The grey cuckoo sings coo-koo</i> <i>And great my wish to be in Uist with you</i></p>
Sèist /	<p>Tha 'n crodh a' geumnaich anns a' chrò A' bhanarach 's a cuach na dòrn A' seinn a duan 's i bleogħann bhò 'S bu mhòr mo mhiann bhith 'n Uibhist leat.</p>	<p><i>Chorus</i></p> <p><i>The cattle are lowing in the pen</i> <i>The dairymaid and her bucket in hand</i> <i>Singing her song and herding cows</i> <i>And great my wish to be in Uist with you</i></p>
Sèist /		<p><i>Chorus</i></p>

Bu mhòr mo mhiann bhith 'n siud san àm,
Is m' inntinn fad' bho thìr nan Gall,
Ag èisteachd sgeulachd, òran 's rann,
'S bu mhòr mo mhiann bhith an Uibhist leat.

Sèist /

Tha pòr na machrach làn de bhiadh
Tha breac air linne 's lach air sgiath
Tha iasg am pailteas sa Chuan Shiar
'S bu mhòr mo mhiann bhith an Uibhist leat.

Sèist /

Is dìomhain dhuinne bhith cho faoin
A' siubhal saoghal riuth gach maoin,
Tha beatha is slàinte an tìr mo ghaoil,
'S gun tèid mi thàmh do dh'Uibhist leat.

Sèist /

*Great my wish to be there this time
And my mind far from the land of the Gall
Hearing stories, songs, and poems
Great my wish to be in Uist with you*

Chorus

*The harvest of the machair are full of food
Salmon in ponds and ducks on the wing
Fish plenty in the Western Sea
Great my wish to be in Uist with you*

Chorus

*How can we be such silly fools
To roam the world in search of fame?
There's health and wealth in the isle I love
And I shall stay in Uist with you*