

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Beathaichean, a chaidh à bith, air mapaichean na h-Alba (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.maclea@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 704. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 400 corresponds to Litir 704.

Bha mi a’ bruidhinn an t-seachdain sa chaidh mu ainmeachadh ainmhidhean, a th’ air a dhol à bith ann an Alba, air mapaichean na dùthcha. Chan eil an lioncs ann idir, chan eilear cinnteach mun mhadadh-allaidh agus tha am mathan a’ nochdadh dà thuras (’s dòcha).

Ach dè mun torc? An torc-nimhe no torc-allaidh – *the wild boar*. Tha ainmean ann mar An Torc, Allt nan Torc, Allt nan Torcan, An Torc-choire, Allt an Tuirc, Beinn an Tuirc, Cruach Tuirc, Loch an Tuirc, Meall an Tuirc, Sròn an Tuirc agus Tòrr an Tuirc.

Tha an t-uabhas de dh’ainmean mar sin ann. Ach a bheil sin a’ ciallachadh gun robh an torc fhèin pailt aig aon àm ann an Alba? A bheil na h-ainmean gu lèir a’ riochdachadh an tuirc-nimhe? Feumaidh sinn a bhith faiceallach mu dheidhinn sin.

Anns a’ chiad dol a-mach, tha am facal *torc* cuideachd a’ ciallachadh *cleft, notch, indentation*. Tha *torcan* a’ ciallachadh *little cleft*. Mar sin, ’s iongantach mura h-eil *Allt nan Torcan* faisg air an Acha Mhòr ann an Leòdhas a’ ciallachadh *the burn of the little clefts*. Mas ann às an Acha Mhòr a tha sibh fhèin, ’s dòcha gum bi beachd no eòlas agaibh air an ainm sin. Tha cuideachd Meall an Torcain a ch’ gach dràibhear air an rathad eadar Gairbh agus Ullapul air taobh thall Loch a’ Ghlas Chàrnaich.

Agus dè mu dheidhinn *Allt nan Torc* deas air Tobar Mhoire ann am Muile? *The burn of the boars*? Tha e faisg air Doire nan Damh agus an Cnoc Capallach, ach an urrainn a bhith cinnteach gur ann air ainmhidh a tha Allt nan Torc a-mach? Agus tha ciall a bharrachd air *torc*, a rèir Dwelly – *Sod. A special use of it was the sod turned up as a mark to indicate divisions of arable land during the runrig system of cultivation.*

Tha *Tòrr an Tuirc* tuath air cladach Loch Shubhairne faisg air Creag an Taghain agus Creag an Fhithich. A bheil iad le chèile a’ riochdachadh àiteachan a bha ainmeil airson nam beathaichean sin? ’S dòcha.

Ach dè mu na h-ainmean mar *Bad an Tuirc* ann an Athall, *Beinn an Tuirc* ann an Cinn Tìre agus *Meall an Tuirc* faisg air Baile Eòghainn ann an Ros an Ear? A bheil iadsan a’ riochdachadh an ainmhidh? A-rithist, ’s dòcha.

Faisg air Meall an Tuirc ann an Ros an Ear, tha Meann Chnoc agus Druim nan Damh – beanntan eile a tha a’ giùlain ainmean bheathaichean. Ach tha Uilleam MacBhàtair ag innse dhuinn ann am *Place Names of Ross and Cromarty* gu bheil *Cnoc Cèislein*, a tha faisg air Meall an Tuirc, a’ ciallachadh *cnoc na muice* no *cnoc na cràine*, *the hill of the sow*. A rèir choltais, nuair a chithear paidhreachadh de

dh'ainmean mar sin, tha 'torc' a' buntainn ri cumadh na beinne – gu bheil druim oirre **a bha a' cur ann an cuimhne nan seann Ghàidheal** druim an tuirc-nimhe. Bha ar sinnsearan eòlach gu leòr air an torc. Ach chan eil an t-ainm a' ciallachadh gun robh an torc-nimhe uaireigin pailt anns a' cheàrnaidh sin.

Ri taobh rathad mòr an A9 aig Druim Uachdair, chì gach tràibhear beinn mhòr air a bheil *An Torc*, no ann am Beurla, *The Boar of Badenoch*. Innsidh mi tuilleadh dhuibh mu dheidhinn sin an-ath-sheachdain.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: lioncs: *lynx*; madadh-allaidh: *wolf*; mathan: *bear*; torc: *wild boar*; Doire nan Damh: *the copse of the stags*; an Cnoc Capallach: *the horse hill*; Loch Shubhairne: *Loch Hourn*; Creag an Taghain: *the crag of the pine marten*; Creag an Fhithich: *the crag of the raven*; Athall: *Atholl*; Cinn Tìre: *Kintyre*; Baile Eòghainn: *Evanton*; Ros an Ear: *Easter Ross*; Meann Chnoc: *kids' hill (young goats)*; Uilleam MacBhàtair: *William Watson*; druim: *back, ridge*; pailt: *plentiful*.

Abairtean na Litreach: ainmeachadh ainmhidhean, a th' air a dhol à bith ann an Alba, air mapaichean na dùthcha: *the naming of animals, which have become extinct in Scotland, on the country's maps*; gun robh an torc fhèin pailt aig aon àm: *that the boar itself was once plentiful*; a bheil na h-ainmean gu lèir a' riochdachadh an tuirc-nimhe?: *do all the names represent the wild boar?*; feumaidh sinn a bhith faiceallach: *we must be careful*; 's iongantach mura h-eil X faisg air an Acha Mhòr a' ciallachadh: *it's likely that X near Achmore means*; a chì gach tràibhear air an rathad eadar Gairbh agus Ullapul: *that every driver sees on the road between Garve and Ullapool*; taobh thall Loch a' Ghlas Chàrnaich: *the far side of Loch Glascarnoch*; deas air Tobar Mhoire ann am Muile: *south of Tobermory in Mull*; beanntan eile a tha a' giùlain ainmean bheathaichean: *other mountains that carry animals' names*; nuair a chithear paidhreachadh de dh'ainmean: *when pairing of names is seen*; a' buntainn ri cumadh na beinne: *is concerned with the shape of the mountain*; bha ar sinnsearan eòlach gu leòr air an torc: *our ancestors were familiar enough with the wild boar*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *It's tempting to see the words torc, torcan and tuirc in place names representing the wild boar but the words do have other meanings that might be relevant in a landscape context. Torc can also mean a 'cleft, notch, indentation'; the diminutive torcan is therefore a 'little cleft'. Torc also means a sod of earth, sometimes one turned up to mark divisions of arable land under the old runrig system. And it appears that some place names that include torc represent a hill whose shape is reminiscent of a wild boar, rather than recalling the historical existence of the species. Also, as we'll see next week, landscape references to the boar can be folkloric rather than ecological.*

Gnàthas -cainnt na Litreach: **a bha a' cur ann an cuimhne nan seann Ghàidheal:** *that reminded the old Gaels.*

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