

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Iseabail Gowdie (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 1,124. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 820 corresponds to Litir 1,124.

Ann an còig ceud deug is naochad (1590), chaidh cùisean-cùirte mì-chliùiteach a chumail ann am Bearaig a Tuath. Bha iad co-cheangailte ri buidseachd, gu sònraichte de bhith a’ feuchainn ri long an Rìgh a chur fodha. Chaidh grunnan a chur gu bàs ann an teine, an dèidh dhaibh ciùrradh fhulang. Bha an Rìgh, Seumas VI, a’ creidsinn gun robh buidseachd fìor, agus sgrìobh e leabhar mun chuspair air an robh *Daemonologie*.

Anns an aon bhliadhna a thàinig *Daemonologie* a-mach, bha grunn chùisean-cùirte air feadh Alba, agus daoine fo chasaid de bhuidseachd. Thathar a’ smaoinichadh gun robh mu dhà cheud dhiubh air an cur gu bàs.

Shocraich cùisean an dèidh sin, ach bha tuilleadh ainneirt an aghaidh ‘buidseichean’ no ‘ban-bhuidseichean’ anns an t-seachdamh linn deug. Agus tha sin gam thoirt air ais gu Iseabail Gowdie à Allt Èireann a chaidh air beulaibh luchd-ceasnachaidh ann an sia ceud deug, seasgad ’s a dhà (1662). Thairis air sia seachdainean, rinn i aideachadh de bhuidseachd ceithir tursan. Bha i air a cumail fo ghlas na h-aonar fad na h-ùine sin. Cha robh gnothaichean na fàbhar gu h-ionadail, ge-tà. Bha ministear na paraiste agus an t-uachdaran dhen bheachd gum biodh bàs bana-bhuidseich ceart is cothromach.

Anns a’ chiad aideachadh aige, thuir Iseabail gun do choinnich i ris an Donas anns an eaglais ann an Allt Èireann air an oidhche. Rinn an Donas a chomharra air a gualainn agus dheoghail e fuil bhuaithe. Cha robh Iseabail leatha fhèin. Bha buidheann ann. Bha comas aca sgiathadh air eich dhraoidheil is a dhol a-steach tro uinneagan ann an taighean nan uaislean.

San dàrna aideachadh, thuir i gun deach i a chèilidh air Banrigh nan Sìthichean. Ach ghabh Iseabail eagal an sin oir bha taigh na Banrigh làn tharbhuise. Bha i an sàs ann an cruth-atharrachadh cuideachd. Dh’fhaodadh i a cur fhèin ann an cruth cathaig. Bha feadhainn eile comasach air an cur fhèin ann an cruth cait no maighich. Thuir i gun do rinn i ìomhaighean crèadha de mhic an uachdarain leis an amas gum biodh iad a’ fulang tinneas no bàs.

Chan eil mi cinnteach an robh fios aig Iseabail gun robh i a’ sgrìobhadh a teisteanais-bàis fhèin, ach lean i oirre. Dh’inns i rannan a chanadh i fhèin is na bana-bhuidseichean eile airson an cruth atharrachadh. Chlàir an luchd-ceasnachaidh barrachd rannan-buidseachd bho Iseabail na fhuair eadh riann bho neach sam bith eile ann am Breatainn.

Dh’inns Gowdie do a luchd-ceasnachaidh mar a bha saighdean beaga draoidheil aig an Donas. Bhiodh esan gan toirt do na bana-bhuidseichean airson losgadh air daoine. Duine sam bith air am bualadh saighead dhen t-seòrsa sin, bhiodh iad a’ faighinn bàs.

Anns an treas aideachadh aice, thug Iseabail ainmean seachad de dhaoine a chaidh a mharbhadh le buidseachd. Rinn i cunntas de thuras a chaidh i a dh’Allt Èireann air adhbhar

an Donais, agus i ann an riochd maighich. Nuair a bha i na maighich, thuir i, chaidh **prasgan chon** às a dèidh. Fhuair i air falbh bhuapa le bhith a' ruith bho thaigh gu taigh gus an d' fhuair i cothrom a cur air ais ann an riochd daonna.

Mura robh sin gu leòr, bha tuilleadh aig Iseabail ri aideachadh, cuid dheth gu math mì-thaitneach, mar a chluinneas sinn an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: tuilleadh ainneirt: *more [additional] oppression, violence*; Allt Èireann: *Auldearn*; aideachadh: *confession*; an Donas: *the Devil*; Banrigh nan Sìthichean: *The Queen of the Fairies*; cruth-atharrachadh: *shapeshifting, transformation, transmogrification*; teisteanais-bàis: *death certificate*; saighdean: *arrows*; mì-thaitneach: *unpleasant*.

Abairtean na Litreach: chaidh cùisean-cùirte mì-chliùiteach a chumail ann am Bearaig a Tuath: *infamous court cases were held in North Berwick*; gu sònraichte de bhith a' feuchainn ri long an Rìgh a chur fodha: *particularly of attempting to sink the King's ship*; chaidh grunnan a chur gu bàs ann an teine, an dèidh dhaibh ciùrradh fhulang: *some people were put to death in a fire, after they had suffered torture*; thathar a' smaoinichadh gun robh mu dhà cheud dhiubh air an cur gu bàs: *it is thought that about two hundred of them were put to death*; shocraich cùisean an dèidh sin: *matters settled down after that*; air beulaibh luchd-ceasnachaidh: *in front of interrogators*; air a cumail fo ghlas na h-aonar: *kept in solitary confinement*; cha robh gnothaichean na fàbhar gu h-ionadail, ge-tà: *matters were not in her favour locally, however*; rinn an Donas a chomharra air a gualainn agus dheoghail e fuil bhuaithe: *the Devil made his mark on her shoulder and he sucked blood from it*; sgiathadh air eich dhraoidheil: *flying on magic horses*; tro uinneagan ann an taighean nan uaislean: *through windows in the houses of the gentry*; làn tharbhu-uisge: *full of water-bulls*; dh'fhaodadh i a cur fhèin ann an cruth cathaig: *she could put herself in the form of a jackdaw*; ann an cruth cait no maighich: *in the form of a cat or hare*; gun do rinn i ìomhaighean crèadha de mhic an uachdarain: *that she made clay images of the landlord's sons*; leis an amas gum biodh iad a' fulang tinneas no bàs: *with the aim that they would suffer illness or death*; rannan a chanadh i fhèin is na bana-bhuidisichean eile: *chants/verses she and the other witches would say*; chlàir an luchd-ceasnachaidh barrachd rannan-buidseachd: *the interrogators recorded more witchcraft verses*; a cur air ais ann an riochd daonna: *to put her[self] back in human form*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: de thuras a chaidh i a dh'Allt Èireann air adhbhar an Donais, agus i ann an riochd maighich: *of a time she went to Auldearn on behalf of the Devil, when she was in the form of a hare*. Note the use of agus here to start a clause – it wouldn't idiomatically be translated as 'and' in this type of situation.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: chaidh **prasgan chon** às a dèidh: *a pack of dogs chased her*.

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