

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.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 609. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 305 corresponds to Litir 609.

Tha an dealbh Bàs an Daimh, ann an Gailearaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba, a’ sealltainn Cailean Fitzgerald a’ sàbhaladh beatha Rìgh Alasdair III. B’ e Cailean an tùsair, a rèir beul-aithris, aig Clann ’ic Coinnich. Fhuair e fearann bhon Rìgh ann an Cinn Tàile, a’ gabhail a-staigh Eilean Donan. ’S e ogha Chailein – Coinneach – a thug ainm don chinneadh.

Bha Clann ’ic Coinnich air a bhith dìleas do rìghrean na h-Alba. Ach thug an còigeamh Iarla Shìophort, Uilleam MacCoinnich, taic do na Seumasaich nan ciad ar-a-mach ann an seachd ceud deug is còig-deug (1715). Chaill e an tiotal agus fearann aige.

Ge-tà, cha do chuir sin stad air bho bhith a’ toirt taic do na Seumasaich anns an dàrna ar-a-mach ann an seachd ceud deug is naoi-deug (1719). Ach chaill arm nan Seumasach, agus feachd shaighdearan Spàinnteach, ann am Blàr Ghleann Seile. Agus leag saighdearan an riaghaltas Caisteal Eilean Donan gu làr.

Aona bhliadhn’ deug às dèidh sin, chaidh aig Uilleam air cuid dhen fhearann aige a cheannach air ais. Am measg sin bha oighreachd air Eilean Leòdhais. Nuair a thàinig an treas ar-a-mach Seumasach ann am **Bliadhna Theàrlaich**, thug a mhac, Coinneach, taic do Rìgh Deòrsa. Ann an seachd ceud deug, seasgadh ’s a sia (1766) chaidh an tiotal, Viscount Fortrose, a bhuileachadh air.

Còig bliadhna às dèidh sin, thabhainn Coinneach don riaghaltas rèisimeid de shaighdearan Gàidhealach a stèidheachadh. Agus chaidh an seann tiotal a bhuileachadh air – Iarla Shìophort. Seachd bliadhna às dèidh sin, chaidh an rèisimeid aige a stèidheachadh – na Sìophortaich.

Chaochail Coinneach gun oighre fireann agus dh’fhalbh an tiotal leis. Chaidh ceannas na fine gu *cousin* dha. Chaochail esan agus fhuair a bhràthair, Francis Humberston MacCoinnich, an tiotal mar cheann-cinnidh. Rinn Francis obair-leasachaidh air a’ chala ann an Steòrnabhagh. Agus rinn e leasachadh mòr air a’ phrìomh chaisteal aige, Caisteal Bhrathainn, ann an taobh an ear Rois.

Bha ùidh mhòr aig Francis anns na h-ealain. ’S e a dh’iarr air a’ pheantair Ameireaganach, Benjamin West, an dealbh mòr iongantach, Bàs an Daimh, a dhèanamh. Tha e coltach gun robh MacCoinnich am beachd an dealbh a chrochadh ann an Caisteal Bhrathainn.

Chosg e ochd ceud gini – sùim mhòr mhòr aig an àm. ’S e an seòrsa deilbh a bhiodh rìghrean no riaghaltasan mar as trice a’ coimiseanadh. Agus tha e cinnteach gun do rinn MacCoinnich soilleir do West – ’s dòcha aig coinneamhan ann an Lunnainn – gun robh e ag iarraidh dealbh a shealladh cho treun agus dìleas ’s a bha Clann ’ic Coinnich. Bha an Rìgh Deòrsa dhen bheachd gur e fìor dheagh dhealbh a bh’ ann. Mas e propaganda a bh’ ann, dh’obraich e.

An-ath-sheachdain, cuiridh mi crìoch air an eachdraidh seo de Bhàs an Daimh, ach feumaidh mi innse dhuibh dè thachair do Francis Humberston MacCoinnich, Mòrair Shìophort (chaidh a dhèanamh na bharan ann an seachd ceud deug, naochad 's a seachd – 1797). Dh'fhàs e bodhar nuair a bha e na bhalach agus cha robh cainnt mhath aige.

Bha ceathrar mhac aige. Ach chaochail a mhic gu lèir roimhe. Nuair a chaochail Francis fhèin ann an ochd ceud deug is còig-deug (1815), bhàsaich “Na Sìophortaich” leis. Agus **thug a bhàs gu buil faidheadaireachd aig Coinneach Odhar Fiosaiche**. B' e sin gun tigeadh na Sìophortaich gu ceann le bàs cinn-chinnidh a bha bodhar agus balbh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Bàs an Daimh: *The Death of the Stag*; Blàr Ghleann Seile: *The Battle of Glenshiel*; ogha: *grandson*; na Sìophortaich: *The Seaforth Highlanders*; Caisteal Bhrathainn: *Brahan Castle*; an Rìgh Deòrsa: *King George*.

Abairtean na Litreach: an tùsair aig Clann 'ic Coinnich: *the progenitor of the MacKenzie clan*; fhuair e fearann ann an Cinn Tàile: *he got land in Kintail*; taic do na Seumasaich nan ciad ar-a-mach: *support to the Jacobites in their first rebellion*; chaill arm nan Seumasach, agus feachd shaighdearan Spàinnteach: *the Jacobite army, and a force of Spanish soldiers, lost*; leag saighdearan an riaghaltais X gu làr: *the government soldiers razed X to the ground*; aona bhliadhn' deug: *11 years*; chaidh aig Uilleam air cuid dhen fhearann aige a cheannach air ais: *William was able to buy back much of his land*; thabhainn Coinneach rèisimeid de shaighdearan Gàidhealach a stèidheachadh: *Kenneth offered to establish a regiment of Highland soldiers*; gun oighre fireann: *without a male heir*; chaidh ceannas na fine gu cousin dha: *the leadership of the clan went to a cousin of his*; obair-leasachaidh air a' chala: *development work on the harbour*; gun robh X am beachd an dealbh a chrochadh: *that X intended to hang the painting*; 's e an seòrsa deilbh a bhiodh rìghrean no riaghaltasan a' coimiseanadh: *it's the sort of picture that kings or governments would commission*; cho treun agus dìleas: *how brave and loyal*; chaidh a dhèanamh na bharan: *he was made a baron*; dh'fhàs e bodhar: *he grew deaf*; chaochail a mhic gu lèir roimhe: *his sons all died before him*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **thug a bhàs gu buil faidheadaireachd aig Coinneach Odhar Fiosaiche:** *his death brought to fruition a prophecy of the Brahan Seer. The The Death of the Stag has a connection with one of the famous prophecies of Coinneach Odhar – that the Seaforth line would come to an end with the death of a clan chief who was without hearing or speech. There is a story of Seaforth's vision when he was a lad, caused by the scarlet fever which was to rob him of his hearing and to deleteriously affect his speech. He reported seeing an old woman who went from bed to bed in the dormitory with a mallet and a peg. She drove the peg into the forehead of some boys – the ones that were later to die; others she left alone, and they survived. Seaforth was predeceased by his four sons, a fact which is reputed to have depressed him, causing him to give up making an effort at speech and to become silent. Thus, the Brahan Seer's prophecy came true.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **Bliadhna Theàrlaich:** *the year of the 1745-6 Jacobite rebellion* (lit “Charlie's Year”, referring to the Prince).

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