

An Litir Bheag

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An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 1,061 (which corresponds to Litir 1,365). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

There is a garden in Elgin, in Moray, that is based on the Bible. There are plants there that appear in the Bible.

It's in Genesis, the first book in the Bible, that there is the first mention of particular species of trees. It's the aspen tree the first one that appears. That's in Genesis Chapter 2, Verse 37.

That's somewhat intriguing for me, because an oral tradition arose among the Gaels that it was from the aspen tree that the wood came from which the crucifixion tree was made. That's the tree on which Jesus Christ was crucified. The old people would say that that was the reason that the leaves and stems of the tree quiver.

However, when we look at the English version of that verse, it's not 'aspen' that is there, but 'poplar'. Those two trees are related to each other. But they are not the same thing.

The craobh-chrithinn, meaning 'poplar', appears another time in the Bible. That is again in the Old Testament in the Book of Hosea, Chapter 4, Verse 13. The text is about bad practices in the old days. Here's what the text says: Air mullaichean nan sliabh tha iad ag iobradh, agus air na slèibhtean tha iad a' losgadh tùise; fo

Tha leas no gàrradh ann an Eilginn, ann am Moireibh, a tha stèidhichte air a' Bhìoball. Tha lusan ann a nochdas anns a' Bhìoball.

'S ann ann an Genesis, a' chiad leabhar anns a' Bhìoball, a tha a' chiad iomradh air gnèithean sònraichte de chraobhan. 'S e a' chraobh-chrithinn a' chiad tè a nochdas. Tha sin ann an Genesis Caibideil 2, Rann 37.

Tha sin car iongantach dhomh, oir dh'èirich beul-aithris am measg nan Gàidheal gur ann bhon chraoibh-chrithinn, no aspen, a thàinig am fiodh às an do rinneadh an crann-ceusaidh. Sin an crann air an robh Ìosa Crìosd air a cheusadh. Chanadh na seann daoine gur e sin as coireach gum bi duilleagan is gasan na craoibhe air chrith.

Ge-tà, nuair a choimheadas sinn air an dreach Bheurla dhen earrainn sin, chan e 'aspen' a tha ann, ach 'poplar'. Tha an dà chraoibh sin càirdeach do chèile. Ach chan e an aon rud a tha ann.

Tha a' chraobh-chrithinn, a' ciallachadh poplar, a' nochdadh turas eile anns a' Bhìoball. Tha sin a-rithist anns an t-Seann Tiomnadh, ann an Leabhar Hosea, Caibideil 4, Rann 13. Tha an teacs mu dheidhinn droch chleachdaidhean anns an t-seann aimsir. Seo na tha an teacs ag ràdh: Air mullaichean nan sliabh tha iad ag iobradh, agus air na slèibhtean tha iad a'

<p>chraobhan daraich agus crithinn agus cuilinn a chionn 's gu bheil an sgàile taitneach.</p> <p><i>That means 'On the mountain summits they make sacrifice and upon the hills they burn incense; under oak trees and poplars and holly because the shade is pleasant.' Now, in the English versions of the Bible that I have, none of them name 'holly'. They say 'elm' or 'terebinth'. The terebinth is a tree that grows in the Middle East.</i></p> <p><i>Those who translated the Bible had a difficulty. They wanted to put in names of trees that the Gaels would recognise. And today, although a holly tree would grow in a Biblical Garden in Scotland, I don't reckon a terebinth would grow there.</i></p>	<p><i>losgadh tùise; fo chraobhan daraich agus crithinn agus cuilinn a chionn 's gu bheil an sgàile taitneach.</i></p> <p>Tha sin a' ciallachadh <i>'On the mountain summits they make sacrifice and upon the hills they burn incense; under oak trees and poplars and holly because the shade is pleasant.'</i> Nise, anns na dreachan Beurla dhen Bhìoball a tha agam, chan eil gin dhiubh ag ainmeachadh <i>'holly'</i>. Tha iad ag ràdh <i>'elm'</i> no <i>'terebinth'</i>. 'S e an <i>terebinth</i> craobh a dh'fhàsas anns an Ear-mheadhanach.</p> <p>Bha duilgheadas aig an fheadhainn a rinn ann an t-eadar-theangachadh dhen Bhìoball. Bha iad airson ainmean chraobhan a chur ann a bhiodh na Gàidheil ag aithneachadh. Agus an-diugh, ged a bhiodh craobh-chuilinn <i>'holly tree'</i> a' fàs ann an Gàrradh Bìobaill ann an Alba, cha chreid mi gum fàsadh <i>terebinth</i> ann.</p>
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