

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Dòmhnall mac Fhionnla' nan Dàn (2)

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 950. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 646 corresponds to Litir 950.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Dhòmhnall mac Fhionnla' nan Dàn – am bàrd agus sealgair Abrach. Chaidh a thiodhlacadh ann an Cladh Cille Choirill. Tha clach-cuimhne anns a' chladh dha ach chan eil fios le cinnt cà' bheil an uaigh aige. A rèir aithris bha leac ann uaireigin ga comharrachadh agus, **cleas Dhonnchaidh Bhàin**, sgrìobh am bàrd na leanas airson a dhol oirre:

Fhir, a cheumas thar mo lic', Seall a-rithist às do dhèidh, 'S cuimhnich – ged tha mi san uaigh – Gun robh mi uair cho luath riut fhèin.

Co-dhiù tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu bhàs Dhòmhnall, a rèir beul-aithris a chaidh a chruinneachadh anns an sgìre. Tha an naidheachd laghach agus, a bharrachd air sin, tha i a' toirt dhuinn briathrachas co-cheangailte ri boghadaireachd.

Bha Dòmhnall a' fàs sean. Ged a bha a bhean na b' òige na e, chaochail i **air thoiseach air**. Bha e a' fuireach cuide ri a nighinn. Latha a bha seo, bha e gu h-àrd taobh Loch Trèig na shuidhe ann am bothan agus e a' coimhead a-mach air an uinneig. Bhiodh e an uair sin ochdad 's a h-ochd bliadhna a dh'aois. Bha a nighean ag obair air aran a dhèanamh. Leig Dòmhnall osna 'Dè th' ort, a dhuine?' thuir i.

'Tha mi a' faicinn ùdlaiche a' tighinn a-nuas an sin, agus e cho brèagha 's a chunna' mi riamh. Agus 's e a tha a' cur caimir-inntinn orm nach urrainn dhomh a thilgeil leis an t-saighead.'

'Och, na bithibh a' coimhead air rudan mar sin, a dhuine,' thuir i.

'Thoir thusa an t-saighead a-nuas bhàrr an fharaidh,' thuir Dòmhnall. 'Tha i dreis ann a-nise, agus am bogha. Faic am bheil an taifeid fallain. Agus faigh an t-saighead as fheàrr smèidir. Ma tha i garbh anns an roinn, suath i ri clach an teinntein.'

Rinn an nighean sin. Leag Dòmhnall a thaic ris an uinneig. Tharraing e an t-saighead agus leig e air falbh i. Thuit am fiadh. Agus cha mhòr nach do thuit am bodach taobh an teine leis a' bhriosgadh a thug e air.

'Seo agad m' iarrtas,' thuir e. 'Sin agad an damh mu dheireadh a thilgeas mi. Feann e agus cuir an t-seiche aige air dòigh agus thèid mo thiodhlacadh ann an seiche an daimh sin ann an Cille Choirill. Na cuir air mo dhruim idir mi. Ach cuir m' aghaidh air Loch Trèig is air na monaidhean air a bheil m' inntinn a' siubhal a h-uile latha.'

Tha mi airson soraidh a leigeil le Cladh Cille Choirill an-diugh oir tha sinn air a bhith ann beagan sheachdainean. Ach bu mhath leam dìreach geàrr-aithris a dhèanamh air an eaglais anns a' chladh a tha gu math math sean. A rèir beul-aithris, chaidh a togail – no 's dòcha ath-thogail (oir tha an t-ainm gu math sean) – ann an ceithir cheud

deug, ochdad 's a ceithir (1484) le ceann-cinnidh nan Camshronach, Ailean nan Creach.

Thog Ailean seachd creachan ach, an dèidh làimhe, ghabh e aithreachas às. Chuir e roimhe seachd eaglaisean a thogail airson a chuid aithreachais a dhearbhadh. B' e tè dhiubh Cille Choirill. Bha an eaglais anns a' chladh mu thràth nuair a chaidh Dòmhnall mac Fhionnla' nan Dàn a thiodhlacadh ann, le seiche daimh timcheall air agus aghaidh air Loch Trèig 's na monaidhean.

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Faclan na Litreach: Abrach: *Lochaber*; caimir-inntinn: *mental distress*; taifeid: *bowstring*; m' iartas: *my request*; feann: *flay, skin*; Ailean nan Creach: *Allan of the Forays*; aithreachas: *regret*.

Abairtean na Litreach: bha leac ann ga comharrachadh: *there was a slab marking it*; Fhir, a cheumas thar mo lic', Seall a-rithist às do dhèidh: *O man who walks over my slab, look again behind you*; cuimhnich – ged tha mi san uaigh – gun robh mi uair cho luath riut fhèin: *remember – although I am in the grave – that I was once as swift as you*; a' toirt dhuinn briathrachas co-cheangailte ri boghadaireachd: *giving us vocabulary connected to archery*; dè th' ort, a dhuine?: *what's wrong with you, man?*; ùdlaiche a' tighinn a-nuas an sin: *a stag coming down there*; cho brèagha 's a chunna' mi riamh: *as beautiful as ever I saw*; nach urrainn dhomh a thilgeil leis an t-saighead: *that I can't shoot at it*; thoir thusa an t-saighead a-nuas bhàrr an fharaidh: *take down the arrow from the loft*; tha i dreis ann a-nise, agus am bogha: *it's been there a while, as has the bow*; faigh an t-saighead as fheàrr smeòir: *get the arrow with the best shaft*; ma tha i garbh anns an roinn, suath i ri clach an teinntein: *if it is rough on the cleft, rub it on the hearthstone*; leag X a thaic ris an uinneig: *X supported himself on the window*; cha mhòr nach do thuit am bodach leis a' bhriosgadh: *the old man almost fell with the aftershock*; thèid mo thiodhlacadh ann an seiche an daimh: *I'll be buried in the stag's skin*; cuir m' aghaidh air Loch Trèig: *set me to face Loch Treig*; thog Ailean seachd creachan: *Allan was engaged in seven plunderings*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: chaochail i air thoiseach air: *she died before him ie ahead of him*. Air thoiseach air 'ahead of' and air dheireadh air 'behind' are good phrases to remember (the lenition of the noun being related to an old model for the indefinite dative singular). Here are a couple of examples: bha mi air thoiseach ort 'I was ahead of you'; bha i air dheireadh air a piuthar 'she was behind/after her sister'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: cleas Dhonnchaidh Bhàin: *in the manner of Duncan Ban [MacIntyre]*. Duncan's well-known grave in Edinburgh has a similar verse on it (although Dòmhnall's is much earlier and perhaps served as a model for Duncan – if oral tradition is correct).

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