

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 588. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 284 corresponds to Litir 588.

Nuair a tha i air a togail aig àm spàirne, thig na sìthichean is bheir iad taic do na daoine leis a bheil i. Tachraidh sin, ge-tà, dìreach trì tursan. Às dèidh sin, chan obraich i tuilleadh. Cò air a tha mi a-mach? Rudeigin anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Rudeigin ainmeil a bha, agus a tha, le Clann 'ic Leòid. Clann 'ic Leòid Dhùn Bheagain.

Tha mi cinnteach, ma tha sibh eòlach air eachdraidh an Eilein Sgitheanaich, gum bi fios agaibh gu bheil mi a' bruidhinn mun Bhrataich Shìth – *The Fairy Flag*. Tha a' bhratach seo air a dèanamh de shìoda. Tha i air a cumail ann an Caisteal Dhùn Bheagain. Tha i uabhasach sean. Agus uabhasach prìseil.

A rèir stòiridh à beul-aithris, bha Leòdach air choreigin air eilthreachd don Tìr Naoimh. Bha e an sàs ann an **Cogaidhean na Croise**. Latha a bha seo, bha ar gaisgeach a' dol tarsainn abhainn nuair a thug sìthiche ionnsaigh air. Bha strì mhòr ann eadar an dithis. Ach rinn MacLeòid a' chùis air an t-sìthiche. Mar thoradh air a bhuidh, thug an sìthiche duais do MhacLeòid. 'S e a bh' ann bogsa fiodha anns an robh bogsaichean na bu lugha, an ath fhear na bu lugha na 'm fear roimhe. Bha iad car coltach ris na liùdhagan ainmeil Ruiseanach air am bi sibh eòlach.

Dh'fhosgail MacLeòid bogsa às dèidh bogsa. Dh'fhosgail e am bogsa mu dheireadh. Na bhroinn bha ceàrnag de shìoda buidhe. 'S e bratach a bh' ann – A' Bhratach Shìth. Agus bha dualchas **na cois**. Nan togadh neach a' bhratach, nochdadh sluagh mòr de ghaisgich armaichte airson taic a thoirt dha.

Ach bha rabhadh na cois cuideachd. Nan robh i air a togail taobh a-staigh latha is bliadhna bhon latha sin, chan fhàsadh bàrr sam bith air an fhearann aig a' ghaisgeach Leòdach airson latha is bliadhna eile. Tron ùine sin, cha bhiodh uain aig caoraich, no laoigh aig crodh, no leanabh aig teaghlach air an fhearann sin.

Thill MacLeòid don Eilean Sgitheanach agus thug e am bogsa don cheann-chinnidh aige. Thug an ceann-chinnidh am bogsa do a bhean. Agus thachair e dìreach mar a chaidh innse ro làimh. Nochd arm shìthichean. Ach cha do dh'fhàs bàrr. Agus cha do rugadh uan, laogh no leanabh – airson latha is bliadhna.

Chan eil fhios cò às a thàinig a' bhratach bho thùs. Tha beachd ann gum buineadh i o shean do Rìgh Nirribhidh – Harald Hardradr. Thathar a' smaoinichadh gun tàinig an sìoda, às an deach a' bhratach a thogail, às an Ear-mheadhanach. Agus, na òige, bha Harald ag obair do dh'Ìmpire Chonstantinople. Bha a' bhratach a' barantachadh buaidh ann an cath. Chan eil mi cinnteach, ge-tà, an robh i aig Harald aig Blàr Drochaid

Stamford anns a' bhliadhna mìle, seasgad 's a sia (1066). Chaill Harald an sin do dh'arm nan Sasannach.

Anns an arm aige air an latha sin bha fear Goraidh Cròbhan, a tha ainmeil ann an eachdraidh nan Gàidheal. Dh'èirich Goraidh gu bhith na cheannard air rìoghachd a bha a' gabhail a-steach Eilean Mhanainn agus pàirtean de dh'Alba is Èirinn. An d' fhuair esan a' Bhratach Shìth bho Harald? Agus an d' fhuair a' chiad Leòdach i bho Ghoraidh? Cò aige a tha fios. Bheir sinn sùil a bharrachd air a' Bhrataich Shìth an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: sìthichean: *fairies*; Clann 'ic Leòid Dhùn Bheagain: *Clan MacLeod of Dunvegan*; a' Bhratach Shìth: *The Fairy Flag*; duais: *reward*; rabhadh: *warning*; ceann-cinnidh: *clan chief*; Goraidh Cròbhan: *Godred Crovan*; Eilean Mhanainn: *Isle of Man*.

Abairtean na Litreach: nuair a tha i air a togail aig àm spàirne: *when it is raised at a time of conflict*; bheir iad taic do na daoine leis a bheil i: *they will give help to the people that own it*; tachraidh sin, ge-tà, dìreach trì tursan: *that will happen, however, only three times*; chan obraich i tuilleadh: *it won't work any more*; de shìoda: *of silk*; bha Leòdach air choreigin air eilthreachd don Tìr Naoimh: *some MacLeod or other was on a journey to the Holy Land*; bha ar gaisgeach a' dol tarsainn abhainn: *our hero was crossing a river*; rinn X a' chùis air Y: *X defeated Y*; mar thoradh air a bhuaidh: *in recognition of his victory*; bogsa fiodha anns an robh bogsaichean na bu lugha: *a wooden box in which there were smaller boxes*; an ath fhear na bu lugha na 'm fear roimhe: *the next one smaller than the previous one*; na liùdhagan ainmeil Ruiseanach: *the famous Russian dolls*; air am bi sibh eòlach: *that you will know*; ceàrnag de shìoda buidhe: *a square of yellow silk*; nan togadh neach a' bhratach: *if a person picked up the flag*; nochdadh sluagh mòr de ghaisgich armaichte: *a large host of armed warriors would appear*; chan fhàsadh bàrr air an fhearann: *no crop would grow on the land*; cha bhiodh uain aig caoraich, no laoigh aig crodh, no leanabh aig teaghlach: *no sheep would have lambs, no cows calves and no family a child*; gum buineadh i o shean do Rìgh Nirribhidh: *that it belonged in olden times to the King of Norway*; às an Ear-mheadhanach: *from the Middle East*; a' barantachadh buaidh ann an cath: *guaranteeing victory in battle*; an d' fhuair a' chiad Leòdach i bho?: *did the first MacLeod get it from?*

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha dualchas **na cois**. *There was a heritage accompanying it. I explained the usage of the compound preposition an cois ("beside, accompanying") in Litir 276 (08.10.04). In this Litir I have used it combined with a prepositional pronoun associated with ann (where English would use a personal pronoun eg "beside her" rather than a noun eg "beside the road"). Here's how it will appear with all the persons: nam chois (beside me), nad chois (beside you), na chois (beside him), na cois (beside her), nar cois (beside us), nur cois (beside you), nan cois (beside them). In the Litir, I say na cois because the word bratach is feminine.*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: **Cogaidhean na Croise:** *The Crusades [the wars of the cross].*

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