

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 482. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 178 corresponds to Litir 482.

An t-seachdain sa chaidh bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Reachdas Ì, no *The Statutes of Iona*, a rinn cron mòr air Gàidheil taobh an iar na h-Alba ann an sia ceud deug 's a naoi (1609). Chaidh dòighean ùra a sparradh air na cinn-chinnidh. B' fheudar dhaibh an ainmean a chur ri cunnradh ann an Eilean Ì as t-samhradh sa bhliadhna sin. Bha dà earrainn ann an Reachdas Ì a bha gu sònraichte millteach air dòigh-beatha agus dualchas nan Gàidheal.

B' e a' chiad earrann gun robh aig gach duine-usal Gàidhealach, aig an robh ionmhas luach co-dhiù trì fichead beathach mairt, ri a mhac a bu shine a chur don Ghalltachd airson foghlam Beurla. Mura robh mac aige, bha aige ris an nighean a bu shine aige a chur don Ghalltachd airson foghlam Beurla.

A rèir na h-earrainn eile, cha bhiodh cead tuilleadh aig bàird a bhith a' dol timcheall taighean nan ceann-cinnidh. Bhiodh aig na cinn-chinnidh bàrd sam bith a nochdadh a chur a-mach às an sgìre aca. Bha an riaghaltas a' dèanamh coimeas eadar bàird agus “*beggars [and] vagabonds*”.

Ann an dòigh, dh'fhaodar a ràdh gur e rud math a bh' ann gum biodh cinn-chinnidh dà-chànanach, oir b' i a' Bheurla cànan oifigeil na rìoghachd. Bha na cinn-chinnidh gu tric ioma-chànanach, agus Laideann aca, agus cha b' e sin fàth na h-earrainn sin co-dhiù. Chanainn gun robh trì rudan fa-near don riaghaltas leis an earrainn sin – gum b' urrainn dhaibh mic **nan ceann-cinnidh** a chumail mar ghiallan nam biodh feum air (airson dèanamh cinnteach gum biodh an athraichean a' coileanadh toil an riaghaltais), gum faigheadh iad foghlam Pròstanach, agus gum biodh iad a' fàs na bu Ghallta.

Agus dh'obraich e, ged a thug e ùine, 's dòcha. Dh'fhosgail caolas eadar cinn-chinnidh agus an tuath. Dh'fhàs na h-uaislean Gallta. Tro thìde dh'fhàs mòran dhiubh Sasannach nan dòigh. Agus cia mheud de na cinn-chinnidh an-diugh aig a bheil Gàidhlig? Glè bheag, ma tha gin ann idir.

Cha b' e sin an aon ionnsaigh a thug an Riaghaltas Albannach air na Gàidheil anns an t-seachdamh linn deug. Ann an sia ceud deug is sia-deug (1616), chuireadh achd an sàs leis an amas foghlam Beurla a sgaoileadh air feadh na rìoghachd, agus bàs a thoirt air a' Ghàidhlig.

Ach dè mun earrainn eile ann an Reachdas Ì – airson stad a chur air na cinn-chinnidh bho bhith a' toirt taic do bhàird? Bha àite sònraichte aig na bàird aig ceann shuas saoghal na Gàidhlig agus bha iad a' tighinn beò air an airgead a thug cinn-chinnidh dhaibh. Bha e **gun chiall** a bhith a' dèanamh coimeas eadar na daoine foghlamaichte sin agus “*beggars [and] vagabonds*”. Cha robh an sin ach propaganda riaghaltais.

Tha sinn a' cluinntinn gu tric mun bhliadhna shònraichte a bhios ann an ath-bhliadhna air a bheil *Homecoming Scotland 2009*. Chan urrainn dhomh Gàidhlig a thoirt dhuibh air sin oir chan eil facal Gàidhlig aig *Homecoming Scotland* air an làraich-lìn aca.

Bithear a' comharrachadh mòran rudan matha mu Alba an ath-bhliadhna. 'S dòcha gum bu chòir cuideachd a bhith a' cuimhneachadh mar a thòisich an stàit ar dìmeas a dhèanamh air a' Ghàidhlig – le droch phoileasaidhean a lean gu o chionn ghoirid. Ach a bheil na buidhnean Gàidhlig, no na craoladairean Gàidhlig a' dol a chomharrachadh Reachdas Ì an ath-bhliadhna? Bu chòir dhaibh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Reachdas Eilean Ì: *The Statutes of Iona*; Pròstanach: *Protestant*; uaislean: *gentry*; làrach-lìn: *website*.

Abairtean na Litreach: chaidh dòighean ùra a sparradh air na cinn-chinnidh: *new ways were forced upon the clan chiefs*; b' fheudar dhaibh an ainmean a chur ri cunnradh: *they had to put their names to a treaty*; gu sònraichte millteach air dòigh-beatha agus dualchas nan Gàidheal: *particularly damaging to the way of life and heritage of the Gaels*; aig an robh ionmhas luach co-dhiù trì fichead beathach mairt: *who had riches to the value of at least sixty cows*; ri a mhac a bu shine a chur don Ghalltachd: *to send his eldest son to the Lowlands*; cha bhiodh cead tuilleadh aig bàird: *poets/bards would no longer be permitted*; bàrd sam bith a nochdadh a chur a-mach às an sgìre aca: *to expel any bard who appeared from his area*; dh'fhaodar a ràdh gur e rud math a bh' ann: *it could be said that it was a good thing*; cha b' e sin fàth na h-earrainn sin co-dhiù: *that wasn't the purpose of that clause anyway*; chanainn gun robh trì rudan fa-near don riaghaltas: *I'd say that the government intended three things*; gum biodh an athraichean a' coileanadh toil an riaghaltais: *that their fathers would fulfil the wishes of the government*; dh'fhosgail caolas eadar cinn-chinnidh agus an tuath: *a gap opened between clan chiefs and their tenantry*; cha b' e sin an aon ionnsaigh: *that wasn't the only attack*; leis an amas foghlam Beurla a sgaoileadh air feadh na rìoghachd, agus bàs a thoirt air a' Ghàidhlig: *with the aim of spreading English language education throughout the kingdom, and bringing about the death of Gaelic*; bha iad a' tighinn beò air an airgead a thug cinn-chinnidh dhaibh: *they lived on the money the clan chiefs gave them*; bithear a' comharrachadh mòran rudan matha: *many good things will be marked/commemorated*; mar a thòisich an stàit ar dìmeas a dhèanamh air a' Ghàidhlig: *how the state began to disrespect Gaelic*; bu chòir dhaibh: *they should*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: gum b' urrainn dhaibh mic **nan ceann-cinnidh** a chumail mar ghiallan: *that they could keep the sons of the clan chiefs as hostages. Are you unsure about when the second element in ceann-cinnidh lenites? It acts in the same way as an adjective would in agreement with its noun, in this case ceann. We would say an ceann mòr (the big head) in the nominative singular so we say an ceann-cinnidh in the same case. Here is the compound carrying some other inflexions. Cinn-cinnidh (cf cinn mhòra), air na cinn-cinnidh (cf air na cinn mhòra), nan ceann-cinnidh (cf nan ceann mòra), air ceann-cinnidh (cf air ceann mòr), air a' cheann-cinnidh (cf air a' cheann mhòr). If you're unsure about the rules governing lenition of adjectives, a grammar text like *Gràmar na Gàidhlig* by Michel Byrne might be of assistance.*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: bha e **gun chiall** a bhith a' dèanamh coimeas eadar na daoine foghlamaichte sin agus X: *it was senseless to make a comparison between those educated people and X*.

** Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA*