

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

'Cathair' (2)

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,296. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 992 corresponds to Litir 1,296. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha mi a' bruidhinn anns an Litir mu dheireadh mun fhacal *cathair*. Tha e a' nochdadh an siud 's an seo ann an ainmean-àite air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Uaireannan, tha e a' seasamh airson 'chair' no 'seat'. Ann an meadhan Earra-Ghàidheal, mar eisimpleir, tha Cathair Dhonncha Dhuibh. Tha e tuath air an Fhùirneis. Tha an t-Suirbhidh Òrdanais ag ràdh gur e 'rude seat' a th' ann. Bha i air a cruthachadh le cìobair air an robh Donncha Dubh mar ainm.

Ann an Gleann Tromaidh ann am Bàideanach, tha clach ri taobh na h-aibhne air an robh Cathair Fhearghais – *Fergus's chair*. A rèir choltais, dh'atharraich an t-ainm gu Clach Fhearghais oir tha e a' nochdadh mar sin air an dàrna mapa sia-òirlich aig an t-Suirbhidh Òrdanais. Chan eil fhios a'm dè chanas muinntir an àite rithe an-diugh.

Tha am facal *sìthean* cumanta air feadh na Gàidhealtachd. Tha e aithnichte mar àite far am biodh sìthichean a' fuireach. Ach, air taobh an iar Siorrachd Rois, nochdaidh am facal *cathair* airson an dearbh rud. Ma bheir sibh sùil air mapa de sgìre Gheàrrloch, chì sibh Portaigil no *Port Henderson*. Deas air a' bhaile, tha Carr Dhubh ann. Tha an sàr-eòlaiche, Uilleam MacBhàtair, ag innse dhuinn gur e sin A' Chathair Dhubh 'the black fairy knoll'.

Cuideachd ann an Ros an Iar, faisg air An Leathad, tha loch ann air a bheil Loch na Cathrach Duibhe. Tha MacBhàtair a' dearbhadh gu bheil sin a' ciallachadh 'the loch of the black fairy knoll' – ged nach eil a' Chathair Dhubh fhèin comharraichte air na mapaichean.

Tha am facal *cathair*, mar as trice, boireanta, ach bidh e a' nochdadh an siud 's an seo mar gu bheil e fireanta. Tha eisimpleir ann an Ros an Ear, faisg air Baile Dhubhthaich, far a bheil Cnoc an Dubh Chathair. Tha an t-ainm a' ciallachadh 'the hill of the black chair'.

Ma tha sibh a' coimhead airson an fhacail *cathair* air mapaichean na Gàidhealtachd, **nach dèan sibh cinnteach** nach eil stràc air a' chiad 'a'. Ma tha stràc ann, tha facal eadar-dhealaichte agaibh. 'S e sin *càthar*, le '-ar' aig an deireadh. Tha e a' ciallachadh 'boggy place'. Bidh e a' nochdadh anns an tuiseal ghinideach le '-air' aig an deireadh – mar eisimpleir anns an ainm-àite Druim a' Chàthair ann an Gleann Moireasdain. Tha sin a' ciallachadh 'the ridge by the boggy ground'.

Ach air ais gu *cathair*. Seo mar a nochdas e ann an **caochladh shuidheachaidhean**: cathair-shneadhan 'anthill'; cathair-ghàirdeanach 'armchair';

cathair-bhreitheanais ‘tribunal, judgement seat’; cathair-chuibhle ‘wheelchair’ agus cathair-iomchair ‘sedan chair’ – gu litreachail ‘carrying seat’.

Mu dheireadh, ’s e ‘A’ Chathair’ a chanas sinn ri reul-bhad ann an iarmailt an leth-chruinne mu thuath. Ann am Beurla, ’s e *Cassiopeia* a th’ air. Bha *Cassiopeia* na banrigh a chaidh a-mach air Poseidon, dia na mara. Chaidh a cur don iarmailt mar pheanas agus bhiodh i a’ dol timcheall a’ phòla mu thuath, a’ greimeachadh gu teann air an rìgh-chathair aice. ’S e cumadh a cathrach a chì na Gàidheil fhathast anns a’ bhad rionnagan air an oidhche.

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Faclan na Litreach: meadhan Earra-Ghàidheal: *Mid-Argyll*; Gleann Tromaidh: *Glen Tromie*; Bàideanach: *Badenoch*; An Leathad: *Laide*; Uilleam MacBhàtair: *William J Watson*; mar as trice: *usually*; boireanta: *feminine*; tuiseal ghinideach: *genitive case*.

Abairtean na Litreach: tuath air an Fhùirneis: *north of Furnace (Loch Fyne)*; bha i air a cruthachadh le ciobair air an robh X mar ainm: *it was created by a shepherd called X*; aithnichte mar àite far am biodh sìthichean a’ fuireach: *recognised as a place where ‘fairies’ would be living*; air taobh an iar Siorrachd Rois, nochdaidh am facal X airson an dearbh rud: *in Wester Ross, the word X appears for the very same thing*; tha MacBhàtair a’ dearbhadh gu bheil sin a’ ciallachadh: *Watson confirms that that means*; ged nach eil X fhèin comharraichte air na mapaichean: *although X itself is not marked on the maps*; bidh e a’ nochdadh an siud ’s an seo mar gu bheil e fireanta: *it appears here and there as if it were masculine*; tha eisimpleir ann an Ros an Ear, faisg air Baile Dhubhthaich: *there is an example in Easter Ross, near Tain*; tha facal eadar-dhealaichte agaibh: *you have a different word*; a chanas sinn ri reul-bhad ann an iarmailt an leth-chruinne mu thuath: *that we call a constellation in the firmament of the northern hemisphere*; bha *Cassiopeia* na banrigh a chaidh a-mach air Poseidon, dia na mara: *Cassiopeia was a queen who fell out with Poseidon, the god of the sea*; bhiodh i a’ dol timcheall a’ phòla mu thuath, a’ greimeachadh gu teann air an rìgh-chathair aice: *she would go around the north pole, keeping a tight grip on her throne*; ’s e cumadh a cathrach a chì na Gàidheil fhathast anns a’ bhad rionnagan air an oidhche: *it’s the form of her chair that the Gaels see in the group of stars at night*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Seo mar a nochdas e ann an **caochladh**

shuidheachaidhean: *here’s how it appears in a variety of situations. Notice that the noun commanded by caochladh is in the genitive plural case (without the article).*

Here are some other examples: tha caochladh dhathan air na geansaidhean ‘the jumpers have a variety of colours’; cluinnear caochladh bheachdan air a’ ghnòthach ‘a variety of opinions will be heard on the matter’; faodar sin a ràdh ann an caochladh dhòighean ‘that can be said in a variety of ways’.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: nach dèan sibh cinnteach nach eil stràc air a’ chiad ‘a’: *won’t you make certain that there is no accent on the first ‘a’.*

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