

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Clach Sgàin (2)

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,309. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,005 corresponds to Litir 1,309. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Chlach Sgàin – clach-chrùnaidh Rìghrean na h-Alba anns an t-seann aimsir. Agus clach-chrùnaidh Monarcan Bhreatainn anns an latha an-diugh.

Ann an seann chunntasan mun chloich, cha robh an luchd-cunntais uile air an aon ràmh mu choltas na cloiche. Dh'inns cuid dhuibh dhuinn nach e cnap mòr de chloich-ghainmhich a bh' innte, ach pìos màrmoir ann an cumadh cathrach. B' e fear dhuibh sin *John of Fordun* à Siorrachd Obar Dheathain. Tha mi a' dol a dhèanamh gearr-chunntas de na sgrìobh e anns an leabhar aige *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* anns a' cheathramh linn deug.

Nuair a bha Maois beò, chaidh mac aig Rìgh Greugach a chur a-mach às an dùthaich aige. B' esan Gaythelos. Fhuair e comraich anns an Èiphit. Phòs e Scota, nighean Pharaoh. Ge-tà, cha do ghabh e pàirt ann an sgiùrsadh nan Iùdhach thar na Mara Ruaidh. Dhiùlt e.

Bha clann Israeil a' teicheadh bho armailt Pharaoh. Ràinig iad a' Mhuir Ruadh. Seo earrann às an t-Seann Tiomnadh – Leabhar Ecsodus, Caibideil ceithir-deug (XIV), Earrann aon air fhichead (21). 'Agus shìn Maois a-mach a làmh **os cionn na fairge**, agus thug an Tighearn air an fhairge dhol air a h-ais le gaoth làidir on ear rè na h-oidhche sin, agus rinn e 'n fhairge na talamh tioram, agus roinneadh na h-uisgeachan.'

Bha na h-Èiphitich pìos air dheireadh air clann Israeil. Ach lean iad orra, a-steach gu meadhan na fairge, a bh' air a dhol tioram. Thill na h-uisgeachan orra agus bha na h-Èiphitich uile air am bàthadh.

Leis gun robh Gaythelos air diùltadh pàirt a ghabhail ann am fuadachadh nan Iùdhach, chaidh a chur a-mach às an rìoghachd. E fhèin, a bhean agus uaislean Greugach is Èiphiteach eile. Chuir iad cabhlach ri chèile agus dh'fhalbh iad airson tìrean ùra a lorg. Bha Gaythelos na cheannard orra. Bha iad ann an Afraga greis. An uair sin, chaidh iad a-null don Spàinn.

Bidh cuimhne agaibh gur e Scota a bh' air bean Ghaythelos mar ainm. 'S ann bhuaipe a fhuair an sluagh an t-ainm Scot – ged a bha sin a' buntainn ris na h-Èireannaich a **cheart cho math** ri muinntir na h-Alba. Agus tha Gaythelos a' riochdachadh 'Gàidheal Glas' – às an tàinig na Gàidheil.

Thog Gaythelos baile mòr ris an canadh iad Brigancia. Ach bha muinntir na Spàinne a' maoidheadh orra. Mar sin, dh'iarr Gaythelos air na mic aige falbh, feuch tìr ùr gun sluagh a lorg. B' e a mhac a b' fheàrr leis fear Simon Breac, a rèir *John of Fordun*.

Ràinig Simon costa na h-Èireann ann an long. Leig e acraichean. Ach dh'atharraich a' ghaoth. Dh'òrdaich Simon na h-acraichean a tharraing suas ach cha mhòr nach robh iad glaiste ris a' ghrunnnd. Mu dheireadh, thàinig iad suas. Chan e a-mhàin na h-acraichean a thàinig gu uachdar na mara, ach bha clach nan cois. Bha i dèante de mhàrmor agus bha i ann an cumadh cathrach. Innsidh mi dhuibh tuilleadh mu a deidhinn anns an ath Litir.

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Faclan na Litreach: Clach Sgàin: *The Stone of Scone [or Destiny]*; geàrr-chunntas: *summary*; dhiùlt: *refused*; An Seann Tiomnadh: *The Old Testament*; fuadachadh: *expulsion*; cabhlach: *fleet*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Clach-chrùnaidh Rìghrean na h-Alba anns an t-seann aimsir: *the coronation stone of Scottish kings in olden times*; seann chunntasan mun chloich: *old accounts of the stone*; cha robh an luchd-cunntais uile air an aon ràmh mu choltas na cloiche: *the correspondents were not all in agreement about the stone's appearance*; nach e cnap mòr de chloich-ghainmhich a bh' innte: *that it wasn't a big lump of sandstone*; pìos màrmoir ann an cumadh cathrach: *a piece of marble in the shape of a chair/throne*; fhuair e comraich anns an Èiphit: *he obtained sanctuary in Egypt*; cha do ghabh e pàirt ann an sgiùrsadh nan Iùdhach thar na Mara Ruaidh: *he didn't participate in the routing of the Jews across the Red Sea*; thug an Tighearn air an fhairge dhol air a h-ais: *the Lord forced the sea to recede*; le gaoth làidir on ear rè na h-oidhche sin: *with a strong wind from the east all that night*; rinn e 'n fhairge na talamh tioram: *he turned the sea into dry land*; roinneadh na h-uisgeachan: *the waters were parted*; bha na h-Èiphitich uile air am bàthadh: *the Egyptians were all drowned*; bha muinntir na Spàinne a' maoidheadh orra: *the people of Spain were threatening them*; dh'òrdaich X na h-acraichean a tharraing suas: *X ordered that the anchors be raised*; cha mhòr nach robh iad glaiste ris a' ghrunnnd: *they were almost fixed to the seabed*; bha clach nan cois: *there was a stone along with them*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Agus shìn Maois a-mach a làmh os cionn na fairge: *and Moses stretched out his hand above the sea*. I took this text from an older Scottish Gaelic version of the Bible, and it is interesting that the translators used fairge, rather than muir, as their default word for 'sea'. This is still the case in Irish Gaelic where it is spelt farraige. In common usage in Scotland today, we tend to use fairge when we are referring to a wild or tempestuous sea or ocean, although its general application for 'sea' is still widely understood.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: ged a bha sin a' buntainn ris na h-Èireannaich a cheart cho math ri muinntir na h-Alba: *although that applied to the Irish just as much as the people of Scotland*.

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