

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk **

Bha e na bhriseadh-cridhe don bhàrd, Uilleam Ros, nuair a chuala e gu robh a leannan, Mòr Ros, air pòsadh, agus gu robh i air a dhol a dh’fhuireach ann an Sasainn còmhla ris an duine aice. Sgrìobh e an uairsin an dàn, neo òran, air an do chuir e “Oran Cumhaidh” mar ainm. Gu dearbh, ’s e cumha a th’ ann.

Tha còig rannan deug anns an òran mar a sgrìobh am bàrd e. Agus sgrìobh e e airson a bhith air a sheinn, air an fhonn “Robai dona gòrach”. Tha cuid de na rannan nach bi aithnichte idir don mhòr-shluagh an-diugh, ach ’s ann tearc a tha na Gaidheil nach aithnich an deicheadh rann. ’S e sin, mar as trice, a’ chiad rann dhen òran mar a tha e air a sheinn an-diugh. Bheireadh e cus ùine na còig rannan deug gu lèir a sheinn.

Is truagh nach d’ rugadh dall mi, gun chainnt is gun lèirsinn. Sin mar a tha e a’ tòiseachadh. ’S dòcha gu bheil sibh ga aithneachadh. Seo an rann gu lèir:

*Is truagh nach d’ rugadh dall mi,
Gun chainnt is gun lèirsinn.
Mus fhac’ mi d’ aghaidh bhaindidh,
Rinn aimhleas nan ceudan.
O’n chunna’ mi air thùs thu,
Bu chliùiteach do bheusan,
Gum b’ fhasa leam am bàs
Na bhith làthair as d’ eugmhais.*

’S ann mar sin a tha na briathran nuair a tha an t-òran air a sheinn. Ach chan ann buileach mar sin a chaidh an sgrìobhadh. Anns a’ chiad loighne, an àite *Is truagh nach d’ rugadh dall mi*, sgrìobh Ros, *Carson nach d’ rugadh dall mi..?* Agus tha diofar ann cuideachd anns an dà loighne mu dheireadh. Sgrìobh am bàrd, “Chan fhasa leam nam bàs, a bhith làthair as d’ eugmhais.” Ach, ged a tha an diofar sin ann, chan eil diofar mòr sam bith air a’ bhrìgh. Mar a sgrìobh am bàrd ann an rann eile...

*...cha d’fhuair mise sgeul
Ann am Beurla neo Gàidhlig,
A dh’innseadh dhomh mar dh’fhaotainn
An gaol ud a smàladh*

’S toil leam am pìos seo cuideachd a tha, mar as trice, air a sheinn mar dharna rann:

*Gur binne leam do chòmhradh
na smeòrach nan geugan,
Na cuach sa mhadainn Mhàighe,
's na clàrsach nan teudan,
Nan t-Easbaig air Latha Dòmhnach,
's am mòr-shluagh ga èisteachd,
Neo ged a chunntadh stòras
na h-Eòrpa gu lèir dhomh.*

Ann an òran tùsail tha am bàrd a-mach tric air fear *Cormac*, ged nach bi seo a' nochdadh anns an òran a th' air a sheinn.

*Ach siud mar sheinneadh Cormac,
's e dearmad a chiad ghaoil...*

Bha an Cormac seo na chlàrsair Eireannach a bha ainmeil, aig an àm ud, ann am beul-aithris. Gu bitheanta air a' Ghaidhealtachd anns an dà dhùthaich – Eirinn agus Alba – bhiodh na clàrsairean a' siubhal bho àite gu àite is, gu dearbh, bho dhùthaich gu dùthaich, mar gur e aon dùthaich a bh' ann, a' dèanamh am bith-beò eatarra. Agus thàinig Cormac a dh'Alba, far an do chuir e seachad bliadhnaichean còmhla ri ceann-feadhna Clann 'icLeòid ann an Leòdhas. Agus ann a sin ... uill ... chan urrainn dhomh innse dhuibh an-dràsta gu dè dh'èirich dha. Cha cheadaich an ùine mi.

Ach cluinnidh sibh an sgeul an ath-sheachdain, agus tuigidh sibh an uairsin carson a rinn am bàrd, Uilleam Ros, coimeas eadar e fhèin is an clàrsair, Cormac. Agus tuigidh sibh carson a bha e duilich, ann an dòigh, nach robh Ros na chlàrsair, seach bàrd. Ach an-dràsta, leigidh mi soraidh leibh.

* * *

Faclan na seachdain: briseadh-cridhe: *disappointment*; oran cumhaidh, cumha: *lament*; cainnt: *speech*; lèirsinn: *vision, sight*; bairidh: *feminine*; smeòrach: *thrush*; cuach: *cuckoo*; stòras: *riches*; tùsail: *original*; clàrsair: *harpist*; ceann-feadhna: *clan chief*.

Abairtean na seachdain: tha cuid de na rannan nach bi aithnichte: *some of the verses will not be familiar (recognised)*; 's ann tearc a tha na Gaidheil nach aithnich an deicheamh rann: *scarce are the Gaels who don't recognise the tenth verse*; is truagh nach d'rugadh dall mi: *it is a pity I was not born blind*; (a) rinn aimhleas nan ceudan: *which was the ruin of hundreds (pronounced "kaytan" rather than "kiatun" for the rhyme)*; bu chliùiteach do bheusan: *your conduct was renowned*; gum b' fhasa leam am bàs na bhith làthair as d' eugmhais: *it would be easier for me to die than to live without you*; chan fhasa leam nam bàs a bhith làthair as d' eugmhais: *it is worse than death to live without you*; a dh'innseadh dhomh mar dh'fhaotainn an gaol ud a smàladh: *that would tell me how I could extinguish (the fire of) that love*; gur binne leam do chòmhradh na X: *your conversation is sweeter to me than X*; tha am bàrd a-mach tric air X: *the poet often mentions X*; siud mar sheinneadh Cormac: *that is how Cormac would sing*; 's e (a') dearmad a chiad ghaoil: *neglecting his first love*; gu dè dh'èirich dha: *what happened to him*; carson a rinn X coimeas eadar e fhèin is Y: *why X made a comparison between himself and Y*; leigidh mi soraidh leibh: *I'll say farewell to you*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdain: Nan t-Easbaig air Latha Dòmhnach: *than the bishop on a Sunday*. You may be unsure as to why Ross wrote Latha Dòmhnach, rather than

Didòmhnaich. *In addition to its slightly more poetic quality, Latha Dòmhnach is really just another term for Didòmhnaich. The prefix Di- which appears at the beginning of the days of the week in modern Gaelic, is very interesting, for it has cognates in many European languages, appearing either as a prefix or suffix or, sometimes, as a separate word. For example, Monday is Lundi in French, Lunedì in Italian, dydd Llun in Welsh and Diluain in Gaelic. Most importantly, perhaps, it is dies Lunae in Latin, the ancient language of the Church, which influenced much of this terminology in various tongues, including Gaelic. The Gaelic for Sunday, Didòmhnaich, derives from the Latin, dies Dominica (Day of the Lord) but, because Di- is understood to mean “day”, it can be replaced by the standard modern Gaelic word for “day” – latha (or là). Didòmhnaich remains the standard term for Sunday in the southern Gàidhealtachd, including communities which are predominantly Catholic in the Western Isles. But another term has become standard in northern areas where Presbyterianism is the dominant religious persuasion – Latha na Sàbaid (the Sabbath Day).*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdain: cha cheadaich an ùine mi: *time will not permit me.*

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