

Explorations of God, language and spirituality, book one

By Linden Alexander Pentecost, from England published with changes as an ebook in the UK on January  
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**by linden alexander pentecost**

I am just some guy from Britain, I have absolutely no idea where my ancestors are from, but, I guess Britain and perhaps a few other places. Although I do not know my own culture, I have found so much inspiration and wonder through learning, often just a little about other cultures and languages. I hope to share this enthusiasm with the hope that more people are encouraged to find a connection to spirituality and nature with cultures and languages.



This is the first in a short series of books, consisting of articles, poems and words, about travel, language and finding God. I attach the idea of 'God' to no one people or language, I feel that, whatever it is, it is an encompassing force, present in all creation, all cultures and all people. This is a book about the relationship between God and language from my experience in various places I have visited. Book one places a particular focus on what I have learned from and through Celtic languages, but this book also relates to other languages to a lesser extent. This book contains the following sections:

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- .Celtic Cumbria
- .Gaelic Christianity
- .To the Outer Hebrides, Mannin and Kernow
- .The Story of Arthur and the cave
- .Nouns
- .Meaning within Scottish Gaelic words
- .Nouns in other languages

# Explorations of God, language and spirituality, book one

By Linden Alexander Pentecost, written and self-published in October 2021 from England, UK as a paperback, republished with small changes in January 2022 from England, UK as an ebook. I am also a resident of and was born in the UK.

Some of these posts were originally on my, now deleted blogs, Iwerjon and Voicesofthunder on wordpress. In addition to writing the body of the text and taking the cover photo and author photo, I also wrote the poems and language examples throughout this wee book. This book is written for my family, friends and for all others who it finds well.

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## Introduction

This book is about no specific thing, other than sharing my love of language and perhaps drawing this in a sacred light. I found that my interest in languages was far from being simply a technical interest; more than that, they help me to understand and connect with the world around me, and in doing so help me to understand myself and others better. I feel that language is sacred and given by God somehow, or Allah, or however you interpret the divine creation around us. Although I often describe this force as 'God', I mean in no way to imply that me calling it such makes me more right or correct than others, rather this is just how I speak to it. In other languages and cultural settings I may speak to it differently. I also consider myself a Hindu, and I have practiced with people from other religions, including Islam, druidism; when I travel, I hold a respect for the local deities in my heart.

I have great respect for the traditions of indigenous peoples throughout the world, I also believe their deities to be real, and that their closeness to harmony can teach us again how to be in balance with our world. My writing is personal experience, mainly with influences from Christianity, Hinduism and druidism, or rather 'Welsh Neopaganism'. Some of what I have written here in relation to personal experience, and what I have wondered, is not to be taken as truth, take it as fiction if you like, because I honestly don't think that we can know the answers to some things, not accurately. I am much more certain about the accuracy of the languages however, but when it comes to my philosophical thoughts about language, all I can say is that there is the phrase in Arabic, الله أعلم, often translated as 'God knows best'.

I know that my thoughts and imagination are only a mirror of the creator's truth, so they can be seen as nothing more than an imaginery mirror. The only thing I truly know, is that a divine force and will for kindness exists in creation, and that sometimes perhaps it opens my imagination, even though I am always unable to know what is true. This applies even to how we generally classify languages, much of the time I think there simply isn't enough proof that a connection between things can be used to imagine the source or origin. الله أعلم

# Jamaica

Maybe in some kind of timeless, eternal sense, I listened to Abba when my dad took me to Jamaica, unaware that in seven years time my heart and feet would take me to Northern Europe in summer, to Sweden. The two places are so far from each other, but, the feeling of magic in nature and language, that I felt with Swedish, I also felt in Jamaica. Like in the Canary Islands, I had no knowledge really of the culture and history of Jamaica. I knew a little about Jamaican music and food, and it felt natural and relaxing to me. But I knew nothing about what God, religion and the world is in the diverse Jamaican culture. Nor did I know anything of the older indigenous people on these islands. I knew though that the people are nice. There is a kindness and desire to help and look after, humbleness and connection to the natural world, the lush forests, the ocean, beaches, and the clear rivers. And of course, the language I feel must reflect this reality and perception in the way that only it can. The language in Jamaica may be classed as some by English, as a variant of English, or a speech that is historically and currently connected to English. It can also be said that the language in Jamaica is sometimes much more distant from English, and that Jamaican Patois is a language in its own right, with varying degrees of connectedness and relatedness to English throughout history. I personally think that the latter is much more true, and I like seeing Patois written and spoken, it's beautiful.

But I am not Jamaican and I don't think I have a right to describe their language, and I don't understand enough about it to be able to say anything really. But as with the essence of the music and culture, for me I can say that the the language feels intimately connected to the world, and the way that this land appeared and felt to me. There was an element of the first indigenous people, which I could feel. And an element of the sky, birds and music, which somehow reminded me of Abba and the forests of Sweden, and perhaps knowing somewhere, inside, that I would be going there. I remember the music of the Rio Grande in Jamaica, flowing like liquid crystal and roaring in the warm sun, the green trees glowing emerald and alive with the sound of birds. The Rio Grande flows down, a braided river meandering like a snake among the gentle grey pebbles, sometimes deeper, sometimes with deep pools, where men can stand on their bamboo rafts, over the deep, bright-turquoise, life-filled waters.

The valley brings up feelings which remind me of the song Shenandoah, there is a particular version of this song by Van Morrison and The Chieftains which comes to mind. Perhaps because of this version of the song, the song Shenandoah also reminds me of Ireland, of Killarney National Park, where the forests, rivers and mountains are also flowing with green tree light and the sounds of birds. What this song is about for me, is following the river home, the river takes us out into the cosmos, but ultimately takes us home too, which is love.

## Celtic Cumbria

I created a Brythonic name for a mountain: **Er Monidh Aiarn**, 'The Iron Mountain', I don't think there's anything too wrong with re-empowering a sacred mountain, using the Brythonic tongue. The mountain in question is Stickle Pike in Dunnerdale, England, and the Northern Brythonic language was that Celtic language close to Welsh, once spoken in places like Cumbria in England, and in Southern Scotland. I guess **Er Monidh Aiarn** could be called a poetic name. Stickle Pike is a small, pointy-shaped mountain in the Dunnerdale Fells, between The Lickle Valley and The Duddon Valley, in Western Cumbria.

The area is abounding in Celtic names, that could be interpreted as either Brythonic or Goidelic, often as both. Some of the words remaining around the Duddon Valley, with my Brythonic interpretation, include:

**brock** – badger, as in 'Brockbarrow Crag'

**pen** – a head, of which there are two named in the Duddon Valley area

**hesk** – sedge, as in ‘Hesk Fell’

**cumb** – a round hollow or valley, as in the mountain Black Combe

**dýfoc** – abounding in darkness, blackness, as in Devokewater, a nearby lake

Some of the names are definitely Brythonic, or P-Celtic, **pen** is the same in Welsh, but **cenn** in Old Irish, also **hesk** is ‘hesg’ in Welsh, but **seisc** in Old Irish. This is usually a reliable way to tell Goidelic and Brythonic apart, Goidelic languages kept the initial s. The same applies to the word **pen**, this is why the languages are sometimes divided into P-Celtic and Q-Celtic, the word **pen** is cognate to the Gaulish **pennon**, but outside of Celtic, the word appears absent in Indo-European languages. Because Gaulish and Brythonic are both P-Celtic, they use the form of this word with ‘p’. Whereas Irish as **ceann** and Manx has **kione**, from the Primitive/Ogham Irish **\*qenn-**, giving Old Irish **cenn**. (The Primitive Irish **q** here represents [k<sup>w</sup>]).

To make matters more confusing, Scottish Gaelic, Manx and Irish have the word **beinn** for ‘mountain’, and some think that this is a borrowing from the Brythonic word **\*penn-**. But, Cumbria has the word **benn** as well, which seems to have a different meaning to the Goidelic meaning. So in a way, Cumbria shows where the Goidelic and Brythonic languages almost seem to conjoin, at least with certain words. This again helps to show the close, and sometimes confusing relationship, between P-Celtic and Q-Celtic in Cumbria. And to add further to this mystery, the word may not even be of Indo-European origin anyway, so there could be much more to the history of this name.

Some of these names can also be interpreted as Goidelic, instead of **dýfoc** we could say **dúbhach**. Instead of **brock**, we could spell this word in Goidelic as **brocc**. There is sometimes very little difference between the Old Irish and ancient Brythonic pronunciations.

Not far from Dunnerdale, are the 'Kinmont' names. These names likely come from, or at least, were later spoken by Goidelic speakers. We can connect this name to an older Goidelic **Cenn Monaid**.

In terms of identifying the original culture of these Celtic speakers, we might look to archaeology, and even to some of the archaeological sites lying about Dunnerdale, The Duddon Valley, and the surrounding mountains and crags.

There is at least some connection between the Celtic languages, and the Bronze Age Atlantic cultures. These people may, or may not have spoken Celtic, but it is obvious that the Atlantic Bronze Age in some way provided the basis to the later Celtic Iron Age. So it's not unreasonable to look at the Bronze Age Cumbrian sites, as being ancestrally Celtic. Even if they didn't speak Celtic languages, they are certainly connected to the basis of Celtic culture in Western Britain. In Cumbria it is often hard to say whether a word is Brythonic, Goidelic, or both or neither. There is a Celtic element, but how it came about, and how exactly these people called themselves, is another matter entirely.

Furthermore, the sites in the Duddon Valley area have a western orientation, on the Irish Sea, close to the Isle of Man, Galloway in Scotland, and to Ireland, and to the once-Goidelic parts of Wales. The Atlantic Bronze Age in this part of Cumbria, and the subsequent Celtic speakers, may represent a founding Celtic culture, which would likely have had just as close links to Ireland and the Isle of Man, if not more so, than to Wales and mainland Britain.

Nevertheless, when the Celtic heritage of Cumbria has been discussed, it has been general practice to put the data into a Brythonic model. This model helps us to recreate, and re-live that culture, even by recreating the language to some degree. I think that writing in Cumbric, or using ancient, reconstructed Brythonic, helps to keep that connection alive, and to re-immense ourselves within it, creatively, giving it new life.

But in truth, the connection to Ireland, and to the wider, Ibero-Atlantic Celtic culture, was perhaps just as important, especially when referring to the



earliest appearance of Celtic language and culture in Western Britain. It is perhaps no coincidence, that the Isle of Man, has inscriptions written in so called Primitive Irish, Ogham language. I have wondered if Ogham Celtic/Primitive Irish is a continuation of that original Atlantic Celtic culture in Ireland and Britain. Despite Ogham Celtic being Q-Celtic, like modern Goidelic, we still find Ogham in Brythonic-speaking areas with a Western, Irish Sea orientation. There is even one example in central England, again, implying an ancestral importance in Ogham Celtic; and with Ogham Celtic perhaps providing a link between Brythonic-Celtic areas, and the wider, ancestral Atlantic-Celtic cultures. This might even be suggestive that Ogham Celtic/Primitive Irish, has been in Britain as long as Brythonic has.

So, who were these ancestral Celtic speakers? Likely they weren't purely 'Celtic', since no such thing exists. They were likely made up of a continuation of earlier tribes and peoples, who, undergoing social and cultural change, became the people we identify as Celts, due to their more recent re-connections in language and cultural formation.

The Bronze Age was a time of change, when the old, cultural and spiritual lines of heritage, became re-formed around new ideas and connections. One such change, was the abandonment of certain sacred sites from the Neolithic. In many cases, these sites were continued by people, and in some cases, megalithic architecture continued as a part of Bronze Age culture, albeit on a smaller scale.

## Gaelic Christianity

Tá an ghrian ag éirí  
Tá solas na gréine nam chroidhe  
Tá Dia nam anam  
Tá beatha is draoidheacht ann  
Amen

The above poem I wrote in Donegal Ulster Irish. I was a Christian when I was younger, I then became more interested in paganism, before going back to an interest in Christianity again, whilst also coming to understand God differently. There are many Christians who find deep meaning and compassion through their religion.

As I was growing up and went to churches, I occasionally felt some kind of presence, something special and magical. I grew up mainly focused on the sciences, so my brain didn't understand how a God could really exist; although neither did I disregard it, I kind of assumed that God was there. Despite being very science-orientated, I had always felt a love and magic for particular places, songs and landscapes. And along with my mum, this was probably my main connection to the divine as a child: nature. Landscapes, mountains, lakes, the wind as it blows waves on water. All of these things had spirit and magic to me, although I could not explain it at the time, nor did I know that it was 'spiritual'.

Then when I was fifteen, I went to the Isle of Arran, off the coast of southwest Scotland. Arran or *Eilean Arainn* in Gaelic, is a wild and beautiful island; it is full of landscapes, colour, mountains of different shapes and figures. Small wooded glens where streams play soothing music, machair with long grasses, blowing in the wind, where ancient stones stand. These ancient stones were erected in the Neolithic, at Machrie Moor on Arran. When I visited the island, I still only saw spirituality through the perspective of the one God.

But I realised that, where I was having problems with my own Christian religion, as Christianity as a whole; when I went to the Isle of Arran, I was able to relate to Christianity, and to God, through the Gaelic culture and landscape. I will get more onto this topic of 'Gaelic Christianity' a little later.

What it was, was that when I was in those landscapes on Arran, and I felt them, and I felt how perfect the world is, I realised that it would be incredibly unfair if there wasn't *something*, especially as my instincts and intuition were telling me that that *something*, is indeed there.

I looked more to Christianity, trying to understand the different, sometimes wild theories about how the world could be only 5,000 years old. I would watch Christian videos online, taking on wisdom, feeling myself become closer to understanding whatever it was, and yet this did not feel like 'my religion'. It felt too formal, too detached, and it did not give me the answers that I wanted.

It wasn't until some time later, when I came to look at Gaelic traditions on fairies, that my belief in the supernatural and the divine went beyond doubt. I began to look at God, not through the perspective of what we see today, but to look at God as the ancient Irish Christians did.

A lot of the *Christian* elements in Irish spirituality probably pre-date Christianity, including the symbol of the cross, which is also found in 5,000 year old Neolithic monuments, for example.

But continuing on, the early Irish Christians would live in isolated places, on islands on lakes, or islands looking over the seas, living in beehive shaped buildings, where they most likely meditated upon God, listening and taking in the form of God through the wild, immensity of the nature around them.

This was an idea of God that I could relate to. It was not doctrine and specifics, it was individual, between myself and the whole cosmos, between myself and God.

When I have looked into Early Gaelic Christianity, I have wondered if the Christian and pagan elements can both be encompassed together. Even though Christianity as a whole is said to be a monotheistic religion, I personally believe that the early Irish Christians did not discount other forms of the divine, as it manifested through the intricately complex cycles of nature and creation that exist around us. This is perhaps the essence of the 'old traditions' and how they interact with the idea of a one God; for me, it is possible for there to be one God, and also an infinite number of other Gods or divine forms that are in their totality and individually, divine creator. I do completely respect all indigenous beliefs on this; I accept for example that many indigenous cultures do not have a single creator deity. But in my opinion this is not entirely what God represents, my idea of 'God' in this

sense is very compatible with indigenous beliefs, because 'God' to me, is the underlying 'love' in the cosmos, and this concept of good, kindness and love, is transferable across all beliefs and religions. That is what I think the essence of God is, love, kindness, something that exists above and beyond the behaviour and patterning of the cosmos as a whole; whilst also underlying it. This is at least what I believe.

I feel that the divine has an infinite number of forms and expressions, ancestors, deities, connected to the sky, and to the trees, the waters and seas. Another thing I imagine is that they are associated with the behaviour of the cosmos as a whole, and its intricacy, from the spiralling of galaxies to the growing roots from a tree.

## To the Outer Hebrides, Mannin and Kernow

Ten years ago I was in a house with family members, looking out of the window at the green fields and the sea. This might conjure an image of fields that is not what I am describing however; this view was in the Hebridean Islands of Scotland. The fields may be partially wild, wet with rain, ferns growing, rockiness, and crags. The sea is a colour that is perhaps indescribable, a vivid shining turquoise, a darker blue-green of no description. The sky too changes, and the wind blows, the clouds shine pink in sunrise, rolling over mountains from the sea. The skies are sometimes huge, allowing one's eyes to look into the distance, where the sea and sky seem to meet.

These islands are very special to me and to my family. Although I do not know where my ancestors are from, Northeast England, Wales somewhat, somewhere near Stockport, who knows. These islands are very special to me all the same. All places are, but this one, I feel I know somewhat. There are multiple layers of what we might term spiritual tradition on the islands. There are ancient sites, stone circles and houses that date to thousands of years ago. And then there is the later Christian religion, which, I feel can be anchored and together with those earlier traditions. Fundamentally, I feel

that something central to Gaelic Christianity and to the earlier peoples, was that the divine was visible in the nature around us. In the way it felt. And that is perhaps especially prominent in these islands. The mountains, feel alive to me. That can be interpreted in a pre-Christian sense, that the mountains are like ancient wizards of stone, watching over nature and the world. And it can also exist in a Gaelic Christian sense, I feel. In that all these marvels of nature are manifestation of a divine God or presence, the spirit who created the cosmos.

I have wondered if language is somehow quite connected to this two. The spirituality of the Western Isles, for me, always leads back to the language, and within the language, there are clues as to how the cosmos, spirits and the divine, have been referred to natively on these islands. The music of Gaelic Christianity is something unique in itself, the description, style, poetry, and sounds of the music, seem to transport me to a different perception of the world, and somehow, the divine becomes more visible through the wildness of nature. Gaelic does describe the world differently to English. For two languages that are spoken next to each other, Scottish Gaelic and English are fundamentally very, very different. Both are Indo-European languages, but English belongs to the Germanic branch of Indo-European, Scottish Gaelic belongs to the Celtic branch. Within Celtic there are two main families known now, Brythonic and Goidelic. Scottish Gaelic is a Goidelic language, like Irish and Manx.

Similarly to Russian, Irish and Scottish Gaelic have a sort of system of soft or hard consonants and vowels, where soft sounds are palatalised. For example, the l in **leam** is soft, and the l in **latha** is hard, or broad. Scottish Gaelic, like other Celtic languages, have consonant mutation. Initially and internally, for example, **muir** – sea, **anns a' mhuir** – in the sea. Changes in whether consonants or vowels are broad or slender, indicate the plural and genitive forms of nouns **each** – horse, **eich** – horses, **cat** – cat, **cait** – cats.

Word order in Scottish Gaelic is different to English, the verb generally comes first, the pronoun or noun follows. Such as, **chuala mi** – I heard, **chuala u** – you singular heard, **chuala sinn** – we heard, **chuala an duine** – the man heard, etc.

Another thing about Scottish Gaelic are the conjugated prepositions, which are focused very much on location and where an action is located. For

example, saying 'I have a cat' is **tha cat agam** literally 'there is a cat at-me, **agam** – at-me, **agad** – at-you singular, **aige** – at-him, **aice** – at-her, **againn** – at-us, **agaibh** – at-you plural, **aca** – at-them.

Manx Gaelic on the Isle of Man, Mannin, uses similar lenition processes to the Irish and Scottish Gaelic languages, although with Manx having a very different written form, the mutations are naturally written differently.

Furthermore, the lenition processes in Manx are arguably somewhat separate from the common Goidelic lenition system, because we can talk about secondary lenition in Manx, for example, where [s] becomes medially [ð], even though it is not written. Some Manx nouns are: **kayt** – cat, **baatey** – boat, **thie** – house. After the word for 'my', which in Manx is **my**, these words mutate: **my chayt** – my cat, **my vaatey** – my boat, **my hie** – my house

**ta baatey er y traie** – there is a boat on the beach

**ta my vaatey er y traie** – my boat is on the beach

**ta'n thie ayns Mannin** – the house is in The Isle of Man

**cha nel my hie ayns Mannin** – my house is not in the Isle of Man

Back to The Outer Hebrides again, I will recount this. When I looked across at the ocean, I saw that it was eternally beautiful. Wild, but somehow our source, like the rains of the sky, the tears of God perhaps. I remember when it rained outside, I read some things in different languages. I read from a book, *Gaelic words and expressions of South Uist and Eriskay, Collected by Fr.Allan MacDonald of Eriskay, edited by J.L.Campbell*, which a friend had leant me. Sat in a cozy room, with a cross hanging on the door, reading connections to God and spirit in the culture and traditions that are carried in the language and its dialects. I planned to find more out about Icelandic culture too, and, Gaelic Christianity may have been somehow present in early Iceland, and most definitely did at some point interact with Icelandic culture. This Norse culture was also connected to these islands, through the Norrøn language on these Western Isles, visible in many place-names like Sanday, from the Norrøn **Sandey** 'sand island'. I read too a little about Irish, Manx, Swedish, Bondska, Trøndersk and Meänkieli, which I shall get on to some other time.

Below are some examples of basic sentences in Scottish Gaelic

tha mi á Glaschu – I am from Glasgow

tha mi – I am

tha – am, is, are, there is, there are,

mi – I

á – from, out of

Glaschu – Glasgow

có ás a tha thu? – where are you from? (singular)

có ás – where from?

a – linking particle, that

tha thu – you are (singular)

thu – you

tha an leabhar agam – I have the book

tha – am, is, are, there is, there are

an leabhar – the book

an – definite article, the

leabhar – book

agam – at-me, a form of **aig** 'at'

bheil iasg agad? – do you (singular) have a fish?

bheil – replaces **tha** when asking questions

iasg – fish, a fish

agad – at-you (singular), a form of **aig** 'at'

## tha mi a' seinn – I am singing

**tha mi** – I am

**a'** – translates similarly to the ending -ing on verbs in English

**seinn** – singing, sing

Slightly later on that year, myself, my grandfather, my dad, and my grandad's friend, went down to Cornwall for a week of exploring mining history, engines and other historical things. I remember it was raining and November in Truro. We went into a museum and saw an Egyptian display, and I remember feeling like I wanted to cry for some reason. Maybe because I fundamentally felt that this person did not want to be out on display like this. It was dark and raining outside, blustery but atmospheric and enchanting.

I found yet another book on the Cornish language, called *Bora Brav* by Polin Prys. From my own experience, travel, and visiting different expressions of nature and culture, have given me a greater feeling of connection to the world as a whole. And this often seems to coincide with feelings of the spiritual and heavenly. Cornwall's ancient past is full of mystery, and was not well recorded. But like Scotland, Wales and Western England, Gaelic Christianity was connected to Cornwall, as attested by Ogham inscriptions.

The island of Lundy further into the Bristol Channel may be another example of a place early Celtic Christianity was important. Like Parts of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the Isle of Man, the coastline of Cornwall is alive with enchantment, lush nature and the wildness of the seas and the skies. For thousands of years people have built sacred monuments here, and in Celtic Christian times, stone churches of dramatic location were built among the granite, bracken and heather. Cornish belongs to the Brythonic branch of Celtic, rather than the Goidelic branch, as Scottish Gaelic does. But it shares with Scottish Gaelic many of the unique features that make it a Celtic language, some of them found widely across Europe and elsewhere, others are more specific to Celtic and other language families, like



conjugated prepositions for example. Cornish is known as **Kernowek**, or **An Yeth Kernowek** 'The Cornish Language'. Cornwall is known as **Kernow**.

We visited other places, including Chysauster, which takes its name from the Cornish word **chi** – 'house'. This place reminded me of the west of Ireland, and Southwest Scotland. And the atmosphere here was very special. The ancient stone houses, roofless, are nestled among bracken, heather and grass, upon a hillside where there was mist. Very few people were at Chysauster on that November day, but my relatives, a friend, and myself, and the haunting wind and mists from the sea. Another thing I remember from this particular trip was having a pint and playing pool with my grandad, and basically, I was absolutely dreadful. I mean, I wasn't just a bit off, I mean I was completely not good at all, which most amused my grandad. Now, here are some poems I wrote in Scottish Gaelic, with their English translation

You are magical and wild  
Big waves coming from the depths  
Mountains are rising  
From the sea  
Stormy but quiet  
Ancestors standing on stars  
The light of God from the west

Tha u draoidheil is fiadhaich  
Tonntan móra 'tighinn ás an doimhneachd  
Tha beanntan ag éirigh  
Ás a' mhuir  
Stoirmeil ach ciùin  
Sinnsearan a' seasamh air rionnagan  
Solas Dhé bhon iar

Rinn Dia bàrdachd nam beann  
Rinn Dia na h-òrain shìorraidh  
Rinn Dia fuaimnean nan aibhnichean  
Rinn Dia seallaidhean na gréine  
Rinn Dia sgeulachdan na mara

God did the poetry of the mountains  
God made the eternal songs  
God made the sounds of the rivers  
God made the views of the sun  
God made the stories of the sea

## The story of Arthur and the Cave

Across many parts of Wales and Cornwall, and what was Brythonic England, there are legends and stories that connect places to the name of Arthur.

This name translates to 'bear man', and it does make me wonder about these stories of Arthur about certain places, and the presence of bears in ancient Wales and elsewhere. Legends from several places, talk about a cave in which King Arthur sleeps. And that one day he will be awoken again, when the world needs him. I have wondered if this story is related to the bear as a sacred, ancient animal. I have wondered this, when I have looked across the mountains of North Wales, and seen the pink sun set golden on the light grey ancient, volcanic rocks, with green and mist in the valleys around, boulders and lakes and lush green trees.

The legends of King Arthur have surely been told in new forms and new ways, obscuring what the original meaning of the stories might mean. But it can be said that the presence of Arthurian legends and local place names might certainly imply a sacred connection between these sites and the original meaning and story of the Arthurian Brythonic tales. Perhaps we have to look even further back, before this history become 'Brythonic, Breton, Cornish and Welsh' as we know them. The Welsh word *arth*, 'bear' would be connected to a Common or Proto-Brittonic *\*artos*.

I have wondered if this word also shares a connection with the Basque word, *hartz*. It is known that the Basque language is very ancient, and may connect to times and memory that we have largely forgotten elsewhere in Europe. It is interesting for instance, that long ago, before the last Ice Age, people in Europe acknowledged bears as extremely sacred animals. I believe that the cave paintings of this time are also in some way connected

to this, and to the concept of going into darkness, like the winter, to then return from the womb of the earth. The bear is dangerous, but, bears also have great love. And perhaps this story is connected to that place in our hearts where we can meet nature and truly listen to her.

The Common-Brittonic word *\*widus* is perhaps originally from an Indo-European word to divide, perhaps connected to Welsh *gŵydd* 'presence', 'face', Older Brittonic *\*wéd-* 'to see, to know'. This is also close to a word, *gŵydd* - 'a loom', and *gwau* - 'to weave', and ultimately with *gŵydd* - 'trees', which in Welsh is most noticeably visible as a suffix in the spoken language we know today, in North Wales this can mean plough.

Could this in some way reflect a druidic understanding of trees, and the similarity between trees, weaving and knowledge, the similarity between the nervous system, weaving, trees and knowledge? The largest mountain in Wales is named *Yr Wyddfa* in Welsh, which can be interpreted as 'the grave place' or 'seeing place', or even 'place of knowledge', but that is speculation. In North Welsh tradition, *Yr Wyddfa* was the home to *Rhita Gawr*, a giant, who collected beards and made them into a cloak. He was then later slain by Arthur. Tentitively the idea of collecting beards or hairs could be connected to hair being associated with knowledge and wisdom in some cultures, and, hair grows a little bit like trees do, sort of. Does this story tell us of some kind of divine action, between the bear spirit, Arthur, and the giant, are both seasonally gods of the mountain, rather like after the night comes the day, with the giant representing the night, the stone, and the wisdom locked in the stars and the earth and water, and Arthur representing the illumination of that truth from within the mountain? In some of the stories about Arthur, he returns from the cave in our time of need. Perhaps this can be tentively interpreted as perhaps, in the future, we will feel more illuminated and understanding of our presence in the universe once again.

# Nouns

The concept of a noun does not seem to be the same in each language. This is a philosophical point which I feel to be unsanswerable, but I would like to talk about some examples of differences and similarities across languages. In Scottish Gaelic and in Manx Gaelic, nouns are either masculine or feminine. This is common in Indo-European languages. In the Goidelic languages, the gender can sometimes be recognised from the word stem, but often it is more noticeable by how that noun behaves with adjectives and the article. Feminine nouns have initial consonant mutation here, so **y baatey** – the boat, in Manx, **baatey** – a boat; **y ghrian** – the sun, **grian** – sun. The latter word is feminine and so the initial consonant mutates after the definite article **y**. The other spoken Celtic languages have similar initial consonant changes, like in Cornish, **menydh koth** – old mountain, **bro goth** – old land, the latter word is feminine, so the adjective **koth** undergoes mutation to **goth**. Nouns in the Goidelic branch of Celtic still have inflection or 'case', for example in Manx **y mooir** – the sea, **sollys ny marrey** – the light of the sea, in Scottish Gaelic **am muir**, and **solas na mara**. Common masculine nouns in the Goidelic languages have a process of slenderisation in the plural, for example in Scottish Gaelic **fear** – man, **fir** – men, or 'of a man', the genitive singular and nominative plural, **mac** – son, **mic** – sons or 'of the son', genitive singular and nominative plural.

## Nouns in Reconstructed Primitive Irish

†•••••†	<b>benā</b> – woman
†•••••/•••••†	<b>viras</b> – man
†•••••/•••••†	<b>maqqas</b> – son
†•••••/•••••†	<b>bardas</b> – poet, seer
•••••/•••••†	<b>tígas</b> – house



## Meaning within Scottish Gaelic words

The following is a select list of Scottish Gaelic words, with comments on their meaning within. When pronunciation is given it is given in the Torridon dialect pronunciation.

**mi** – [mi], - 'I', the first person singular pronoun, I reconstruct this as Proto-Celtic *\*mi* or *\*mē*. Celtic languages are quite different from other Indo-European languages, which often use a form related to *\*mi* as the object form, Celtic on the other hand uses *\*mi* as the nominative form. Using a pronoun based on [m] for the first-person singular is not limited to Celtic nor to Indo-European. For example, Finnish has *minä* 'I'.

**draoidheachd** – [drɔiɪʃxk] sorcery, bewitchment, magic. The primary root of this word is **draoidh** 'druid', 'seer', 'person with wizardry or scientific lore. This word **draoidh** means 'druid', 'philosopher', 'wizard', which comes from a Proto-Celtic concept which I reconstruct as *\*druwits* - 'person with sacred knowledge', 'druid'. More specifically, these words are talking about a form of knowledge that is connected to trees, and perhaps we can wonder if in this aspect of Celtic language and spirituality, knowledge was associated with trees. The initial **dr-** is connected to an Indo-European spiritual root meaning 'tree', **dr-** is cognate here to 'tree' in English. Even today, people who practice druidism will often meet in groves of trees.

**bàrdachd** – [pa:rɪʃxk] poetry, a word sharing the same suffix as the word above, in this case cognate to the word 'bard', a Celtic and Proto-Celtic word to describe a poet or seer, in Scottish Gaelic it can mean someone who makes rhymes, poems and tells oral history. It could be reconstructed in Proto-Celtic as *\*bardos*. In ancient Anatolia, there used to be spoken the easternmost of the Celtic language, called Galatian. It was likely a language more or less identical with Gaulish, perhaps we can consider it a dialect of Gaulish. In this language the word *βαρδοί* – *bardoι* is recorded, 'bards, singers'. (reference: *Freeman, Philip (2001). The Galatian Language: A Comprehensive Survey of the Language of the Ancient Celts in Greco-Roman Asia Minor. Lewiston, New York: Mellen Press. ISBN 0-7734-7480-3.*)

**leughadh** – ‘reading’, ‘the act of reading’. Note that this word has a rather different pronunciation in Torridon/Wester Ross to elsewhere. The base word is **leugh** ‘read’, connected to Old Irish *légaid* ‘reading, studying out loud, recite’, and connected to Manx *lhaih*. The Latin word *legō* ‘I read, I gather, or I choose’. I have also wondered if this concept is related to *lukea* ‘to read’ in Finnish, probably originally encompassing the idea of ‘to count’, in some ways similar to the Latin semantics of ‘gather’, also found in other Finno-Baltic languages, like the Võro *lugõma*, and to words in other Uralic languages, like Erzya ловномс *lovnoms*.

**Sgitheanach** – this is the Gaelic name for the Island of Skye, located just adjacent to the mainland coastline of Wester Ross. The word ‘Skye’ and Gaelic **Sgitheanach** do bare some similarity to the words ‘Scotland’ and ‘Scythia’. Although any comment on this word is extremely speculative, I have not been able to find out enough about the Scythians to really look into this connection. The Scythian language is related to the living Ossetian languages of the Caucasus Mountains, but, the Scythians were a wide and diverse group of peoples, and I wonder if their originally language was really Indo-European. There is a connection between the Scythians and Indo-Iranian languages, but the evidence of the original Scythian language is lacking. It must have a connection to Indo-European, but whether Scythian is Indo-European or not, I am less convinced. The same applies to this name of the Isle of Skye, is it an Indo-European word, or is it somehow connected to something older, and to an older people? And furthermore, what is the meaning of this sacred word, that sits in the dark misty mountains of the Isle of Skye?

**giuthas** – Scots pine tree, older Gaelic *gius*, from reference: *An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language (1911)* by Alexander MacBain a word that may have possible cognates in Indo-European languages, but which may also be largely outside of Indo-European in its origins. The Scots pine was one of the first species of tree to colonise Scotland, where it remained in its wild forests. Torridon is famous for these ancient forests, and one can sit on the mountainside among the rugged pine trees, their leaves like castles of ancient green against the mountains and sky. Here one can smell the purifying scent of the pine in the air, where birds sing and make their home in the trees, and red deer and wild cats move among their branches and roots.

**mac** – son. In ancient Celtic culture, the concept of this word root had more meanings than ‘son’. It was also connected to the Gaulish God *Mapones*, of which I might reconstruct an early Primitive-Irish equivalent as *\*Maqones*. This deity appears to be one of youth and health, and in parts of the Celtic world this concept and deity were certainly very important. I wonder if the root word is connected also to the idea of inheritance and inheritance of tribal traditions and responsibility also. In the Gaelic world, **mac** is said in someone’s tribal, inherited name, perhaps this was also a form of ‘bardic name’. As in Scottish Gaelic, **Stiùbhard Mac Dhòmhnail** ‘Stewart MacDonald’, ‘Stewart son of Donald’. This root is also recorded in ceremonial language in Ogham inscriptions, recorded in the genitive as *†-𐌚𐌚𐌚𐌚𐌚- maqqi*, the nominative was likely *†-𐌚𐌚𐌚𐌚- maqqas*. An interesting question is, was Primitive Irish truly the ancestor to Modern Goidelic, or is it rather the link, more like ceremonial bardic language, between Modern Goidelic and Indo-European?

**sealladh** – [ʃaːlˠəx̪], sight or view. Although this is speculative, I have wondered if this word is at all collected to Gaelic word **sùil** – ‘eye’, and to the Finnish word *silmä* – ‘eye’.

## Nouns in other languages

Nouns in Danish and in Swedish and the written form of Norwegian named Bokmål belong to either a common gender, from the older masculine and feminine genders, and the neuter gender. This is clear from the indefinite and definite articles for the nouns. For example, in Swedish **en fjärd** – an inlet of islands and basins from the Baltic sea, ‘fjord’, is of the common gender. The definite form ‘the fjord’ is **fjärden**. To say ‘a mountain’ is **ett fjäll**, which belongs to the neuter gender. The definite form is **fjället**, for instance, **de såg fjället från älven** – ‘they saw the mountain from the river’.

In Icelandic on the other hand, nouns have three genders, such as **maðurinn** – ‘the man’, **konan** – the woman, and **húsið** – the house, the ending is different for forming the definite form for each of the genders.



Another example is **hann er yndislegur** – he is wonderful, **hún er yndisleg** – she is wonderful, **það er yndislegt** – it is/that is wonderful.

In Russian, nouns are either masculine, feminine or neuter, this is often visible from the ending of a noun. For example, masculine nouns tend to end with a consonant, like **лес** 'forest'. Feminine nouns commonly end with -**а** or -**я**, such as **ланка** 'a female deer', whilst neuter nouns often end with another vowel, like **море** 'sea'. Within Russia there are many dialects, and the pronunciation of vowels especially is different in south, central and north west Russia. Northern Russian dialects also have an influence from Uralic languages. Finnic languages do not have gender at all. Russian has more noun declination than the Goidelic languages do, but Finnic languages have many more suffixes or 'cases' than Goidelic or Slavic. Nouns in Finnish behave quite differently, behaving with declination in instances where no distinction would be made in many other languages. For example, the noun **mäki** 'hill, mountain', this is the nominative form. The genitive is **mäen** – 'of the mountain'. My favourite Finnish word, is **elämä** – [elæmæ] – life, connected to the verb **elää** – 'to live, to be alive', which also derives the word **eläin** – 'animal'.

Articles by the author available online:

*.Pre-Celtic elements in the Goidelic languages* – available on omniglot.com

*.Blas Ghàidhlig Lios Mhóir (A taste of Lismore Gaelic)*, available on academia.edu and at archive.org

*.Scottish Gaelic dialects and ancient languages in Scotland – Dualchainntean na Gàidhlig agus cànanan àrsaidh ann an Alba*, available on academia.edu and at archive.org

*.The Finnish Language and Finnish spiritual traditions, with comments on language and spirituality*, available at archive.org

*.A basic description of five languages: Scottish Gaelic, Manx, Norwegian, Finnish and Nuxalk*, available at archive.org

Travel is very special I feel, and the opportunity it gives us to change perception and to find unexpected changes and the meeting of new people. Recently I had an experience, where I was sat on a bus, and a man sat next to me. He later moved seats though, after realising that I was fidgeting around.

I wanted to say to him that he didn't have to move, so, when I got off of the bus, I said this to him, and it sparked a really nice and genuine conversation as we sat on a bench and became friends. Shortly afterwards, when walking across the large bus station, I found some Arabic writing on the ground, a small piece of paper which I just 'happened' to find. The paper detailed on the importance of being honest about one's feelings, and this process of being guided is why I feel drawn to write these books.

Below is a poem I wrote whilst traveling, :)

Leaving home, going home  
I know there are angels  
Around in the sky  
They bring hope  
From the silver sky  
Thinking of you  
The angel up high  
Your smile is like the crystals in the air  
Your hair is like the silky auro sun  
Your smile is my prayer brought on wings  
To and from the blue horizon of my eternal soul

Amen

I hope that this short book has been enjoyable and given something to my readers. May you be blessed, تَوَكَّلْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ