

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Uilleam Elphinstone, Easbaig Obar Dheathain (3)

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 901. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 597 corresponds to Litir 901.

Thairis air a’ cheala-deug a dh’fhalbh, bha mi a’ bruidhinn mu Uilleam Elphinstone, Easbaig Obar Dheathain. Bu mhath leam aon rud eile a ràdh mu dheidhinn. Thug an Rìgh, Seumas IV, cead do dhithis ann an Dùn Èideann uidheam clò-bhualaidh a bhith aca. B’ iadsan Bhaltair Chepman agus Anndra Myllar. Dh’iarr an Rìgh orra laghan na h-Alba is achdan na pàrlamaid fhoillseachadh agus aon rud cudromach eile – cunntas de ‘na h-uirsgeulan co-cheangailte ri naoimh na h-Alba’.

’S ann air Uilleam Elphinstone a bha an t-uallach airson am fiosrachadh a chur ri chèile mu na naoimh. ’S e obair mhòr a bh’ ann. Chan ann a-mhàin air na h-uirsgeulan a bha aire an easbaig, ach air fiosrachadh eile air na naoimh – an làithean fèille, ùrnaighean is laoidhean dhaibh **is mar sin air adhart**. ’S e na dh’èirich às a’ phròiseact leabhar uabhasach prìseil. Bha e air fhoillseachadh ann an Dùn Èideann. Ach, leis gur e Easbaig Obar Dheathain a chuir ri chèile e, ’s e *Breviarium Aberdonense – The Aberdeen Breviary* – a th’ air an leabhar mar thotal. Tha e sgrìobhte ann an Laideann nam meadhan-aoisean.

Tha na cunntasan mu na naoimh anns a’ Bhreviarium gu math inntinneach. Bu mhath leam criomagan dhiubh a thoirt dhuibh. Mar eisimpleir, tha Fèill Chentigearna, naomh boireann a tha co-cheangailte ri Loch Laomainn, air an t-seachdamh latha dhen Fhaoilleach. Bha mac aig Centigearna a tha cuideachd ainmeil mar naomh – Faolan.

Bha Faolan air a bhreith le clach na bheul. Air sgàth sin, dh’òrdaich athair, fear Fearadach, gum biodh a mhac air a thilgeil do loch airson a bhàthadh. Nuair a chuala Centigearna an naidheachd, rinn i ùrnaigh do Dhia airson Faolan a shàbhaladh.

Airson bliadhna, bha Faolan fo chùram ainglean Dhè. An uair sin, bha easbaig, fear Ibar, air an rathad a thadhail air Centigearna. Chunnaic e Faolan beò fon uisge. Cha robh a’ chlach na bheul tuilleadh. Thug e Faolan do a mhàthair agus chaidh an gille a bhaisteadh mar Chrìosdaidh.

Tha an cunntas cuideachd ag innse dhuinn mu Innis Cailleach air Loch Laomainn. Tha an t-eilean co-cheangailte, ann am beul-aithris, ri cailleachan dubha a bhuineadh do Chentigearna, agus a bha a’ fuireach air an eilean còmhla rithe. Ach ’s dòcha nach robh na **mnathan-cràbhaidh** ann aig an aon àm ri Centigearna. Tha an cunntas ag innse dhuinn gun robh ise a’ fuireach ann an Innis Cailleach leatha fhèin mar aonaran. Chaochail i agus chaidh i gu Nèamh air an t-seachdamh latha dhen Fhaoilleach.

Tha dà sgeul iongantach mu mhìorbhailean a rinn Faolan anns a’ Bhreviarium. Bha e a’ fuireach ann am manachainn agus ag obair ann an cealla a thog e fhèin. Chunnaic sgalag e tro bhriseadh beag anns a’ bhalla. Bha Faolan a’ sgrìobhadh anns an dorchadas. Bha solas

a' tighinn bho a làimh chli fhad 's a bha e a' sgrìobhadh le a làimh dheis. Dh'aithris an sgagal an rud iongantach seo do na manaich.

Bha Faolan feargach nach robh a' chùis diomhair tuilleadh. Dh'iarr e air corra-mhonaidh a bha na peata aig na manaich sùilean a' bhalaich a chur às. Ach ghabh e aithreachas agus chuir e sùilean a' bhalaich air ais mar a bha iad aig an toiseach. Tha a' mhìorbhail eile a rinn Faolan nas iongantach buileach. Innsidh mi dhuibh mu dheidhinn an-ath-sheachdain.

* * * * *

Faolan na Litreach: Easbaig Obar Dheathain: *The Bishop of Aberdeen*; Loch Laomainn: *Loch Lomond*; Innis Cailleach: *Inchcailloch*; aonaran: *hermit*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Thairis air a' cheala-deug a dh'fhalbh: *over the last fortnight*; thug an Rìgh cead do dhithis ann an Dùn Èideann uidheam clò-bhualaidh a bhith aca: *The King gave two people in Edinburgh permission to have a printing press*; dh'iarr an Rìgh orra achdan na pàrlamaid fhoillseachadh: *the King asked them publish acts of parliament*; na h-uirsgeulan co-cheangailte ri naoimh na h-Alba: *the legends connected to the Scottish saints*; 's ann air X a bha an t-uallach: *the responsibility was X's*; an làithean fèille, ùrnaighean is laoidhean dhaibh: *their feast days, prayers and hymns to them*; 's e na dh'èirich às a' phròiseact leabhar uabhasach prìseil: *what came from the project was an extremely valuable book*; sgrìobhte ann an Laideann nam meadhan-aoisean: *written in medieval Latin*; air an t-seachdamh latha dhen Fhaoilleach: *on the 7th of January*; bha Faolan air a bhreith le clach na bheul: *Fillan was born with a stone in his mouth*; air a thilgeil do loch airson a bhàthadh: *thrown into a loch to drown him*; rinn i ùrnaigh do Dhia airson Faolan a shàbhaladh: *she prayed to God to save Fillan*; fo chùram ainglean Dhè: *under the care of angels of God*; chaidh an gille a bhaisteadh mar Chrìosdaidh: *the boy was baptised a Christian*; dà sgeul iongantach mu mhìorbhailean: *two amazing stories about miracles*; chunnaic sgagal e tro bhriseadh beag anns a' bhalla: *a servant saw him through a crack in the wall*; bha solas a' tighinn bho a làimh chli: *there was a light coming from his left hand*; dh'iarr e air corra-mhonaidh a bha na peata aig na manaich sùilean a' bhalaich a chur às: *he asked a crane who was a pet of the monks to put the boy's eyes out*; ghabh e aithreachas: *he regretted it*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: 's dòcha nach robh na **mnathan-cràbhaidh** ann aig an aon àm ri Centigearna: *perhaps the nuns weren't there at the same time as Kentigerna. The old expression for 'nun' – cailleach-dhubh 'black cowled one' – which gives the name of the island on Loch Lomond where a nunnery reputedly existed (Innis Cailleach, the old Gaelic for 'Island of Nuns'). But in modern Gaelic it is seen as more appropriate to use the term 'bean-chràbhaidh' meaning 'devout woman', as cailleach might be considered mildly pejorative or inappropriate for a religious woman.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: *is mar sin air adhart: and so on [and so forth].*

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