

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Iain Lom (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 947. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 643 corresponds to Litir 947.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Iain Lom, bàrd na Ceapaich, a th’ air a thiodhlacadh ann an Cladh Cille Choirill ann am Bràigh Loch Abar. Bhuineadh e do Chloinn Dòmhnail a’ Bhràighe. A rèir beul-aithris, dhearbh Iain aig aois òg gun robh e gu math comasach le briathran. Nuair nach robh ann ach cnapach, chaidh e a dh’Inbhir Nis cuide ri athair. Air dha na h-eich a chur don stàball, chaidh Iain am measg nam fear anns an taigh-seinnse. Bha a’ chuid a bu mhotha dhiubh mòran na bu shine na Iain.

Thug fear dhiubh beachd air Iain nach robh idir moltach. Bha Iain eòlach air dà sheanfhal – **bidh breith luath lochdach** ‘a hasty judgement is harmful’ agus **na toir breith chabhagach air mac luideagach no air loth pheallagach** ‘don’t judge hastily a ragged boy or a shaggy colt’. Agus thuirt e ris an duine a thug droch beachd air, ‘Breith luath lochdach, breith air loth pheallagach no air giullan breac-luirgneach’. Tha sin a’ ciallachadh ‘a hasty harmful judgement – a judgement on a shaggy colt or a freckly-shinned lad’. Breith luath lochdach, breith air loth pheallagach no air giullan breac-luirgneach. Thuig athair comasan Iain air an latha sin agus thuirt e ris, ‘Is math thu fhèin, Iain, nì thu gleus fhathast.’

Thathar ag ràdh gun d’ fhuair Iain foghlam ann an sgoil-diadhaireachd anns an Spàinnt, agus bha e mion-eòlach air a’ Bhìoball. Ach tha ceist ann fhathast an robh comas sgrìobhaidh aige.

Tha e ainmeil airson na sgrìobh e mu Bhlàr Inbhir Lòchaidh anns a’ Ghearran, sia ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a còig (1645). Bha e còmhla ri Montròs, a bh’ ann an seirbheis an Rìgh, agus rinn iad a’ chùis air armailt a bha fo smachd Iarla Earra-Ghàidheal. Ach dhiùlt Iain claidheamh a thogail, eadhon nuair a chaidh fear a thabhann dha leis a’ ghaisgeach, Alasdair mac Cholla Chiotaich. Nan tuiteadh e ann am blàr, cò bhiodh a’ moladh nan Dòmhnallach airson a’ chùis a dhèanamh air na Caimbeulaich, thuirt e.

Sgrìobh e dàn air a bheil ‘Latha Inbhir Lòchaidh’ agus, gu dearbh, ’s ann sgaiteach a tha a chainnt ann. Seo agaibh dìreach dà rann airson blas dheth a thoirt dhuibh:

Sgeul a b’ aite nuair a thigeadh, Air Caimbeulaich nam beul sligheach, H-uile dream dhiubh mar a thigeadh, Le bualadh lann ’n ceann gam bristeadh.

’N latha a shaoil iad a dhol leotha, ’S ann bha laoich gan ruith air reodhadh, ’S iomadh slaodanach mòr odhar, A bh’ air aodann Ach’ an Todhair.

Tha stòiridh iongantach mu Iain Lom air innse ann an Loch Abar. Bha an dubh-ghràin aig Iarla Earra-Ghàidheal air, air sgàth na sgrìobh e mu na Caimbeulaich. Chuir an t-Iarla airgead mòr air a cheann agus cò nochd aig Caisteal Inbhir Aora, a’ sireadh na duaise,

ach Iain Lom fhèin! An àite cur-às dha, thug an t-Iarla cuireadh do dh'Iain fuireach sa chaisteal airson seachdain!

Bha an dithis còmhla sa chaisteal, a' toirt sùil air coilich-dhubha mharbh, ghlèidhte air a' bhalla. Thuirt an t-Iarla, 'Am faca tu riamh, Iain, uiread sin de choilich-dhubha anns an aon àite?'

'Chunnaic,' fhreagair Iain.

'Càite?'

'An Inbhir Lòchaidh,' thuirt am bàrd.

'Iain, Iain,' ars an t-Iarla, 'cha sguir thu gu bràth de chagnadh nan Caimbeulach.'

'S e as duilich leam,' ars Iain, '**nach urra mi 'n slugadh!**'

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: cnapach: *lad*; moltach: *complimentary*; comas sgrìobhaidh: *the ability to write*; sgaiteach: *cutting, satirical*; Inbhir Aora: *Inveraray*.

Abairtean na Litreach: dhearbh Iain aig aois òg gun robh e gu math comasach le briathran: *John proved at an early age that he was very capable with words*; air dha na h-eich a chur don stàball: *after he had put the horses in the stable*; thuig athair comasan Iain: *his father understood John's abilities*; nì thu gleus fhathast: *you'll make something of yourself yet*; foghlam ann an sgoil-diadhaireachd anns an Spàinnt: *education in a seminary in Spain*; bha e mion-eòlach air a' Bhioball: *he knew the Bible extremely well*; rinn iad a' chùis air armait a bha fo smachd Iarla Earra-Ghàidheal: *they defeated an army under the command of the Earl of Argyll*; dhiùlt Iain claidheamh a thogail: *John refused to pick up a sword*; nuair a chaidh fear a thabhann dha leis a' ghaisgeach: *when one was offered to him by the hero*; nan tuiteadh e ann am blàr, cò bhiodh a' moladh nan Dòmhnallach?: *if he fell in a battle, who would praise the MacDonalds?*; sgeul a b' aite nuair a thigeadh: *the most pleasing news when it came*; air Caimbeulaich nam beul sligneach: *of the wry-mouthed Campbells*; H-uile dream dhiubh mar a thigeadh: *that every gang of them when they came*; le bualadh lann 'n ceann gam bristeadh: *had their heads broken with sword blows*; 'N latha a shaoil iad a dhol leotha: *on the day they thought they'd be successful*; 'S ann bha laoch gan ruith air reodhadh: *heroes were pursuing them on frozen ground*; 'S iomadh slaodanach mòr odhar: *many a big sallow sloucher*; A bh' air aodann Ach' an Todhair: *who [lay] on the face of Achintore*; a' sireadh na duaise: *seeking the reward*; uiread sin de choilich-dhubha: *as many blackcocks as that*; cha sguir gu bràth de chagnadh nan Caimbeulach: *you'll never stop chewing the Campbells*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **nach urra mi 'n slugadh:** *that I can't swallow them. You might be familiar with the phrase is urrainn dhomh 'I can'. Dialectally, the use of the preposition 'do' is not compulsory, and you will hear is urrainn mi, using the personal pronoun, rather than the prepositional pronoun. Note also that urrainn can also be reduced to urra or urradh.*

Seanfhaclan na Litreach: **bidh breith luath lochdach** *a hasty judgement is harmful*; **na toir breith chabhagach air mac luideagach no air loth pheallagach** *don't judge hastily a ragged boy or a shaggy colt.*

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