

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

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.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 454. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 150 corresponds to Litir 454.

An t-seachdain sa chaidh dh’fhàg sinn Naomh Pòl – fear ris an canar ann am Fraingis Saint Pol de Leon – air eilean far costa na Breatainne Bige. Bha e dìreach air cur às don nathair mhòir. Leis gun do shàbhail e an t-eilean air a bheil Batz, no L’Isle de Batz, chaidh an t-eilean gu lèir a thoirt dha. Chaidh pàirtean de thìr-mòr faisg air an eilean a thoirt dha cuideachd. Thog Pòl manachainn mhòr anns an eilean.

Chaidh iarraidh air a bhith na easbaig. Ach thug e an aon fhreagairt ’s a thug e do rìgh na Cuimrigh nuair a bha e òg (oir ’s e Cuimreach a bh’ ann): “B’ fheàrr leam an sgìre seo fhàgail.”

Bha plòigh aig riaghladair na sgìre, ge-tà. Dh’iarr e air Pòl dhol a thadhal air an rìgh – Rìgh na Frainge – le litir sheulaichte. Anns an litir, dh’iarr an riaghladair air an rìgh Pòl a dhèanamh na easbaig. Thug an rìgh a chreidsinn gun robh e feargach le Pòl airson a bhith a’ diùltadh na tàlant an aige a chur gu feum gu maith an t-sluaigh. Thuirt Pòl gun dèanadh e rud sam bith a bha an rìgh ag iarraidh air. Cha b’ urrainn dha a dhiùltadh an uair sin agus rinneadh easbaig dheth.

Thill Pòl gu Batz ach chuir e a chathair-eaglais air chois air thìr-mòr aig àite ris an canar ann am Fraingis Saint Pol-de-Leon. Chuir e taigh easbaig air dòigh ann an seann tobhta far an robh tairbh-allaidh agus mathain a’ fuireach. Thug Pòl òrdugh do na beathaichean falbh air ais don choille. Ach bha aon chràin tuirc ann agus bha a h-uirceanan a’ deoghal aice. Dhiùlt ise falbh. Bhuail Pòl air a ceann i agus dh’fhàs i solt sa bhad. Dh’fhuirich i gu sàmhach sìtheil **anns an fhail-mhuc**. Agus aiste thàinig seòrsa de mhuc shònraichte ris an canar “mucan rìoghail”.

Bha Pòl gu math sean nuair a chaochail e. Tha cuid ag ràdh gun do ràinig e aois ceud is ceathrad (140) bliadhna. A rèir aithris, bha e air fàs cho tana ’s gun gabhadh solas faicinn tro a làmhan.

Chaochail e ann an cealla a bh’ air a togail dha faisg air a’ mhanachainn anns an eilean. Bha muinntir an eilein ag iarraidh gum biodh e air a thiodhlacadh an sin. Ach bha muinntir Saint Pol-de-Leon airson ’s gum biodh e air a thiodhlacadh anns a’ chathair-eaglais. Ciamar a bha iad a’ dol a thighinn gu rèite?

Uill, chaidh dà chairt ullachadh, agus dà dhamh a’ tarraing gach tè. Bha iad air an cur letheach-slighe eadar an t-eilean agus a’ chathair-eaglais. Bha aon phaidhir dhamh a’ coimhead a dh’ionnsaigh na mara, is bha am paidhir eile a’ coimhead a dh’ionnsaigh a’ bhaile. Chaidh a’ chiste-laighe a chur air na dhà, leth dhith air gach cairt. Bhiodh e an urra ris an naomh fhèin càite an rachadh e don uaigh.

A rèir beul-aithris, nuair a thòisich na daimh air gluasad, chaidh a' chiste à fianais. Bha i do-fhaicsinneach. Cha robh fios aig an t-sluagh dè an taobh a bha i a' dol.

'S ann dìreach nuair a ràinig na cairtean an cinn-uidhe a bha fios aig an t-sluagh dè bh' air tachairt. Bha briseadh-dùil air na h-eileanaich oir bha a' chairt acasan falamh. Bha muinntir a' bhaile a' dèanamh gàirdeachas oir bha a' chiste air a' chairt acasan. Agus bha Naomh Pòl, Saint Pol de Leòn, air a thiodhlacadh sa chathair-eaglais anns a' bhaile a tha a' giùlain ainm fhathast.

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Faclan na Litreach: manachainn: *monastery*; seulaichte: *sealed*; cathair-eaglais: *cathedral*; solt: *placid*; letheach-slighe: *halfway*; paidhir: *pair*; ciste-laighe: *coffin*; do-fhaicsinneach: *invisible*.

Abairtean na Litreach: far costa na Breatainne Bige: *off the coast of Brittany*; bha e dìreach air cur às don nathair mhòir: *he had just killed the big serpent*; chaidh an t-eilean gu lèir a thoirt dha: *the entire island was given to him*; thug e an aon fhreagairt: *he gave the same answer*; 's e Cuimreach a bh' ann: *he was a Welshman*; bha plòigh aig riaghladair na sgìre: *the area's governor had a ruse*; dh'iarr X air an rìgh Pòl a dhèanamh na easbaig: *X asked the king to make Paul a governor*; thug X a chreidsinn gun robh e feargach: *X pretended he was angry*; a' diùltadh na tàlant an aige a chur gu feum gu maith an t-sluaigh: *refusing to use his talents for the good of the people*; gun dèanadh e rud sam bith: *that he would do anything*; rinneadh easbaig dheth: *he was made a bishop [a bishop was made of him]*; seann tobhta far an robh tairbh-allaidh agus mathain a' fuireach: *an old ruin where buffaloes and bears lived*; bha aon chràin tuirc ann: *there was one wild boar sow*; bha a h-uirceanan a' deoghal aice: *her young [piglets] were suckling her*; dh'fhàs i solt sa bhad: *she became placid immediately*; aiste thàinig seòrsa de mhuc shònraichte: *from her came a special type of pig*; cho tana 's gun gabhadh solas faicinn tro a làmhan: *so thin that light could be seen through his hands*; gum biodh e air a thiodhlacadh: *that he would be buried*; ciamar a bha iad a' dol a thighinn gu rèite?: *how were they going to come to an agreement?: dà dhamh a' tarraing gach tè: two oxen pulling each one*; a dh'ionnsaigh na mara: *towards the sea*; leth dhith air gach cairt: *half of her on each cart*; an urra ris an naomh fhèin: *up to the saint himself*; càite an rachadh e don uaigh: *where he would go to the grave*; an cinn-uidhe: *their destinations*; a tha a' giùlain ainm: *which carries his name*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Dh'fhuirich i gu sàmhach sìtheil anns an fhail-mhuc: *she lived quietly and peacefully in the pigsty*. Fail-mhuc is an interesting word. It is a compound noun in which the second element is in the genitive plural. Literally it means "sty of pigs". It therefore behaves grammatically just like taigh-chearc ("henhouse/house of hens"). Because the second element is a genitive plural without the article it is always lenited and is never otherwise inflected ie it remains "mhuc" in all cases. Thus we get doras na fail-mhuc (the door of the pigsty), na failean-mhuc (the pigsties), dorsan nam failean-mhuc (the doors of the pigsties). Here's a question for you (I'll give you the answer next week): what's the Gaelic for "in the dog-kennel", "in the dog-kennels" and "the doors of the dog-kennels"?

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: chaidh a' chiste à fianais: *the coffin disappeared*.

* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig.