

Caibideil 6

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
- The definite article (“the”) & the nominative case of nouns
- Dualchas nan Gàidheil – *Carmina Gadelica* – *Hymns & Incantations*
- Òran -

Sean fhacal an t-seachdain

Nach do rug do chat na cuileanan.

- Hasn't your cat given birth to puppies! (Aren't you lucky!)



The definitive article (“the”) with nouns

As we’ve discussed before, there is no word for *a* or *an* in Gàidhlig. All indefinite nouns simply are referred to by the noun by itself:

- Doras – a door
- Balach – a boy
- Taigh – a house
- Eaglais – a church
- Leabaidh – a bed
- Caileag – a girl

For definite nouns (those taking a “the”), the case is quite different. There is a variety of articles (*the*’s) that are used with Gaelic nouns (not to scare you, but the definite article can vary according to

- gender,
- case,
- initial/first letter, or
- singular/plural

– all in all, making for something like 60 different possibilities, *depending ...*), and for this reason we need to approach this topic slowly, starting off with the nominative.

Grammar reminder:

Definition: a “nominative” noun is the root form of the noun -- the word form you will find in the dictionary when you look it up – the unchanged, unaltered, singular version of the noun. (Remember, a noun is a “person, place, thing, or idea.”)

The nominative is also known as the accusative or the subjective form or “case”. The latter because it is the form used when the noun is the subject of the sentence.

Grammar reminder: the subject of a sentence is the “do-er” of the action, as in

- The **boy** hit the ball.

In this, “boy” is the subject of the verb.

Masculine nouns:

For masculine nouns that begin with a vowel, use the article “an” and the prefix t- (or an t-), thusly

Hint for memorizing: Sometimes, it is easier to remember a specific example than a general rule. Hence, these are given with the adjective mnemonic to further remind you of the gender); as well, a suggested commonly used noun is colored in red. So, if you

remember, for instance, “an t-òran binn” as your model for masculine nouns that begin with a vowel, you can plug any similar noun into that pattern.

Noun	English	Definite	w/ adjective
Òran	Song	An t-òran	An t-òran binn
Each	Horse	An t-each	An t-each mòr
Òrd	Hammer	An t-òrd	An t-òrd mòr
Ùrlar	Floor	An t-ùrlar	An t-ùrlar dubh*
Ionad	Place, location	An t-ionad	An t-ionad mòr
Actar	Actor	An t-actar	An t-actar math

Dubh=black

For masculine nouns that begin with the infamous b, f, m, & p, (bowl of fluffy mashed potatoes) the article “**am**” is used:

Noun	English	Definite form	
Balach	Boy	Am balach	Am balach mòr
Bàta	Boat	Am bàta	Am bàta beag
Bata	Stick	Am bata	Am bata mòr
Fèis	Festival	Am fèis	
Facal	Word	Am facal	
Mathan	Bear	Am mathan	
Muir	Sea	Am muir	
Paipear	Paper	Am paipear	
Pàigheadh	Paying, payment	Am pàigheadh	
Boireannach	Woman	Am boireannach	

For all other masculine nouns, we use the article **an**:

Noun	English	Definite form	w/ adjective
Cnoc	Hill	An cnoc	An cnoc mòr
Toll	Hole	An toll	An toll beag
Latha	Day	An latha	An latha fada*
Saighdear	Soldier	An saighdear	An saighdear mòr
Duine	Man	An duine	An duine math
Seòmar	Room	An seòmar	
Rùm	Room	An rùm	

*Fada = long

Feminine nouns

Feminine nouns beginning with our infamous b, f, m, p and the gutturals c & g are **all lenited and take the article a'**:

Noun	English	Definite form	w/ adjective
Caileag	Girl	A' chaileag	A' chaileag bheag
Cailleach	Old woman	A' chailleach	A' chailleach mhòr
Gealach	Moon	A' ghealach	A' ghealach mhòr
Bùth	Shop	A' bhùth	A' bhùth bheag
Màthair	Mother	A' mhàthair	A' mhàthair bheag

Maihdeann	Maiden, girl	A' mhaighdeann	A' mhaighdeann mhòr
Breug	Lie	A' bhreug	A' bhreug mhòr

The f-feminine nouns present us with a special case:

Like the words above, those feminine nouns that are **f+consonant** are lenited and take the article **an** :

Freagairt	Answer	An fhreagairt	An fhreagairt mhath
Fraing	France	An Fhraing	An Fhraing bhòidheach
Fleasg	Garland, spray (of flowers)	An fhleasg	

*bòidheach/bhòidheach = beautiful

For 'f+vowel' feminine nouns, the definite article **an** is **still** used, but the noun is lenited:

Noun	English	Definite form	w/ adjective
Fiamhachd	Fear, timidity	an fhiamhachd	
Fàilte	Welcome	An fhàilte	An fhàilte mhath
Fianais	Evidence	An fhianais	
Fineag	Mite	An fhineag	
Fine	Clan, race, tribe	An fhine	
Finealtachd	Polished manners, sensitivity	An Fhinealtachd	

S: For feminine nouns beginning with an s+vowel, or an s+liquid (sl-, sn-, or sr-), you use an + the prefix t- (an t-):

Noun	English	Definite form	w/ adjective
Snàthad	Needle	An t-snàthad	
Sùil	Eye	An t-sùil	An t-sùil dhonn
Sràid	Street	An t-sràid	An t-sràid fhada*
Slat	Stick, rod	An t-slat	
Sìth	Peace	An t-sìth	
Side	Weather	An t-side	

*fada / fhada = long

The good news is that masculine & feminine nouns – beginning with d, t, l, n, r, sg, sm, sp or st all take the definite article an:

Noun	English	Definite form
Leabhar	Book	An leabhar
Sgàthan	Mirror	An sgàthan
Nead	Nest	An nead
Làmh	Hand	An làmh
Sgian	Knife	An sgian
Nighean	Daughter, girl	An nighean

Duine	Man	An duine
Latha	Day	An latha

Plural nouns

Once in a while, Gaelic gives us a break. And here it is!

The nominative plural article in all instances (that is, whether masc. or fem.) is **na** :

Noun	English
Na leabhraichean	The books
Na làithean	The days
Na nigheanan	The girls
Na ballaich	The boys
Na fir	The men
Na bùithtean	The shops
Na saighdearan	The soldiers
Na càraichean	The cars

Plurals that begin with a vowel, the plural definite article = **na h-**

Na h-òrain	The songs
Na h-adhbharan	The reasons
Na h-eich	The horses

EACARSAICHEAN:

Here we're concentrating on nouns with definite articles:

EXERCISE 1 Translate into English

1. An robh thu anns an eaglais?
2. Tha an gille anns an rùm
3. Cha robh duine aig an doras
4. A bheil thu aig an sgoil? Tha
5. Bha i tinn agus cha robh i aig an sgoil
6. Tha mi glè bhlàth faisg air an teine (blàth = warm, teine = fire; faisg air = near)
7. Bha iad ris an doras
8. A bheil an leabaidh anns an rùm?
9. Chan eil an sgoil glan.
10. Tha an eaglais fuar.
11. An robh an sgian geur?
12. A bheil an litir mòr?
13. Bha an nead falamh.
14. Chan robh an t-òran snog.
15. Tha an leabhar fada.

EXERCISE 2 Translate into Gàidhlig

1. The man is busy on the road
2. The boat is on the river
3. They were in the hotel.
4. We weren't very hot at the fire
5. There is a letter from the girl (nighean)
6. There isn't an empty room in the house.
7. Was the book small?
8. The lad is terribly tired.
9. The floor was not wet.
10. The fire was hot.
11. The hand was cold.
12. The girl was not happy.
13. The night is cold.

Sgrìobhadh saor (free writing):

Write 5-10 sentences using a noun with a definite article and using the new vocabulary words below:

Vocabulary:

Adjectives:

Falamh – empty Glan – clean Salach	Geur Ìosal teth
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nouns

Abhainn river Balach – boy Bàta – boat Bata – stick Caileag – girl Doras – door Duine – person, husband, man Each – horse Eaglais – church Fearg – anger Gille – lad Làmh – hand Làr – floor Leabaidh – bed	Leabhar – book Litir – letter Loch – loch Nead – nest Nighean – girl, daughter Oidhche – night Òran – song Peann – pen Rathad – road Seòmar – room Sgàthan mirror Sgian – knife Sgoil – school Sith – peace Snàthad – needle Taigh – house
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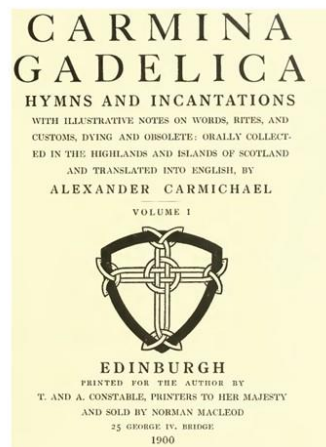
Supplemental material to follow

Dualchas nan Gàidheil

Carmina Gadelica – Hymns, prayers, incantations

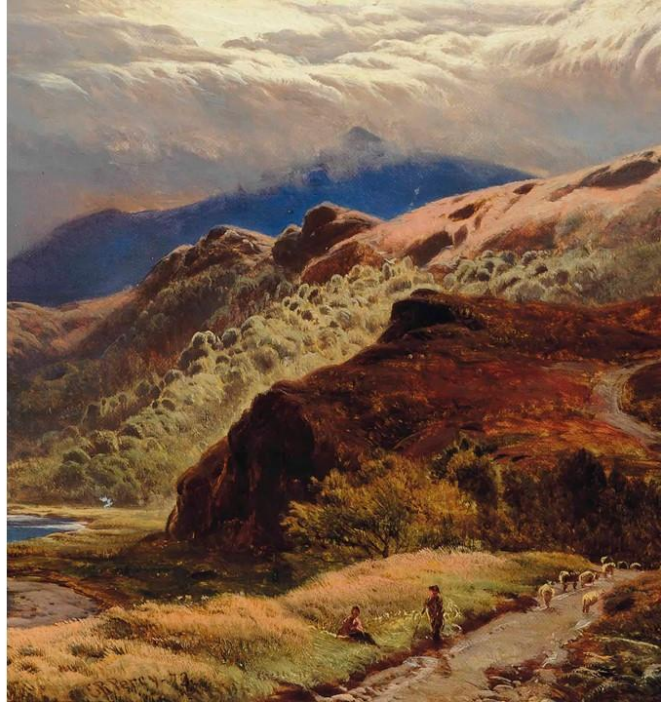
Note on inspiration for this presentation

- Student noted that Gaelic “obair” is a cognate to Latin “opus” – “work”
- Must be careful – not necessarily that one came from the other but that both derived from more ancient source – in this case, the proto-Indo European “opos”
- But even though words might remain, concepts of work differ between cultures – in our contemporary culture, “work” is separate from “life” – we speak of “work/life balance”
- However, in the traditional culture of the Gaels, there was no such distinction ... there was no struggle between opposing concepts: work, life, living, play, song, the world of nature and the world of the spirit all coincided and intertwined
- This is illustrated by this collection – in which no aspect of life is left without a prayer or a hymn



Gathered from the mid- to late 1800s in the Gàidhealtachd.

- Collection illustrates how every aspect of life, no matter how ordinary or mundane, was imbued with spirituality – the spirit of things was interwoven with their earthly existence
- Although the spiritual references are highly Christianized, it is believed that these references are 'imported' and laid over pre-Christian hymns and prayers to ancient gods and to nature itself (as illustrated by prayers directly to "nature").
- One contributor said that much of what he heard as a child "must have been about the wild beliefs and practices of his people of the long long ago, and perhaps not so long ago either." (Carmichael, v1, p6-7)
- The mix of influences is seen in references such as those to Brigid – Christian saint, pagan goddess, foster mother of Jesus; or in poems to the sun or the moon, with their mixtures of Christian and pagan symbology.
- As the University of Edinburgh put it, there have been suspicions that not only were the original incantations altered to suit the prevailing religious atmosphere, but
- "Niggling doubts remained ... concerning just how much Carmichael [himself] had edited and polished the original texts he had collected in order to present them in print ... [sparking] heated scholarly debate over Carmina's authenticity."



Ora nam buadh Invocation of the graces

- probably originally composed to a young woman on her marriage. The phrase 'eala dhonn,' brown swan, would indicate that the girl was young – "Is tu an eala dhonn," – not yet a white (mature) swan.
- The allusions to both Christian female figures & Gaelic (pagan) heroines provides example of mix of influences & sources



IONNLAIME do bhasa

Ann am frasa fiona,
Ann an liu nan lasa,
Ann an seachda siona,
Ann an subh craobh,
Ann am bainne meala,
Us cuirime na naoi buaidhean glana caon,
Ann do ghruaidhean caomha geala,

Is tu gleus na Mnatha Sithe,
Is tu beus na Bride bithe,
Is tu creud na Moire mine,
Is tu gnìomh na mnatha Greuig,
Is tu sgeimh na h-Eimir aluinn.
Is tu mein na Dearshul agha.
Is tu meanm na Meabha laidir,
Is tu taladh Binne-bheul.

I BATHE thy palms
In showers of wine,
In the lustral fire,
In the seven elements,
In the juice of the rasps,
In the milk of honey.
And I place the nine pure choice graces
In thy fair fond face.

Thine is the skill of the Fairy Woman,
Thine is the virtue of Bride the calm,
Thine is the faith of Mary the mild,
Thine is the tact of the woman of Greece.
Thine is the beauty of Emir the lovely,
Thine is the tenderness of Darthula delightful.
Thine is the courage of Maebh the strong.
Thine is the charm of Binne-bheul.

Òrain bleoghain Milking songs

- Three or four milking girls among a fold of sixty, eighty, or a hundred cows on meadow or mountain slope.
- The moaning and heaving of the sea afar, the swish of the wave on the shore, the carolling of the lark in the sky, the unbroken song of the mavis on the rock, the broken melody of the merle [orange-beaked blackbird] in the brake, the lowing of the cattle [and] the response of the calves, the singing of the milkmaids in unison with the movement of their hands, and of the soft sound of the snowy milk falling into the pail, the gilding of hill and dale, the glowing of the distant ocean beyond, as the sun sinks into the sea of golden glory,

(Carmichael, v1, p258)



CRONAN BLEOGHAIN milking croon

THIG a Bhreannain o'n a chuan,
Tliig a Thorrainn biiadh nam fear,
Tliig a Mhicheil nihil a nuas
'S dilinn domh-sa bua mo ghean.

Sgath an Ard High gabh ri d' laogh.
Thig a Chaluim chaoimh o'n chro,
Thig a Bhrìde mhor nam buar,
Thig a Mhoire mhin o'n neol,
'S dilinn domh-sa bo mo luaidh.

Thig am fearan o'n a choill,
Thig an traill a druim nan stuagh,
Thig an sionn cha 'n ann am foill,
A chur aoibh air bo nam buadh.
Ho m' aghan, ho m' agh gaoil.

Come, Brendan, from the ocean,
Come, Ternan, most potent of men,
Come, INMichael valiant, down
And propitiate to me the cow of my
joy.

Come, beloved Colum of the fold,
Come, great Bride of the flocks,
Come, fair Mary from the cloud,
And propitiate to me the cow of my
love.
Ho my heifer, ho heifer of my love.

The stock-dove will come from the
wood,
The tusk will come from the wave,
The fox will come but not with
wiles,
To hail my cow of virtues.
Ho my heifer, ho heifer of my love.

DIA LIOM A LAIGHE God with me lying down

- “This poem was taken down in 1866 from Mary Macrae, Harris. She was rather under than over middle height, but strongly and symmetrically formed. She often walked with companions, after the work of the day was done, distances of ten and fifteen miles to a dance, and after dancing all night walked back again to the work of the morning fresh and vigorous as if nothing unusual had occurred.
- She danced at her leisure and carolled at her work like 'Fosgag Mhoire,' Our Lady's lark, above her ... [she was full of] old lore and ... the old ways ... reciting and singing, dancing and merry-making”
- but a [religious] reaction occurred, and Mary Macrae's old-world ways were condemned [as the church stamped out the culture of the Gaels]



Dia leam a
laighe
God with me
lying down

- DIA leam a laighe,
- Dia leam ag eirigh,
- Dia leam anns gach ra solliis.
- Us gun mi ra son as aonais,
- Gun aon ra as aonais.

God with me lying down,
God with me rising up,
God with me in each ray of light,
Nor I a ray of joy without Him,
Nor one ray without Him.



Frith Mhòire the augury of Mary

- The 'frith,' augury, was a species of divination enabling the 'frithir,' augurer, to see into the unseen. This divination was made to ascertain the position and condition of the absent and the lost, and was applied to man and beast. The augury was made on the first Monday of the quarter and immediately before sunrise. The augurer, fasting, and with bare feet, bare head, and closed eyes, went to the doorstep and placed a hand on each jamb. Mentally beseeching the God of the unseen to show him his quest and to grant him his augury, the augurer opened his eyes and looked steadfastly straight in front of him. From the nature and position of the objects within his sight, he drew his conclusions.

Frith Mhòire

DIA faram, Dia fodham,
Dia roinham, Dia am dheoghainn,
's Mis air do shlighe Dhia,
Tlius, a Dhia, air mo luirg.

Mac Muire min-ghil, Rìgh nan dul,
A shulachadh domh-s' na bheil uam,
Le gras nach falnaich, ma 'm choinneamh,
Gu brath nach smalaich 's nach doillich.

God over me, God under me,
God before me, God behind me,
I on Thy path, O God,
Thou, O God, in my steps.

Son of beautiful Mary, King of life.
Give Thou me eyes to see all my quest,
With grace that shall never fail, before me,
That shall never quench nor dim.

GEASLANACHD NA GEALAICH Moon Worship

- "There are many traces of moon beliefs and of moon homage still current in the Western Isles.
- Work – harvesting, sheering, slaughtering, travel, or any venture – was planned around the phases of the moon.
- In some districts old and young kept a coin in their pocket to hail 'ribhinn na h-oidhche,' the queen of the night.
- People went to the highest hill to look for 'èiteag nan reul' [bright woman of the stars] or 'ribhinn na h-oidhche' Then they called out, 'Fhaic! fhaic! ' 'See! See!"
- Herdboys and herdgirls whispered softly in the ear of the cows—'Sud a' ghealach ùr, a rùnag nam bà.' There is the new moon, thou beloved one among cows!



Hymn to the moon

- GLOIR dhuit fein gu bràth,
- A ghealach gheal, a nochd ;
- Is tu fein gu bràth
- Lòchran àigh nam bochd.
- FÀILTE dhut, a ghealach ùr,
- Àilleagan iùil na bàidh !
- Tha mi lùbadh dhut mo ghlùn,
- Tha mi curnadh dhut mo ghràidh.
- Glory to thee for ever,
- Thou bright moon, this night;
- Thyself art ever
- The glorious lamp of the poor.
- Hail to thee, thou new moon,
- Guiding jewel of gentleness !
- I am bending to thee my knee,
- I am offering thee my love.

