

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Buaidh nan Gàidheal air Innis Tìle

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.maclea@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 636. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 332 corresponds to Litir 636.

Tha sinn uile eòlach air a’ bhuaidh a thug na Lochlannaich air ar cànanan is cultar ann an Alba. Tha faclan againn ann an Gàidhlig is Albais – agus Beurla – a thàinig bhon t-Seann Lochlannais. Dh’atharraich Lochlannais blas is dòigh-labhairt na Gàidhlig. Tha iomadach ainm-àite Lochlannach air tìr na h-Alba. Ach dè mun rathad eile? Dè a’ bhuaidh a thug na Gàidheil air na Lochlannaich?

Tha fios againn gun deach faclan Gàidhlig don Lochlannais a bhathar a’ bruidhinn ann an Alba. Agus tha fios againn gun do ghabh mòran, aig an robh sinnsireachd Lochlannach, ri cànan is cultar is dualchas nan Gàidheal. Dh’fhàs Innse Gall gu tur Gàidhealach a-rithist, mar eisimpleir. Bha sin ann an Alba, ach an do thachair an aon rud ann an Innis Tìle?

Tha mi a’ cur na ceist oir tha deasbad air a bhith ann an Innis Tìle – agus tha fhathast – air buaidh nan Gàidheal – Èireannaich agus Albannaich – air cultar nan Tìleach. Tha Innis Tìle a’ seasamh a-mach bho na dùthchannan Lochlannach eile oir ’s ann an Innis Tìle a-mhàin a chaidh na faoinsgeulan mòra a chlàradh ann an sgrìobhadh – anns a’ chànan aca fhèin. Carson a rinn na Tìlich sin nuair nach do rinn na Nirribhich is na Dànaich an aon rud? Tha cuid a’ cumail a-mach gur e sin buaidh nan Gàidheal oir b’ iad na Gàidheil – gu h-àraidh ann an Èirinn – an aon sluagh eile air taobh siar na Roinn Eòrpa a bha a’ sgrìobhadh a leithid nan cànan fhèin.

Ach, ma tha sin fìor, ciamar a thug na Gàidheil buaidh air muinntir Innis Tìle? Uill, tha trì dòighean ann. Anns a’ chiad dol a-mach le Lochlannaich a chaidh a dh’fhuireach ann à Alba is Èirinn anns na naoidheamh is deicheamh linntean; bha na Lochlannaich sin air tighinn fo bhuaidh chultarach nan Gàidheal. Anns an dàrna àite le ceanglaichean cultarach a bh’ air an dèanamh ann an ceann a tuath na h-Alba agus Arcaibh, far am biodh Gàidheil is Lochlannaich a’ coinneachadh ri chèile. Agus an treas dòigh – le Gàidheil a chaidh a dh’fhuireach ann an Innis Tìle – tràillean, mnathan aig Lochlannaich agus daoine a chaidh a dh’fhuireach ann gu saor-thoileach.

Tha grunn fhaclan ann an Tìlis a thathar a’ smaoinneachadh a thàinig bhon Ghàidhlig – mar eisimpleir *kapall* (làir no each boireann), a dh’èirich bho *capall*, agus *tarfur* (tarbh) bhon Ghàidhlig *tarbh*. Tha ainm pearsanta no dhà ann cuideachd, leithid *Njáll* a thàinig à *Niall*. Tha *Njáll* ainmeil mar ainm ann an Innis Tìle oir tha faoinsgeul ann – *Njálsgata* – sgeulachd Nèill. Ach chan eil mòran ann an coimeas ris na thàinig don Ghàidhlig bhon t-Seann Lochlannais. ’S e as coireach ri sin, ’s dòcha, gur ann aig Lochlannaich, seach Gàidheil, a bha smachd. Bhiodh aig tràillean ri cànan am maighstirean ionnsachadh, seach an rathad eile.

Ach 's dòcha gu bheil mi air a dhol **air thoiseach orm fhìn**. Oir, nuair a chaidh na Lochlannaich a dh'Innis Tìle an toiseach, tha e coltach gun robh daoine ann romhpa agus gur e Gàidheil a bh' annta. Ann an *Íslendingabók*, a chaidh a sgrìobhadh anns an dàrna linn deug, thathar ag ràdh, nuair a chaidh na Lochlannaich a dh'fhuireach ann an toiseach, ann an ochd ceud is seachdad (870), gun robh dìthreabhaich Ghàidhealach – ris an canadh iad *papar* – a' fuireach ann mu thràth. Bheir sinn sùil orrasan an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Innis Tìle: *Iceland*; Arcaibh: *Orkney*; tràilleann: *slaves*; mnathan: *wives*; dìthreabhaich: *hermits, people living in the wilderness*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a' bhuidhe a thug na Lochlannaich air ar cànanan is cultar: *the influence that the Norse brought to bear on our languages and culture*; dh'atharraich Lochlannais blas is dòigh-labhairt na Gàidhlig: *the Norse language changed the blas and mode of speaking Gaelic*; dè mun rathad eile?: *what about the other way?*; don Lochlannais a bhathar a' bruidhinn ann an Alba: *into the Norse language that was spoken in Scotland*; cultar nan Tìleach: *the culture of the Icelanders*; a' seasamh a-mach bho na dùthchannan Lochlannach eile: *standing apart from the other Scandinavian languages*; 's ann an Innis Tìle a-mhàin a chaidh na faoinsgeulan mòra a chlàradh: *it's only in Iceland that the sagas were recorded*; b' iad na Gàidheil an aon sluagh eile air taobh siar na Roinn Eòrpa: *the Gaels were the only other people in Western Europe*; anns na naoidheamh is deicheamh linntean: *in the ninth and tenth centuries*; a' coinneachadh ri chèile: *meeting each other*; a chaidh a dh'fhuireach ann gu saor-thoileach: *who went to live there voluntarily*; tha ainm pearsanta no dhà ann: *there are one or two personal names*; an coimeas ris na thàinig: *compared to what came*; 's e as coireach ri sin: *what's responsible for that*; gur ann aig Lochlannaich a bha smachd: *that the Norse were in charge*; bhiodh aig tràilleann ri cànan am maighstirean ionnsachadh: *slaves would have to learn their masters' language*; seach an rathad eile: *rather than the other way round*; gun robh daoine ann romhpa: *that people were there before them*; a chaidh a sgrìobhadh anns an dàrna linn deug: *which was written in the twelfth century*; ris an canadh iad *papar*: *that they called [would call] papar*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *Several Gaelic words seem to have been adopted into Old Norse eg àirigh (meaning a shieling as it does in Gaelic), coinneamh (a right to free billeting in Norse), gadan (head-gear probably made of twisted horse hair, originally a withe in Gaelic), geilt (which became gjalti, meaning terror) and sòrn (a drying place for malt). In addition to that there are two of which I am aware that have survived the centuries and are still to be found in modern Icelandic. These are **kapall**, a mare, and **tarfur**, a bull; neither word occurs in Norwegian or Swedish. Do you know of any other Gaelic survivors in modern Icelandic? Please share your knowledge with me!*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **air thoiseach orm fhìn:** *ahead of myself.*

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