

Spatial pattern and process in the fragmentation of heather moorland

by

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for degree. The work of which it is a record has been carried out by myself unless stated otherwise. All sources of information have been acknowledged by means of reference to the authors.

Sander Pieter Oom

Dedication

To all sheep munching away on this planet and
against all who dare to call them stupid!

The treachery of Finella

Kenneth, Malcolm's son, reigned for twenty-four years and two months. And he was killed by his own men in Fettercairn, through the treachery of Finella, the daughter of Cunthar, earl of Angus. This Finella's only son had been killed by the aforesaid Kenneth.

Translated from the Chronicle of the Kings of Scotland by A.O. Anderson (1990).

Her name was Finella; Kenneth had long before ordered her only son to be slain at Dunsinnan, I know not whether by severity of the law, or for some deed, or for any other cause. Therefore this crafty woman, eagerly aspiring after the king's death, caused to be made in a remote cottage a kind of trap never seen before. The trap had attached to it on all sides crossbows, always kept wound up, each with its cord, and fitted with the sharpest bolts and in the middle of them stood a statue like a boy, cunningly attached to the crossbows, so that if any one touched and moved it in any way he should loosen the catches of the crossbows on all sides, and immediately be pierced by the bolts discharged.

Also after completing her work for the accomplishment of this crime, the wicked woman mentioned above kept always a cheerful countenance before the king, and at last deceived him, flattering him with treacherous words. The king went hunting one day with a few followers, not far from his own dwelling, with dogs raising the beasts here and there among the woods. And he chanced to turn aside near the village of Fettercairn, where the traitress lived; and when she saw him she bent her knees, and begged him importunately to go to her house. 'Otherwise,' she said, 'I must necessarily consider that I am suspected by your Majesty's Grace. But God knows, and thou, king, shalt soon know, that although the talk of malignant men repeats many lies about me, I have always been loyal to thee, and always shall be, so long as life remains with me. For I know very well that all thou hast done recently to my most wicked son was done not undeservedly, but justly.' And she ran up to him and whispered in the king's ear. 'If but thou wilt come with me, I will expose to thee, my lord, thy betrayers, my cursed son's accomplices, and the manner of their treason; they hoped to associate me with them in

their deceit, under an oath; but I refused at once to consent to their wicked treachery. They have forced me, however, to swear, touching the Gospels, that I should never betray their secrets; and although I promised them this under oath, I should nevertheless have been most false and a traitress to thee, my lord king, to whom before all others is due firm and loyal fealty, if I hid the danger of thy person. For who is unaware that no oath holds against the safety of royal majesty?’

Thus did the treacherous woman cunningly beguile the king’s mind, and lead him with her, alas ! too trustful in her, to the dwelling, in spite of the opposition of all. Why dilate, why dwell upon grievous things? After the king had dismounted from his horse, she led him alone by the hand very swiftly to the house where the trap was concealed. And as if for the purpose of revealing the secrets of the traitors, as she had promised, she closed the door behind them, and showed him the statue, which was the lever of the whole trap. Upon his asking what this statue had to do with him, she answered, smiling: ‘My lord king, if any one should touch and move the top of the head of this statue that thou seest, a marvellous and pleasant show will spring from it.’

Wholly ignorant of the hidden treachery, he drew easily towards him with his hand the head of the machine, and loosened the levers and catches of the crossbows; so that he was suddenly pierced from all sides by the bolts released, and died without uttering another word.

Then the traitress went out quickly by the back-door, and hid herself for the time in the shadows of the woods; but soon afterwards she came safely to her supporters. Also the king’s followers waited long for his return from the house, and wondered why he delayed there. At last they beat persistently upon the door, and, hearing nothing, in rage broke it open. As soon as they knew of his death, a great outcry was raised, and they ran hither and thither searching for the wicked woman, but in vain; not finding her, and not knowing what to do, they burned the town with fire, reducing it to ashes. And they carried away with them the king’s blood-stained body and shortly afterwards buried it in the royal fashion with his fathers, in Iona.

Translated from Fordun, *Chronica* by A.O. Anderson (1990).

Fordun's story of Finella is semi-mythical. Tradition in the Mearns says that Finella walked on the tree-tops from Finella Hill, near Fordoun, down to Finella Den, near St Cyrus: this suggests that she was a wholly mythical personage, possibly the stream-goddess of Finella Burn. Perhaps the stream's name (? *find-ela* "white swan") has influenced the form of a woman's name (*Findguala* "white shoulder").

Taken from Anderson, Alan Orr (1990).

Anderson, Alan Orr (1990). *Early sources of Scottish history: A.D. 500 to 1286*. Volume 1. Paul Watkins, Stamford, pp. 512-515.