

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

‘Geal’ ann am Bàrdachd Nàdair

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.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 869. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 565 corresponds to Litir 869.

Dè a’ Ghàidhlig a th’ air ‘white-legged’ no ‘white-footed’? Uill, seo agaibh dòigh air sin a ràdh – *geal-chasach* no *geala-chasach*. Mar Albannach air an tràigh san Spàinnt aig toiseach an t-samhraidh – *geal-chasach*! Bu mhath leam, anns an Litir seo, sùil a thoirt air mar a bhios am facal ‘geal’ a’ dol **an cois** fhaclan eile ann an co-cheangal ri nàdar.

Leis an fhìrinn innse, chan e ainmhidhean a thug ‘geal-chasach’ gu m’ aire, ach craobhan. Tha ainm-àite ann an sgìre Thoirbheartain ann an Ros an Iar – am Badan Geala-chasach. Fhuair an t-àite sin ainm air sgàth nan craobhan-beithe a tha a’ fàs ann gu nàdarrach. Tha iad geal aig a’ bhonn. Tha iad geal-chasach.

Chaidh mi don bhàrdachd aig Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir airson faicinn mar a bha an sàr-bhàrd sin a’ cur an fhacail ‘geal’ an sàs. Seo eisimpleir às an dàn aige ‘Beinn Dòrain’. Tha Donnchadh a’ dèanamh tuairisgeul de dh’eilid: Bha i ‘grad-charach, fad-chasach, aigeannach, neònach, geal-chèireach, gasganach, gealtach ro mhadadh...’ Geal-chèireach – ‘white-buttocked’.

Tha Donnchadh a’ cleachdadh iomhaigh car coltach ri sin faisg air toiseach ‘Beinn Dòrain’: ‘Greighean bu gheal cèir, faoghaid air an dèidh, ’s laghach leam an sreud a bha sròineiseach’. Greighean bu gheal cèir – ‘herds that were white-buttocked’. Agus tha an dàmh a’ faighinn aithne dhen aon seòrsa oir tha Donnchadh a’ sgrìobhadh mu ‘damh a’ chinn allaidh, bu gheal-chèireach feaman’. *The wild-headed stag* – damh a’ chinn allaidh. *Of the white buttocked rump* – bu gheal-chèireach feaman.

Ann an dàn ainmeil eile aige – Coire a’ Cheathaich – tha Donnchadh a’ cleachdadh ‘geal’ ann an co-cheangal ris a’ bhradan. Seo pàirt dhen naoidheamh rann:

Tha bradan tarr-gheal sa choire gharbhlaich

Tha tighinn on fhairge bu ghailbheach tonn...

Tha tarr-gheal a’ ciallachadh ‘white-bellied’. Tha bradan tarr-gheal sa choire gharbhlaich – ‘there is a white-bellied salmon in the rough corrie’.

Agus a-rithist, anns an aon rann:

Le shoillsean airgid gu h-iteach meanbh-bhreac

Gu lannach, dearg-bhallach, eàrr-gheal, sliom.

’S e Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair sàr-bhàrd eile. Seo e a’ cleachdadh an fhacail ‘geal’ anns an dàn ainmeil aige, ‘Allt an t-Siùcair’. Tha e a’ bruidhinn ris an àite fhèin:

gur h-àlainn barr-fhionn, braonach

do chanach caoin-gheal thom,

na mhaibeanan caoin maoth-mhìn

nad mhòintich sgaoth chearc donn.

Do chanach caoin-gheal thom ‘*your gentle white bog-cotton of [the] hillocks*’. Do chanach caoin-gheal thom. Tha canach, gu dearbh, caoin-gheal.

Mu dheireadh, bu mhath leam innse dhuibh mu fhacal fillte a chleachd an dà chuid, Donnchadh Bàn agus Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair anns a’ bhàrdachd aca. ’S e sin brisg-gheal ‘*clear, transparent, limpid*’. Brisg-gheal. Tha an dithis ga chleachdadh ann an co-cheangal ri uisge. Seo earrann à Allt an t-Siùcair:

*Gur milis, brisg-gheal, bùrn-ghlan
meall-chùirneineach ’s binn fuaim,
bras-shruthain Allt-an-t-Siùcair
ri torman siùbhlach, luath...*

Agus earrann à Beinn Dòrain:

*Le glainnead a h-uisge
Gu maoth-bhlasta, brisg-gheal...*

With the cleanliness of her water, sweet-tasting and clear. Seadh, ’s e sin aon rud nach gabh àicheadh mu dheidhinn Alba. Tha uisge againn ann am pailteas, agus tha a’ chuid as motha dheth brisg-gheal.

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Faclan na Litreach: geala-chasach: *white-legged, white-footed*; Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir: *Duncan Ban MacIntyre*.

Abairtean na Litreach: dòigh air sin a ràdh: *a way of saying that*; sgìre Thoirbheartain ann an Ros an Iar: *the vicinity of Torridon in Wester Ross*; air sgàth nan craobhan-beithe a tha a’ fàs ann: *because of the birch trees that grow there*; a’ dèanamh tuairisgeul de dh’eilid: *describing a hind*; grad-charach, fad-chasach, aigeannach, neònach, geal-chèireach, gasganach, gealtach ro mhadadh: *quick of movement, long-limbed, spirited, eccentric, white-buttocked, white-tailed, timorous before a dog*; faoghaid air an dèidh: *a hunt in their pursuit*; ’s laghach leam an sreud a bha sròineiseach: *I like the herd that was snuffling*; tha an dàmh a’ faighinn aithne dhen aon seòrsa: *the stag is recognised in the same way*; tha bradan tarr-gheal sa choire gharbhlaich: *there is a white-bellied salmon in the rugged corrie*; tha tighinn on fhairge bu ghailbheach tonn: *that comes from the ocean of the stormiest wave*; le shoillsean airgid gu h-iteach meanbh-bhreac: *with his silvery flashes, with fins and small speckles*; gu lannach, dearg-bhallach, eàrr-gheal, sliom: *scaly, red-spotted, white-tailed and sleek*; gur h-àlainn barr-fhionn, braonach: *how beautiful, fair-headed and dewy [is]*; na mhaibeanan caoin maoth-mhìn: *in gentle soft clusters*; nad mhòintich sgaoth chearc donn: *a flock of red grouse [swarm] on your moorland*; gur milis, brisg-gheal, bùrn-ghlan: *how sweet, transparent and pure [is]*; meall-chùirneineach ’s binn fuaim: *piles of water droplets and melodious sound*; bras-shruthain X: *the rapids of X*; ri torman siùbhlach, luath: *making a smooth, fast murmuring*; nach gabh àicheadh: *that cannot be denied*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *Did you notice that the second word in all of the compounds is lenited ie geal-chasach, geal-chèireach, tarr-gheal, caoin-gheal, brisg-gheal?*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: mar a bhios am facal ‘geal’ a’ dol **an cois** fhaclan eile: *how the word ‘geal’ appears along with other words.*

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