

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Naomh Munnu (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.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 916. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 612 corresponds to Litir 916.

Tha ainm-àite ann an Comhghall a tha gu math inntinneach. 'S e sin Cill Mhunnu, no Kilmun, àite a bha co-cheangailte ri Munnu, seann naomh Ceilteach. Ach cò bh' ann am Munnu? Uill, bha far-ainm aig mòran de na naomh. Bha sin eadar-dhealaichte bhon ainm-bhaistidh aca. B' e Finten ainm-baistidh Mhunnu.

Tha an sgoilear Gilbert Márkus air leabhran inntinneach a dhèanamh air eachdraidh is dualchas Mhunnu. 'S e *Brilliant Flame* ainm an leabhra. Tha e a' cur nar cuimhne cho cudromach 's a bha Earra-Ghàidheal ann an eachdraidh nan Gàidheal, gu h-àraidh ann an co-cheangal ri sgaoileadh an t-soisgeil.

Tha iomradh air Munnu ann am *Beatha Chaluim Chille* a chaidh a sgrìobhadh le Eònan, naoidheamh aba Ì. Chan e Munnu a chanas Eònan ris an naomh, ach Finten – ainm baistidh.

Rugadh is thogadh Finten ann an Èirinn. Bha e air a ghairm le Dia gus a dhol a dh'Eilean Ì mar eilthreach. Bha e airson coinneachadh ri Calum Cille. Chaidh e gu seann duine airson a chomhairle fhaighinn mun chùis. Fhad 's a bha iad a' bruidhinn, thàinig dithis mhanach às Eilean Ì a-steach.

‘A bheil a h-uile càil gu math le ar n-athair naomh, Calum Cille?’
dh'fhaighnich an seann duine.

‘Gu cinnteach, tha,’ fhreagair na manaich. Bha na deòir a' sruthadh sìos an gruaidhean. ‘Tha e air a dhol gu Crìosd anns na beagan làithean a dh'fhalbh.’

Nuair a chuala e an naidheachd seo, thuit Finten don làr. Bha e a' caoineadh. An dèidh greis, dh'fhaighnich e, ‘Cò dh'fhàg Calum Cille às a dhèidh mar fhear-leantainn?’

‘Baithéne, dha robh e na oide,’ fhreagair na manaich.

‘Ma cheadaicheas an Tighearna,’ thuirt Finten, seòlaidh mi gu ruige Baithéne, am fear naomh is glic. Ma ghabhas e rium, bidh e na aba dhomh.’

Gun dàil sam bith, rinn Finten deiseil. An ceann greis, ràinig e Ì. Thuirt e ris na manaich gun robh e ag iarraidh coinneachadh ris an aba. Nuair a bha e air beulaibh Bhaithéne, chaidh e air a ghlùin. Dh'iarr an t-aba air èirigh gu a chasan. Chuir e ceistean air an fhear òg.

Dh'aithnich an t-aba gum b' e seo an duine air an robh Calum Cille air a bhith a' dèanamh fàidheadaireachd. ‘Tha mi a' toirt taing do Dhia gun tàinig thu,’ ars an t-aba. ‘Ach, gu dearbh, cha bhi thu nad mhanach an seo.’

Rinn an naidheachd sin Finten brònach. ‘Tha e coltach nach eil mi airidh air a bhith nam mhanach,’ thuirt e. ‘Chan eil mi math gu leòr.’

Chaidh an t-aba às àicheadh sin. ‘Chan e nach eil thu airidh air a bhith nad mhanach, a mhic,’ thuir an seann duine. ‘Ach chan urrainn dhomh a dhol an aghaidh stiùireadh Chalum Chille naoimh. Bhruidhinn an spiorad naomh troimhe. Aon latha, nuair nach robh ann ach an dithis againn, thuir e rium, “Èist rium gu dùrachdach. Goirid às dèidh dhomh an saoghal seo fhàgail, thig bràthair às Èirinn – fear Finten mac Thalchain. Bidh e ag iarraidh a bhith na mhanach dhut. Ach chan fhaod e a bhith na mhanach dhut.” Carson a thuir Calum Cille sin, agus dè thachair do dh’Fhinten, no Munnu? Innsidh mi dhuibh an ath sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Comhghall: *Cowal*; Cill Mhunnu: *Kilmun*; far-ainm: *nickname*; naoimh: *saints*; Eònan: *Adamnan*; a’ caoineadh: *weeping*; dh’aithnich: *recognised*.

Abairtean na Litreach: B’ e Finten ainm-baistidh Mhunnu: *Finten was Munnu’s baptismal name*; gu h-àraidh ann an co-cheangal ri sgaoileadh an t-soisgeil: *particularly in connection with the spreading of the gospel*; naoidheamh aba Ì: *the ninth abbot of Iona*; gus a dhol a dh’Eilean Ì mar eilthreach: *to go to Iona as a pilgrim*; thàinig dithis mhanach às Eilean Ì a-steach: *two monks from Iona entered*; le ur n-athair naomh: *with your holy father*; bha na deòir a’ sruthadh sìos an gruaidhean: *the tears were running down their cheeks*; às a dhèidh mar fhear-leantainn: *after him as a successor*; dha robh e na oide: *to whom he was a teacher*; ma cheadaicheas an Tighearna: *if the Lord permits*; bidh e na aba dhomh: *he will be my abbot*; nuair a bha e air beulaibh X, chaidh e air a ghlùn: *when he was in front of X, he went on his knee*; air an robh Calum Cille air a bhith a’ dèanamh fàidheadaireachd: *of whom Columba made a prophesy*; chaidh an t-aba às àicheadh sin: *the abbot denied that*; chan urrainn dhomh a dhol an aghaidh stiùireadh Chalum Chille naoimh: *I cannot go against the command of the holy Columba*; èist rium gu dùrachdach: *listen to me carefully*; goirid às dèidh dhomh an saoghal seo fhàgail: *shortly after I have departed this world*; thig bràthair às Èirinn: *a brother will come from Ireland*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: ginealach no dhà **an dèidh Chalum Chille** fhèin: *a generation or two after Columba himself*. We tend to treat Gaelic personal names, particularly traditional names, as if they were definite noun phrases ie they require to be inflected in a traditional manner, following traditional rules. An dèidh is a compound preposition and commands a noun phrase, where the article is present, in the genitive case eg an dèidh a’ chogaidh. Thus, Calum Cille is inflected to Chalum Chille which, being genitive, is also the possessive form of the name – we say Ì Chalum Chille ‘Columba’s Ì’ for Iona.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: nach eil mi airidh air a bhith nam mhanach: *that I’m not worthy of being a monk*.

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