

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Leabhar Cheannanais agus Port mo Cholmaig (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 1,389. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,085 corresponds to Litir 1,389. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learn Gaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learn Gaelic.scot.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Leabhar Cheannanais, agus mar a tha cuid dhen bheachd gun robh e air a dhèanamh ann am Machair Rois. Bha manachainn ann am Port mo Cholmaig airson mu cheud bliadhna, bho thoiseach gu deireadh an ochdamh linn. Tha dùil gur e Cruithnich a bha ag obair ann, ged nach eil fianais againn mun chànan a bha iad a' bruidhinn. Bha iad a' sgrìobhadh ann an Laidinn.

Tha fianais mun mhanachainn a' tighinn bho obair a rinn arc-eòlaichean ann. Agus fhuair eadhon fianais anns a' chladhach sin a tha a' cur ris an sgeul mu Leabhar Cheannanais.

Tha an sgoilear Victoria Whitworth, a sgrìobh an leabhar *The Book of Kells: Unlocking the Enigma*, air sùil gheur a thoirt air an obair-ealain anns an leabhar. Tha e coltach gun robh dithis an sàs ann. Tha mi an dùil gur e fir a bh' annta – manaich. Sgrìobh fear dhiubh an teacsa, agus rinn e cuid dhen obair-ealain. Rinn am fear eile obair-ealain a-mhàin. Chan eil fios againn cò bh' annta no cò às a bha iad.

Buinidh na clachan snaighte as brèagha a th' againn ann an Alba do Mhachair Rois. Mar a tha Victoria Whitworth a' sgrìobhadh anns an leabhar aice: *'The carved stones of the Tarbat peninsula are the finest examples of Pictish stone sculpture to be found anywhere.'*

Am measg nan clach, tha an fheadhainn a bhuineas do Bhaile a' Chnuic, Seannduaig agus An Eig – àiteachan a tha uile faisg air Port mo Cholmaig. Agus tha an obair-ealain orra rudeigin coltach ris na nochdas air duilleagan Leabhar Cheannanais. Tha iad nas coltaiche buileach ma chuimhnicheas sinn gun robh na clachan sin uaireigin air am peantadh ann an dathan brèagha – mar a tha Leabhar Cheannanais.

Math dh'fhaodte gun robh rudeigin ann am fàbhar an luchd-ealain ann am Port mo Cholmaig. 'S e sin a' chlach a bh' aca. Bha iad a' cleachdadh na cloiche a tha pailt anns an sgìre – an Seann Chlach-ghainmhich. Tha e furasta gu leòr a' chlach seo obrachadh airson cumaidhean fillte a dhèanamh.

Chan ionann i sin agus a' chlach ann an Eilean Ì air taobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd. Tha i sin gu math cruaidh, agus **nas dorra obrachadh**. Agus, ged

a tha seann chroisean mòra ann an Ì, chan eil obair-ealain air na clachan dhen t-seòrsa a chì sinn ann am Machair Rois, no ann an Leabhar Cheannanais.

Chan eil sin ri ràdh nach robh Port mo Cholmaig ceangailte ri Eilean Ì. Bha an dà mhanachainn faisg air gach ceann dhen Ghleann Mhòr – trom biodh daoine a’ siubhal. Agus bha e air a bhith furasta gu leòr seòladh aig muir eadar Port mo Cholmaig agus Eilean Lindisfarne air costa an ear-thuath Shasainn. Bha Lindisfarne agus Eilean Ì ceangailte tro phearsaichean eaglais a bha a’ dol eatarra.

Agus cò bh’ anns an naomh a tha ainmichte ann am Port mo Cholmaig? Thathar a’ smaoineachadh gum b’ esan Colman, Easbaig Lindisfarne anns na seasgadan dhen t-seachdamh linn. Chaidh esan gu ruige Lindisfarne à Eilean Ì.

Anns an ath Litir bheir sùil air an teicneòlas a bhathar a’ cleachdadh ann am Port mo Cholmaig airson làmh-sgrìobhainnean a dhèanamh. Tha cuid ag ràdh gu bheil sin a’ cur taic ris a’ bheachd gun robh Leabhar Cheannanais air a dhèanamh ann am Port mo Cholmaig.

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Faclan na Litreach: Leabhar Cheannanais: *The Book of Kells*; Machair Rois: *the coastal plain of Easter Ross*; arc-eòlaichean: *archaeologists*; obair-ealain: *artwork*; manaich: *monks*; clachan snaighte: *sculpted stones*; Seann Chlach-ghainmhich: *Old Red Sandstone*; cumaidhean fillte: *complex shapes*; easbaig: *bishop*; teicneòlas: *technology*; làmh-sgrìobhainnean: *manuscripts*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Bha manachainn ann am Port mo Cholmaig airson mu cheud bliadhna: *there was a monastery in Portmahomack for around a hundred years*; bho thoiseach gu deireadh an ochdamh linn: *from the beginning to the end of the eighth century*; tha dùil gur e Cruithnich a bha ag obair ann: *it is thought that it was Picts that were working there*; fhuair eadhon fianais anns a’ chladhach: *evidence was obtained in the dig*; sgrìobh fear dhiubh an teacsa: *one of them wrote the text*; chan eil fios againn cò bh’ annta no cò às a bha iad: *we don’t know who they were or where they were from*; an fheadhainn a bhuineas do Bhaile a’ Chnuic, Seannduaig agus An Eig: *the ones that belong to Hilton (of Cadboll), Shandwick and Nigg*; nas coltaiche buileach ma chuimhnicheas sinn gun robh na clachan sin uaireigin air am peantadh: *even more similar if we remember that those stones were painted at one time*; gun robh rudeigin ann am fàbhar an luchd-ealain: *that something was in the favour of the artists*; furasta gu leòr a’ chlach seo obrachadh: *easy enough to work this stone*; ged a tha seann chroisean mòra ann an Ì: *even though there are large old crosses on Iona*; bha an dà mhanachainn faisg air gach ceann dhen Ghleann Mhòr: *the two monasteries were close to each end of the Great Glen*; trom biodh daoine a’ siubhal: *along which people would be travelling*; bha Lindisfarne agus Eilean Ì ceangailte tro phearsaichean eaglais a bha a’ dol eatarra: *Lindisfarne and Iona were connected through church figures that were going between them*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: nas dorra obrachadh: *more difficult to work*. Dorra is considered to be a comparative form of the adjective *duilich* ‘sorry, difficult’ although there is another equivalent form *duilghe*. Alternatively, it is considered to be the comparative form of *doirbh* ‘difficult, tricky’, although there is another form *doirbhe*. Whatever its exact grammatical status, *nas dorra* means ‘more difficult’ and is relatively common in speech.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Chan ionann i sin agus a' chlach ann an Eilean Ì:
that is not the same as/equivalent to the stone on Iona.

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