

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Dèirceach Abrach (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.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 759. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 455 corresponds to Litir 759.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun turas a bhioraich Calum Cille slat às a’ choille don dèirceach Abrach. Tha an stòiridh a’ nochdadh ann an eachdraidh an naoimh – *Vita Columbae* – a chaidh a sgrìobhadh le Adomnan. Bha an t-Abrach bochd a’ cleachdadh na slaite anns a’ choille mar stob airson fiadh-bheatha a ghlacadh. Cha robh a theaghlach tuilleadh às aonais sitheann.

Ach, latha a bha seo, thuirt bean an duine ris gun robh dragh oirre mun stob a bha e a’ fàgail anns a’ choille gach oidhche. ‘Spìon às an talamh e,’ thuirt i, ‘oir ma gheibh duine no crodh bàs air, thèid thu fhèin, ’s mi fhin ’s ar clann a chur gu bàs no a chur ann am braighdeanas.’

Fhreagair an duine aice, ‘Chan ann mar sin a bhitheas e oir, nuair a bheannaich am fear naomh an t-slat, thuirt e nach dèanadh i cron air daoine no crodh.’ Ach tha e coltach **gun robh cìrean a’ choilich air a’ chirc**. Rinn an duine na dh’iarr a bhean air. Spìon e an stob a-mach às an talamh, ged a bha e muldach mu dheidhinn.

Thug e an t-slat bhiorach a-steach don taigh agus chuir e an taic a’ bhalla i. Goirid às dèidh sin, thuit an cù-taighe air a’ bhior agus chaidh a mharbhadh. Thuirt a bhean ris, ‘Thèid fear no tè dhen chloinn agad air, agus thèid am marbhadh.’

Bha na faclan sin guineach dha. Thug e an t-slat a-mach às an taigh. Dh’fhalbh e astar mòr chun na coille leatha. Lorg e preas agus chuir e an t-slat am falach anns a’ phreas far nach dèanadh i cron air duine no beathach. No ’s e sin a bha na bheachd.

Ach thill e madainn an làrna-mhàireach agus bha earba air tuiteam air bior na slaite. Bha i marbh. Thug an duine bochd an t-slat air falbh. Chuir e fon uisge i aig oir aibhne. Bha e deimhinne nach dèanadh i cron air dad an sin.

Ach bha e ceàrr. Thill e madainn an làrna-mhàireach. Agus dè bha glacte air bior na slaite ach bradan mòr. Bha e cho mòr ’s **gur gann gun robh comas aig an duine bhoichd** a thoirt dhachaigh leis. Ach rinn e a’ chùis agus thug e an t-slat dhachaigh aig an aon àm.

Chuir e an t-slat a-muigh air mullach an taighe. Agus thuit feannag air a’ bhior. Bha i air a marbhadh sa bhad.

Bha an duine bochd troimh-chèile. Fhuair e comhairle bho a bhean an t-slat a dhèanamh na spealgan. Agus ’s e sin a rinn e. Bhreis e an t-slat le tuagh agus thilg e na spealgan don teine.

Tha Adomnan ag innse dhuinn gun do thill an t-Abrach bochd a bhith na dhèirceach, agus gun robh e airidh air an droch shuidheachadh anns an robh e, oir bha e air sgrios a dhèanamh air an t-slait a thug Calum Cille dha. Fhad ’s a bha an t-slat

aig an duine, agus i na stob sa choille, bha feòil gu leòr aige, agus bha e cuideachd a' reic pàirt dhith airson airgead. A-nise, ged a bha e air a bhith beartach airson greis, bha e bochd a-rithist agus, airson a' chòrr de a bheatha, bha e fhèin agus a theaghlach a' caoidh call na slaite a thug Calum Cille dha.

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Faclan na Litreach: bheannaich: *blessed (verb)*; muladach: *very sad*; guineach: *wounding, piercing*; earba: *roe deer*; deimhinne: *certain*; feannag: *crow*; troimh-chèile: *extremely upset*; tuagh: *axe*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mun turas a bhioraich Calum Cille slat às a' choille don dèirceach Abrach: *about the time St Columba sharpened a stake from the wood for the beggar from Lochaber*; airson fiadh-bheatha a ghlacadh: *to catch wild animals*; cha robh a theaghlach tuilleadh às aonais sitheann: *his family was no longer without venison*; thuirtean bean an duine ris gun robh dragh oirre: *the man's wife told him she was worried*; spìon às an talamh e: *pull it out of the ground*; thèid X a chur gu bàs no a chur ann am braighdeanas: *X will be put to death or put in captivity*; chuir e an taic a' bhalla i: *he placed it leaning against the wall*; thuit an cù-taighe air a' bhior: *the house dog fell on the point*; dh'fhalbh e astar mòr chun na coille: *he went away a long distance to the wood*; far nach dèanadh i cron air duine no beathach: *where it wouldn't harm man or beast*; 's e sin a bha na bheachd: *that's what he thought*; oir aibhne: *the edge of a river*; dè bha glacte air bior na slaite ach bradan mòr: *what was caught on the point of the stake but a large salmon*; sa bhad: *instantly*; comhairle bho a bhean an t-slat a dhèanamh na spealgan: *advice from his wife to break the stake into little pieces*; gun robh e airidh air an droch shuidheachadh anns an robh e: *that he was deserving of his bad situation*; ged a bha e air a bhith beartach airson greis: *although he had been wealthy for a while*; airson a' chòrr de a bheatha: *for the rest of his life*; a' caoidh call na slaite: *bewailing the loss of the stake*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bha e cho mòr 's **gur gann gun robh comas aig an duine bho ch** a thoirt dhachaigh leis: *it was so big that the poor man was hardly able to take it home with him*. Gann is commonly used with the assertive verb to mean 'hardly, scarcely'. Other examples are: is gann gun robh biadh air fhàgail 'there was hardly any food left'; bu ghann gun robh facal anns an litir a bha e ag aithneachadh 'there was hardly a word in the letter that he recognised'; 's gann gun gabh e creidsinn 'it can scarcely be believed'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: gun robh cìrean a' choilich air a' chirc: *that the wife wore the trousers in the house 'that the cockerel's comb was on the hen'*.

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