

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh 226

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 roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 226.*

Chaidh mi a choimhead air uaigh o chionn ghoirid, ann an cladh a-muigh air an dùthaich faisg air Inbhir Nis. Bha mi air taobh an iar na dùthcha nuair a chaochail am fear a bh’ air ùr-thiodhlacadh ann – fear a b’ aithne dhomh a bhuineadh do Shrath Narann. Bha eòlas air leth aige air eachdraidh agus dualchas na sgìre. ’S e an t-ainm a bh’ air Andaidh MacCuimein.

Bha e follaiseach dhomh sa mhionaid dè an uaigh a bh’ aige, oir air tè de na h-uaighean bha flùraichean ùra. Chan e flùraichean na bùtha a bh’ annta, ge-tà, ach feadhainn a chaidh a thogail anns a’ mhonadh le muinntir an àite. Bha gràdh aig Andaidh air an dùthaich aige. Agus, a bharrachd air na flùraichean, bha na botannan aige agus bratach na h-Alba. ’S e “caractar” a bh’ ann agus chitheadh tu sin anns na bh’ air fhàgail air an uaigh aige.

Bha seo anns a’ chladh ri taobh na seann eaglais aig Dùn Fhlicheadaidh. Ainm-àite inntinneach a tha sin – Dùn Fhlicheadaidh. Bha beachd aig Andaidh air, mar a bha air iomadach rud co-cheangailte ris an sgìre. Bha cuid de na seann daoine dhen bheachd gun tàinig e à “Dùn an Leth-cheud”, leis gu robh leth-cheud duine air am marbhadh ann am blàr agus gu robh iad air an tiodhlacadh anns a’ chladh. Ma tha sin fìor, chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh cuin’ a thachair e, oir tha e coltach gu bheil eaglais air a bhith air an làrach sin airson co-dhiù mìle is trì cheud bliadhna.

Co-dhiù, cha chreid mi nach robh Andaidh amharasach mu dheidhinn a’ mhineachaidh sin. Bha esan dhen bheachd gun tàinig Flicheadaidh à Fliuch no Fliuchad, a’ ciallachadh gur e àite fliuch a bh’ ann.

Tha mi gu mòr an comainn Andaidh airson notaichean fhàgail againn air seann stòiridhean is naidheachdan a chruinnich e anns an sgìre, agus bu mhath leam, mar chomharra air a bheatha is air a bhàs, tè bheag dhiubh sin aithris dhuibh an-dràsta. Tha i mu dheidhinn ainm-àite eile anns an sgìre – Uaigh an Duine Bheò.

Tha e coltach gu robh Clann ’ic an Tòisich agus Clann ’icIlleBhrath an uganann a chèile mu chrìochan an cuid fearainn. As deidh ùine, dh’aontaich an dà chinneadh gabhail ri beachd bodaich a bha mion-eòlach air dualchas an àite. ’S e an duilgheadas a bh’ ann gur e fear de Chloinn ’icIlleBhrath a bh’ ann – fear Eòin MacIlleBhrath.

Là a bha seo, chaidh Eòin agus àrd-urrachan an dà chinnidh a-mach còmhla. Gheall e air “a’ cheann a bha fo bhonaid” gur ann le Cloinn ’icIlleBhrath a bha “an talamh fo chasan”. Uill, ’s dòcha gu robh Clann ’icIlleBhrath toilichte le bhreith, ach cha robh Clann ’ic an Tòisich riarachtaid idir. Feumaidh gu robh iad amharasach mu dheidhinn na thuirt Eòin. Agus feumaidh gun do rinn iad beagan sgrùdaidh air, oir fhuair iad a-mach gu robh ceann eile fo bhonaid – ceann coilich! Agus am broinn a chuid bhròg, fo chasan, bha talamh a bh’ air a thoirt far fearann aig a’ chinneadh aige fhèin – Clann ’icIlleBhrath. Mar sin, cha robh Eòin breugach, ach cha robh e buileach ag innse na firinn na bu mhò!

Co-dhiù, bha Clann 'ic an Tòisich feargach. Chaidh Eòin a thiodhacadh beò fon talamh mar pheanas agus tha càrn ri fhaicinn anns an àite fhathast, air a bheil Uaigh an Duine Bheò.

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Faclan na seachdaine: cladh: *cemetery*; chaochail: *died*; Srath Narann: *Strathnairn*; Andaidh MacCuimein: *Andy Cumming*; botannan: *boots*; caractar: *character*; Dùn Fhlicheadaidh: *Dunlichity*; Uaigh an Duine Bheò: *The Grave of the Living Man*; gheall e: *he pledged*; ceann coilich: *a cockerel's head*; breugach: *untruthful*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: chaidh mi a choimhead air uaigh: *I went to look at a grave*; fear a b' aithne dhomh: *a man I knew*; bha e follaiseach dhomh sa mhionaid: *it was instantly obvious to me*; chitheadh tu sin anns na bh' air fhàgail: *you could (would) see that in what was left*; leis gu robh leth-cheud duine air am marbhadh: *because 50 people were killed*; cha chreid mi nach robh Andaidh amharasach: *I think Andy was doubtful*; mar chomharra air a bheatha is air a bhàs: *to mark his life and death*; gu robh Clann 'ic an Tòisich agus Clann 'icIlleBhrath an ugannan a chèile: *that the Mackintoshes and MacGillivrays were at each other's throats*; dh'aontaich an dà chinneadh gabhail ri beachd bodaich: *the two clans agreed to accept the opinion of an old man*; air a' cheann a bha fo bhonaid: *on the head that was under his bonnet*; 's dòcha gu robh X toilichte le bhreith: *perhaps X was pleased with his judgement*; am broinn a chuid bhròg: *inside his shoes (emphasis on his)*; a bh' air a thoirt far fearann aig a' chinneadh aige fhèin: *that had been take from his own clan's land*; cha robh e buileach ag innse na firinn na bu mhò: *he wasn't exactly telling the truth either*; chaidh Eòin a thiodhacadh beò mar pheanas: *John was buried alive as punishment*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: am fear a bh' air ùr-thiodhacadh ann: *the man who was newly buried there. You will be familiar with ùr as an adjective meaning "new" eg a bheil seo ùr? (is this new?) In the construction above, it is used to prefix a verbal noun in the terminal position, in which case a lenitable consonant at the start of the verbal noun will generally be lenited. Other examples: tha sinn air ùr-thighinn don sgìre (we have newly come to the area), bha iad dìreach air ùr-phòsadh (they were just newly married). Remember to give the ù vowel its proper length so that a listener does not confuse ùr with the unaccented ur, the second person plural possessive article. Bha e air ur tiodhacadh (without lenition) is "he had buried you", whereas bha e air ùr-thiodhacadh means "he was newly buried" – a significant difference!*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Tha mi gu mòr an comainn Andaidh: *I am much obliged to Andy. The name of the person is in the genitive so with Seumas we would say tha mi gu mòr an comainn Sheumais. To somebody's face you would say tha mi gu mòr (or fada) nad chomainn (singular/informal) or nur comainn (plural/formal) ie I am much obliged to you.*

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