

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for 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, Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 429. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 125 corresponds to Litir 429.

Ann an ceithir cheud deug, fichead 's a seachd (1427) dh'iarr Rìgh na h-Alba, Seumas I, air na cinn-chinnidh Ghàidhealach coinneachadh ris ann an Inbhir Nis. Bha na cinn-chinnidh a' smaoinneachadh gum biodh an Rìgh a' cur fàilte orra. Ach 's ann air a' chaochladh a bha e. Chaidh na ceannardan Gàidhealach a chur an grèim. Chaidh feadhainn dhiubh a chur gu bàs air a' chroich. An àite a bhith a' ciùineachadh chùisean eadar an Riaghaltas agus na fineachan, rinn an Rìgh mòran na bu mhiosa iad.

B' e an ceann-cinnidh a bu chumhachdaiche aig an àm Alasdair mac Dhòmhnail 'ic Eòin 'ic Aonghais Òig – ceann-cinnidh nan Dòmhnallach agus Tighearna nan Eilean. Seo na sgrìobh Aonghas MacCoinnich mun ghnòthach anns an leabhar aige *Eachdraidh na h-Alba*, a chaidh a chur an clò ann an ochd ceud deug, seasgad 's a seachd (1867):

“Bha Aonghas Dubh MacAoidh agus Alasdair Dòmhnallach, Morair nan Eilean, agus a mhàthair, ban-Iarla Rois, am measg na muinntir a chuireadh an làimh. Chuireadh iad sin uile fo dheuchainn airson am beatha, agus chaidh an fheadhainn a bu ro chiontaiche dhiubh a chur gu bàs. Fhuair Fear nan Eilean 's Aonghas Dubh **cead an cois**’, an dèidh an cumail greis nam prìosanaich. Ach b' èiginn do dh' Aonghas a mhac, Niall, a thoirt seachad mar gheall air gun cumadh e an t-sìth an dèidh sin. Rinneadh prìosanach de Niall **san sgeir mhara** ris an abrar am Bas, far an do chumadh àireamh bhliadhnachan e, 's airson an d' fhuair e an t-ainm Niall Basa MacAoidh.

“Dh'èirich Alasdair Dòmhnallach nan Eilean an ceannairc a-rithist cho luath 's a thill an Rìgh don taobh deas. Thog e deich mìle duine anns na h-eileanan agus ann an Ros; leis an fheadhainn seo loisg agus dh'fhàsaich e roinn mhòr dhen dùthaich, agus gu h-àraidh fearann a' Chrùin, ris an robh fearg mhòr aige. Agus loisg e gu làr baile Inbhir Nis, a bha na bhaile rìoghail.”

Chuir an Rìgh arm eile ri chèile agus rinn e air Loch Abar. Thrèig na Camshronaich agus Clann Chatain Alasdair agus bha e follaiseach dha nach b' urrainn dha seasamh an aghaidh an Rìgh. Ghèill e agus chaidh a chur don phrìosan ann an Tuntalla ann an Lodainn. Bha seo ann an ceithir cheud deug, fichead 's a naoi (1429).

Ach cha robh ar-a-mach nan Dòmhnallach seachad. Chuir caraid aig Alasdair, Dòmhnall Ballach, feachd ri chèile. Thachair i ri arm an Rìgh, a bha fo smachd Iarla Mhàrr is Iarla Ghallaibh, ann an Inbhir Lòchaidh as t-Sultain ceithir cheud deug, trithead 's a h-aon (1431). Thug na Dòmhnallaich buaidh.

Bidh cuimhne agaibh anns an dàn 'S *Math an Còcaire an t-Acras* gun do mhol Iarla Mhàrr fear Ó Birein a thug cuid-oidhche dha ann an Loch Abar – agus gun do chuir e fàilte mhòr air anns a' chaisteal aige ann an Cionn Droma ann an Siorrachd Obar Dheathain. Uill, ma

chuir, cha robh ach ceithir bliadhna aige airson sin, oir chaochail e ann an ceithir cheud deug, trithead 's a còig (1435).

Ann an leabhar *Inverness and the MacDonalds*, tha Evan Barron ag innse dhuinn gun do chaochail an t-iarla anns a' bhliadhna sin ann an Inbhir Nis. 'S dòcha gun deach fàilte a chur air Ó Birein ann an Inbhir Nis, seach Cionn Droma. Chan eil fhios a'm mu dheidhinn sin. Ach tha Barron ag ràdh gun deach an t-iarla a thiodhlacadh ann an Cladh nam Manach anns a' bhaile ceithir bliadhna às dèidh dha fuarag eòrna a ghabhail a-mach às a' bhròig aige fhèin, agus an t-acras air.

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Faclan na Litreach: fineachan: *clans*; Inbhir Lòchaidh: *Inverlochy*; cuid-oidhche: *a night's lodging*; Cionn Droma: *Kildrummy*.

Abairtean na Litreach: dh'iarr Seumas I air na cinn-chinnidh Ghàidhealach coinneachadh ris: *James I asked the Highland clan chiefs to meet with him*; 's ann air a' chaochladh a bha e: *it was otherwise*; chaidh X a chur an grèim: *X was arrested*; chaidh feadhainn dhiubh a chur gu bàs air a' chroich: *some of them were put to death on the gibbet*; a' ciùineachadh chùisean: *calming matters*; Tighearna [also Morair] nan Eilean: *The Lord of the Isles*; am measg na muinntir a chuireadh an làimh: *among the people who were apprehended*; an fheadhainn a bu ro chiontaiche dhiubh: *those of them who were most guilty*; b' èiginn do dh'Aonghas a mhac a thoirt seachad mar gheall air gun cumadh e an t-sìth: *Angus had to give over his son as a pledge that he would keep the peace*; dh'èirich Alasdair an ceannairc a-rithist cho luath 's a thill an Rìgh don taobh deas: *Alasdair recommenced his rebellion as soon as the King returned to the south*; loisg agus dh'fhàsaich e roinn mhòr: *he burned and cleared a large part*; fearann a' Chrùin: *Crown land*; loisg e gu làr: *he burned to the ground*; thrèig na Camshronaich agus Clann Chatain Alasdair: *the Camerons and Clan Chattan abandoned Alasdair*; bha e follaiseach dha nach b' urrainn dha seasamh an aghaidh: *it was obvious that he couldn't stand against*; Tuntalla ann an Lodainn: *Tantallon in Lothian*; fo smachd Iarla Mhàrr is Iarla Ghallaibh: *under the control of the Earl of Mòrr and the Earl of Caithness*; thug na Dòmhnallaich buaidh: *the MacDonalds were victorious*; gun do chaochail an t-iarla: *that the earl died*; às dèidh dha fuarag eòrna a ghabhail a-mach às a' bhròig aige fhèin: *after he had eaten barley brose out of his own shoe*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Rinneadh prìosanach de Niall san [ie anns an] sgeir mhara ris an abrar am Bas: *Neil was made a prisoner on the sea rock called the Bass. Just a little reminder that the preposition ann [an] can sometimes be used where "on" (rather than "in") would be employed in English. Common examples are anns a' mhonadh (on the hill) and anns an eilean (on the island) eg bha mi san Eilean Sgitheanach (I was on Skye). In the 21st Century many might prefer to say air an sgeir to anns an sgeir but clearly the latter was preferred by Angus Mackenzie in the mid-19th Century.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Fhuair Fear nan Eilean 's Aonghas Dubh cead an cois': *the Lord of the Isles and Black Angus were freed [lit. they got permission of (to use) their legs.]*

* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig.