

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Seumas Mac a' Phearsain (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 1,037. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 733 corresponds to Litir 1,037.

Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mun cheatharnach ainmeil, Seumas Mac a' Phearsain, am fear a chruthaich Cumha Mhic a' Phearsain no *MacPherson's Lament*. Rugadh e sa bhliadhna sia ceud deug, seachdad 's a còig (1675). Bha e an dà chuid cliùiteach agus mì-chliùiteach anns an ear-thuath airson a bhith na cheatharnach.

Chaidh Seumas a chur gu bàs – **mar a chhì sinn** – air a' chroich. Am measg nan casaidean na aghaidh, bha '*being an Egyptian*'. Cha robhar a' ciallachadh 'Èiphiteach' ach 'Siopsach'. 'S dòcha gur e 'neach-siubhail' a chanamaid an-diugh.

Bha Seumas na mhac-diolain aig uachdaran à Bàideanach – Donnchadh Mac a' Phearsain à Inbhir Fhèisidh, taobh Loch Ìnnse. Thachair Donnchadh ri boireannach òg brèagha aig banais. Bha ise, a rèir beul-aithris, na Siopsach. Rugadh leanabh-gille dhi agus ghabh Donnchadh ris gum b' esan athair.

Dh'fhàs Seumas gu bhith na ghille làidir, eireachdail. Bha e sgileil le claidheamh, agus bha **claidheamh-mòr** aige a bha sia troighean a dh'fhaid. Bha e cuideachd na fhìdhlear air leth.

Nuair a bha Seumas òg, chaidh athair a mharbhadh ann an strì ann am Bàideanach. Chaidh Seumas a dh'fhuireach còmhla ri teaghlach a mhàthar. Bha Seumas an uair sin an sàs gu mòr ann am mèirle. Bhiodh e a' dol air feadh ceann an ear-thuath na h-Alba. Uaireannan bhiodh e air ceann còmhlain a rachadh a-steach a mhargaidh ann an solas an latha – ann am bailtean mar Eilginn, Farrais agus Baile Chè. Ach cha robh e ri fòirneart agus cha dèanadh e cron air bantrach no duine a bha beò ann am bochdainn.

Ge-tà, dh'èirich droch naimhdeas eadar Seumas agus na h-uachdarain ann an Siorrachdan Mhoireibh, Bhanbh agus Obar Dheathain. Chuir MacDhuibh à Braco buidheann air dòigh airson a dhol air a thòir.

Aon turas, chaidh Seumas a ghlacadh ach fhuair e mu sgaoil a-rithist. Seo mar a thachair e. Bha e ann an Siorrachd Obar Dheathain. Chuir na h-ùghdarrasan boireannach brèagha air dòigh airson a ghlacadh oir bha laigse aig Seumas a thaobh nam ban. Dh'iarr an tè seo air Seumas coinneachadh rithe airson èisteachd ri ceòl na fìdhle. Cha robh Seumas faiceallach gu leòr agus, mar ainmhidh neo-chùramach, choisich e a-steach do ribe. Chaidh a chur an grèim le oifigearan lagha.

Bha Seumas sa phrìosan ann an Obar Dheathain. Ach ghabh am boireannach òg dàrna beachd air na rinn i. Bhruidhinn i ri fear Pàdraig MacIlleDhuinn a bha na mhèirleach ainmeil – agus na fhear-siubhail – agus chuir esan fios gu Dòmhnall Mac

a' Phearsain, co-ogha Sheumais, ann am Bàideanach. Chuir iad buidheann saoraidh air dòigh agus rinn iad air Obar Dheathain.

Bhris iad a-steach don phrìosan agus fhuair iad lorg air Seumas. Bha e ceangailte ri balla a chealla le slabhraidhean. Ach bha an sgioba air uidheaman a thoirt leotha airson slabhraidhean a ghearradh. Fhad 's a bha iad ag obair air a shaoradh, thòisich ùpraid taobh a-muigh doras a' phrìosain. Mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain, dh'fheuch aon duine ri Seumas a chumail sa phrìosan. Ach fhuair Seumas mu sgaoil airson a bhith ri mèirle greis eile.

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Faclan na Litreach: ceatharnach: *freebooter*; Seumas Mac a' Phearsain: *James MacPherson*; Èiphiteach: *Egyptian*; Siopsach: *Gipsy*; Inbhir Fhèisidh: *Invereshie*; Loch Ìnnse: *Loch Insh*; eireachdail: *handsome*; MacDhuibh à Braco: *Duff from Braco*; ceòl na fìdhle: *fiddle music*; Pàdraig MacÌlleDhuinn: *Peter Brown*; ùpraid: *commotion*.

Abairtean na Litreach: bha e an dà chuid cliùiteach agus mì-chliùiteach anns an ear-thuath airson a bhith na cheatharnach: *he was both renowned and infamous in the north-east for being a freebooter*; chaidh X a chur gu bàs air a' chroich: *X was put to death on [the] gibbet*; 's dòcha gur e 'neach-siubhail' a chanamaid an-diugh: *perhaps we would say 'traveller' today*; bha X na mhac-dìolain aig uachdaran à Bàideanach: *X was an illegitimate son of a laird from Badenoch*; ghabh Donnchadh ris gum b' esan athair: *Duncan accepted that he was his father*; bha e cuideachd na fhìdhlear air leth: *he was also a fantastic fiddler*; air ceann còmhlain a rachadh a-steach a mhargaidh ann an solas an latha: *at the head of a group that would go into a market in the light of day*; bailtean mar Eilginn, Farrais agus Baile Chè: *towns like Elgin, Forres and Keith*; cha dèanadh e cron air bantrach no duine a bha beò ann am bochdainn: *he wouldn't harm a widow or a person that was living in poverty*; na h-uachdarain is tuathanaich bheartach ann an Siorrachdan Mhoireibh, Bhanbh agus Obar Dheathain: *the landlords and rich farmers in Morayshire, Banffshire and Aberdeenshire*; fhuair e mu sgaoil: *he got free*; bha laigse aig Seumas a thaobh nam ban: *James had a weakness with regard to women*; mar ainmhidh neo-chùramach, choisich e a-steach do ribe: *like a careless animal, he walked into a trap*; ghabh am boireannach òg dàrna beachd air na rinn i: *the woman reconsidered what she had done*; ceangailte ri balla a chealla le slabhraidhean: *fixed to the wall of his cell with chains*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha claidheamh-mòr aige a bha sia troighean a dh'fhaid: *he had a claymore that was six feet in length*. Claidheamh mòr without a hyphen means a 'big sword'. But the hyphen changes the meaning to 'claymore', a particular type of Highland sword, wielded by two hands. However, according to tradition, notably in MacDuff, James MacPherson was strong enough to use his claymore with one hand.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: mar a chì sinn: *as we shall see*.

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