

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.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 610. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 306 corresponds to Litir 610.

Thathar a’ smaoinichadh gun robh Francis Humberston MacCoinnich a’ dol a chur an deilbh ainmeil a dh’òrdaich e – *Bàs an Daimh* – an-àirde ann an Caisteal Bhrathainn ann an Siorrachd Rois. Bidh cuimhne agaibh gu bheil an dealbh, a chaidh a dhèanamh ann an seachd ceud deug, ochdad ’s a sia (1786), a’ sealltainn tùsair Clann ’ic Coinnich, Cailean Fitzgerald, a’ sàbhaladh beatha Rìgh na h-Alba, Alasdair III.

Tro na naochadan dhen ochdamh linn deug (1790an), ge-tà, bhathar a’ leasachadh Caisteal Bhrathainn. Agus dh’fhuirich an dealbh mòr iongantach, a tha a-nise ann an Gailearaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba, ann an Lunnainn airson còrr is trithead bliadhna. Bha e ann an stiùidio an fhir a pheant e, Benjamin West. Thathar a’ smaoinichadh gun robh e air a roiligidh suas fad cuid mhath dhen ùine sin.

Ann an ochd ceud deug, fichead ’s a h-aon (1821), bliadhna às dèidh bàs West, chaidh an dealbh a ghluasad gu tuath. Bha e ann an Caisteal Bhrathainn gu naoi ceud deug, caogad ’s a dhà (1952) nuair a chaidh an caisteal a leagail. Chaidh an dealbh a ghluasad an uair sin gu Talla Baile na Cananaich is Ros Mhairnidh. Tha mi a’ tuigsinn gun robhar a’ cluich badminton aig amannan anns an talla far an robh e crochte!

Anns na h-ochdadan, cho-dhùin oighrean nan Sìophortach gun robh aca ri a reic. Chaidh e gu rùp ann an Lunnainn. ’S e Gailearaidh Nàiseanta nan Ealain ann am Washington DC a cheannaich e airson prìs mhath – còrr is leth-mhillean not. Bha Bàs an Daimh a’ fàgail na dùthcha dhan do rinneadh e. Bha e a’ dol don dùthaich anns an do rugadh am fear a pheant e. ’S ann à Pennsylvania a bha Benjamin West.

Ach cha b’ e sin deireadh an sgeòil. Leis gun robh e cho luachmhor mar phìos ealain, chuir Riaghaltas Bhreatainn stad air bho bhith a’ dol a-null thairis. An uair sin, chaidh a cheannach le Gailearaidhean Nàiseanta na h-Alba. Bha àite air a ghleidheadh dha ann an Gailearaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba ann an Dùn Èideann. Ach bha an dealbh cho mòr, agus bha e air a bhith air a roiligidh uiread, ’s gun do rinneadh co-dhùnadh gum biodh air e a chrochadh anns a’ ghailearaidh agus gur ann an sin fhèin a bhiodh an glèidheadair ag obair air nuair a bhiodh obair gleidhidh a dhìth air.

Agus bha obair gleidhidh a dhìth air. Thòisich i ann an dà mhìle ’s a ceithir (2004). B’ fheudar don ghlèidheadair sracadh sa chanabhas a chàradh. Agus b’ fheudar dha faighinn cuidhteas bhàrnais a bha thairis air a h-uile nì. Bha **tòrr ath-pheantadh mionaideach** a dhìth air an dealbh. Rinn an glèidheadair an obair anns a’

ghailearaidh agus bha cothrom aig a' phoball sùil a thoirt air fhad 's a bha e ga dèanamh.

Thathar a' smaoinichadh gun robh ìomhaighean snaighte àrsaidh ann an ceann West nuair a dhealbhaich e an dealbh – rudan mar *An Gall a' Bàsachadh* anns an Ròimh agus *Fear-sabaid Bhorghese* anns an Louvre ann am Paris. Agus thathar a' dèanamh dheth, a thaobh stoidhle peantaidh, gun tàinig West gu mòr fo bhuidh Rubens. Ge bith dè an fhìrinn a th' ann a thaobh sin, tha an dealbh iongantach. **Mholainn** gun toir sibh sùil air an ath thuras a tha sibh ann an Dùn Èideann.

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Faclan na Litreach: Bàs an Daimh: *The Death of the Stag*; Siorrachd Rois: *Ross-shire*; rùp: *auktion*; glèidheadair: *conservator*; am poball: *the populace*; ìomhaighean snaighte àrsaidh: *ancient sculptures*.

Abairtean na Litreach: an-àirde ann an Caisteal Bhrathainn: *up in Brahan Castle*; tùsair Clann 'ic Coinnich: *the progenitor of the MacKenzie clan*; ann an Lunnainn airson còrr is trithead bliadhna: *in London for more than thirty years*; thathar a' smaoinichadh gun robh e air a roilgeadh suas: *it's thought it was rolled up*; fad cuid mhath dhen ùine sin: *for a good portion of that time*; chaidh an dealbh a ghluasad gu tuath: *the painting was moved north*; nuair a chaidh an caisteal a leagail: *when the castle was levelled*; Talla Baile na Cananaich is Ros Mhaircuidh: *The Fortrose and Rosemarkie Town Hall*; gun robhar a' cluich badminton aig amannan anns an talla far an robh e crochte: *that badminton was being played at times in the hall where it was hung*; cho-dhùin oighrean nan Sìophortach: *the heirs of the Seaforths decided*; gun robh aca ri a reic: *that they had to sell it*; còrr is leth-mhillean not: *more than half a million pounds*; anns an do rugadh am fear a pheant e: *in which the man who painted it was born*; deireadh an sgeòil: *the end of the story*; luachmhor mar phìos ealain: *valuable as a piece of art*; bha e air a bhith air a roilgeadh uiread: *it had been rolled up so much*; bha obair gleidhidh a dhìth air: *it need conservation work*; sracadh sa chanabhas a chàradh: *to repair a tear in the canvas*; b' fheudar dha faighinn cuidhteas bhàrnais a bha thairis air a h-uile nì: *he had to get rid of varnish that covered everything*; An Gall a' Bàsachadh: *The Dying Gaul*; gun tàinig West gu mòr fo bhuidh Rubens: *that West came strongly under the influence of Rubens*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bha tòrr ath-pheantadh mionaideach a dhìth air an dealbh: *much touching up was required on the painting. Why have I not inflected ath-pheantadh here? One might expect it to be a genitive singular form following the noun tòrr ie slenderized. Without the adjective that would be the case viz tòrr ath-pheantaidh. But with an adjective and no article, the general modern trend is not to inflect a masculine noun in the genitive singular (and the adjective follows the noun). A good exemplar to remember the rule by is geansaidh balaich (a boy's jumper) but geansaidh balach beag (a wee boy's jumper). Note this is only in the indefinite – with the article we'd say geansaidh a' bhalaich bhig (the wee boy's jumper).*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Mholainn gun toir sibh sùil air: *I [would] recommend that you take a look at it.*

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