

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at 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, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk **

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an t-seachdain sa chaidh mu Lochan nan Arm faisg air Taigh an Droma a tha co-cheangailte ri Raibeart Brus, Rìgh na h-Alba. Ach tha àite faisg air làimh aig a bheil dlùth-cheangal do dh’fhear eile a tha ainmeil, agus a bha beò faisg air sia ceud bliadhna ron Bhrosach. B’ esan Naomh Faolan.

’S e *Saint Fillan* a chanas daoine ris ann am Beurla, ach tha ainm ann an Gàidhlig fada nas brìghmhoire. Tha “faolan” a’ ciallachadh “madadh-allaidh beag”, is tha am facal “faol” air a chuimhneachadh fhathast anns an ainm a th’ againn airson *January* – am Faoilleach, an t-àm dhen bhliadhna nuair a bhiodh acras mòr air na madaidhean.

A rèir beul-aithris, bha an naomh airidh air an ainm. Là a bha seo, nuair a bha e a’ treabhadh na talmhainn, thug madadh-allaidh ionnsaigh air fear de na daimh aige a bha a’ tarraing a chrainn. Mharbh am madadh an damh. Ach nuair a thog Faolan a ghuth, is nuair a dh’iarr e air Dia taic a thoirt dha, dh’fhalbh aigne fhiadhaich a’ mhadaidh agus thàinig am beathach a dh’ionnsaigh an duine gu macanta. Cheangail Faolan am madadh-allaidh ris a’ chrann, ghabh am madadh àite an daimh mhairbh, agus lean an duine naomh air le bhith a’ treabhadh na talmhainn.

Eadar a’ Chrìon Làraich agus Taigh an Droma, chithear fhathast an tobhta aig seapail Naoimh Fhaolain. Chan eil mòran air fhàgail dheth ach tha e brèagha, agus mholainn gun tèid sibh ann as t-earrach nuair a tha an lus beag ris an canar an t-searragaich, no *lesser celandine*, fo bhlàth. ’S e nàdar de bhuidheag, no *Ranunculus*, a tha anns an lus seo, agus tha flùraichean brèagha buidhe a’ nochdadh air as t-earrach. Tha e uabhasach pàilt timcheall na tobhta.

Bha Faolan beò anns an ochdamh linn. Bhuineadh e do theaghlach uasal ann an Ulaidh agus bha a mhàthair na Bana-phrionnsa agus cuideachd na naomh le ceangal do dh’Innis nan Cailleach ann an Loch Laomainn, far an robh cailleachan dubha a’ fuireach o shean. Bha Faolan fhèin na dhuine urramach a dh’fhàg dìleab mhòr Chrìosdail as a dhèidh. Tha dà rud prìseil co-cheangailte ris ann an Taigh-tasgaidh na h-Alba ann an Dùn Eideann – ceann a bhachail agus clag bho sheapail. Is innsidh mi tuilleadh mu dheidhinn an dà chuid sin an ath-sheachdain.

Ach dh’fhàg e rudan eile as a dhèidh cuideachd, nam measg cnàmhan bho ghàirdean clì, a bh’ air an cumail ann an ciste bheag. Agus tha sin gam thoirt air ais gu far an do thòisich mi an Litir, le Raibeart Brus. Ochd bliadhna as dèidh dha a chlaidheamh a thilgeil ann an Lochan nan Arm, agus e a’ teicheadh bho fheachd nàimhdeil faisg air Seapail Fhaolain, bha am Brosach air ais ann am meadhan na h-Alba air ceann an airm nàiseanta. Bha sin anns a’ bhliadhna trì-deug is a ceithir-deug (1314).

An oidhche ro Bhlàr Allt a’ Bhonnaich, tha luchd-eachdraidh ag innse dhuinn gun do rinn an rìgh ùrnaigh mu choinneamh ciste bheag anns an robh e an dùil gu robh cnàmhan Fhaolain. Ge-tà, bha an sagart a thug a’ chiste leis air na cnàmhan fhàgail ann an Srath

Fhaolain gus nach biodh iad air an call. Ach nuair a bha am Brusach ag ùrnaigh, dè thachair ach gun do dh'fhosgail a' chiste leatha fhèin – agus bha na cnàmhan na broinn!

Anns a' mhadainn ron bhatail, chaidh a' chiste a thoirt seachad air sreathan de shaighdearan Albannach, agus iad air an glùinean. Agus, a thaobh a' chòrr dhen là, uill, tha fios agaibh dè thachair.

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Faclan na seachdaine: Taigh an Droma: *Tyndrum*; Raibeart Brus: *Robert Bruce*; Naomh Faolan: *Saint Fillan*; nas brìghmhoire: *more meaningful*; madadh-allaidh: *wolf*; gu macanta: *meekly*; seapail: *chapel*; fo bhlàth: *in bloom*; pailt: *plentiful*; Innis nan Cailleach: *Inchcailloch*; cailleachan dubha: *nuns*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: aig a bheil dlùth-cheangal do dh'fhear eile: *which is closely linked to another man*; an t-àm dhen bhliadhna: *the time of the year*; nuair a bhiodh acras mòr air na madaidhean: *when the wolves would be hungry*; nuair a bha e a' treabhadh na talmhainn: *when he was ploughing the ground*; thug X ionnsaigh air Y: *X attacked Y*; dh'fhalbh aigne fhiadhaich a' mhadaidh: *the wolf's wild disposition disappeared*; chithear fhathast an tobhta: *the ruin can still be seen*; mholainn gun tèid sibh ann as t-earrach: *I would recommend that you go there in spring*; bhuineadh e do theaghlach uasal ann an Ulaidh: *he belonged to a noble family in Ulster*; bha Faolan na dhuine urramach: *Fillan was a revered man*; ceann a bhachail agus clag bho sheapail: *the head of his crozier and a bell from his chapel*; nam measg cnàmhan bho ghàirdean clì: *among which [were] bones from his left arm*; a' teicheadh bho fheachd nàimhdeil: *fleeing from a hostile force*; an oidhche ro Bhlàr Allt a' Bhonnaich: *the night before the Battle of Bannockburn*; gun do rinn an rìgh ùrnaigh mu choinneamh ciste bheag: *that the king prayed in front of a small kist*; gus nach biodh iad air an call: *so they wouldn't be lost*; gun do dh'fhosgail a' chiste leatha fhèin: *that the kist opened of its own accord*; tha fios agaibh dè thachair: *you know what happened*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: ghabh am madadh àite an daimh mhairbh: *the wolf took the place of the dead ox. Are you comfortable with the lenition and slenderisation of the adjective here? "The dead ox" (nominative) is an damh marbh (damh is a masculine noun). In the instance above, damh is in the genitive case ("of the ox") so it is slenderised to daimh. The initial "d" is not lenited following the terminal "n" of "an" but the adjective follows the rule and is both slenderised and lenited – so it changes from marbh to mhairbh, with attendant pronunciation change. Another genitive worth looking at is crann in fear de na daimh aige a bha a' tarraing a chrainn (one of his oxen which was pulling the plough). Following the verbal noun a' tarraing, crann goes into the genitive case. With the article present, it is both lenited and slenderised.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: A rèir beul-aithris, bha an naomh airidh air an ainm: *according to oral tradition, the saint merited his name. Tha X airidh air Y: X deserves Y (remember that it is a short "a" – àirigh, with a long "a" means "shieling").*

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