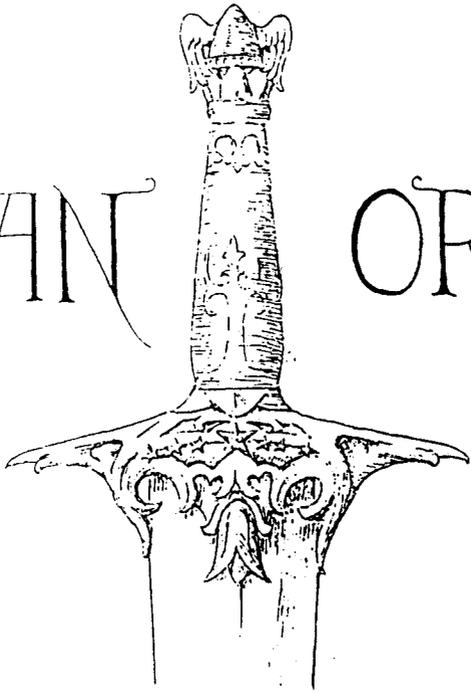


AN OR



Issue 21



EDITORIAL

Welcome to Anor 21: yet another issue squeezed in at the very end of term! This time we have so many serious articles that I have finally succumbed to the pressure to include some of my own work in an attempt at comic relief. Yet that is not to say that the serious articles are boring! I found them most interesting and look forward to being able to print a comment page packed with discussion in the next issue as a result.

Speaking (writing?) of the comment page, I, like my predecessors, am most happy to take comments in any form: written, verbal, inscribed in tablets of stone or even recorded magnetically on small plastic disk! So please pass your comments to me, or to any committee member.

I also want to take this opportunity to give Noel Evans a short commercial. You may have noticed his artwork in Issue 20 and there is more of it in this Anor. Noel is prepared (more like begging) to work to commission and can be contacted through me.

Duncan McLaren

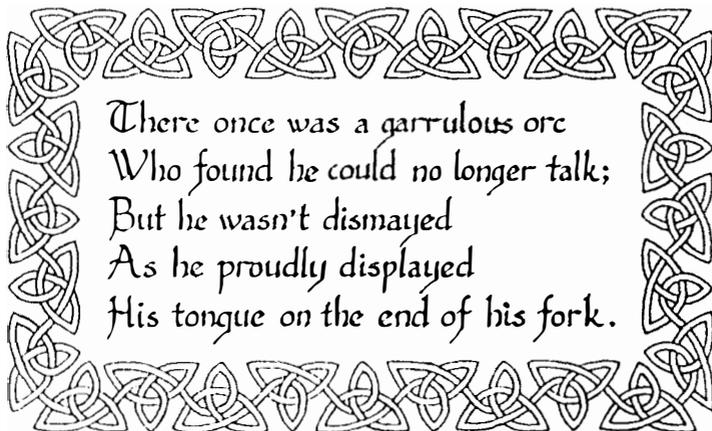
P.S. No, you're not getting away with it: admittedly there was enough material this issue, but the same people are writing each time and it would be nice to get more variety ... there must be more literate CTS members out there somewhere ... how about starting with a nice easy piece for the comment page saying how rude you think the editor is!

Credits

Editor (and typist):	Duncan McLaren
Artwork:	Cover, Lynne Elson, Per Alhberg; pp 8, 21, Noel Evans; Borders, Susan Foord..
Dirty work (photocopying):	Stephen Linley
Type-setting:	Seán Brooke-Hughes & the expensive computers (again).

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There once was a garrulous orc
Who found he could no longer talk;
But he wasn't dismayed
As he proudly displayed
His tongue on the end of his fork.

Susan Foord

The Road Goes Ever On

Reflections on Tolkien and the Classical Epic

The Lord of the Rings is often described as an 'epic' novel. Although the term is perhaps most often used by reviewers and the writers of publishers' blurbs to designate a work of fantasy of a certain length (preferably in three volumes) in a vaguely 'high' style, it seems worth attempting a more precise definition of the genre and looking more closely at its appropriateness as a description of Tolkien's writings. I propose in this article, firstly to draw attention to certain features of LoTR which justify its assignment to the epic genre; and secondly to suggest some ways in which the classical epic tradition may have influenced Tolkien.

I

The definition of the term 'epic' is no simple matter, and I propose to cheat slightly by adopting the views put forward by Aristotle in the Poetics. Aristotle's ideas are not, of course, incontrovertible, but have two immediate advantages in this context (aside from convenience): they derive from the same culture by which the term itself was invented, and would no doubt have been familiar to Tolkien himself, through both his Classical and English literary studies.

Paraphrasing two passages from the Poetics,¹ Aristotle's definition can be summarised as follows: epic poetry is a metrical representation of the action of heroic (or 'good') individuals in narrative form, constructed around a single piece of action (or 'achievement'), with a beginning, a middle and an end. Leaving aside Tolkien's obvious divergence from Aristotle's stipulation that an epic must be in metre, we can see that in all other respects LoTR does indeed conform to these requirements. The whole narrative is essentially concerned with a single action - Frodo's casting of the Ruling Ring into the Cracks of Doom - with its background and its consequences.² Most of the characters involved could convincingly be described as 'good' or 'heroic'. The hobbits, more mundane and 'down to earth' than the human, dwarvish and elvish characters, are a possible exception. Tolkien sometimes exploits this incongruity for comic effect (as in the encounter between Theoden, Merry and Pippin at the gates of Isengard³) and several critics have pointed out the role of the hobbits in leading the reader gradually into the heroic world beyond the border of the Shire. I would argue that they also represent Tolkien's concession to the novelistic genre to which LoTR also (at least superficially) belongs, and which demands 'realistic' characters, not too much larger than life, to whom the reader can relate.⁴ The description 'epic novel' is then appropriate to the extent that the epic themes and figures of the story are set within the framework of a modern novel.

II

Turning from these theoretical considerations, the plot of LotR contains a number of elements derived from, or at least coinciding with, classical epic poetry, particularly the Odyssey and Virgil's Aeneid. A number of these similarities were pointed out by Catherine Hooley in an article in Anor 2,⁵ which draws attention to parallels between the stories of Odysseus, Aeneas and Aragorn: all three characters undertake a journey to the realms of the dead, which is vital to their achievement of their goal; and all three are seeking to resume or establish kingship. A recent article in Amon Hen⁶ also pinpoints a more specific resemblance in the parallel scenes of leave-taking between Aragorn and Eowyn in RotK and Aeneas and Dido in Aeneid 4. I would supplement these observations by noting further parallels between Odysseus, Aeneas and Frodo.

The Odyssey and the first half of the Aeneid have the same basic structure: the hero wanders for a number of years before attaining his goal and his journey is punctuated by various encounters, which cause delays of varying length (Odysseus is confronted by the monstrous Cyclops, the witch Circe, the nymph Calypso etc., while Aeneas makes various false starts in his attempts to fulfil his destiny in founding a new Troy). The goal is eventually reached, but only (in Odysseus' case) after he has gradually lost all his companions through one disaster or another. Frodo's story is, in outline, similar: he undertakes a journey, which is divided into stages by his encounters with Tom Bombadil, Aragorn, Elrond, Faramir and finally Shelob. Like Odysseus, he is (almost) bereft of companions before his quest is achieved. Moreover, most of the characters encountered offer Frodo practical help (Bombadil, Aragorn), advice (Elrond, Bombadil) or gifts (Galadriel). This motif is also found in the Odyssey: Odysseus is aided or advised, more or less willingly, by Circe, Calypso, Aeolus, Lord of the Winds, who gives him a bag of winds to help him on his way home, and the Phaeacians, who actually return him to Ithaca in their ships. The resemblance to the Aeneid is still closer: Aeneas, like Frodo, is initially unsure of his goal, but receives advice from various figures (the Delian oracle, the seer Helenus, the Cumaean Sibyl) on his travels.

A few more specific correspondences may be tentatively suggested. Galadriel, for example, is in some ways analogous to Circe. She is a powerful queen, who, although not, of course, a witch, is apparently believed to be something of the kind by Éomer and Faramir,⁷ and Boromir says of Lothlórien " ... it is said that few come out who once go in; and of that few none have escaped unscathed".⁸ The company spends a peaceful and relatively long period of a month in her domain - Odysseus and his companions spent a year feasting on Circe's island - and go on their way after receiving valuable help, in the form of gifts and advice, from Galadriel and Celeborn.

Odysseus and Aeneas both encounter various monstrous creatures, most notably the Cyclops, in the course of their journeys. Here again, Frodo's story provides an analogy, in the person

of Shelob, who is, like the Cyclops, a cave dwelling monster from whom the hero almost fails to escape; although the episodes are, of course, very different in other respects.

Finally, there is the motif of the journey to the realm of the dead, which has already been mentioned in connection with Aragorn. Frodo passes through the Dead Marshes on his way to Mordor; but Mordor itself can also be seen as a kind of figurative hell. Whenever the landscape is described, it is in terms of darkness, dryness and death:

... down on the stones behind the fences of the Black Land the air seemed almost dead ... The land all around was dreary, flat and drab-hued ... A few miles to the north-east the foothills of the Ashen Mountains stood like sombre grey ghosts, behind which the misty northern heights rose like a line of distant cloud hardly darker than the lowering sky.⁹

It is also notable that, like Aeneas, or Ged and Arren in Ursula le Guin's *The Farthest Shore*, Frodo and Sam do not leave by the same route by which they entered the Black Land.

III

This brings me to my final and perhaps most significant point of comparison between Tolkien and the classical epic. This is a theme common to much of Tolkien's writing, and also to the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid* and other ancient epics:¹⁰ the theme of homecoming, and the difficulty - if not impossibility - of returning to one's point of departure. This theme is particularly prominent in the *Odyssey*, which is concerned throughout with the hero's *nostos* (return) and reestablishment in his kingdom of Ithaca. Homecoming is mentioned twice in the ten-line prologue, and frequently thereafter, as, throughout the first half of the poem, the hero longs to "see the day of his return". Ironically, he never does actually see his return, because he is asleep when the Phaeacians return him to Ithaca. Moreover, his homecoming is not yet truly accomplished, since he must disguise himself as a beggar in order to gain access to his own house which has been occupied for several years by a group of suitors who are importuning his wife, Penelope, and feasting on his own meat and wine. Even when he has wreaked his revenge on the suitors and been reunited with his son, his wife and his aged father, he cannot, or so it is hinted, find rest. Earlier in the poem, during the hero's visit to the underworld, he is given a mysterious prophecy by the shade of the prophet Teiresias:

"When you have killed the suitors in your own palace ... then go forth, carrying with you a balanced oar, till you come to men who know nothing of the sea and eat food unseasoned with salt, men unacquainted with ships and their crimson cheeks or with balanced oars that are to ships as are wings to birds. I will give you a plain token you cannot miss. When another traveller falls in with you and takes the thing on your shoulder to be a winnowing-fan then plant that balanced oar in the ground and offer to Lord Poseidon the sacrifice of a ram and a bull

and a boar that mates with sows. Then return home ..."¹¹

This is taken by many critics to represent an impossibility, implying that Odysseus' wanderings will never truly end.

The hero of the Aeneid, on the other hand, is seeking to set up a new kingdom, but it is often spoken of as a new Troy, and is to be founded in Italy, the land from which the ancestors of the Trojans were believed to have come. Again this return is not unproblematic. Aeneas makes several false starts, attempting to found his city in Thrace and Crete, to ally himself with the Carthaginian queen Dido, and finally leaving some of his company to settle in Sicily, before finally arriving in Italy. But, like Odysseus, he is to find that his trials are not yet over, and he must fight and conquer the hostile natives before he can begin, at last, to build the city which, long after his death, is to become Rome.

A light-hearted version of this motif is already present in The Hobbit. In the final chapter, Bilbo sings of returning to "trees and hills [he] long has known"; but in the event things turn out not to be quite as he left them. Not only has his hobbit-hole been invaded, like Odysseus' palace, by a motley collection of "people of all sorts, respectable and unrespectable", hoping to buy his property at auction, but he himself has also changed:

Indeed, Bilbo had lost more than spoons - he had lost his reputation. It is true that for ever after he remained an elf-friend, and had the honour of dwarves, wizards and all such folk as ever passed that way; but he was no longer quite respectable. he was in fact held by all the hobbits of the neighbourhood to be 'queer' ...¹²

Moreover, the apparently 'happy ever after' ending of TH is not as final as it seems: at the beginning of LoTR, Bilbo is off on his travels again. For a time, he finds rest in Rivendell, but even this will not be his final resting place. The song he sings on leaving Bag End is a significant variation on his song of homecoming at the end of TH:

*The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began
Now far ahead the Road has gone
And I must follow if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And wither then? I cannot say.*¹³

Frodo's homecoming at the end of RotK is closely parallel to Bilbo's, although in his case it is not only Bag End, but the whole of the Shire that has been invaded, and must be 'scoured' (again, like Odysseus' palace). Like Bilbo, Frodo has been altered by his experiences: "There is no real going back", he realises on the road to Bree. "Though I may come to the Shire, it will not be the same for I shall no be the same ..."¹⁴ In fact, he is unable to settle down again



Resting at the roadside - Noel Evans

in his old home, and only two years after his return, he departs for the Grey Havens.

The themes of homecoming, change and loss are present too, in The Silmarillion. To consider only the main overarching narrative of the Noldor and the search for the Silmarils, we read in the last pages of the narrative:

And the Vanyar returned beneath their white banners, and were born in triumph to Valinor; but their joy in victory was diminished, for they returned without the Silmarils from Morgoth's crown, and they knew that those jewels could not be found or brought together again unless the world be broken and remade.¹⁵

Moreover, the elves of Beleriand do not return to Valinor itself, but dwell on Tol Eressea, the Lonely Isle.

Tolkien's writing, then, is permeated by a sense of change and loss: once one has left home, it is impossible to return - for it has changed, or one has changed oneself, or both. This is doubtless connected with Tolkien's conservatism and strong sense of the tragic inevitability of change; but I suspect that, deliberately or unconsciously, Tolkien was also influenced in this, as in the construction of his narrative in the ways that I have discussed, by the traditions of classical epic poetry.

Monica Gale

Footnotes

1. Poetics, 1449 b5.7 and 1459 a23
2. The same could also be said of The Hobbit and of The Silmarillion, which, although more episodic and less obviously organised around a single action, is, as the title suggests, in essence the story of the theft and 'recovery' of the Silmarils.
3. II, book 3, ch.8.
4. Bilbo's almost anti-heroic character in IH is an even more striking example.
5. "An Heroic Continuum: a Classicist's Perspective" in Anor 2, 1983.
6. "Aragorn and Aeneas" in Amon Hen 99, 1989.
7. II, book 3, ch.2: "Then there is a lady in the Golden Wood, as old tales tell!" [Éomer] said. "Few escape her nets they say ..."; book 4, ch.5: "... ever and anon one will go in secret to Lorien, seldom to return. Not I. For I deem it perilous now for mortal man wilfully to seek out the Elder People".
8. FotR, book 2, ch.6.
9. RotK, book 6, ch.3.
10. Such as the Nostoi, a lost poem from the 'Epic Cycle' which told of the return of the Greek leaders from Troy.
11. Odyssey, 11.119.132 (trans. Walter Shewring)
12. IH, ch.19.
13. FotR, book 1, ch.1.
14. RotK, book 6, ch.7.
15. QS, ch.24.

An Analysis of the Mortality of Hobbits

Previous articles in this journal have addressed the question of the size of the population of the Shire, and have included an analysis of family size.¹ However there appears to have been no attempt made to determine the life expectancy or average age of Hobbits. To this end such data as is available has been collated and ordered and hopefully will some light can be thrown on the issue of life and death in the Shire. The curve fitted to this data has been compared with the English Life Tables No. 14 (ELT14 - the equivalent curve or 'graduation' of the 1980-82 deaths in England and Wales). For details of the graduation process see Appendix II.

Examining the ages at death reveals no significant variation in mortality with sex, date of birth or wealth, so there are no grounds for subdividing the data. It should however be noted that fifty-six deaths constitutes a very small sample size and no firm conclusions can be reached. There appears to be a slight tendency for female hobbits to die younger, but the majority of these deaths are Baggins' who are said to be shorter lived than the Tooks or Brandybucks. The hardworking Gamgee family show no signs of dying young and are rather long lived. The two shortest lived hobbits dying from natural causes are Bilbo's parents Bungo and Belladonna who reached 80 and 82 respectively. There are no variations over time (with date of birth) and in particular no deaths recorded from the Days of Dearth following the Long Winter, except perhaps for the 93 year old Thain Isumbras III in 1159. Three nonagenarian Baggins' died during the Fell Winter of 1511.

The composite mortality rates should therefore be assumed to apply to male Hobbits of at least moderate wealth during times of plenty. The experience of the poor may be very different and even that of the wealthy during times like the Dark plague of '37 or the Days of Dearth when 'many thousands' died. In such groups and at such times the mortality rates may have varied widely from those calculated.

Since the youngest death from natural causes is at the age of 80 it is problematic to determine the distribution of deaths up to this point. This is compounded by the apparent omission from the family trees of any infant or other premature deaths. Examining the time between births in large families should reveal the existence of omissions and indeed there is a ten year gap between the first two of Mungo Baggins' children, but only four year gaps between the second, third and fourth children. This may of course be due to other circumstances but a margin has been included to allow for such omissions.

The results are given in Appendix I. The data can be interpreted in several ways. Mortality rates for hobbits are 60% of the equivalent for England (ELT14) at age 30 and drop to just 1% at age 70, rising thereafter to parity at around 110. Thus hobbits do not simply experience lower mortality, but have a differently shaped distribution curve. Life expectancy is around 23 years longer up until age 60, but subsequently the gap narrows to zero at around age 110. Alternatively, an 80 year old hobbit has much the same likelihood of dying as a 45 year old

Englishman. This difference also decreases to zero at around age 110. The number of deaths by age peaks at age 99 compared with age 77 for humans. Hence hobbits can be considered to remain in good health until their seventies, but then deteriorate at twice the rate of humans of the same age. While 90% of hobbits reach 87 years of age, only 10% can be expected to reach the age of 104 only 17 years later.

The age reached by 10% of the population can be taken to be representative of the underlying life expectancy (ignoring avoidable deaths). For humans this calculation would give a life expectancy of 85 years: for hobbits the figure is 104 years. Thus hobbit mortality is not equivalent to that which could be expected for a human population living in idyllic conditions.

There remains a problem in predicting the mortality of very old hobbits. Although statistically, one in 1800 hobbits could be expected to reach Bilbo's farewell Party age of eleventy-one there is no statistical likelihood of attaining even 120 years. Yet the Old Took lived to 130, well outside this limit. 'Old' Rory Brandybuck reached 106 and two others reached 104, a surprisingly high proportion in such a small population sample. Although it is possible to refit the curve to make 130 a mathematical possibility, this would unfortunately significantly worsen the fit for younger age groups. Rather than altering the curve, an explanation for this exception can be sought.

In The Hobbit it is said of the Old Took that "long ago one of the Took ancestors must have taken a fairy wife". This is considered to be highly doubtful in the light of further information now available on elves, but it is not impossible that some elvish influence was involved. In particular, elvish food is known to have sustaining properties and its inclusion in the diet (of the elderly) could conceivably have life prolonging properties.

Bilbo and Gollum are two clearly exceptional cases; both had long lives extended by the influence of the Ring. The latter lived for 78 years after losing the Ring, without any apparent aging. This can be attributed entirely to the lingering effects of the Ring. Bilbo possessed the Ring for a much shorter period, but also lived at least 20 years after passing on the Ring. This may be attributed in part to the Ring, but also in part to life at Rivendell and elvish food. At 130 he was described as looking "very old" and indeed shows other signs of advanced age in his conversations with Frodo. At 111 he felt "all thin, sort-of stretched", suggesting that this "very respectable age" was greater than he would have achieved normally. He was already being compared to the Old Took and I would suggest that he was then the oldest living hobbit in the Shire by some years.

Graham Taylor

Appendix I: Comparison of mortality rates

Comparison of the proportion aged x years dying before attaining age $x + 1$ (Q_x) with the same proportion taken from the English Life Tables 14 for males.

Age	Hobbit	ELT14	Hobbit as % of ELT14
0	0.00050	0.01271	4.0
10	0.00050	0.00024	208.0
20	0.00050	0.00093	54.0
30	0.00050	0.00088	57.0
40	0.00050	0.00184	27.0
50	0.00050	0.00615	8.1
60	0.00050	0.01843	2.7
70	0.00050	0.04703	1.1
80	0.00321	0.11334	2.8
90	0.03049	0.22693	13.0
100	0.20027	0.38087	53.0

Comparison of expectation of future life in years (E^0_x) with that from the English Life Tables 14 for males.

Age	Hobbit	ELT14	Difference (years)
0	95.1	71.0	24.1
10	85.6	62.2	23.4
20	76.0	52.5	23.5
30	66.3	42.9	23.4
40	56.6	33.3	23.3
50	46.9	24.3	22.6
60	37.1	16.4	20.7
70	27.3	10.1	17.2
80	17.5	5.8	11.7
90	8.8	3.3	5.5
100	3.1	1.9	1.2

Appendix II: The graduation process

Dates of birth were taken from the family trees in Appendix C of *LoTR*. Births are assumed to be uniformly distributed over the calendar year. Dates of death were also taken from the family trees supplemented by information from the Tale of Years in Appendix B of *LoTR*. In addition information for individuals known to be alive in a certain year, but for whom no date of death is known has also been included, with a "year of exit" from the table set at the last year they were known to be alive. Thus someone present at Bilbo's Farewell Party, with a known birthdate would exit the table (without a death being recorded) at 1401, the year of the party. Deaths and exits are also assumed to be uniformly distributed over the calendar year.

From this data, the number of deaths at age x years (D_x) and the total number of years lived (by the whole population) aged x last birthday (E_x) have been calculated. To smooth the distribution, values of D_x and E_x were grouped into three year periods. Calculating D_x/E_x provides an estimate of the proportion of those aged x years dying before achieving age $(x + 1)$

years (Q_x) for each interval. The curve

$$\ln(Q_x/P_x) = a + bx$$

was fitted to the data between ages 74.5 and 107.5 by the least squares method. This solves to give values for a of -22.1316, for b of 0.2075 and an equation:

$$Q_x^{(1)} = \text{Exp}(a + bx)/1 + \text{Exp}(a + bx)$$

There were only three deaths before the age of 80, (Lotho at 45, Primula at 60 and Drogo at 72). This is for a total number of years lived of around 7,000. This means that up to the age of 80 a value for Q_x can only be an estimate. The calculation for Q_x gives a value of 0.00043, which can be rounded up to:

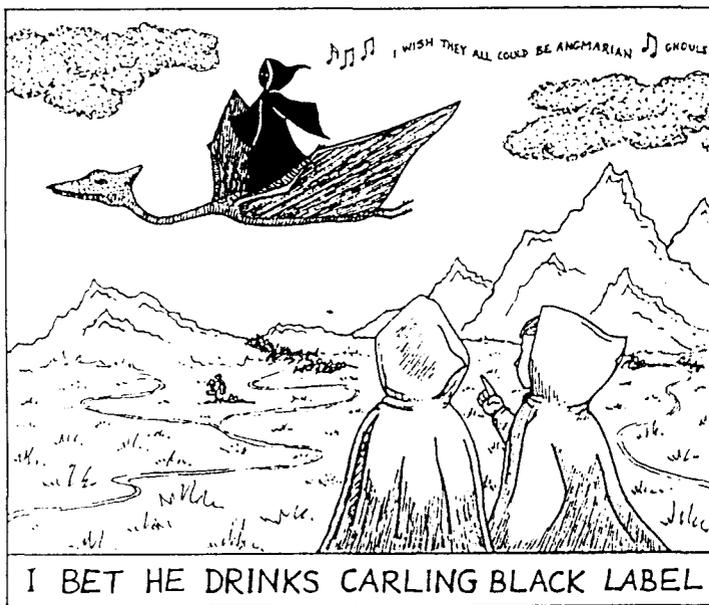
$$Q_x^{(2)} = 0.0005$$

The two curves, $Q_x^{(1)}$ and $Q_x^{(2)}$ intersect between ages 70 and 71 and to avoid a discontinuity the curves were blended between the ages of 70 and 85 to give a single smooth curve for all ages.

Footnotes

1. See for example Duncan McLaren's "The Society of the Shire" in [Anor 15](#)

MIDDLE EARTH REVISITED



The "other passage" of Cirith Ungol

*Some demented ramblings by two old hobbits ...
Sorry, I mean 'the editor and his accomplice'.*

Darkness was all around, a cold, clammy, silent sort of darkness, the sort that not even the most unpleasant of orcs likes to be out in on his own. The silence was broken by the sound of quiet footsteps which suddenly halted with a squelching thud, followed by a voice, a broad rustic voice, a voice so out of place that one would have wondered what it was doing there, except for the fact that one would have been too busy wondering what one was doing there oneself!¹

"Why have we stopped, Mr Frodo?" said the voice.

Frodo took some time to answer, as though pondering a tricky problem, and then said: "There's something blocking the tunnel, Sam."

"What is it?"

"I don't know" answered Frodo, "I can't see."

"Yes," said Sam, "It is rather dark in here." He moved forward, narrowly missing the old and dry orc's skull that was lying on the floor at his feet.

"Ugh," he said, "it's sticky whatever it is."

"I thought I told you to keep your hands out of that box that Galadriel gave you!" snapped Frodo.

"No, Mr Frodo," said Sam, "I means this stuff in front of us!" Under his breath he added "Pillock!" and mentally added another to the score. Quite what he was going to do to Mr Frodo when they got out of this, Sam wasn't sure, but he knew that Frodo wouldn't enjoy it one bit.

Meanwhile Frodo had begun feeling his way around the side of the tunnel and after some time he announced that he had found a way round. Sam followed, hoping that the sticky stuff clinging to his trousers was nothing worse than usual.

The soft footsteps hurried on through the tunnel of Cirith Ungol, but then at the next corner Sam let out a fearful scream.

"What's wrong?" whispered Frodo urgently.

Somehow Sam succeeded in stammering a reply: "I just, I just wish you'd watch where you're a

putting that sword Mr Frodo!" he said. Frodo did not answer. 'One day' he thought, 'one day that idiot will learn to walk straight.'

For a long time the silence was unbroken, apart from the dripping of water, scuttling insects and far off, the occasional howl of an orc being tortured. Suddenly Frodo realised there was something missing ... no 'flip' 'flop' of Gollum's footsteps. "Sam?" he said.

"Yes, Mr Frodo,"

"Have you seen Gollum recently?" asked Frodo, "You know, I haven't seen hide nor hair of him since before I went to sleep last night .. remember, when you were complaining of feeling hungry. Have you seen him since then?"

"No, Mr Frodo," said Sam, burping gently. Frodo let the subject drop.

Sometime later a thought crossed Sam's mind.

"Mr Frodo?"

"Yes Sam,"

"You're a clever hobbit,"

"Yes Sam," said Frodo, somewhat smugly.

"Well," said Sam, "there's something I've been meaning to ask you; and seeing as we might not get out of here alive, particularly not with that spider that the author's planning to let loose on us soon, I thought I'd better ask it now."

"Yes Sam," said Frodo, "what is it?"

"Well, why, ... why do hobbits have hairy feet?" Sam blurted out.

Frodo paused, "Ah ... Ummm ... there's no one else here is there?" he asked.

"No, Mr Frodo."

"Good," said Frodo, "let me show you."

The noises that followed were enough to put a troll off his dinner. The grunting and squeaking got louder and more frantic, until at last Sam sighed in fulfilment.

"Do you understand now, Sam?" asked Frodo.

"Yes, thank-you Mr Frodo," sighed Sam, "but I didn't think it would hurt so much!"

Despite the unpleasantness of their surroundings, the hobbits, exhausted by their exertions,

dropped off to sleep. Frodo was awoken much later by a loud chomping and chewing noise.

"Sam?" he queried tremulously. The noise continued, in fact if anything it got louder and he could almost imagine the blood dripping and bones cracking under those blackened teeth.

"Sam!?" he said again, slowly backing away. The noise ceased and was followed by a loud and revolting burp.

"Sam!" cried Frodo in fear.

"Nice bit of roast G .. rabbit. that," said Sam, "would you like some Mr Frodo?"

"No, thank-you," snapped Frodo, marching off down the tunnel. Unfortunately he didn't take any notice of the direction he had taken, and completely missed the next junction. Some time later he admitted: "Sam, I think were lost."

"Yes," said Sam, "we should have come across that spider long ago." He paused, and then added: "Why don't we look at the map then?"

"Sam," said Frodo, trying to suppress his exasperation, "it's dark!"

"Oh, don't worry about that," replied Sam, "it's in braille!"

"Right-on!" exclaimed Frodo.

Sam had dug the map out of his pack and unrolled it on the floor before Frodo finally realised that they hadn't had a map before.

"Sam," he asked, "where did you get this?"

"Oh, that nice gentleman in black down at the tower sold it to me."

"What for?" demanded Frodo.

"Just that old ring of yours," said Sam, "a really good deal I thought ... I knew you were wanting to get rid of it!"

"You fool!" interrupted Frodo, raising his sword.

"You fell for it that time," sniggered Sam, completely failing to notice the large black spider creeping up on Frodo.

Duncan McLaren and Sean Brooke-Hughes
(Based on an original concept by Adrian Waterworth)

Footnotes:

1. In fact the voice had just escaped from a Ralph Bakshi film and had nothing whatsoever to do with the Lord of the Rings.

The Land of Narnia

Brian Sibley explores the world of C.S. Lewis, with illustrations by Pauline Baynes, Collins Lions, £8.95 (hardback) £3.99 (paperback).

Hot on the heels of the television adaptation of the Chronicles comes this guide to Narnia, written by Brian Sibley, better known, perhaps as the man behind the BBC radio adaptation of LotR. To avoid repeating myself too often, I may as well point out now that the book is aimed primarily at children, a fact evident in layout, large type-face, large number of illustrations (more of which anon), and in the general style of writing. A caveat before I start, then, is not to expect anything stunningly profound or 'unsuitable for children'.

The book is in seven chapters, the first two of which give a brief biography of Lewis up to the time of writing the Chronicles, and the immediate background to their being written. There are a few interesting details here, though little new to those familiar with, say, "Surprised by Joy", or other biographies. Most interesting is the information which is more directly relevant to Lewis' own writings: the move, when he was seven, to the rambling house of Little Lea, his avid reading of children's books, as well as "grown-up novels" (sic), which seemed to feed his vivid imagination, as did his discovery, five years later, of Germanic and Norse myths and legends (incidentally, Tolkien's spelling 'dwarves' appears here, though not elsewhere in the book). There is also a survey of the stories which he himself was writing at this time, obviously influenced by the books he was reading. Tolkien gets a name-check, and a picture too, merited not least by his important contribution to Lewis' return to Christianity. The second chapter is concerned more directly with the immediate circumstances which led to his writing the Chronicles.

Chapter three gives extensive plot summaries of all the books, in chronological, rather than publication order, and also fills in the gaps in the histories of both Narnia and this world. In choosing this order Sibley cites Lewis' own remarks in defence. Obviously these are not intended to be read before the books, and the whole chapter (the longest in the book, incidentally,) serves in effect only to point out the overall structure of the Chronicles as a whole in a linear order, which is somewhat confused by the order of publication.

The following two chapters deal respectively with the geography of Narnia and neighbouring lands, including Lewis' own original map of Narnia; and the creatures, both real and mythical/imaginary with which he populated his world. Sibley also points out the Norse and Greek sources for the mythical creatures, and gives an extensive account of the development of Lewis' most imaginative creation, Puddleglum the Marsh-wiggle.

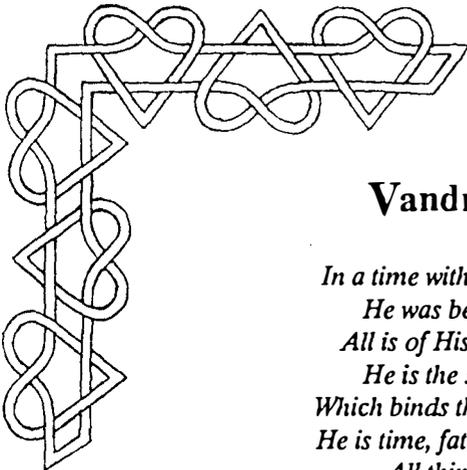
The 'Deeper Magic' is the subject of the next chapter, tactfully done, and the book ends with the conclusion of the biographical details, concentrating on his marriage to Joy, and his

international fame, not only because of the Narnia books, but also as a Christian apologist as a result of 'Miracles', 'Mere Christianity' and of course, 'The Screwtape Letters'. There is also a small photo of the Pevensies' coronation from the BBC dramatisation (there had to be one somewhere!)

And now the illustrations. Well, as you might expect in a children's book, there are lots, all (except for those of academic interest) courtesy of the pen of Pauline Baynes. Many of these will already be familiar with the books, but the chapter headings are all new, as are four full-page colour paintings, one of which also appears on the cover. The frontispiece is Baynes' map of Narnia, which makes another page of colour. Being myself, like Alice, rather attracted to books with pictures in, I cannot deny that it was these illustrations that first drew my attention to this book; and when the pictures capture the mood of the text in the magical way that Baynes' always seem to, the temptation is irresistible. Yes, I'm a fan, and at four quid for the paperback this must be the cheapest, not to say the most handy, collection of her Narnia illustrations around - it's worth that much just for the colour pages.

In conclusion; if you want a not-too-heavy guide to Narnia, and a brief biography of Lewis to boot, you could do worse. If you want a collection of Baynes' artwork, ditto. The two together make a winning combination. It's beautifully laid out and, of course, lavishly illustrated. What more can I say? Essential if only for the pictures. Excellent value for money.

Stephen Linley



Vandred

*In a time without time
He was begun.
All is of His hand.
He is the spirit
Which binds the Vamul.
He is time, fate, justice,
All things.*

O gracious Vandred, I kneel at your altar.

Graham Dann

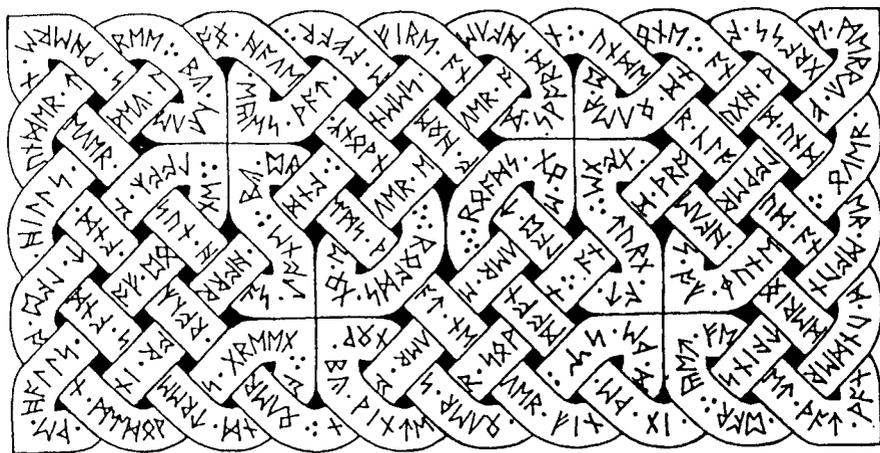
Comment

In the absence of any comment from anyone else, I thought I'd air some of my opinions on recent topics covered by Anor.

I was interested to read of the Norse version of the origin of dwarves "appearing in the earth like maggots in meat". Despite being a rather undignified description of Durin, this is a good analogy to the creation of the dwarves in Middle-earth, as they were still made from stone originally, despite the existence of dwarf women. Perhaps Middle-earth's dwarves are even more alike to Norse dwarves than Jeremy King argues.

Further, on the naming of the Dwarves in the Hobbit, Tolkien writes (Letters p21) "the dwarf-names (Icelandic) .. [were] regretfully substituted to avoid abstruseness for the genuine alphabets and names of the mythology into which Mr Baggins intrudes ..." He also (Letters p31.) describes the Scandinavian names of the Dwarves as an 'editorial concession'. Of course, once the names were published, Tolkien was rather stuck with them, even if he did manage to re-write the plot! In addition, more empoeemically he notes that the dwarves never revealed their true personal names to others, and thus justifies the substitution. (Letters p175.)

Richard Spontack in Anor 19 drew our attention to Gandalf's evolution between The Hobbit and LoTR, and asked why this may be. Although Gandalf had been around for many, many years before the events in The Hobbit, it is only after then that his 'Great Work' began, only then that Saruman was revealed to him as a traitor. Although it might be argued that as a result of these events Gandalf could have been expected to become more distant and concern himself simply with greater things, I would suggest that Gandalf finally became deeply involved with a world which he had previously only been 'visiting'.



Heroism in Tolkien

What is heroism? It is a term which is little understood today, perhaps because there are so few heroes about. This was not always the case. Although by no means exclusive to the Germanic peoples, heroic literature is very common in their cultures. This literature was well known to Tolkien, and its influence on his writings can be identified easily. So it is a natural question to ask to what extent he uses the concept of heroism.

Heroism is much more than courage. A hero has definite ideas about the purpose of his courage.¹ He refuses to compromise with anything which will cause him shame and loss of honour. He will not let fear of pain or even death prevent him from upholding his honour. He believes that yielding gains him nothing. As it is put in the Old Icelandic poem, the Havamal:

*The cowardly man
thinks he will live for ever
if he shuns battle;
but old age gives
him no peace,
even if spears do.*

So a hero will fight on, even when there is no hope of survival. It is better to die resisting than to live on in shame. Indeed courage tends to increase as opposition gets fiercer. As Beorhtwold said in the Old English poem The Battle of Malden.²

*Thought shall be the harder, heart the keener,
mood the more, as our might lessens.*

The greatest acts of a hero are usually his last, when he brings out his last reserves of skill and courage to meet a challenge too great for him.

That definition is inadequate, and would be even if it were longer. The only proper way to understand heroism is to study examples from literature. It is well worth reading any of the Icelandic sagas to get a better picture. But two characters stand out particularly, both from Brennu-Njals Saga. Gunnarr was the archetypal warrior, expert with bow and halberd, a veteran of many Viking expeditions. Back in Iceland, he was ambushed as part of a feud, and was sentenced to exile for killing his attacker. He refused to leave, so was attacked at home by a large band whom he fought off until his bowstring was broken. He asked his wife for some of her hair to replace it. Not being on good terms, she refused. To have seized some would have been dishonourable so he continued without. He killed two of his attackers and wounded sixteen more before he was slain.



Njall was caught up in the same feud as an old man because his sons killed rather too many people. Eventually they were besieged in his home. The attackers chose to set fire to the building to avoid an open fight. But they allowed the servants and women to leave, and extended the same offer to Njall. He replied "I do not want to go out, because I am an old man and am little able to avenge my sons, but do not want to live in shame".

So heroism is a philosophy of life, setting personal honour above fear of death, rather than exceptional courage or ability. When deciding whether any of Tolkien's characters are heroic, it is therefore a question of the moral principles guiding their actions, rather than of the actions themselves. So this study may throw light on more general areas, such as good and evil, right and wrong, or fate and free will.

To do a complete survey I should consider the characters in The Silmarillion, and no doubt in the apocryphal History of Middle-earth series too.³ However, the constraints of space limit me to The Lord of the Rings, which also perhaps has more narrative and character description than the rest put together.

If asked to name a hero in this book, many readers would probably think of Aragorn. He was undoubtedly skilled in fighting, enduring in hardship, and more than averagely courageous. In this sense he is a model of the popular concept of a hero. Some of his actions were quite obviously in defiance of any fear of death. Travelling the Paths of the Dead was an enormous risk, and leading the assault of Gondor on Mordor was suicidal, to say the least. He was certainly not going to avoid anything merely because of a risk of pain or death.

But what were his motives for taking these risks? Obviously he was quite keen on becoming king of Arnor and Gondor, and enjoying all the power, prestige and privileges that would come with the job. But primarily he was intent on saving the world from Sauron. His actions were geared to this, so often he let people get away with great slights to his honour. His treatment by the people of Bree would not be tolerated by many heroes, and Denethor's insults would have provoked swift vengeance. But Aragorn put the future of Middle-earth above his own honour, so let this behaviour go unchecked.

Frodo is another name which would soon be mentioned in any discussion about heroes. He was, after all, the main character in the book, and played a considerable part in Sauron's downfall. He was not, of course, a typical warrior. Indeed as the tale progressed, he seemed to find killing more and more distasteful. But in incidents such as the fighting in Moria, he showed a certain amount of skill, and a great deal of courage. But his greatest act of courage was his journey into Mordor. Few heroes have ever possessed such bravery that they would journey into the heartland of the enemy with no protection. And Frodo had little idea of what he would find, inadequate provisions, and an enemy far greater than anyone around today. He rose to the challenge that this presented, and just like Beorhtwold, his determination increased as his strength gave out on the way to Mount Doom.

However, like Aragorn, his motives were not heroic. He did not journey to Mordor to get a story told about himself. Indeed, back in the Shire he became something of a recluse, and did not mind the fact that Merry and Pippin were held in higher esteem than the ringbearer. All along he had been giving up every hope of staying alive for the sake of a very far fetched plan. A true hero would have given short shrift to any wizard who suggested such lunacy.

Gimli is perhaps a better candidate when it comes to preserving his honour. His resentment at being asked to be blindfolded in Lothlorien was well-founded. The suggestion that he was less trustworthy than the others was a gross insult. Being a true dwarf, he was prepared to die rather than to yield. Likewise his wrath at Eomer's words about Galadriel was typically heroic; insults directed towards friends are just as important to avenge. And yet this same insult showed that Gimli too was not consistently heroic. At the end of the tale, Eomer taunted Gimli by claiming that Arwen was more beautiful than Galadriel. Whether or not she was is immaterial. Eomer was evidently mocking Gimli and yet the dwarf did not bat an eyelid. Similarly he refused to ride horses, but very soon gave in under the insistence of Legolas, rather than be left behind.

So, does LotR provide better examples of heroism than these? Are there any characters who actually care about their honour, and take steps to avoid shame? Eowyn would seem to fit this description. She was brought up in a culture similar to that which nurtured Beorhtwold. She was trained as a warrior, and no doubt would have been more than a match for most men in a duel. But as was noted before, it takes more than skill and courage to make a hero.

Eowyn cared about her honour. That is why she resented Aragorn's rejection of her, which

led to her resisting Faramir's advances. That is why she was annoyed when Aragorn ignored her advice about the Paths of the Dead, and then refused to let her go with him. That is why she resented being kept behind when her comrades went off to battle, and why she eventually sneaked off incognito.

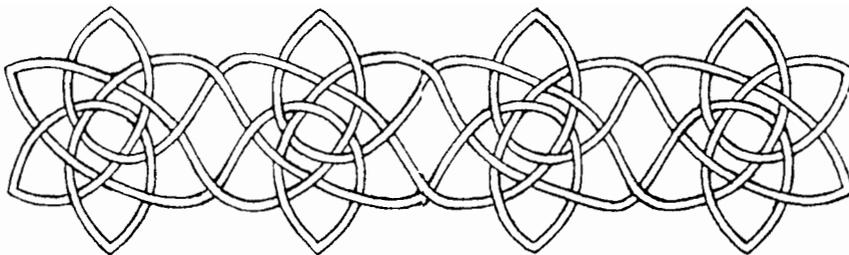
In the Battle of the Pelennor Fields she displayed real heroism. With Theoden killed, and no-one about save Merry, she faced the chief of the Ringwraiths, an enemy far beyond her apparent power. But she refused to yield and retreat in shame. Without hope she fought on to safeguard her honour in battle. This was not for any altruistic motive such as saving the world - it was more important than that.

So why does Tolkien largely abandon the heroic stance of the sources from which he drew? Probably because he did not approve of heroism in its old sense. In many ways it is a selfish philosophy. Tolkien, quite rightly perhaps is keen to show that selfishness is wrong. So in the story of Eowyn, although it is easy to sympathise with her, and to rejoice over the results of her action, there is still a feeling that she did wrong in riding to battle. So while he portrays courage used in the service of Good as excellent, Tolkien rejects traditional ideas of heroism in favour of a new morality.

Jeremy King

Footnotes

- 1 The poem to which The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son is an epilogue.
- 2 The nature of these works as extended histories means that they tend to reveal less about individuals and their motives, while The Hobbit is not serious enough to be of much help.



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