

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Cath Ghlinn Freòin (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 1,054. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 750 corresponds to Litir 1,054.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Chath Ghlinn Freòin. Thachair e gu siar air Loch Laomainn anns a’ bhliadhna sia ceud deug ’s a trì (1603). Bha an latha a’ dol leis na Griogaraich agus bha Clann a’ Chombaich a’ ruith romhpa sìos Gleann Freòin.

Thachair na Griogaraich air ceannard Oilthigh Dhùn Bhreatann agus oileanaich aige – trithead ’s a seachd daoine gu lèir. Thuirt an ceannard ri ceann-cinnidh nan Griogarach, Alasdair Dubh, gun robh e a’ cur na h-òigridh fo a chùram-san.

Bha sabhal faisg air làimh. Dh’òrdaich Alasdair Dubh gum biodh na h-oileanaich air an cur don t-sabhal fo chùram fear de na daoine aige, Eòghann Dubh na Dubh-leitir. Nise, cha b’ e Eòghann an cuilean a bu ghlice san àl. Cha do thuig e dè bha fa-near dha. Bha esan dhen bheachd gun robh na gillean nam prìosanaich aige. Sheas e le a chladheamh taobh a-muigh doras an t-sabhail agus ghlas e an doras.

Co-dhiù, lean an ruaig. Aig bonn Ghlinn Freòin sgaoil na saighdearan aig Sir Umfra Mac a’ Chombaich. Chuir Alasdair Dubh stad air an ruaig. Chruinnich e a dhaoine còmhla agus chaidh iad dhachaigh tron ghleann. Mus do ràinig iad an sabhal far an robh na h-oileanaich, mhothaich Alasdair do Eòghann Dubh na Dubh-leitir. ‘Eòghainn,’ thuirt an ceann-cinnidh, ‘carson a tha thus’ an seo? Dè rinn thu leis na gillean a dh’fhàg mi fod chùram?’

Dh’aidich Eòghann gun robh e air **a h-uile mac màthar dhiubh** a mharbhadh.

‘Gun sealladh Dia oirnne,’ thuirt Alasdair Dubh. ‘Ma mharbh thu na balaich, fuilingidh sinn. Cha chluinnear iomradh air na Griogaraich an dèidh seo.’

Chaidh Alasdair a-null don t-sabhal far an do dh’fhàg e na gillean fo chùram Eòghainn. Bha na gillean uile nan laighe marbh nam fuil fhèin. Cha do thuig Eòghann gun robh e air dad ceàrr a dhèanamh. A rèir choltais, bha na gillean ag iarraidh faighinn a-mach a chionn ’s gun robh an t-àile air a thruailleadh am broinn an t-sabhail. Cha robh Gàidhlig aca ’s cha robh Beurla aig Eòghann. Bha iadsan ag iarraidh àile glan a ghabhail air an anail. Bha esan a’ smaoinichadh gun robh iad a’ feuchainn ri dol-às a dhèanamh. Agus mharbh e iad uile.

Ged a chaidh an latha leotha, bha na Griogaraich gu math diombach mu na thachair do na h-oileanaich. Bha iad deimhinne gun tigeadh dìoghaltas orra bhon Ghalltachd, agus bha iad ceart.

Thathar ag ràdh, an dèidh Cath Ghlinn Freòin, gun tug na banntaich aig saighdearan Cloinn a’ Chombaich lèine fhuilteach leotha, gach tè air bior sleagh, agus na boireannaich air muin-eich. Chaidh iad a Dhùn Èideann, **feumaidh**, oir thathar ag

ràdh gun do sheall iad na lèintean don Rìgh agus gun do dh'iarr iad air na Griogaraich air fad a dhèanamh nan eucoirich.

'S dòcha gum bi cuimhne agaibh, anns a' chiad Litir mu Chath Ghlinn Freòin, gun do dh'inns mi dhuibh mar a mharbh na marsantaich Ghriogarach molt le earball geal – agus gur e sin a bu mhotha a chuir air a' chroich iad, agus a dh'adhbharaich an cath.

Uill, an dèidh a h-uile càil, a rèir choltais, bha gnàth-fhacal aig na Griogaraich nam measg fhèin: B' fheàrr nach do rugadh a-riamh molt dubh an earbaill ghil. B' fheàrr nach do rugadh a-riamh molt dubh an earbaill ghil. B' fheàrr, gu dearbh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Cath Ghlinn Freòin: *The Battle of Glen Fruin*; sabhal: *barn*; Sir Umfra Mac a' Chombaich: *Sir Humphrey Colquhoun*; diombach: *indignant*; muineach: *horseback*; eucoirich: *criminals*; gnàth-fhacal: *saying*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Bha an latha a' dol leis na Griogaraich: *the day was going with the MacGregors*; bha Clann a' Chombaich a' ruith romhpa: *the Colquhouns were running ahead of them*; a' cur na h-òigridh fo a chùram-san: *putting the young people under his care*; an cuilean a bu ghlice san àl: *the wisest puppy in the litter*; cha do thuig e dè bha fa-near dha: *he didn't understand what was required of him*; gun robh na gillean nam prìosanaich aige: *that the lads were his prisoners*; le a chlaidheamh taobh a-muigh doras an t-sabhail: *with his sword outside the barn door*; co-dhiù, lean an ruaig: *anyway, the pursuit continued*; mus do ràinig iad an sabhal far an robh na h-oileanaich, mhothaich Alasdair do Eòghann Dubh: *before they reached the barn where the students were, Alasdair noticed Eòghann Dubh*; dè rinn thu leis na gillean a dh'fhàg mi fod chùram?: *what did you do with the lads I left in your care?*; gun sealladh Dia oirne: *God save us*; ma mharbh thu na balaich, fuilingidh sinn: *if you killed the boys, we shall suffer*; cha chluinnear iomradh air na Griogaraich: *nothing will be heard of the MacGregors*; bha na gillean uile nan laighe marbh nam fuil fhèin: *the lads were all lying dead in their own blood*; a chionn 's gun robh an t-àile air a thruaillleadh am broinn an t-sabhail: *because the air was contaminated inside the barn*; gun robh iad a' feuchainn ri dol-às a dhèanamh: *that they were trying to escape*; gun tug na bantraich aig saighdearan Cloinn a' Chombaich lèine fhuilteach leotha: *that the widows of the Colquhoun soldiers took a bloody shirt with them*, gach tè air bior sleagh: *each one of them on the point of a spear*; b' fheàrr nach do rugadh a-riamh molt dubh an earbaill ghil: *it would have been better had the white-tailed black wether never been born*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Dh'aidich Eòghann gun robh e air a h-uile mac màthar dhiubh a mharbhadh: *Eòghann admitted that he had killed every single one of them*. A h-uile mac màthar is a Gaelic equivalent of 'every Tom, Dick and Harry'. Both phrases are rather too gender specific – but note that there is a newer Gaelic version which addresses that issue – a h-uile mac màthar is nighean athar. We should all learn to use it!

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Chaidh iad a Dhùn Èideann, feumaidh: *they must have gone to Edinburgh*.

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