

Dòmhnall dubh mac an Tàillùir (dahnul du mak ahn tailyur)

[I am writin' you in the language of my inheritors, transported as I am magickly to the year of our Lord 2019. Sadly, my own Gàidhlig—now written Gaelic—be mostly lost and be greatly changed in any case. Even the English I learnt in my youth and in my travels is now greatly changed, so I will use my adopted form, used here in the Shire of Arenal, now called American, which be much closer to the English of my day. You will forgive me if I take license with my spellings and my grammar, as we had no such firm ways as you do now, and I will attempt thusly to make my writin' sound closer to my speech!]

I was born in 1566 in Achnacarry, far North and deep in the highlands of Scotland, on the same day that Queen Mary bore her son Jamie, then our and England's King.

My mother was beauteous! She was the darlin' of all around, or so I was told. An' I do believe it so, for she was surely my mother, but my father, the tailor thereabouts, couldnae been my own true father as I am but 10 years the younger of him! But a right guid father he was to me: honest, caring, loving, and kind: I am honored to be hight "mac an Tàillùir"!

'Twas said often thereabout that my mother, Patricia, was not only beauteous, but rebellious, with a high thirst for knowledge, who pestered the guid and learned priest of Achnacarry—Father Leclerc, or Père Leclerc as I later came to know him once I had myself learnt his native French—to teach her his own language, as he was of Paris in France. Their mutual teaching and learning continued until his death. (It was said my third brother greatly resembled him, and of this I can attest!) And this was to my advantage—though I knew it not at the time, as I was as boisterous and rebellious as was my mother—because the good priest instructed me as well as she in the ways of books and the various tongues which he had mastered in Europe before crossing the Channel and wandering north to our glen in Scotland. Later, my travels to Europe were greatly facilitated as I could often speak with the peoples there in their native tongues, and my own fluency improved greatly thereby.

But who was my own true father? I suspect 'twas the laird his own self, for I favored him greatly, and I had his own given name, too: Dòmhnall. Of course he could not acknowledge me as his own—and first—son, as my mother had not the benefit of family, name, and marriage with the great man. So I had to content myself, an' 'twas not greatly difficult, to be my mother's husband's acknowledged son, hence what all came to call me Dòmhnall (which the English corrupt to "Donald") "son of the tailor", or in modern Gaelic "Dòmhnall mac an Tàillùir" (or Tailleour, or Taylior").

My life—as I look back now more than 60 years into it (yes I am ancient!)—was vastly interesting and fortunate, as the laird included me with his own sons and neglected neither my own martial training, as he did not that of them. Hours every day with Father Leclerc and with Maister Dòmhnall who was the laird's master-at-arms passed blissfully in my young life. We even sallied forth in a great mass to avenge the sacking of a village belonging to our clan to the north. When I came to my majority, my father gifted me with a tiny sum to garb myself in my favored black (all the other boys called me Dòmhnall Dubh) and white wool, with a purple feather in my bonnet. He further gifted me with an ancient iron penannular for my cloak. The Maister Dòmhnall gifted me with a fine claymore that looked much like one from the walls of the laird's own hall that was finer than the one I had trained with, and a fine, old bronze penannular—very and mysteriously similar to my own laird's!—for my breacan an feile (which the English named "great kilt"). My mother cried and bid me a sad farewell, but I proudly marched off down the lane to seek my fortune, a full man and warrior at age 17, bound for France, Germany, and Italy where I knew I could make myself known and understood thanks to the good Père Leclerc!

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My life was active: journeying, fighting, reveling, courting, dancing, and feasting my way through Europe and the East, even unto Africa. I saw many strange things, and small fame accompanied “the brave bear and testy bull” as I traveled about. I watched on the bows of ships as trees and cities rose up on the horizon day after day, others disappearing astern, and marveled that there was always more yet to come, and wondered if there was ever an end to their progression over this great curve upon which we live. The rude sailors laughed at my questions, and learned men in the cities scoffed at my questions. Little did I know then that my journeys would take me even to Holy Jerusalem, where my Lord at the time was pleased to gift me with one of his own rings, and add the Cross to my own devices of the Bear and the Bull over a [bar sinister] in sable, or, and purple. I bear these today still, home in my native land and now in service to my own laird’s son, who welcomed me home as a brother as we had taken turns besting each other in Maister Dòmhnall’s—and now my own!—training fields.

I am blessed to have been first hand fasted then married to my own fine woman, Teresa, the beauteous daughter of a mysterious eastern lady shipwrecked upon our shores from Spain and married to a distant cousin of my own Laird Dòmhnall of Achnacarry, married by my old mentor Père Leclerc no less. I count myself very fortunate to still have so many family and friends about me after my return home at my advanced age of 30. My mother and father beam happily at us all, my brothers, sisters, Teresa and I and our crushing crowd of bairns! My Teresa and I share a pair of fine rooms in the Laird’s fine new stone castle built by clansmen to protect our clan much like the castles of the English far to the south, while the bairns, various hounds, a furtive cat or three, and the occasional chicken or goose run amok among the castle’s other children or begin their training in my care. Our serving girl and her husband live nearby in a croft I caused to be built on land gifted to me by the old Laird, Dòmhnall, she (Caitlin) helping my wife and the castle at large, he (Iain) as my man-at-arms.

I am most content with my relatively quiet life, tucked here as we are far into the highlands of Scotland at the heart of my laird’s and my clan’s domains. The English—we call them the sassenaich hereabouts—are not far, but they are far enough to be nary a bother, at least in our glens of Scotland. Our King has many English pretensions, though, and I fear this peacefulness may well change in the future. A grasping, cold race they are!

We enjoy our lives greatly. The days are full with brawling and fighting on my fields with dirk, claymore, bow, and axe. I am one of the few of us equipped with more than a shield, as such equipment comes dear and is little needed among us of the highlands, unlike the bloody battles of Europe and the East in full armor! A bonny group of lads we have hereabouts, tough and resourceful, loyal to family, clan, King and God, fierce, for these are the true measures of a man. In these I was again most fortunate, as ai learned these traits from my father, Père Leclerc, the Maister Dòmhnall, and the companions of my travels. Our lasses are near as tough, and fully as resourceful, although they might say more so, and a good deal more comely! I confess, however, that our food is a might bland to my traveled-tastes, as spices lack hereabouts, and cannot compare to the East and Holy Jerusalem! I confess as well that our churchmen here are finer than those of France and Italy, who hold their noses and avert their gazes as they pass by, glad in their gold and finery. I wonder that our Father Most High prefers them and their Pope to our plainer fathers, for I have read myself in our Holy Bible that our Father’s Son was himself a plain man, and despised the airs

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of the priests of his day. But matters such as those thankfully touch us not in our far glen here in the highlands!

Life is kind and good, and our Lord has richly blessed us!

Amen

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1. What is your persona's name?
2. What year was your persona born?
3. What is your persona's native country?
4. What is your persona's current country?
5. What are the climates of your persona's native and current countries?
6. What are the terrains of your persona's native and current countries?
7. In what city/town/village was your persona born?
8. What city does your persona currently claim as "home"?
9. What are/were your persona's parents' names?
10. What are/were your persona's parents' occupation(s)?
11. Does your persona have any siblings, and if so, are any still alive?
12. Is your persona married?
13. What are the marriage customs and typical age of marriage for your persona's culture/time-frame?
14. What type of building does your persona currently live in?
15. With whom does your persona live?
16. Are there members of your persona's household that are not related to your persona (servants/retainers, wards/fosterlings, guests, etc.)?
17. Were pets kept during your persona's culture/time-frame? If so, what kind, if any, does your persona have?
18. What is your persona's occupation?
19. How old is your persona?
20. How long do people like your persona tend to live?
21. What is your persona's ethnicity?
22. Who is your persona's current employer?
23. Would your persona have been literate in your chosen culture/time-frame?
24. What level of education does your persona have?
25. Where was your persona educated?
26. What languages does your persona speak?
27. What units of measure were used by your persona's culture/time-frame?
28. What type of money did people of your persona's culture/time-frame use?
29. What kind of legal system exists in your persona's culture/time-frame, and who make the laws?
30. What is the status of women among your persona's culture/time-frame, and can they own property or conduct business?
31. What major events have occurred during your persona's lifetime? (Natural catastrophes, wars, revolutions, discoveries, etc.)
32. Does your persona fight? If so, where did your persona learn to fight?
33. What type of armour and weapons were used by fighters in your persona's culture/time-frame? And how were such obtained?
34. List your persona's skills and hobbies. For each, write down where your persona learned them.
35. What "class" is your persona? (I.e., royalty, nobility, merchant, middle, artisan, slave, etc.)
36. How widely has your persona traveled?
37. In what capacity has your persona traveled? (I.e., military, sailor, rich person's hobby, etc.)
38. Who is your persona's current monarch?
39. Who is the current Pope during your persona time?
40. What religion is your persona?

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41. What kind of religious duties would be required of your persona?
42. How did people of your persona's culture/time-frame deal with trade?
43. With respect to international relations, does your persona favor colonization, isolationism, conquest/conversion, open trade, etc.?
44. How does your persona personally obtain goods (food, drink, clothes, etc.)?
45. How did people of your persona's culture/time-frame tell time?
46. How did people of your persona's culture/time-frame keep track of days?
47. What type of clothes does your persona normally wear?
48. What type of clothes does your persona wear for special occasions?
49. Are there any (sumptuary) laws restricting what your persona can wear?
50. What does your persona eat in a normal day?
51. How is food prepared and preserved in your persona's culture/time-frame?
52. What spices were available to your persona and how expensive were they?
53. What were the eating habits of people of your persona's culture/time-frame?
54. What are the cleaning/bathing habits of your persona's culture/time-frame?
55. What types of wildlife live in your persona's area?
56. Name your persona's favorite musicians/artists/dances.
57. What political figure/party/movement does your persona support?
58. Who is the most significant thinker of your persona's time?
59. What does your persona consider to be the greatest social problem their country?
60. What is most likely to cause your persona's death?
61. What type of medical aid is available in your persona's culture/time-frame, and does your persona have access to it?
62. List at least three of your persona's goals in life. (Learn to write, become apprenticed to a craftsman, visit the "big city", take over the family business, go to the Holy Land, usurp the crown, etc.)
63. What does your persona know of history/science/medicine/geography?
64. What's the most striking scientific achievement of which your persona is aware?
65. Does your persona consider the Earth to be flat, round, or hollow?
66. Does your persona believe that the Earth revolves around the Sun, or vice-versa?
67. What does your persona consider to be the causes of criminal behavior?
68. What does your persona consider to be the true measure of a man?
69. Who has most influenced your persona's thoughts on these questions?
70. Did your persona's culture/time-frame have heraldry?