

ISSUE 11

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## Editorial

Hi there, and welcome to *Anor 11*. First of all, let me say a big Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this Issue—this must be the first ever *Anor* to actually be produced on time, and not only that, there is even some material left in the file ready for the next issue. However, having said that, there is no reason to get complacent. The next issue will be the Oxonmoot and Societies Fair Issue, and as such needs to be really full. In particular, you will notice that this issue has got even less artwork in than is usual even for *Anor*, and I would be very pleased to accept anything that could pass off as a picture. Most Smial magazine editors manage to fill up the spare corners in their pages with little doodles, but any of you who have seen my doodles will understand why I don't do that!

Also rather disappointing is the lack of results of my 'Comments' page. As you will see, I only had one comment, even if that was a rather long one! However, I am not prepared to give in that easily, and the experiment will continue for at least one more issue. There's plenty of material in this issue to provoke comment: what are your views on the technological development of fantasy worlds, and Middle-earth in particular? what are your views of *The Silmarillion*? was Tolkien affected by his wartime experiences, or was he actually thinking of St. Guthalc as he wrote *The Lord of the Rings*? Please, make your views known; lets have some lively feedback this time.

I suppose I'd better shut up and let you get on with reading *Anor*—and let me warn you—you've got another four pages of me rabbiting on before you get to anything else! Don't forget, the copy date for *Anor 12* is August 1st, giving you lots of time to write things after EXAMS. Good luck, and good reading!

Mike Percival

# The Layman's Guide to Advanced Tolkien Studies

## Series Introduction

When the Cambridge Tolkien Society was formed three and a half years ago, the founder members were the kind of Tolkien fans who queue up outside Heffers whenever a new overpriced tome of scribblings by JRRRT is published by Allen and Unwin. However since those early meetings, the membership has grown, at one stage reaching nearly one hundred, before eventually settling down at about seventy. What kind of people are these new members? As far as we are aware, only one person has joined the CTS in the last two years who was already a member of the Tolkien Society. Most of our new members are people who have encountered Tolkien through *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, and there is at least one who hasn't even read those books! Our members in general are people with a general liking of fantasy and science fiction, who have enjoyed *LotR*, and who have attended and enjoyed at least one, and sometimes more, meetings, or else have been bullied by one of the more 'active' members. Few of our members have read any of "The History of Middle-earth", that is *The Book of Lost Tales* and subsequent volumes, and many have never made it beyond the first few pages of *The Silmarillion*. The object of this series of articles is to provide an introduction to these books, with a view to encouraging more people to explore the works of Tolkien further than they otherwise might.

I have landed up writing this first article myself for two reasons. Firstly, no one else seemed particularly enthusiastic to do it, and secondly, I felt that by writing a whole article, I could give a better idea of what I was after than by endless explaining. However, I must make it clear that I do not intend to write the whole series. I hope that each of the seven or so articles will be written by different people, although this may not, of course, be possible. But if you have a particular favourite book, be it *BoLT*, *UT*, or, dare I say it, *The Lays of Beleriand*, and would like to write about it, please get in touch. The next book in the series is *Unfinished Tales*, which should provide plenty of material, so please get writing!

## Part I - *The Silmarillion*

### Introduction

*The Silmarillion* was one of those rare books which celebrated its 60th anniversary by being published! Most books which have been around for that long are either unpublishable, or lie forgotten in a bottom drawer. But in the case of *The Silmarillion*, the reason for the long delay between the first scribblings made in notebooks in 1917 and its eventual publication in 1977 was that it was, literally, a lifetime in the writing. Throughout his

life, Tolkien never stopped working on it, and although he tried more than once to get it published, in particular when he was asked for a sequel to *The Hobbit*, it is my belief that it could never have been published while he lived. Tolkien took long enough polishing *The Lord of the Rings* before he allowed that to be published; *The Silmarillion* was like a child to him, and the only thing which could stop him writing and re-writing was his death. Following that event, his son, Christopher, was left with the job of editing the text and bringing it into a state fit for publication, which he did admirably.

The volume which we know as *The Silmarillion* is divided into five parts, of which much the largest is the "Quenta Silmarillion", or history of the Silmarils itself. The others are the "Ainulindalë" and the "Valaquenta", which provide a background against which the story of the Silmarils is set, and the "Akallabêth" and "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age", which are entirely separate stories, but which complete the history of Middle-earth as far as the end of the Third Age. Also included, of course, are the Appendix, Index, and Genealogical Tables without which no Tolkien book would be complete or, in this case, readable.

### The Ainulindalë

The *Ainulindalë*, or "Music of the Ainur", is a creation myth, and therefore makes the logical starting point for any complete "History of Middle-earth". Many readers, however, get put off the whole book at this stage by the style, which is very reminiscent of much of the early part of the Old Testament. They read the opening lines,

"There was Eru, the One, who in Arda is called Ilúvatar; and he made first the Ainur, the Holy Ones, that were the offspring of his thought . . ."

and are, not surprisingly, somewhat daunted by the thought of 400 pages in the same vein. To these people, I would suggest two possible modes of action. The first is to press on; the *Ainulindalë* is less than ten pages long, and the rest of the book isn't in the same style. The second is to skip straight to the *Quenta Silmarillion* and return to the *Ainulindalë* in a few month's time, when you feel ready for it! It is perfectly possible to understand the *Quenta* without having read the earlier stories.

Having made these rather discouraging noises, I must say that I find the *Ainulindalë* a very moving story, and it certainly helps put the relationship and actions of the 'gods' in the later stories in perspective.

### The Valaquenta

If the *Ainulindalë* is reminiscent of the start of the Old Testament, which at least has a story to tell, all be it in a rather 'difficult' style, the *Valaquenta* is reminiscent of one of those parts of the Bible which we all know of, but which few of us have actually read—the lists of names, "The sons of Reuben were . . . ; the sons of Joel were . . ." etc. In this case the *Valaquenta* is the "Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the Lore of the Eldar", and that describes it pretty well, since it consists of little more than a listing of the fourteen "Great Valar" together with accounts of their chief powers and interests (a bit like a C.V., really!), followed by rather briefer notes about the important Maiar, or lesser powers. My advice once again is don't be put off; if you get bogged down (and I certainly did when I first read it), don't be frightened to skip it and get on with the serious part of the story in the *Quenta Silmarillion*. The *Ainulindalë* and *Valaquenta* are somewhat akin to the snippets of 'ancient history' which it is now fashionable to put at the start of fantasy books; they help to build the background, and are important to anyone who wishes to study the land in which the stories are set, but they are rarely vital to the

understanding and enjoyment of the story itself, which is, I hope, why most people read fantasy books.

### Quenta Silmarillion – The History of the Silmarils

At last, I've got to the heart of the book, the *Quenta Silmarillion*, or "Silmarillion proper". And I am immediately faced with a problem. How, in a few words here, can I capture anything of a book which covers many thousands of years of history, some of it in the style of a chronicle of the fortunes of a people, looking at events on a global, or at least a continental scale, and other parts on a much more personal level, in particular the story at the heart of the book, that of Beren and Lúthien.

The *Quenta Silmarillion* is the story of the three great jewels, the Silmarils. Made by Fëanor, most skilled of all the Noldor, the Silmarils embodied the last of the light of the Two Trees of Valinor. But the Silmarils were stolen by Melkor, the original Dark Lord, to whom Sauron was no more than a lieutenant, and the bulk of the book is occupied with the attempts of the elves, led by Fëanor, to get them back.

The story begins soon after the creation of the World, when the gods were employed in shaping the lands and seas and mountains. They created two great lamps, one in the North and one in the South of Middle-earth. Seeds sprouted, plants grew, beasts came forth, the Valar rested . . . and Melkor built himself a fortress and stronghold. Then Melkor came forth to war, and threw down the lamps, and the Earth was plunged into darkness once more. The Valar removed themselves to Valinor, a land in the West, fenced about with mountains to the East and the Encircling sea to the West, and there they made their dwelling, and created the Two Trees, which gave light to Valinor. The Valar lived in bliss in Valinor, but they almost forgot the world outside, and there Melkor dwelt. All this took place before Elves or Men dwelt on the Earth.

Well, so far I've got through the first six pages, and at this rate I'm going to fill up the whole of *Anor* with this article! I suppose I'd better change my style. A central theme of the *Quenta Silmarillion* is concerned with light, and the different ways in which the Valar brought light to the Earth. After their first attempt with the great lamps had been brought to nought by Melkor, they created the Two Trees, which brought light to Valinor, but left most of Middle-earth under starlight. This suited them fine, but fortunately for the rest of us, not all the Valar left Middle-earth entirely in the grasp of Melkor. Ulmo, god of the sea, brought life through the streams and rivers, and Yavanna, goddess of Nature, mourned for her works which had been marred in the fall of the lamps. But it was Oromë the hunter who first met the Elves when they woke in the East of Middle-earth. The Valar decided to bring the Elves to Valinor to share in the light of the Trees, and so began a journey which makes the exodus from Egypt seem like a Sunday afternoon stroll. Most of the Elves began the journey, but many did not complete it. At this time also, the Valar captured Melkor, and chained him for three ages, and these "Ages of the Chaining" were the most blissful of all the ages of the Earth.

In Valinor the Elves learned much, and their skill in craft grew, culminating in the creation of the Silmarils, the greatest of all jewels. However, as has often been said, all good things come to an end; the Ages of the Chaining were completed, and the gods, thinking Melkor to be reformed, released him. But Melkor spread dissension among the elves, speaking to them of the wide lands of Middle-earth, which they could rule for themselves. Thus it was that when Melkor destroyed the Two Trees and stole the Silmarils, the groundwork of rebellion was already laid, and the Noldor, inspired by Fëanor, marched out of Valinor to wage war with Melkor when the gods would not, to try to regain the

Jewels.

The rest of the *Quenta Silmarillion* is concerned with the wars of the Elves against Melkor. In the beginning, the Elves won several minor victories, but in the end the forces of Melkor gained the upper hand, and each successive battle saw greater losses for the Elves, even when, in the latter part of the age, the fathers of Men joined with them. In the end, the elves were forced to seek aid, and the war culminated in the voyage of Eärendil the Mariner (father of Elrond and star of the poem named after him in *LotR*) to Valinor, where he asked for and received aid from the Valar, who threw Melkor into the Void forever. Unfortunately, they forgot to get rid of Sauron too, but that's another story!

The theme of light again plays a major part. Following the demise of the Trees, the Valar asked Fëanor to give them the light from the Silmarils to help them heal the trees. Of course, they didn't know that Melkor had already stolen the Jewels, but the fact that Fëanor said no didn't make him too popular. Despite this, however, the Valar didn't entirely forsake the rebellious elves. They used the last fruits of the Two Trees to form the Sun and the Moon, and thus, after long ages, light returned to Middle-earth, and this certainly helped the Elves in their struggle against Melkor.

Set against this background are many stories on a more personal level than the main history. Chief amongst these is the Tale of Beren and Lúthien, but equally moving in different ways are the stories of Túrin, his brother Tuor, and the story that completes the book, that of the voyage of Eärendil. These stories enable the reader to associate rather more with a particular character than the rest of the book; they are like small parts of a novel tucked away inside a history book, but they are also some of the most beautiful and polished pieces Tolkien ever wrote, and as such it is well worth reading *The Silmarillion* just for these small parts.

I could go on for much longer, but a) that would get boring (if it hasn't already!) and b) I don't want to give away too much of the plot—if I succeed in inspiring anyone to read the book, I don't want to spoil it for them! So, onwards . . .

### The Akallabêth

The *Akallabêth* is the story of the Downfall of Númenor. It takes up the story from the end of the *Quenta Silmarillion*, telling of the creation of a land in the middle of the ocean as a reward for the services of Men during the war against Melkor. But eventually the spirit of Sauron rises up and, like his master in Valinor at the start of the First Age, he feigns friendship while spreading dissension, which leads once again to rebellion and war.

### Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age

This part completes the history of Middle-earth as far as the end of the Third Age, and is essentially a retelling of the story of *The Lord of the Rings*, but in the 'History Book' style of *The Silmarillion*. As such it makes a satisfying conclusion to the book, although, of course, the end of the Third Age is just as arbitrary a stopping place as the end of the First or Second would have been, and I, for one, would have liked to know more about the reconstruction of Middle-earth at the start of the Fourth Age.

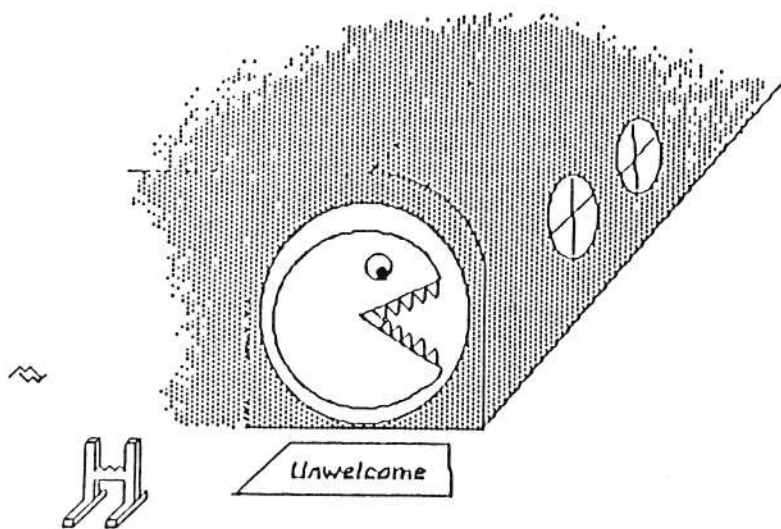
### The Indices

As I mentioned above, no book by Tolkien would be complete without its index and Appendix. In this case the index is not only of use to language scholars, but is invaluable to the 'normal' reader as an aid to remembering who's who, especially since many characters have more than one name. However, don't get bogged down by too frequent referring to the Index.

## Conclusion

*The Silmarillion* does read rather like a history book in places, but most of it is not in the least bit heavy. Many potential readers are put off all too easily by the opening pages, and by some of the heavier parts, but if you persevere and don't get bogged down with the names, there is much of great beauty. If you set out to enjoy it rather than to read it as a history book, it is, I think, the greatest of Tolkien's works.

Mike Percival



I've a feeling Bag-End  
has gone downhill while  
we've been away,  
Mr. Frodo!

# Tolkien and the First World War

When I first read *LotR*, I was surprised by the resemblance of the Dead Marshes and Mordor to the Western Front of W.W. I. This has led me to look in more detail at what Tolkien did during the war, and how this could have affected him.

Once he had finished his degree at Oxford, Tolkien took an active part in the war; previous to this he had been in a reserve unit. He was commissioned as a signals officer in the Lancashire Fusiliers, something which fitted his love of languages. After being moved around Britain his regiment was sent to France and the Western Front. His first and last battle was the Somme, fought throughout the summer and autumn of 1916. Although uninjured, he contracted a disease called 'Trench Foot', caused by the trenches being continually full of water, in which the men had to stand. For the rest of the war a number of illnesses kept Tolkien out of the front line.

There are three possible ways in which this experience could have affected Tolkien. These are:-

- 1) In the imagery of his writing
- 2) In the creation of characters and their personalities.
- 3) By causing a reaction against the horrors and stupidity of modern warfare.

I shall now look at each of these in more detail.

Starting with the possible effects upon his imagery, I will first outline what he witnessed on the Western Front. The battle fields were smashed by continual heavy artillery bombardment, and were also criss-crossed by trench systems where the soldiers waited for the next battle. I am sure most if not all of you have seen pictures of this. Within the trenches or in no man's land were the broken bodies of dead soldiers; many had been torn to pieces by shell fire. From a position behind the main trenches Tolkien wrote of "... a sinister smell of decay." (*Biography* p. 90), and these conditions left their mark on him. The first place where this influence can be easily seen is in the description of the dead marshes. They were described with the words "mists curled and smoked from dark and noisome pools. The reek of them hung stifling in the still air." (*LotR* IV 2). Another way that the war could be seen here is with Sam's description of the lights that appeared, "... some like dimly shining smoke, some like misty flames flickering slowly above unseen candles..." (*LotR* IV 2). These could have been influenced by the way that Very lights would light up a battlefield at night. His experiences could also have given him the knowledge of what bodies that had gone through a cold and bloody fight would look like; this was used when he wrote about battle scenes.

Secondly there was a possible effect through inspiration for characters and their personalities. Here there are two good examples, Sam and Morgoth. Being an officer Tolkien was assigned a batman, a form of personal servant. This is how he described Sam: "My



'Sam Gamgee' is indeed a reflection of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 war..." (*Letters*). So Sam's character was most definitely affected, if not created, by his wartime experiences. During his spare time Tolkien either sat in the mess hut or in his quarters, and it was during this time that he created the character of Morgoth (whose name means 'Black foe of the World'—could this be a double meaning, one for modern warfare and one for the character?) and wrote the history of the Gnomes. So the war also appears to have been important for the creation/discovery of characters.

Finally, there is the possibility that his subsequent work would embody a reaction against the ideas and methods of modern warfare. Indeed this does appear to be the case. Firstly the greater part of his human and elvish characters are styled in the way of the old heroes; they are just, proud men who fight fairly and with honour. They represented the way a real war should be fought. Secondly, the 'enemy' can be seen to embody all that Tolkien saw to be evil. This was especially true of Saruman, at the battle of Helm's Deep. When an explosion breached the Hornburg, Aragorn said "... they have lit the fire of Orthanc beneath our feet." (*LotR* III 7). So a reaction did occur, which is especially seen in the "Fall of Gondolin" which Tolkien wrote in hospital just after the battle of the Somme; it has an heroic grandeur to it, something entirely lacking in modern warfare.

So, in conclusion, how much did the First World War affect Tolkien and his writing? His biographer, Humphrey Carpenter, believes the effects were only superficial. Personally I think it went deeper than that, although the evidence which I have given could be described as 'superficial' since it is only a small part of his great works. But living through Britain's greatest military tragedy, which cost him the life of one of his best friends, Rob Gilson, is bound to have affected him in some way. I believe his experiences gave more realism to the descriptions of the Dead Marshes and Mordor—having seen hell on earth, he found it easier to portray hell on Middle-earth.

Ian Alexander

References :

- Carpenter, H. *J.R.R. Tolkien - A Biography*
- Carpenter, H. (ed) *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*

# Comment

O. K. , so my great idea of a comments page has hardly taken off! I have only received one letter and that, not surprisingly, is about MERP. However, I am not disheartened, and the comments idea WILL continue—if you wish to say anything about anything in *Anor*, hunt me out and shout at me, or jot it on a piece of paper—anything will be most welcome! Here, though, is the full text of my one letter, from Ian Alexander.

## A Reply to MERP

As an avid fantasy role game player I was interested in Paul Harcourt's review of MERP in *Anor 10*. But as someone who is greatly interested in Tolkien's work I must express some doubts about MERP. There are two main points that I wish to make, one about the scenarios and one about the presentation of characters.

I will begin with the scenarios. As was stated in the review they are highly detailed and specific accounts of relatively small areas of Middle-earth. For some areas this sort of detail does exist in Tolkien's work, but for the majority of those areas covered by MERP only very brief outlines can be found. So the writers of the scenarios have to fill in most of the detail from their own imagination and informed guesswork. Serious mistakes are bound to occur since there is only possibly one living person, C.Tolkien, who could share the breadth and depth of vision which is needed to continue the creation of J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth!

My second objection is over the presentation of characters. For any role playing system to work you need strictly defined statistics for characters. Yet how do you put stats for someone like Gandalf or a Balrog into a games system? Many creatures never displayed their true potential, something which in many cases Tolkien only hinted at in his books. So when creating their games system serious inadequacies occurred which must flaw the system (even if it does mean that the system is now playable.)

Overall I have serious doubts and reservations about the credibility of MERP. In my view it has cheapened and debased these masterpieces. Yet unlike Mr. Harcourt I will not make a sweeping statement about whether MERP is sacrilegious or not (I believe people should make up their own minds about this), but I will state again that in my view it is debasing and sacrilegious.

# The Lay of Eärringa

Translated by Colin Rosenthal.

*There's nothing worse than an unfinished Lay*  
Elvish Proverb

## Introduction

The *Lay of Eärringa* (or simply *The Eärringa*) exists in fragmentary form on the so called "Pembroke Manuscript", (Manuscript A), unearthed during excavations of the Late Period Cambridge. It is believed to have been in the private collection of a Cambridge don of this period (O'Dancer, 1963), but its earlier history can only be guessed at. A second manuscript (manuscript B), has not yet been discovered, and this has led some commentators to doubt its existence (O'Fogey, 1971). For this reason, the translation here is made from A.

The distinctive use of imagery and the unusual metrical variants have led to a generally held belief that this is the work of Maglor son of Fëanor, and indeed recent textual analysis (Jason) has confirmed that this is a late First Age piece. However, it must be noted that a recent study by Ross of the social context of the piece has cast doubt on this interpretation.

What cannot be doubted is the astonishing power of the poet's vision of chivalry and courage in an heroic age. It is a great tragedy that we shall probably never possess the final climatic moments of this great epic. What a loss it is to our literary heritage that we shall never hear of Eärringa's heroic return to court, of his queen's delight at the return of her beloved hero from his deadly quest, and of the splendour of the wedding and banquet which followed.

Yet what we do possess is a tremendous tribute to the prowess of First Age imagination. Whatever doubts may remain about the textual history of this work, there can surely be no question of its literary merit.

Colin Rosenthal

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O'Dancer, Tip. (1963) *Proc. Roy. Ling. Soc.* 57  
O'Fogey, T. (1971) *J. Philol. Maun.* 25  
Ross, Irma in *Late First Age Literature, a Sociological Perspective*. The Trouser Press.

*The Lay of Eärringa*

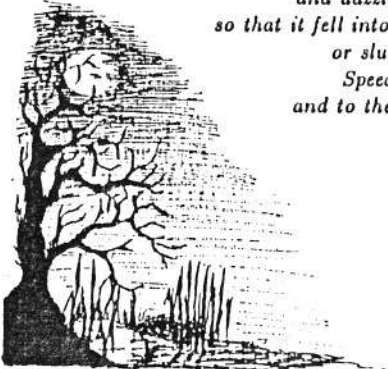
*Eärringa the irreverent  
walked the wastelands  
His sword was sentient  
and giggled girlishly,  
as legendary loins  
and epics also  
Unlike the loins  
Which though grilled with gravy  
On a quest for his queen,  
(After politely pondering  
to find her a fire Drake  
and return with its tail  
he wandered waywardly  
breaking off briefly  
or a sip of springwater  
from his dwarf-wrought drinking horn  
with scenes of slaughter  
were destroyed by dragons*

*(with diaeresis on the 'a')  
a wally he was.  
but senile alas  
Girt were his loins  
in lays and songs  
so often are.  
of lamb and pork  
are girt rarely.  
who quietly told him  
his proposal of marriage)  
and slay it alive  
as token of love,  
those wild lands,  
for a bite of waybread  
or some other beverage  
deeply engraved  
as cities and towns  
which depressed him somewhat.*

*A sudden sound  
and the smell of sulphur  
awoke Eärringa.  
or another oath  
But the artful elf-bane  
and with careful cunning  
friendship feigned  
No fear of fire  
nor dread of death  
nor terror of teeth  
or so he said  
His lyre wrought by Léof  
From his backpack he brought  
and dazzled the dragon  
so that it fell into forgetfulness  
or slumped in sleep  
Speedily his sword  
and to the fallen figure*

*from the sky above  
and a scream of hate  
"Arroint thee!" he cried  
of the elven kind.  
arroitned not  
of creatures of legend  
and flopped to the ground.  
felt the hero  
from dragon claws  
tungsten tipped  
describing things later.  
of the line of Ender  
and began to play  
with diminished runs  
as if fainting with wonder  
at the singing of the hero.  
from the scabbard he drew  
of the fearsome beast...*

(The manuscript ends here.)



# The Christian Exorcising of Barrows, and Guthalc in the Fen Country

The evidence in Norse literature for a cult of the dead is concerned with burial in the earth; ... the conception of life continuing in the grave-mound developed in Scandinavia in heathen times ...; [it] adds to our knowledge of the Norse attitude to the relationship between the living and the dead.

Hilda Roderick Ellis, *The Road to Meil: A study of the Conception of the Dead in Old Norse Literature*, 1943, p. 99.

Guthalc, hermit, born in Mercia, c. 673; d. at Crowland, 714. As a youth Guthalc fought in the army of King Ethelred of Mercia, but [later] entered the monastery of Repton ... [then] settling at a hermitage on a bend of the river Welland in the Fens.

Donald Attwater, *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, 1965, p. 163.

Chapter VIII, 'Fog on the Barrow-downs', of Book one of *LotR*, is concerned with the attempt of the barrow-wight to draw into his chamber Frodo and his companions and to hold them there as 'ghosts' by enchantment. The passage also describes their rescue by Tom Bombadil, the banishing of the wight, and the bringing out of the treasure from within, to be "free to all finders ... for so the spell of the mound should be broken" (*LotR* I 8). It is the contention of this note that the incident is interesting for three reasons:

(i) The echoing of the bringing out of the treasure from the dragon's hoard in *Beowulf*: *ut geferedon dyre maomas* (11.3130-31);

(ii) The many related folklore/narrative motifs from the Germanic world in the Tolkien recension of barrow lore;

(iii) A pleasing cultural link with the Fenlands north east of Peterborough through the Old English poem, *Guthalc A*, and its subject, Saint Guthalc (673-714 A.D.).

The cleansing of treasure by bringing it into the light and its being generously given away is familiar from various passages in medieval literature. In Tolkien's creative writings it is found in: (i) the gift of the Arkenstone in *The Hobbit*; (ii) the splitting up of the treasure hoard in that work; (iii) the whole trilogy's notion of frequent gifts of inexpensive items in the Shire; and (iv) the use of the word *mathom* for such voluntary bestowals, i.e. a semantic amelioration of a word hitherto only used in heroic contexts of 'treasure with a curse on it'.

The many ancient Germanic narrative motifs associated with barrows, and such treasure, may best be studied from Norse literature, in which the relative lateness of conversion, combined with the considerable antiquarian interests of historians, poets and saga-men alike, has resulted in such lore being very rich and detailed. Thus, to use the standard system (*v. infra*) as evolved by Stith Thompson, the comparative folklorist, the Tolkien incident contains echoes, among others, of:

C 16	offending the dead
D 838.5	magic object from barrow (weapons)
E 162.5	dead man tries to come back to life
E 210, ff.	malevolent dead
E 291	ghosts protect treasure
E 481.3.1	dead live in barrows
F 105	dead oppose return of living from land of dead
H 927.1	captive spirits of dead
R 45	captivity in mound
R 112	magic rescue of prisoner from mound
R 219.2	escape from land of dead

etc., etc.

Convenient illustrations of these motifs in Norse literature may be found in the work of two Cambridge scholars:

- i) N.K. Chadwick, (1946). 'Norse Ghosts' (including the *Haugbui*, i.e. 'barrow-dweller'), *Folklore* LVII, pp 50-65 and 106-127;
- ii) H.R. Ellis Davidson, (1964). *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, esp. ch. 6, sect. 4, 'The Burial Mound'.

Perhaps the easiest way to the many Norse analogues to Tolkien's memorable sequence is by using the Stith Thompson Index volume (no. 6) (1954; second edition, 1966)<sup>1</sup>. It will also be sensible to consult Inger M. Boberg's *Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature* (1966), which is a companion to Stith Thompson. Thus her section (p. 62) D 838.5, will suggest much detail about ancient weapons, even as it will draw attention to D 816 'magic object inherited', or D 810 'magic object given'. The many traditions in England of hoards and barrows may be consulted most easily in L.V. Grinsell, (1967), *Barrow Treasure: Fact, Tradition, etc.* in *Folklore*, LXXVIII, pp 1-38.

It may also be noted in passing that Tolkien, whose archaeological work at Lydney Park (Glous.) was reviewed in the journal *Antiquity* in 1934, and who may be shown to have himself used much other material from it, would have had easy access to A. Keiller and S. Piggot, (1939), 'The Chambered Tomb in *Beowulf*', *Antiquity* 13, pp 360 ff, and S. Lindquist, (1948), 'Sutton Hoo and *Beowulf*', *Antiquity* 23, pp 139 ff.

There are a number of general barrow or howe references in fenland lore which will be of interest to the Cambridge Tolkien Society:

- i) The place-name, Barrowden, Rutland, mentioned in *Doomsday Book*, and from Old English *beorgadun*, i.e. 'dun with barrows or Burial-mounds'. [Thus the

<sup>1</sup> The full title of the compilation is: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla ... and Local Legends.*

Downs in the Middle-earth name could refer to the old Celtic element, *dun*, 'hill (-fortress)';

ii) The habit of hiding money in barrows, as a place of concealment, being relatively common in the Danelaw. [See P.H. Sawyer, *Sylogge of Ancient British and Anglo-Saxon Coins in Copenhagen Museum*, Vol. I (1964), p. 23];

iii) Goldenlow, a place name in Bedfordshire (the subject of a treasure-trove inquisition in 1290) (and discussed in the 1926 English Place Name Society volume, *Bedfordshire*, p. 120) [the name means 'burial mound (full) of gold'.] [For those of you familiar with the external editorial address for *Anor*, I will point out that 'Thriplow' has a similar origin, coming from "Tripper's Lowe" (Tripper being an Anglo-Saxon chieftain) - Ed.]

iv) The barrow, Chrishall, near Chrishall Grange, Cambridgeshire, the hoard within which mound being much discussed in 1854;

v) Drakelow in Bedfordshire (i.e. 'dragon-mound');

vi) The legend of the Mercian monk Guthalc, whose retreat in Holland was referred to in the second headpiece quotation.

If we put aside: the matter of the barrow-wight; the treasure - "Things of gold, silver, copper, and bronze; many beads and chains and jewelled ornaments" (*LotR* I 8); the need for a companion (companions) in the barrow, as is stressed in many such incidents (Chadwick, p. 53); the barrow-wight emerging in the evening or in a temporary mist, "on either side ahead a darkness began to loom through the mist" (*LotR* I 8); the benefits of temporary imprisonment in a howe, 'a night spent with the dead is instrumental in bringing about metempsychosis, or "rebirth"' (Chadwick, p. 57); or howe-given dreams, such as those which afflict Merry; etc. - there is another story/analogue to Tolkien's text, namely the Old English poem, *Guthalc A*, concerning the Mercian soldier prince who became first a monk, and then a hermit.

The poem, to be found in the Exeter Book, and sometimes known as *Guthalc the Hermit*, discusses early on the great variety of ways in which a Christian may live (ll. 30-92); and then it focuses on the way of the solitary (i.e. anchorite<sup>2</sup>), showing his temptation by devils on the one hand, and protection by angels and heavenly guidance on the other. With a guardian angel in constant attendance St. Guthalc was able to resist his assailants through faith and courage (O.E. *ellen* as in *Beowulf*.) Devils had once lived in and raided (ll. 143-146) from his barrow. The barrow itself is *on waestenne* (ll. 208, 206, 'in the wasteland'), and once called a *mearclond* (l. 174, 'a border-land'). For *Guthalc* it is first his *orlege* (ll. 196, 455, 'place of battle'), and later his *sigewong* (l. 742, or 'field of victory'). In roof it is low, so that he cannot stand erect inside it (l. 384, *men buge*, 'it should bow the man') - a detail which reminds us that Tom Bombadil, come to rescue Frodo and his friends, had had to stoop to look inside that barrow (*LotR* I 8).

Now while it is not desirable that this poem of a Mercian man of god - self-exiled to his lonely barrow - should be postulated as a source for the 'Barrow Downs' incident, there is no doubt at all that the poem is a most useful analogue, here and generally, for students of Tolkien's mode of *contaminatio*, 'the blending of sources' or *inventio*, 'creation by selecting from various different literary modes'. While the Norse texts lie largely in the

<sup>2</sup> Compare Tolkien's 1962 editing of the *Ancrene Wisse* for the Early English Text Society.

heathen period – and so no Christian spiritual exorcising of the dead is possible – Tolkien causes Bombadil to sing “stronger songs”, and so to release the barrow-wight’s victims. For this, too, there is an analogue in God’s sending St. Bartholomew<sup>3</sup> to release Guthlac from the evil spirits (ll. 684 ff.). His injunction is particularly relevant:

Let there be no bone-breaking, nor bloody wounding, bruising of his body, nor any whit of injury from what you can do to his hurt. (ll. 698 ff.)

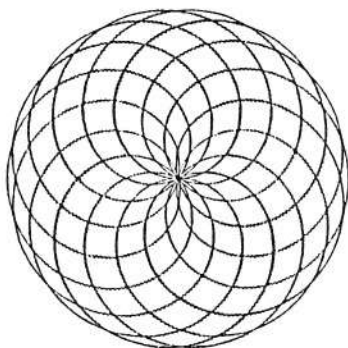
Thus it may be seen that, as is so often the case, there is a deeply spiritual Old English Christian poetic antecedent to an incident in the spiritual growth of Frodo, himself a Christ-figure, bearing his burden of the sins of the world in the One Ring.

What is so different in Tolkien’s thought from the many Old Norse analogues (see Chadwick, *loc.cit.*), may be summed up as:

- i) the exorcising of the barrow;
- ii) the giving away of its contents;
- iii) the spiritual release of its occupant;
- iv) the form of spiritual rebirth accorded the captives, and their leader, Frodo, in particular.

While some will only find echoes of *Beowulf* in the section, the peculiar Danelaw legends of Barrow-lore from Scandinavia, and the verse tale of a lonely self-exile from Mercia, cannot but appeal to those who know the folklore of the fens. For here, it may be contended, if anywhere, there should be sympathy for what Tolkien’s incident may well encompass – namely a peculiarly haunting mix of materials from the Bronze Age, from Christian Mercia, from the fens with their Danish undead ghosts, and from the life of a young man who gave his life so gladly for his maker.

J.S. Ryan



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<sup>3</sup> Parts of the poem are helpful in understanding Gandalf’s transfiguration, as reported in *The Two Towers*.



# Magic and Technology

## in a fantasy universe

As is usual, I don't make any claims to literary or sociological significance, but, more as a forum for discussion than a fully-fledged article, here are some thoughts on fantasy universes.

As a D&D dungeon master, I have laboured long and hard (with assistance) over the creation of our (Anne and my) world of Altrion. The thought struck me the other day, while reading through a scenario I was intending to inflict on an unsuspecting party, involving a long lineage of monarchs: what has happened in Altrion over the last three thousand odd years? More to the point, what technological advances have there been over that period? Answer: probably, very few. This, to me, seemed wrong. Looking at other fantasy universes, such as Middle-earth, tends to reveal the same thing: the early-Middle-Ages feel of most fantasy worlds seems to be totally lacking in progress.

So why? Well, I threw this thought out amongst my acquaintances and gathered in the results.

Hypothesis number one: If magic works, most of the minds who would be occupied in technological advances spend their time huddled over tomes of arcane lore or whatever instead. However, if you look at history, I am reliably informed that most of the breakthroughs in technology were made by very ordinary people, because all the intellectuals were otherwise occupied being incarcerated for suggesting that the world was round. Besides, magic in Middle-earth is very scarce, certainly high magic as performed by robed wizards locked away in high towers.

Hypothesis number two: If magic works, and is of any practical use at all, then a lot of problems will have been solved by magic, and no-one will bother looking for a technological solution. Again, however, we fall foul of the fact that magic in most universes is a) a somewhat esoteric and obscure art and b) not everyone has a tame wizard on hand. Nevertheless, some technological breakthroughs will be held up if magic can usefully replace them. Besides, the kind of person who makes a good inventor is no more going to be deterred by being told he's wasting his time because the local hedge-wizard can already do this than he is by being told it's impossible.

Hypothesis number three: There have been technological breakthroughs, but, due to the communication difficulties in a large country where most can't afford a horse, they tend to be a) localised (hobbits use umbrellas, after all, whereas you never hear them mentioned in Gondor!), b) quite often the same one and c) due to widespread illiteracy and the like, easily forgotten other than as "yon gadget what great-uncle Hol made" This I don't buy for several reasons, not least of which is the fact that it didn't stop England growing up technologically. Add to that the rate at which most fantasy writers seem to think their heroes can travel (invariably about three times as fast as in reality) meaning that information can spread three times as far as it could, and the probability of magical aids to dissemination of information, and it begins to fall apart.

Hypothesis number four: It's all an invalid argument anyway – for instance Britain in

Roman times and in Richard I's day are technologically very similar. Rubbish, sez I. Look at the obvious - arms and armour. The Romans used bronze for weapons, and the best they had in the way of armour was lamellar bronze over leather. 12th century England could at least manage reasonably hard iron, not to mention plate armour. And the Romans never had the stirrup, unlike Middle Ages' England. Now your average fantasy author invariably equips his hero with a good (semi-unbreakable) steel sword and chainmail - admittedly not so much true of Middle-earth, but the heroes of *The Silmarillion* seem no less well-armed than those of *LotR*.

Hypothesis number five: (This isn't really a hypothesis, more an observation). It feels right. True but unhelpful, I hear you say. Maybe, but, since a writer is effectively the god of his world, has he not a right to decree, as maybe his gods would, how the world shall be? Altrion (my world, in case you'd forgotten), is the way it is because it feels wrong to me to have a world which was once in a Dark Ages type state, and surely a world which feels right is better than one which would please a social historian but feels somehow wrong.

Anyway, that's about all I have to say on the subject, other than 'thank you' to Austin Benson, Russel Hand, Anne and the entire Jomslunch of March 26th to whom credit must go for some of the hypotheses.

Mike Whitaker

\* \* \* \* \*

You will, I hope, have read in *Anor 10* the report of last year's Oxonmoot and, perhaps, have thought 'that sounds fun, but I don't know anyone' or 'I'm not a member of the Tolkien Society', so I thought I'd give a few details here of Oxonmoot 1986. This year's Oxonmoot will be held over the weekend of Friday 19th to Saturday 21st of September, and the events will be much the same as last year i.e.

Friday—Innmoot—a chance to meet people and make new friends. Don't be worried if you don't know people already—there'll be lots of people from Cambridge, and we'll all do our best to make you feel at home.

Saturday—plenty of action—discussion group, quiz, D&D, tour of Oxford etc. together with a reception at lunch time given by Priscilla Tolkien, and, of course, the Party in the evening, with ceremonials, entertainments, competitions and, of course, booze. Like last year, Minas Tirith will be performing the opening ceremony, so if YOU want to make a fool of yourself (or watch the rest of us making fools of ourselves), come along!

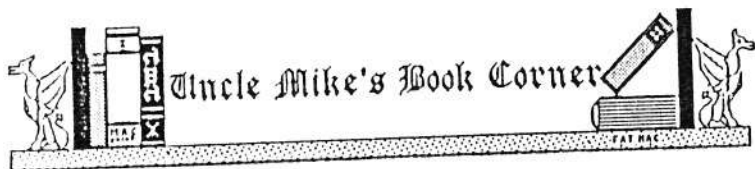
Sunday—visit to Tolkien's grave, followed by a visit to Priscilla Tolkien's house for 'first-timers', and, in the afternoon, a Puntmoot, where we from Cambridge teach those from Oxford how to punt!

Now the important info—cost—and firstly let me point out that YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE TOLKIEN SOCIETY TO ATTEND. The registration fee is £3.50 for members or £9.50 for non-members, plus, if you want college accommodation in Oxford, £10.00 per room per night—all of which is, to my mind, well worth it. If you do want to join the Tolkien Society, that is at present £8.50 per year (full membership) or £4.25 (associate membership i.e. no magazines, but you do get cheap booking for Oxonmoot!) but this will go up shortly.

If you are at all interested, get in touch with me as soon as possible! It's great fun, even if you don't know anyone before you go!

See you in Oxford!

Mike Percival



This issue, as promised, I've got a fair mixture of this'n'that, ranging from Alan Dean Foster (who most people would call an SF writer) through André Norton to Sheri S. Tepper (who is very definitely fantasy). Everybody's into designing worlds this issue, too.

First off, the Alan Dean Foster ...

*Spellsinger, The Hour of the Gate, The Day of the Dissonance, The Moment of the Magician*, Futura, £2.95 ea, 347, 300, 292, 312pp.

A tetralogy, and still going strong, this chronicles the adventures of one Johnathan Thomas Merriweather, one-time law student at an American university, who finds himself mysteriously transported to a world where animals walk about on their hind legs, wear swords and talk. His summoner is an aged wizard by the name of Clothlump, who just happens to be a turtle—well, why not?—and is in need of an engineer. Just how he gets Jontom (as the locals end up mangling his name) is something you'll have to read the first book to find out.

Jontom's major claim to fame turns out to be an ability to play a vast repertoire of rock classics on the electric guitar (anyone still wondering why I like the book?), which, for some strange reason, cause magical effects linked with the lyrics of the song—I'll leave the consequences of playing various rock standards to your imagination! The rest of the characters are distinctly fun, too: Mudge, the cowardly, slightly debauched, otter, and Falameezar, the Communist dragon, are two of the best, not forgetting a slightly non-traditional unicorn in book 4.

O. K., so, the plots are sufficiently unspectacular that I can't remember them off-hand, but the fact that the books seem to have been semi-permanently borrowed this term should say something about them!

Read 'em, especially if you like rock'n'roll!!!

Next, an attempt to jump on the *Thieves World* bandwagon.

*Magic in Ithkar*, ed. André Norton/Robert Adams, TOR, £6.45, 450pp.

For those of you who've been somewhere in Far Harad for the last age, the "Thieves World" books, edited by Robert Asprin and the unsung Lynn Abbey, are a collection of short stories set in the city of Sanctuary, by such notables as Marion Zimmer Bradley, C. J. Cherryh and Poul Anderson. Admittedly the last few books of the series have been going downhill rather, but the idea worked...

...so André Norton nicked it! Set in the city of Ithkar, the stories chronicle the events of various authors' characters at the annual Great Fair to celebrate the coming of the Three Lordly Ones to Ithkar. The only authors of note, bar André Norton, are C. J. Cherryh, Nancy Springer and Lin Carter. The stories aren't bad, particularly Cherryh's, and, in

the interests, I suppose, of fairness, they have been arranged in alphabetical order, which, sadly, puts the rather lack-lustre Lin Carter story first.

At the present price, I don't, however, recommend it as a good investment! The price has, it must be said, a lot to do with the fact that it is only available from that fantasy reader's paradise, Forbidden Planet (and in US trade paperback at that!). [Before I forget: the Virgin Games store on Oxford St. is another place to browse for good fantasy and SF—it stocks American publishers too!]

This next is, I believe, the author's first book:

*A Blackbird in Silver*, Freda Warrington, NEL, £2.95, 302pp.

I picked this up mainly because my attention was caught by the cover, which has one of the most sensibly-clad women I have seen on an SF/fantasy book front for a long while! (Admittedly she'll get the sword on her back caught in her hair if she tries to draw it too fast, but...)

The book itself has a pretty standard plot, i.e. aged sage gives mixed group of heroes mission to save the world from the ravages of the Evil Serpent—you get the idea.

The interest lies in two places. Firstly, the way the world is constructed, being a sphere through which circle three flat planes onto which Entrance Points mysteriously open and close—I told you there's a lot of this world-designing going on in this issue! Secondly, the interplay between the three heroes, who are, respectively: an outcast warrior Prince renowned (unjustifiably) for his evil deeds; a peace-loving islander who has been chosen by his people; and a mysterious girl riding a strange beast who displays no emotion and will give no reason for wishing to kill the Serpent.

The interaction between the three still has a long way to go by the end of the book (being the first book of a saga of as yet uncertain length), but I like what I've seen so far. Another point in its favour is the total lack of wasted space—I prefer not to pay for a cover liberally splattered with comparisons to *LotR* or seven pages of adverts at the back!

Worth the money - I await *A Blackbird in Darkness* with some anticipation.

This issue's Uncle Mike rave review goes to ...

*The True Game*, Sheri S. Tepper, Corgi, £4.95, 542pp.

... which, like last issue's star attraction (*The Chronicles of Morgaine*) is a rebind of a trilogy.

In the Land of the True Game, most are born with one or more Talents, usually from a recognised set of eleven. Those who are become Gamesmen: for instance one with the talents of Flying, Flame and Shapeshifting is a Dragon; those who are not gifted with Talent become pawns. Combat is ritualised and known (obviously) as Game, and it is taught to the young in schools, with the aid of miniature Game pieces.

The hero, Peter, starts out as a student in a school, with the usual stack of disadvantages, like not knowing who his parents are and not knowing what Talent, if any, he possesses. By the end of the third book, he's got it all sorted out (including a quick change of girlfriend a scant few pages from the end), but quite a lot happens in the middle, involving a glorious mix of science and magic, high and not-so-high fantasy, and a set of eleven Game pieces.

The beauty of the trilogy lies not so much in the plot but in the Land of the True Game itself, which is a truly marvellous flight of imagination on the part of the author, being wildly different in structure from anything I've come across before. O. K., I know this is over-the-top, but I think it's terrific! Added to this are two more trilogies set in the Land, one, (*The Chronicles of Mavin Manyshaped*) already complete, and the other

being a continuation of *The True Game* from Peter's girlfriend's point of view, one volume of which (*Jinian Footseer*) has so far been published. They're both good reads too, the latter more than the former, but sadly are only available in U.S. edition, so it's Forbidden Planet or Virgin Games again!

What more can I say....?

Finally, the usual selection of quickie reviews.

*Watchtower*, Elizabeth A. Lynn, Arrow Books, £1.95, 205pp.

Simple plot (summarised concisely on the back of the book), fairly simple characters (although the author hints fairly strongly at the interrelationship of the four principal ones). A good read, but I don't understand how it ever won an award—published in 1980 but has just appeared in W. H. Smith's, and rumoured to be part 1 of a trilogy.

*The Shattered World*, Michael Reaves, Orbit, £2.95, 413pp.

Gorgeous world, consisting of a whole load of shattered fragments held nearly together by magic. Plot? — yes, you guessed it, the magic's wearing out! The hero is a shape-changing (into a bear) thief called Beorn (hmmmmmm), and as if that wasn't bad enough, most of the nasties appear to have come straight out of the D&D Monster Manual. Enjoyable, though the ending is sad and predictable (or was that sadly predictable?).

Once more, that's yer lot for this issue. Next time, I'll have a thousand-pager, the new Sheri Tepper and ... well, read it and see!

Bye for now.

Mike Whitaker



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Meetings are held approximately fortnightly during full term.

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