

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Dùghall Bochanan (5)

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 658. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 354 corresponds to Litir 658.

Ann an seachd ceud deug, seasgad 's a h-ochd (1768), goirid às dèidh don Tiomnadh Nuadh a bhith air eadar-theangachadh gu Gàidhlig, fhuair Dùghall Bochanan droch naidheachd. Bha e fhathast ann an Dùn Èideann. Chuala e gun robh an teaghlach aige, ann an Ceann Loch Raineach, a' fulang le fiabhras. Chaidh e dhachaigh airson cobhair a dhèanamh orra. Nuair a ràinig e Ceann Loch Raineach, bha cùisean duilich. Bha an teaghlach gu math bochd.

Gu mì-fhortanach, ghabh Dùghall fhèin am fiabhras. Aig aois caogad 's a dhà (52), chaochail e. Thill Dùghall gu tìr nan Cananach ann an ciste.

Bha muinntir Raineach airson a thiodhlacadh anns an sgìre acasan oir bha uiread de spèis aca dha. Ach dh'aontaich iad leigeil le daoine à Both Chuidir a dhust a thoirt air ais don chladh air an Lànaidh Bheag faisg air Calasraid. Bha Dùghall air a thiodhlacadh am measg a mhuinntir fhèin.

Ann an naoi ceud deug, naochad 's a còig (1995) chaidh cuimhneachan a chur an àirde dha air an Lànaidh Bheag. Tha e ag ràdh, ann am Beurla: *Dugald Buchanan – Gaelic poet, teacher, evangelist. This monument marks his resting place and commemorates his gifts of inspired language and sacred song by which the literature of his native Highlands has been enriched.*

Chaidh carragh-cuimhne a chur suas dha air an Iomaire Riabhach cuideachd, faisg air an àite far an do rugadh e. Tha sin ag ràdh: *There is not in any language truer poetry than that to be found in the sacred songs of Buchanan. It is undoubted that they have been largely blessed to the spirit and edification of the church of God.* Agus, a bharrachd air na dhà a tha sin, chaidh carragh-cuimhne a chur an àirde dha ann an ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a còig (1875) anns a' cheàrnaig mhòir ann am meadhan Cheann Loch Raineach.

Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gum biodh e iomchaidh crìoch a chur air an t-sreath Litrichean seo mu Dùghall Bochanan le bhith a' toirt sùil bheag air laoidhean spioradail aige. Aig cridhe a chuid sgrìobhaidh, bha uile-chumhachd Dhè, agus sàbhaladh anam mhic an duine bho pheacadh. Seo a' chiad agus an treas rann bhon laoidh aige *Mòrachd Dhè*, air an leantainn leis an rann mu dheireadh:

*O! Ciod e Dia, no ciod e ainm?
Cha tuig na h-aingle 's àrd 'an glòir;
Tha e 'n solas deàlrach falaicht' uath,
Far nach ruig sùil no smuain 'na chòir.*

*Cha robh e òg, is sean cha bhi;
O shìor' gu sìor' gun chaochladh staid;
Cha tomhais grian no gealach aois
Oir 's nithe' caochlach iad air fad.*

*Oir **ni bheil** dadam cosmhail riut
Am measg na chruthaich thu gu lèir,
'S am measg nan daoine **ni bheil** cainnt
A labhras d' ainm ach d' fhacal fhèin.*

Agus airson crìoch a chur air cùisean, seo a' chiad rann bhon laoidh aige *Fulangas Chrìosd*:

'S e fulangas mo Shlànaigheir
A bhios mo dhàn a' luaidh,
Mòr-irioslachd an àrd-Rìgh sin
Na bhreith 's na bhàs ro chruaidh,
'S e 'n t-iongantas bu mhìorbhailich
Chaidh innse riamh do shluagh;
An Dia bha ann o shìorraidheachd
Bhith fàs 'na chìochran truagh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Ceann Loch Raineach: *Kinlochrannoch*; fiabhras: *fever*; chaochail: *died*; Both Chuidir: *Balquhidder*; carragh-cuimhne: *memorial*; ceàrnag: *square*; mòr-irioslachd: *great humility*.

Abairtean na Litreach: às dèidh don Tiomnadh Nuadh a bhith air eadar-theangachadh: *after the New Testament was translated*; airson cobhair a dhèanamh orra: *to help them*; gu tìr nan Cananach ann an ciste: *to the country of the Buchanans in a coffin*; bha muinntir Raineach airson a thiodhlacadh anns an sgìre acasan: *the people of Rannoch wanted to bury him in their parish*; bha uiread de spèis aca dha: *they had so much respect for him*; a dhust a thoirt don chladh air an Lànaidh Bheag faisg air Calasraid: *to take his remains to the cemetery in Little Leny near Callander*; a mhuinntir fhèin: *his own people*; gum biodh e iomchaidh crìoch a chur air an t-sreath: *that it would be fitting to finish the series*; uile-chumhachd Dhè: *the omnipotence of God*; sàbhaladh anam mhic an duine bho pheacadh: *to save the soul of man from sin*; Mòrachd Dhè: *The Majesty of God*; Ciod e Dia?: *what is God?*; cha tuig na h-aingle' 's àrd 'an glòir: *the angels high in their glory don't understand*; falaicht' uath: *hidden from them*; far nach ruig sùil no smuain 'na chòir: *where no sight or thought comes near him*; o shìor' gu sìor' gun chaochladh staid: *without ever changing state*; 's nithe' caochlach iad: *they are things that change*; 's e fulangas mo Shlànaigheir a bhios mo dhàn a' luaidh: *it's the suffering of my Saviour that my song tells of*; na bhàs ro chruaidh: *in his terrible death*; [a] bha ann o shìorraidheachd bhith fàs 'na chìochran truagh: *who was there from eternity becoming an infant on the breast*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **ni bheil** dadam cosmhail riut: **there is not** anything like you. Are you surprised to see **ni bheil** rather than **chan eil**? **Chan eil** was chosen for the Bible, but Armstrong's dictionary of 1825 tells us that **ni bheil** was also used. Both forms derive from the same root. The old negative verbal form **nichon** was generally abbreviated to **chan** in Scotland and to **ni** in Ireland. Thus we say **chan eil** airgead agam in Scotland, whereas the Irish say **níl** airgead agam (**níl** being a contraction of **ni bheil**). But **chan** is still used in one part of Donegal and **ni** clearly was a favoured form in some Scottish dialects. I might note here that I have been informed that Buchanan's diary from which I quoted in *Litir* 654 was actually written in English and later translated into Gaelic by John MacKenzie. *Gabhaibh mo leisgeul airson na mearachd.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **gun tàinig feabhas** air a bhean: *that his wife got better.*

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