

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Taisbeanadh Obar Bhrothaig (1)

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 649. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 345 corresponds to Litir 649.

Tha mi a’ dol a thòiseachadh na Litreach an t-seachdain seo le beagan Laidinn, rud **nach àbhaist dhomh!** Tha e à làmh-sgrìobhainn ainmeil. Saoil am bi fios agaibh dè an làmh-sgrìobhainn. ...*expulsis primo Britonibus et Pictis omnino deletis, licet per Norwagienses, Dacos et Anglicos sepius impugnata fuerit...* Mmm. Uill, ma chanas mi gu bheil an earrann à seann litir chun a’ Phàip, agus gun robh i air a sgrìobhadh le Albannaich, tuigidh sibh ’s dòcha gu bheil i à Taisbeanadh Obar Bhrothaig no, mar a chanar ann am Beurla, *The Declaration of Arbroath*.

Tha an làmh-sgrìobhainn seo air leth cudromach ann an eachdraidh na h-Alba. Tha cuid de sgoilearan dhen bheachd gun tug i buaidh air an fheadhainn a sgrìobh Taisbeanadh Neo-eisimeileachd nan Stàitean Aonaichte. Bha Taisbeanadh Obar Bhrothaig air a sgrìobhadh anns a’ Ghiblean trì cheud deug is fichead (1320). Bha e air a chur ri chèile ann an seòmar-sgrìobhaidh Abaid Obar Bhrothaig leis an aba fhèin. Bha e ag iarraidh air a’ Phàp, Iain XXII, ann an Avignon, aithne oifigeil a thoirt do dh’Alba mar nàisean neo-eisimeileach. ’S iad uaislean mòra na dùthcha a chuir an ainmean ris.

Bidh sibh eòlach air an eachdraidh, tha mi cinnteach. Bha na rìghrean Sasannach ag amas air Alba a ghabhail thairis. Thòisich an iomairt le Eideard I ann an dà cheud deug, naochad ’s a sia (1296). Cha do sguir e eadhon nuair a chaill e ri armailt Uallais aig Drochaid Shruighlea ann an dà cheud deug, naochad ’s a seachd (1297).

Ann an trì cheud deug is ceithir-deug (1314), **rinn armailt Albannach fo Rìgh Raibeart Brus a’ chùis air armailt Eideird II aig Allt a’ Bhonnaich**. Ach, a dh’aindeoin sin, bha na Sasannaich fhathast a’ feuchainn ris a’ chùis a dhèanamh air Alba. Bha am Pàp air taobhadh leis na Sasannaich. Chuir e am Brusach a-mach às an Eaglais às dèidh gun do mhuirt e an Cuimeanach Ruadh am broinn eaglais ann an Dùn Phris.

Bha am Pàp mì-thoilichte cuideachd oir bha e ag iarraidh gum biodh na nàiseanan Crìosdail a’ strì an aghaidh nam Muslamach anns an Tìr Naoimh, seach a bhith a’ sabaid an aghaidh a chèile. Chaidh Taisbeanadh Obar Bhrothaig a sgrìobhadh airson dearbhadh don Phàp gun robh na h-Albannaich ceart ann a bhith a’ diùltadh ri strìochdadh do na Sasannaich.

’S iomadh turas a chualas earrann bhon làmh-sgrìobhainn seo. Seo an earrann as ainmeile, chanainn, air eadar-theangachadh gu Gàidhlig: *fhad ’s a mhaireas ceud duine againn beò, cha leig sinn air chor sam bith leis na Sasannaich smachd a*

ghabhail oirnn. Gu firinneach, chan ann airson glòr, no airgead no urram a tha sinn a' sabaid, ach airson saorsa – airson sin a-mhàin, rud nach leig duine onarach seachad ach le a bheatha fhèin.

Tha an earrann sin gu math cumhachdach agus chan eil e na iongnadh gu bheil e a' nochdadh gu tric air beulaibh dhaoine, gu sònraichte ann am Beurla. Ach chan e sin an earrann a thagh mi – ann an Laidinn – aig toiseach gnothaich. Thagh mi earrann eile, oir bha mi airson rudeigin eile mun Taisbeanadh seo a tharraing do dh'aire dhaoine. Tha e co-cheangailte ri àite nan Gàidheal ann an Alba aig an àm agus tha e airidh air barrachd feirt. Bheir mi a' Ghàidhlig air a shon an-ath-sheachdain.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: làmh-sgrìobhainn: *manuscript*; Taisbeanadh Obar Bhrothaig: *The Declaration of Arbroath*: saorsa: *freedom*.

Abairtean na Litreach: le beagan Laidinn: *with a bit of Latin*; gu bheil an earrann à seann litir chun a' Phàip: *that the section is from an old letter to the Pope*; gun tug i buaidh air an fheadhainn a sgrìobh Taisbeanadh Neo-eisimeileachd nan Stàitean Aonaichte: *that it influenced those who wrote the American Declaration of Independence*; gun robh e air a chur ri chèile ann an seòmair-sgrìobhaidh Abaid Obar Bhrothaig: *that it was put together in the scriptorium of Arbroath Abbey*; aithne oifigeil a thoirt do dh'Alba mar nàisean neo-eisimeileach: *to give official recognition to Scotland as an independent nation*; 's iad uaislean mòra na dùthcha a chuir an ainmean ris: *it was the country's nobles that signed it*; cha do sguir e eadhon nuair a chaill e ri armailt Uallais aig Drochaid Shruighlea: *he didn't desist even when he lost to Wallace's army at Stirling Bridge*; air taobhadh leis na Sasannaich: *had sided with the English*; às dèidh gun do mhuirt e an Cuimeanach Ruadh: *after he had murdered the Red Comyn*; am broinn eaglais ann an Dùn Phris: *inside a church in Dumfries*; an aghaidh nam Muslamach anns an Tìr Naoimh: *against the Muslims in the Holy Land*; ann a bhith a' diùltadh ri striochdadh: *in refusing to surrender*; rud nach leig duine onarach seachad ach le a bheatha fhèin: *a thing that no honourable man gives up except with his own life*; chan eil e na iongnadh: *it's not a surprise*; airidh air barrachd feirt: *deserving of more attention*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: rinn armailt Albannach fo Rìgh Raibeart Brus a' chùis air armailt Eideird II aig Allt a' Bhonnaich: *a Scottish army under King Robert Bruce defeated the army of Edward II at Bannockburn*. I was in a group of Gaelic-speakers recently who were debating the use of the words arm and armailt when referring to a fighting force (rather than weaponry). The consensus was that arm refers to the entire fighting force available to, say, a nation eg Arm Bhreatainn, the British Army. But an 'army' made up of only a portion of the forces theoretically available is an armailt. So the British Army fighting at, say, El Alamein, not being the entire British forces committed to the War, was an armailt Breatannach, rather than Arm Bhreatainn. The Highland army which did battle in the days of the Jacobite rebellion was referred to as 'armailt nam breacan'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: rud nach àbhaist dhomh: *something I don't normally [do]*.

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