

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Mabinogion (1)

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 832. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 528 corresponds to Litir 832.

As t-Earrach am-bliadhna, ghabh mi cuairt don Chuimrigh. Bha mi anns a’ cheann a tuath, ann an Eryri, no ‘Snowdonia’ mar a chanar ann am Beurla.

Bha fear as aithne dhomh a’ ruith cùrsa deireadh-sheachdaineach, a’ toirt sùil air tè de sgeulachdan nam Mabinogion. ’S iad seann sgeulachdan na Cuimrigh, car coltach ri Mòr-sgeulachdan Innis Tìle. Buinidh iad do na Meadhan-Aoisean.

B’ e fàth mo thurais a bhith a’ faicinn nan àiteachan far an do thachair na diofar phàirtean dhen sgeulachd. Tha iad air an comharrachadh is air an ainmeachadh air aghaidh na tìre. Agus, ann an aon àite, air grunn na mara!

Bha mi airson faicinn mar a tha sàr-sgeulaiche a’ dèiligeadh ri a leithid sa Chuimrigh. Oir bu mhath leam gun dèanamaid an aon seòrsa rud an seo le ar sgeulachdan Gàidhealach.

B’ e an sgeulachd a chaidh aithris dhuinn ‘Math, Mac Mhathonwy’. Uaireannan, tha eileamaidean anns na stòiridhean Cuimreach a bhios aithnichte do Ghàidheil. Agus, anns an sgeulachd seo, tha caractar air a bheil Lleu. A rèir choltais tha an aon tùs aige ri Lugh, an seann ghaisgeach is dia pàganach Gàidhealach a tha ainmichte againn fhathast anns a’ mhios – An Lùnastal. Tha Lleu ainmichte ann an grunn àiteachan ann an ceann a tuath na Cuimrigh, leithid Nantlle ‘allt Lleu’.

Tha an stòiridh ro fhada airson innse dhuibh air fad, eadhon gearr-chunntas dheth. Ach bu mhath leam earrann dheth aithris dhuibh.

Bha Math, mòr-mhaor Gwynedd a’ lorg òigh. Chuir e fios gu Arianrhod, nighean piuthar dha.

‘**A bheil thu nad òigh?**’ dh’fhaighnich e.

‘Chan aithne dhomh nach eil,’ fhreagair Arianrhod.

Thug Math a shlat dhraoidheil a-mach agus dh’iarr e air a’ bhoireannach òg ceum a ghabhail thairis oirre. Rinn i sin ach, aig an dearbh àm, rugadh leanabh-gille dhi. ’S e leanabh mòr a bh’ ann, le falt buidhe. Leig e èigh a-mach. Rinn Arianrhod air an doras. Fhad ’s a bha i a’ dèanamh sin, rugadh leanabh-gille eile dhi. Bha am fear sin gu math beag. Chuir bràthair Arianrhod, Gwydion, còmhach sìoda thairis air, agus chuir e am falach e ann an ciste aig bonn a leapa.

Tuigidh sibh a-nise nach e òigh a bh’ ann an Arianrhod agus gun robh dithis leanabh aice. A’ chiad fhear, ’s e Dylan a chuireadh air mar ainm. Tha sin a’ ciallachadh ‘Cuan’. Cho luath ’s a bha e air a bhaisteadh, rinn e air a’ mhuir. Bha e a’ snàmh cho math ri iasg. Cha do bhris tonn riamh fodha.

Ach an leanabh eile – am fear beag – thill Gwydion thuige. Thug e don bhaile faisg air làimh e. Agus dh'aontaich boireannach an sin an gille a thogail – airson sùim airgid. Cha robh ainm air a' ghille aig an àm sin.

An-ath-sheachdain, innsidh mi dhuibh mu àiteachan air cladach na Cuimrigh, agus gu math faisg air a chèile, far a bheil Arianrhod, Dylan agus an gille beag air an ainmeachadh, far a bheil na stòiridhean fhathast beò air bilean an t-sluaigh agus air aghaidh na tìre.

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Faclan na Litreach: deireadh-sheachdaineach: *weekend [adjective]*; Mòr-sgeulachdan Innis Tìle: *The Icelandic Sagas*; sàr-sgeulaiche: *a great storyteller*; gearr-chunntas: *summary*; mòr-mhaor: *regional leader*; sìoda: *silk*; cuan: *ocean*.

Abairtean na Litreach: As t-Earrach am-bliadhna, ghabh mi cuairt don Chuimrigh: *in the spring of this year, I took a trip to Wales*; anns a' cheann a tuath: *in the north*; cumadh na tìre: *the look [shape] of the land*; fear as aithne dhomh: *a man I know*; buinidh iad do na Meadhan-Aoisean: *they belong to the Middle Ages*; air an comharrachadh is air an ainmeachadh air aghaidh na tìre: *marked and named on the face of the land*; air grunnd na mara: *on the seabed*; a rèir choltais tha an aon tùs aige ri Lugh: *apparently he has the same root as Lugh*; seann ghaisgeach is dia pàganach Gàidhealach: *old hero and Gaelic pagan god*; nighean piuthar dha: *the daughter of his sister*; chan aithne dhomh nach eil: *I'm not aware that I'm not*; thug X a shlat dhraoidheil a-mach: *X brought out his magic wand*; ceum a ghabhail thairis oirre: *to step over it*; rugadh leanabh-gille dhi: *she gave birth to a baby boy*; leig e èigh a-mach: *he called out*; chuir e am falach e ann an ciste aig bonn a leapa: *he hid him in a chest at the end of his bed*; cho luath 's a bha e air a bhaisteadh: *as soon as he was baptized*; cha do bhris tonn riamh fodha: *no wave ever broke under him*; dh'aontaich boireannach an sin an gille a thogail – airson sùim airgid: *a woman there agreed to raise the boy – for a sum of money*; beò air bilean an t-sluaigh: *alive on the lips of the people*; air aghaidh na tìre: *in the landscape*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **A bheil thu nad òigh?:** *are you a virgin?* A bheil thu nad X (*ie na do X*) means literally 'are you in your X?' This use of the dative for expressing identity is quite common and avoids the use of the assertive verb 'is'. Other examples are a bheil thu nad thidsear 'are you a teacher?'; a bheil sibh nur ministear? 'are you a minister?'

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **B' e fàth mo thurais** a bhith a' faicinn nan àiteachan far an do thachair na diofar phàirtean dhen sgeulachd: ***the purpose of my journey was to be seeing the places where the different parts of the story happened.***

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